

From the Managing Editor

Faith issues and impasses exist as the churches crisscross with politics and cultures. Such are problems that confront theology and other disciplines and the four articles in this volume chart some common grounds in order to understand them. The articles' authors have employed insights and perspectives from other disciplines, and in the process, proffered theological-pastoral knowledge that are more nuanced (or "cases sensitive") than usually imagined or theorized.

Ferdinand D. Dagmang's "Geography, Society, and Culture: Enablers (or Inhibitors) of Basic Ecclesial Community Development," is a research output from the grounds of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs). In particular, it cites the BEC experiences in the Diocese of Boac in Marinduque and culls out learnings from those communities "through the wider canvas of society, culture, and geographies." The article attempts to identify the "hidden, friendly realities" that facilitate a more robust and participatory development of the BECs in the Diocese. In doing so, it hinted at the fact that BECs in other dioceses in the country would be better understood with the unconcealing or deeper understanding of the "lifeworld, work, everyday life, and disposition" of the members toward community involvement.

"A Theological Ethical Critique of Political Dynasties: A Sociobiological and Evolutionary Perspective," is Lawrence Santiago Pedregosa's analysis of political dynasties in the Philippines through the lens of sociobiology. Without being oblivious to a few advantages out of this cultural reality running through the long gamut of Philippine politics, it dissects in more critical ways, mainly through juxtaposition with non-human behavior within the larger evolutionary scale, as

“ethically problematic” in view of some political democratic ideals including “equal opportunity, transparency, and professionalism.” Political dynasties compromise the theological values and ecclesial pursuit in society for the common good and social justice.

Noel G. Asiones’ “Looking Forward, Looking Back: Framing the Interventions of the CBCP from the Perspective of Opinion Editorials,” is a research article midwived by thematic content analysis of opinion editorials from three major dailies in the country. It peeked at how a secular sector in our society such as the news media perceived or reacted to the Catholic Church hierarchy’s interventions on State-initiated initiatives including the Reproductive Health law, national elections, and the ‘war on drugs.’ The research outcome hints at deeper discernment and pragmatic response within the latitude of “reception or non-reception” by the public of the Church’s interventions on social issues.

“Back to Basics: Retrieving Some Lessons from Christian Tradition,” by Rebecca G. Cacho is a theological exposition on the import of the Christian Tradition and its “life-giving elements” for contemporary living. In the face of variegated challenges to the sociocultural lives of Filipinos, Tradition can be reaffirmed and re-appropriated as “model and lifeline of people’s identity, values, norms, or ways of living together as human beings.” The surplus of wisdom seasoned through time in Tradition, deepened and protected by many generations of believers and exemplars of the faith can help enrich the lives of Filipinos both imperiled by emerging societal disvalues but are also anchored on cherished, life-sustaining, values. An empowering dialogue between local cultures and Tradition as the “handing on of life” is cast as a transformative one for the living out of faith, hope, and love in the polis.

Thomas Mooren's "Marriage in Islam" comes as Notes in this volume, providing glimpses on inter-religious marriage. While there are legal parameters to contend with, Mooren argues for its theological aesthetics, its covenantal character, and how people ushered into this "mystery" can also find rest, love, and compassion as admonished in the Qur'an. Within this covenantal theology of marriage, its inter-religious import resonates with the familiar Christian ground of sacramentality where marriages are also mirrors of the covenant between God and humankind.

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