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Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia

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discusses the Bourbon reforms of the treasury in the Philippines in the eighteenth century, particularly after the British capture of Manila in 1762. Alonso tries to fit the Filipino pieces in an imperial puzzle coherently, from the inception of free trade until the implementation of the tobacco monopoly in 1782, the emergence of the Company of the Philippines in 1785, and a better administration of native tribute.

On the whole, *El Costo del Imperio Asiático* transcends secular and traditional arguments by questioning well-established assertions, such as the Philippines's ruinous economy until the final collapse of the Spanish empire. According to this argument, the Philippines needed the Mexican *situado* or *socorro*, thus becoming a mere appendage of New Spain. This argument, which is widely accepted in American and Filipino historiography, was part and parcel of the black legend of the Spanish colonial system, which depicted the Spaniards as intolerant priest-inquisitors, bloody conquistadors of the Indies, and brutal oppressors of colonized peoples. There was considerable truth in this image, but Spaniards were as cruel as the people who denounced them. Alonso has written a solid work based on primary sources, and he has opened a new line of inquiry to rewrite and revisit Philippine history from the conquest to the colonial restructuring in the eighteenth century.

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FABIO BAGGIO AND AGNES M. BRAZAL, EDS.

Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia

Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008. 261 pp.

In 2006 the conference “Faith on the Move” was held in Quezon City at the Maryhill School of Theology, gathering ten theologians (Lou Aldrich, Agnes Brazal, Victorino Cueto, Emmanuel S. de Guzman, James Kroeger, Anselm Kyongsuk Min, William LaRousse, Felipe Muncada, Anthony Rogers, and Giovanni Zevola) to speak about migration in Asia. The essays gathered in this anthology are revised versions of the papers presented in that

conference. While the table of contents shows that the essays are organized according to the progression of topics with the following part headings—“The Migrant Context,” “Ethical Challenges,” “Reimagining the Church, Mission, and Eschaton,” and “Pastoral Challenges”—in the body of the text itself the essays flow from one to another in a succession uninterrupted by part divisions. This suggests that the essays are united more cohesively than the divisions in the table of contents may suggest.

Underlying the essays is the question—a worry?—about the catholicity of the Catholic Church, i.e., the concern about whether the Catholic Church in general and the local churches of Asia in particular are able to respond to the needs of migrants and the challenges raised by the widespread migration of labor brought about by the globalized flow of capital.

Each of the responses to this problematic primarily takes one or a combination of several approaches:

(1) Some essays are primarily aimed at seeking or retrieving theological resources from within the tradition—both scriptural and magisterial—reinterpreting these theological concepts to specifically address the experience of displacement and conflict engendered by migration. (Zevola's chapter on “Migration in the Bible and Our Journey of Faith” is paradigmatic of this approach. From the Old Testament, he explores the notion of election—purifying it from its exclusionary implications—in order to ground the believer's identity in the experience of foreignness; from the New Testament, he draws from the Emmaus story a spiritual ethic of compassion for the stranger.)

(2) Others are more expressly grounded in their author's pastoral and missionary experiences and give an elaborated account of the economic and political conditions faced by migrant populations in their host countries. These essays are valuable for several reasons: they give their readers an appreciation of the *specificity* of each migratory experience, and the *complexity* of the problems arising out of migration. Muncada's paper, “Japan and Philippines,” for instance, shows how one cannot deal with issues of migration without at the same time recognizing and addressing deeply seated views of Japanese society about gender relations. These essays are also valuable for their *concrete suggestions* for dealing with and responding to the needs of the migrant faithful. For example, Aldrich, in his paper on the situation of migrants in Taiwan, suggests that religious orders “dedicate [themselves] to creating honest labor-broker organizations” (65–66).

(3) Still others turn to the fruits of other fields of inquiry (sociology, political science, philosophy) in order to aid theological reflection in the area of reconceiving fundamental theological notions—such as *church* (De Guzman), *mission* (LaRousse), and *the Trinity* (Brazal)—as well as broader theoretical notions relevant to the question of migration, such as “cultural rights” (Brazal).

In this task of reconceptualization I find De Guzman’s essay, “The Church as ‘Imagined Communities’ among Differentiated Social Bodies,” to be the strongest and most challenging work. It offers an original and fruitful way of thinking about what catholicity means. Without losing his grounding in the faith tradition, in retrieving the traditional metaphor of church as city and revitalizing it with Young’s political theory of urban life, de Guzman grounds his reflection on what “church” means in the fact that the church is part of the secular world. It is through a genuine encounter with the secular realm that the church can genuinely learn from and deal with differences and enter a deeper communal life with others, without merely falling back on facile notions of multiculturalism and tolerance.

Faith on the Move is a rich anthology. It is relevant to the life of the Catholic Church today as well as to questions of multiculturalism and interreligious dialogue, which may also be of interest to non-Catholic and non-Christian readers. Nevertheless, the book is addressed primarily to Catholics—mostly to receiving/host Catholic communities, at times to clergy and missionaries involved with migrant communities, at times to believers in general or specifically to theologians, and—it might surprise us how rarely they are primarily addressed in this volume—to migrants themselves.

Kroeger’s essay, “Living Faith in a Strange Land,” specifically addresses the migrant with his “Dialogue Decalogue for Migrants” (225–45) and is noteworthy for this reason alone. (It is noteworthy, too, for its solid treatment of interreligious dialogue.) There is a recurring tendency, certainly understandable and to some extent justified, to speak of migrants as victims (see, for instance, Kyongsuk Min, 199). While it is true that migrants are subjected to different kinds of oppression and thus call upon others for compassion, hospitality, and justice, we must nevertheless be mindful of the danger of reducing the subjectivity of migrants to their victimization. The tendency to speak of migrants in the third person rather than as interlocutors betrays this danger. In view of this, the essays that explicitly speak of migrants as agents and subjects (Zevola, 104, 114), as “catalysts” of interreligious

dialogue and rejuvenation of the life of the church (Kroeger, 241–42), of the creativity of the “borderline existence” of migrants (Cueto, 6; Brazal, 73) are worth mentioning.

Faith on the Move is without doubt an important compendium, provocative in its implications. But these implications are not yet fully drawn out in this book because it fails to address itself in a direct and sustained way to the official ecclesia. Based on the synopses of church teachings—which include papal exhortations and resolutions reached by various ecclesiastical bodies—provided by a good number of the essays in this anthology, it is clear that the Catholic Church as an institution is aware of the challenges posed by migration and gives a clear mandate to respond positively to these challenges. However, the essays generally stop short of asking the important question of how the hierarchical practices of the official church contribute to the Catholic Church’s inability to respond to the realities of migration.

If one were to take the challenges posed by this book, one would have to ask questions of the following sort: How Eurocentric does the Catholic Church remain? Do we find within the church hierarchy a replication of the divisions between the global north and south? How ecumenical is the church? How open is it to dialogue with other religions? While it professes and mandates *dialogue* as the dialectical counterpoint to *mission* (Kroeger, LaRousse), how dialogical *is* the church internally? Does it, in practice, reinforce the hierarchical relation between priests and laity? How patriarchal is the church? How will the church be able to learn from the Other when it internalizes in its institutional life the subordination of women and their exclusion from ordained ministry?

While such concerns are not totally ignored in this book, such passages as these are more like intimations of these concerns than a sufficient treatment of such issues:

Difference is a reality that we must live with. It cannot be ignored in the Church. It is fair to say though that the Church is not blind to social group differences, especially factored by culture, class, and gender. Young would insist, however, that respect for differences may not find its visible expression in the social relations of a “community” that tends to homogenize people rather than allow them to be themselves, that is, differentiated with affinity. (De Guzman, 135)

...

As we have mentioned above, among various migrant groups and within each migrant group, there are configurations of power and gradations of domination and oppression. It is thus not enough to approach the migrants' situation only in terms of cultural difference or in projecting the Church as a multicultural community. There are also issues revolving around class and gender. (De Guzman, 143)

Moreover, while structures of domination and oppression are acknowledged, one wonders whether attitudes toward these structures remain ambivalent and whether the force of these problems is truly appreciated. In the passage below, for instance, the author on the one hand acknowledges differences of various sorts as causes of injustice, but on the other hand neutralizes these differences by relegating them to the temporal as opposed to the transcendent perspective. The easy distinction the author makes between “non-alienating” and “alienating differences” should make one pause and ask whether the problems posed by these differences have been sufficiently taken into account:

In the triune God, therefore, all differences, in gender, nationality, ethnicity, class, and religion, so many causes of human division, are sublated into the affirmation of a fundamental equality and a new eschatological identity before God as children of the same Father and brothers and sisters of one another in the Son. This eschatological reality is the deepest identity of human beings. All other identities based on empirical contingencies such as nationality, status, class, gender, culture, and religion are temporal and transient. To be born again as new creatures in the Risen Christ is precisely to assume this eschatological identity. Non-alienating differences based on gender, nationality, and culture are to be accepted and respected as part of God's saving providence. Alienating differences such as oppressive differences in class and power are to be removed. (Kyongsuk Min, 191)

The theme of opening the doors of the church to the stranger is a common motif that runs through the essays in *Faith on the Move*. Without minimizing the depth and perspicacity of the works presented in this volume, it has to be said that the suggestions offered and the hopes expressed in these

works can only bear fruit in practice if the church—as an institution (that is to say, primarily the official hierarchy) and in its institutional practices, and not just in its members' internal and individual attitudes—opens its internal doors and acknowledges the reality of its failures of hospitality toward its own members.

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RAMON GUILLERMO

Translation and Revolution: A Study of Jose Rizal's Guillermo Tell

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Ramon Guillermo's *Translation and Revolution: A Study of Jose Rizal's Guillermo Tell* is a work of solid scholarship. Its significance can hardly be disputed, for it is the first book-length study of Rizal's 1886 translation of Schiller's play, *Wilhelm Tell* (first performed in Weimar in 1804). It is thorough in its analysis as well as thoughtful of the historico-political and linguistic intricacies of Rizal's translation.

Guillermo's objective is to analyze Rizal's translation of the Wilhelm Tell “as a living cultural and historical practice” (217), and to reveal how the original German work evolved into Tagalog through Rizal's particular historical and especially political *Weltanschauung*. To show how this evolved, however, is not an easy task. The work of translation, after all, implies the appropriation and integration of what is initially unfamiliar and alien into a work that becomes intimate and meaningful in the translator's own culture and history. This is often neither straightforward nor unambiguous, insofar as the historical and cultural, and therefore textual, renditions of certain concepts are not always immediately commensurable.

Consider the case of translating “inalienable rights.” In the introductory chapter Guillermo takes up the final chapter of *El Filibusterismo*, in which Padre Florentino explicitly cites a German poet (Schiller) as he comforts a dying and disconsolate Simoun. Florentino's citation, as Guillermo