



Editorial Introduction

Budyong is envisioned as a space in our Christian theological altar for varied reflections on what it means to encounter the Divine in our contemporary setting, taking into account the pulsating concerns and issues of the “here and now.” It aims to explore the creative and tensional paths of theologizing and doing theology grounded in, yet not of, our wounded world in order to partake in the transforming journey of the Spirit seen in the light of a “beyond” which, very often, can be awe-filled and joy-filled, yet at the same time, troubling and disquieting.

The articles in this issue allow not for a uniform and subsequently monotonous rendition. On the contrary, the various theological enactments, ranging from theological aesthetics to ethical morality, from urban study to missiology, and from cultural anthropology to narrative theology, are in fact variegated attempts to explore the Divine irruptions in our very midst. They hope to foment a creative newness, hopefully disturbing, in enunciating the very essence of responsible faith. It is a faith “able to respond” to God’s entry into the world of men and women and children; it is a faith whose integrity lies in its authenticity to hear its very own summons—to faithfully allow God to interrupt and transfigure the lives of the community as a sign of faithful openness to the stirrings of the Divine Spirit.

“How Lovely Is Your Dwelling Place!” by Jerome Abila, CSsR reflects on church architecture and sacred space. Providing a brief historical background and the theological underpinnings of the development of church architecture, Abila attempts to expand our understanding of sacred space in the re-imaginings of what constitutes God’s dwelling. A particular route taken is a descriptive analysis of the Redemptorists’ experiences of built spaces. This reflection on Divine spatialization underscores the intrinsic relation between aesthetics and ethics. In other words, the “beautiful” cannot be isolated from the “true” and the “good.” Furthermore, church structures discover their sacred character as they nurture the witnessing of the community of the faithful not only in the God of the living but also in the living God. Church buildings, therefore, find their sacral vocation as they become the home of God’s people who navigate the rough realities of living and believing.

In “*Dumiwata: A Starting Point for Inculturated Christianity among the Subanen*,” Elton Viagedor, OFM attempts to pursue the inculturation of Christianity among the Subanen community by grounding missiological practice in the latter’s indigenous belief system. Taking the pneumatological turn, Viagedor demonstrates the possible mutual enrichment between the Subanen belief in *Dumiwata* and the Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit. What is missiologically painted is an intercultural theology that deeply recognizes the formation of a truly local church where the Subanen people themselves reclaim their power to inculturate the Gospel in their very life and culture towards the creation of a Subanen-Christian identity.

Grounded in his experience with the indigenous community of Akhas in Chiang Rai, Thailand, Bro. Allan Edward O. Pandaan, CSsR explores the existential meaning of *Lo Ching Cha* or the Swing in “Hierophany in the *Lo Ching Cha*.” Creatively appropriating Mircea Eliade’s concept of hierophany, i.e., the manifestation of the Sacred, *Lo Ching Cha* enacts a delinquent

double-game: swinging as playing is at the same time swinging as praying. Indeed, the Akha people pray while they play and/or play while they pray, not at the expense of one over the other but in the creative dynamism of the two in this sacred encounter with Apoemiyeh, God. To understand this sacred space and time via *Lo Ching Cha* is to traverse the frontiers of mission.

Niel John G. Capidos paints in “Urban Faith Transits: Tactical Spaces in the Everyday Ordinary” a collection of sacred stories, the silent gospels of the everyday ordinary people in their unquenchable desire for the transcendent. These narratives, fragmented as they are, serve as a series of departures that create longing, always excessive, for the possibility of encountering the Divine. Searching for a way to navigate “mission in the city,” Capidos appropriates Michel de Certeau’s concept of “tactics” to open possibilities for everyday ordinary people to participate in the creation of divine sense and meaning in the context of an urban “walk” and journey to encounter the consoling and liberating presence of God.

Fr. Antonio Rosales, OFM speaks of the new realities involved in proclaiming the Good News to our world today in his “Missions, the New Evangelization, and the Jubilee 2021.” It is his passionate plea that the approach to Jubilee 2021, the 500th anniversary of the coming of Christianity to the Philippines, be celebrated through a faithful narration of the Jesus Christ story that takes into serious consideration the complex changes in people and society. Christian discipleship today necessitates a missionary testimony not just in words but in the witness of life in this troubled and troubling world.

Bringing *caritas* into the very heart of pastoral care is the central challenge of “The Priest as Moral Educator and Pastoral Moral Guide” by Fr. Carlos Ronquillo, CSsR. Here, he underscores the twofold call for priests to be moral educator and pastoral moral guide as they administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Invoking the anthropologically grounded principle of gradualism, a spiritual

attitude where the becoming of the human person is nurtured in perseverance through fidelity to the gift of grace, Ronquillo's proposal allows for particular penitents who are seemingly trapped in a "no-exit" moral dilemma the plausibility, at least, of following the itinerary that God desires for His/Her people in discerning the creative process of belonging to the Church.

The article, "Word and Response: A Metaphor of Redemption" by Fr. Gerard Louis, CSSR underscores the proclamation of redemption at the very heart of Christian faith and the Redemptorist charism. The Church and theology have to find a way to communicate this Good News in a manner that will speak to the present generation. While remaining faithful to Christian tradition, it has to rediscover narratives and metaphors that creatively negotiate the way towards contemporary sensibilities and intelligibility in order to be meaningful to people. In this regard, Louis proposes Bernard Häring's word and response model, including the leitmotif of responsibility as a plausible way.

In "An Interreligious Dialogue in Mindanao Today," Fr. Hermes B. Sabud, SM examines the complexities of Mindanao realities, the "Land of Promise" as the locus of a theology on interreligious dialogue. The relationships among Christianity, Islam, and other indigenous faith traditions indicate a journey towards the "other." Sabud's major wager is for dialogue to be construed not as process, strategy, method, or approach, but as spirituality—a life lived and guided by the spirit in the concrete love of God and neighbor. This spirituality of dialogue can be enacted in the terrains of everyday relationships where peoples of different religious and cultural identities encounter each other in friendship and hospitality.

Christopher Sta. Ana, CSsR's paper presents the Vietnamese as a people with a welcoming stance. Despite wars, Vietnam maintains a sense of harmonious rapport within their communities and with foreigners. Vietnam's religions may account partly for this, as their religions have a moral and religious assent to doing good and building rapport with one another. These are viewed as spiritual tasks. The inclination to build rapport and strengthen ties that bind is reflected beautifully in the country's tea culture.

All these summons form a theological *bricolage*¹ reflecting the wondering and wandering spirit of the St. Alphonsus Theological and Mission Institute (SATMI) as it endeavors to discern the activity of God in the world. Seeking to understand faith in consideration of and not in isolation from the realities of his/herstory, we touch God who speaks to us and with us in dying and rising, in emptiness and rebirth with that beloved man-God from Nazareth.

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¹The English word for *bricolage* (French) is "tinkering." A tinker or tinkerer can be an unskilled worker who does repair work, yet many times, does different kinds of work successfully. S/He is able to fiddle with anything especially in attempting to mend it. A tinker infuses creativity, ingenuity, and play in work, especially given limited resources at hand.