

COMPLETION REPORT

Migrants' entry into Tokyo's Ecclesial space : The Archdiocese of Tokyo's Vision of a Multicultural Church

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The aim of this project is to explore and nuance the presence of Filipino migrant Catholics in the Church of Japan, particularly on how the migrants are historically received, welcomed, and somehow regulated by the host group, the Japanese Catholics. To be able to achieve this, I had to do a fieldwork in the Archdiocese of Tokyo between July 15-30, 2019. First I have to interview the Archbishop himself, His Excellency, Tarciso Isao Kikuchi, SVD. I had the interview with the archbishop. During the visit, I also had a chance to visit some of the parishes in the Archdiocese where Filipinos have huge and significant presence, namely, the churches in Matsudo , Koiwa and Kasai in Tokyo area. In these visits, I observed and participated in the religious rituals and celebrations and had casual conversations with many of them. In Kasai, I had conversations with its parish priest, Fr. Jess Dano and an FGD with some of the international migrant Catholics in the same parish. The FGD consisted of migrants coming from USA, India, Philippines, and Vietnam. These series of conversations, visits, and FGD took place between July 17-29. Aside from the fieldwork, I had to also review documents and literature related to my research work and during the pandemic, I had also initiated some follow-up conversations with some of the people I met during the July 2019 visit. Unfortunately, the pandemic did not allow me to go to Tokyo for the second visit which was supposedly scheduled around April/May 2020. Despite that, I'm happy to have covered substantial and significant research field work during my July 2019 visit.

Among the many things I have found out, I argue that the guest-identity of (Filipino) migrant Catholics must not be understood as a unilateral action imposed upon by the dominant hosts. Instead, its maintenance is perpetuated by the migrants' elective ethnic clustering. What it means is that in as much as the migrants feel that they have not been welcomed with enthusiasm by the host group, the former is also to blame for their desire to isolate themselves from the host as historically narrated in my published paper. The archbishop is right that the migrant Catholics must stop treating themselves as guests because they are not. The challenge for them is to embrace their missionary vocation and character that as most of these migrants have already been socioculturally embedded in the Japanese society as mothers/fathers to bicultural children, they have to appreciate their role no longer as guests but genuine members of the Church alongside the Japanese Catholic faithful.

Based from this, it is recommended to explore further this shift of identity that is expected from migrant Catholics as they are challenged to embrace a more inclusive role in the Church of Japan. It is important to look as well as to how the Church leadership or even the State must provide venues, opportunities, encounters, and space to ease the so-called paradigm shift that these migrant Catholics must embody as they continue to practice their religious identity within the ecclesial grounds of Japan.

After this research project, I plan to focus on the exploring more specifically the experiences of (Filipino) migrants as parents to bicultural children and how they can help nurture religiosity and spirituality of their bicultural children especially now that the Church of Japan is getting older and the young are getting religiously disinterested.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

July 8-10, 2021, Online Conference, Hosted from Leuven, Belgium, International Academy of Practical Theology with theme: "Coping with Crisis: Hospitality, security, and the search for faithful connections. Title of paper presentation: "The Filipino Catholics in Japan and the Crisis of Agency: Guests or Missionaries"

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

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Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

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