INCULTURATION IN THE CHINESE-FILIPINO CONTEXT

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The reality of inculturation has been a constant theme in the mission of the Church. In the context of Chinese-Filipino culture, the relevance of inculturation finds a special urgency. Can the Chinese-Filipino reality serve as fertile ground for the Gospel to be realized? What is the relationship between the Chinese-Filipino culture and the Gospel?

In relating culture and the Gospel, there have been several attempts to find terms that capture the whole reality of bringing about the relationship between culture and the Gospel. Pope Paul VI mentioned this whole process of bringing the Gospel into particular cultures. He described the present situation as a proper time for intensifying evangelization; he emphasized in Evangelii Nuntiandi (20) that, “the split between the Gospel and culture is without doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures.”

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Today, the term inculturation is widely used to describe the manner of evangelizing cultures. Pope John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio* (52) defines it as “the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.” Particular cultures, times, and peoples respond to the Gospel in many varied ways. The Gospel has also been sowed, nurtured, and reaped by different generations.

During the celebration of the fourth centenary of the arrival of Matteo Ricci in Beijing, which was held at the Gregorian University in Rome on 24 October 2001, Pope John Paul II spoke clearly about the relationship between Church and culture. Using the perspective of Matteo Ricci as a missionary, the pope described the process of inculturation as the “inner harmony between priest and scholar, between Catholic and orientalist, between Italian and Chinese.” In other words, the Church today can serve as the link between the Word of God and cultures. Matteo Ricci was a model, an embodiment of inculturation. The pope further described Matteo Ricci: “historically and culturally he was a pioneer, a precious connecting link between West and East, between European Renaissance culture and Chinese culture, and between the ancient and magnificent Chinese civilization and the world of Europe.”

Inculturation takes place in a mutual exchange of the richness of the Gospel and authentic elements of cultures. It is similar to a mode of human conversation; it is the give-and-take mode of exchange. John Paul II’s *Ecclesia in Oceania* (16) observes: “For the indigenous peoples of Oceania, inculturation meant a new conversation between the world that they had known and the faith to which they had come.”

_Ecclesia in Asia_ speaks of inculturation as dialogue between the Gospel and culture. This dialogue transpires in the work and creative power of the Holy Spirit. It is in this exchange that the dialogue

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of truth becomes part of the intrinsic relationship between Gospel and culture. In the work of inculturation, the Holy Spirit becomes the primary agent of the whole process of the inner transformation of cultural values. *Ecclesia in Asia* (21) notes that, “the same Holy Spirit who leads us into the whole truth makes possible a fruitful dialogue with the cultural and religious values of different peoples.”

**Terms Describing the Faith-Culture Relationship**

There are several terms used to describe the relationship between Gospel and culture. Theologians and the documents of the Church variously speak of inculturation as an “encounter,” “interaction,” “marriage,” “symbiosis,” and “dialogue” between culture and Gospel. Some specific terms related to the inculturation process are now discussed.

**INCARNATION.** Inculturation is understood from the perspective of the mystery of the incarnation. Incarnation refers to the mystery of God taking a human nature. It includes not only external forms, but the reality and totality of human nature—except sin. The mystery of the incarnation focuses not only on physical human features, but making culture and human history part of the divine plan of salvation. The theme of the 1974 Synod of Bishops was centered on evangelization. It promoted the idea that, just as the Son of God was incarnated into the world, the Gospel should likewise be incarnated into human cultures.

**IMPLANTATION.** The Synod of 1974 amplified the process of implanting the faith within various peoples and cultures. The Second Vatican Council clarified that the relationship between culture and the Gospel should not undergo *transplantatio ecclesiae* (the transplantation of the Church), but the process should be *plantatio ecclesiae*, which specifically refers to the implantation of the Church within particular cultures or groups of peoples. Implantation of the Gospel does not refer to the process of planting Western Churches in foreign lands, but acknowledging ways of life present among cultures. It also does
not emphasize recruiting new members into the Church; the focus is establishing new communities, and at the same time providing awareness of the signs of salvation and the presence of God's grace in the various elements already present in the existing culture.

**INDIGENIZATION.** The term "indigenization" gained popularity during the Synod of 1974. It also encouraged the further growth of the native clergy as an important fruit of the establishment of the Church in particular cultures. Its significance is manifested in the importance of cultural identity in the Church. The local Church forms and trains its own clergy. In this process, the local Church moves toward equality with foreign missionaries. When the Church is in the process of indigenization, it experiences the intimate bonding between faith and the languages, art, values, and other expressions of cultural life. There are some risks with regard to this process: *cultural romanticism* (dreaming of its glorious past) and *culturalism* (considering indigenous culture as the determining norm of the process).²

**ADAPTATION.** In the 1960s, "adaptation" was a widely used missiological term. The Second Vatican Council acknowledges the customs, ways of life, and social order in various cultures. In every socio-political area, theological reflection is encouraged. The Council asserted: "Faith may seek for understanding with due regard for the philosophy and wisdom of these peoples" (*Ad Gentes* 22). The major reference and consideration in adaptation is the present cultural situation, calling for *aggiornamento*, renewal and updating. The Gospel has to be adapted to the various cultural situations. The focus here is the missionary and the message. The external aspects of the missionary are considered so as to make him more accepted; adjustments to language, habits, and symbols on the part of the missionary are major factors.

**ACCOMMODATION.** The term "accommodation" was popularized by alluding to the metaphor of a person undergoing constant adjust-

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ments to the environment and particular cultural milieus. The term focuses on the elements of culture which may be integrated into Christianity through the rituals, ceremonies, and celebrations of the people. In accommodation, the minister of the Church adjusts, accommodates, and makes some necessary modifications for the sake of the people. In the liturgy, for instance, the celebrant actively modifies the celebration to the customs of the people in order to bring about a better disposition among the receivers and make it more meaningful for the assembly.

**CONTEXTUALIZATION.** This term is often used in Protestant theologies. It describes the effort to draw the relationship between text and context. It affirms that biblical passages can be contextualized in particular human situations. The term is widely applied to the so-called mission territories. It was widely used to promote contextualized theologies, emphasizing the socio-economic aspects of liberation. Often linked with the Third World, contextualization offers a biblical basis for cultural contexts: religio-cultural, socio-political, and economic aspects.

**ACCULTURATION.** Before Vatican II, "acculturation" was used to refer to the encounter between Gospel and cultures. It was widely used as a scientific theory of such an encounter in cultural anthropology. In some missionary discourses, the term acculturation suggested aggressiveness rather than the need for dialogue and mutual fusion.\(^3\)

**Phases of Inculturation**

The process of inculturation in the Chinese-Filipino context took place in different forms and stages. The recorded history of the advent of the Chinese in the Philippines provides us today with a pattern of encounter between ecclesial faith and Chinese-Filipino culture. The Church understands that the mission of evangelization has

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\(^3\)Ibid., 43.
to be accomplished without detriment to any specific culture. The Gospel knows no boundaries. In the Philippines, the evangelization among the Chinese-Filipinos has unfolded and continues to develop in a unique manner with special experiences.

**Phase One:**
**Migration and Colonization**

The first phase of inculturation consisted of the coming of the Christian faith to the Philippines. Concomitant with the arrival of the Spaniards in the Philippines, waves and waves of Chinese traders frequented the Philippines. Many Chinese migrated to do trade in the archipelago. The Chinese were called *Sangleys (chang lai)* which means “frequent coming.” The arrival of the Spaniards on Oriental shores was not a new encounter; neither was it the first occasion for the Chinese to know about the people from the West. It is said that, from the accounts of the Arabs, a certain Chau Ju-kua, a member of the imperial family of the Sung Dynasty (960-1278 C.E.) came in close contact with the merchants of India, Persia, Syria, and Arabia, who traded with the Chinese. He took this opportunity to gather some data regarding the countries and the peoples from the West.\(^4\) The Chinese came under Spanish rule for about three centuries and had to accept the fact that the modes of enterprise were no longer similar to earlier times when the colonizers were still not here. Some historians say that the other purpose of the coming of the Spaniards to the Philippines was also to extend the empire of Spain. They sought to extend the influence of the Hispanic civilization around the world. Richard Deats concludes:

> Her pride in a glorious past and her hope for an even greater future moved Spanish sovereigns to send explorers to the uttermost reaches of the world. The Philippines provided Spain with the opportunity of gaining a significant colony just off the coast of the

mainland of Asia that would add appreciably to her already vast holdings elsewhere.\textsuperscript{5}

This Spanish motive revealed the tensions to the on-going Chinese trade and industry in the country, which were already present centuries ago. In spite of this, historians say that trade had to remain a Chinese way of expanding and extending the sovereignty of the Dynasties during those times. As they competed in pursuing their own interests, conflicts arose, problems multiplied, and revolts transpired both in government and among the people. The local Church had a significant role to play; she was also committed to spreading the Gospel throughout the whole country.

\textit{Impressions and Learning about Culture}

The first phase of inculturation includes the various impressions about a people and learning about the values present in the culture. Impressions may be positive or negative. Part of the encounter with the faith and the Chinese culture in the Philippines is the impressions the Spaniards had of the Chinese. A great deal of historical study is needed here. However, culture is not history, but it is history that reflects or describes culture. Inculturation here does not only mean the insertion of the Gospel into a particular culture, but includes the reactions concerning the meeting of the faith and culture—in this case, the Chinese culture.

Continuous migration to the Philippines occurred, even as the Chinese government in the Mainland discouraged it by issuing edicts during those times. To the Chinese, it was considered unfilial and undesirable to leave China, but the cause to stay in one's own country was not as strong as the desire to migrate for the purpose of trade and survival. It was only through the coming of the Spaniards that the trading voyages of the Chinese in the Philippines increased steadily and spread all throughout the country.\textsuperscript{6} The galleon trade was said to

be one reason for continuous Chinese migration. In fact, the Chinese became numerous and they needed a separate quarter in Manila called the Parian.⁷

In the course of the encounter between cultures, it is inevitable that impressions about culture emerge. The Spanish colonizers were observant of the emotionally charged Chinese beliefs and attitudes, their motivations, their chief aspirations, and mentalities. Through such impressions, culture change begins. Louis Luzbetak describes culture change as the process by which new ideas regarding social behavior are generated and interpreted.⁸

FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS. The Spaniards found the Chinese residents in the country industrious, tractable, and peaceful. They saw that the Chinese could be beneficial in the economic life of the country. They were indispensable as laborers and artisans in meeting the


⁷The Parian is now Manila’s Chinatown. It was the nerve center of trade and business during the Spanish Period. Euphronio Alip (Ten Centuries of Philippine-Chinese Relations [Manila: Alip & Sons, Inc., 1959]) records the report of Bishop Domingo de Salazar to King Philip II on 24 Jun 1590. He said: “This Parian has so adorned the city that I do not hesitate to affirm to your Majesty that no other known city in España or in these regions possesses anything so well worth seeing as this; for in it can be found the whole trade of China with all kinds of goods and curious things which come from that country. These articles have already begun to be manufactured here, as quickly and with better finish than in China.... In this Parian are to be found workmen of all trades and handicrafts of a nation, and many of them in each occupation. They make much prettier articles than are made in España, and sometimes so cheap that I am ashamed to mention it.” John Leddy Phelan (in The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700 [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959] 11) also says that the Parian meant market place in Chinese and it was the nerve center of the capital’s commercial life.

needs of the country, since the products of the archipelago were often insufficient for the people. However, the Spanish merchant class in due time thought of utilizing them for their own commercial purposes as well as for their own economic enterprises. They hoped that they could benefit from their merchandise to compensate for what Spain and other Latin American countries could not provide.⁹

**UNFAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS.** The Spanish governor, Labezares—who considered it his principal task to promote peaceful and amicable relations with an empire whose immigrants affected much of the Spanish power in Asia—said that the Chinese were mean, impudent, importunate, and deceitful.¹⁰ As a result of these impressions, a revolt began in 1603; the Chinese took the offensive. The clergy suspected that a plan to attack the city was underway and that three Chinese mandarins who came to Manila were behind it. Mutual hate and suspicion arose and consequently both prepared for hostilities. Several houses were burned in Manila, and about 23,000 Chinese were killed in this Spanish-Filipino revolt.¹¹ In short, in the process of inculturation the clash of interests often becomes a realistic part of a meaningful encounter between Church and culture.

**Appreciating and Learning the Chinese Language**

The presence of the Chinese in the Philippines prompted the missionaries to think and desire to do mission in China. The Spanish missionaries intended to do mission in the islands; however, they came to think about entering the Mainland to start new religious missions there, observing the countless Chinese arriving on Philippine shores. The Philippines was thought to be a fertile place of preparation for a greater missionary thrust in the Mainland. The initial

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⁹Alip, 11.


¹¹Felix, 33.
step of inculturation would include possible aspects of the culture that could benefit the Church as well as the culture of a particular people.

The Augustinians were said to be the pioneers in the work of evangelization in the Philippines under the leadership of Urdaneta, Rada, and Herrera. They desired to enter China, but they were waiting for the orders to come from Philip II. China remained a vast empire, immense, and a mystery for the missionaries. The Augustinians also desired to break the Chinese resistance toward the foreigners attempting to penetrate the Mainland. Augustinian Diego de Herrera was commissioned to establish a special embassy for that purpose. However, the pursuit failed, since he took much of his time preparing an enormous mission of Augustinians for the Philippines.

The Franciscans likewise desired to enter China after their arrival in the Philippines in 1578. They pressed Governor Don Francisco de Sande to let them leave the Philippines to begin their mission of spreading the Gospel in China. They failed since there was no way to convince the governor, who in turn told them that they were missionaries for the Philippines and not for China. They decided to leave the Philippines secretly; upon reaching the Chinese shores, they were arrested and sent to prison.\(^\text{12}\)

In 1587, the Holy Rosary Province of the Dominicans, together with Bishop Domingo Salazar, proposed an apostolic project which was to evangelize the Chinese in Manila. The reason for this project was to implant the Christian faith in the Chinese Empire. The evangelization of the Chinese in the country was seen as a tremendous opportunity to learn the Chinese language as well as the possibility of entering and spreading the Gospel in the Mainland through Chinese converts. Binondo was purchased by Don Luis Perez Dasmariñas. The land was donated to the Chinese converts for the purpose of protecting them from the upheavals against the faith; it was established as the center for missionary activity.\(^\text{13}\) It was here then that the

\(^{12}\text{Ibid., 349-54.}\)
value of the Chinese language was recognized for the purposes of evangelization in the Mainland.

**Phase Two:**

**Establishment of Local Church and Chinese Communities**

The second phase of inculturation among the Chinese-Filipinos consisted of the establishment of the local Chinese-Filipino apostolate with baptisms and conversions. With the apostolic project of the Dominicans, which was headed by Bishop Domingo Salazar, the Holy Rosary Church in Binondo was dedicated for evangelization among the Chinese in the Philippines.

**Baptisms.** Following the decree issued in 1755 for the expulsion of the non-Christian Chinese in the Philippines, some 515 Christian Chinese were baptized to evade the edict, and a thousand more pretended to be studying the Christian doctrine.\(^{14}\) The Chinese however, could remain as long as they confined themselves to agriculture.\(^{15}\) The Spaniards testified to the lightness with which the Chinese espoused the Christian Faith. Antonio de Morga commented that they became Christians not because of a desire for salvation, but because of the temporal conveniences that they would have here. The considerations of religion and morals played an important role in the Spanish attitude toward the Chinese. On the one hand, Christianity favored a conciliatory and liberal policy toward the Chinese, and on the other hand, it gave the opportunity for their conversion to Christianity.\(^{16}\) When inculturation is being spoken of here, one must

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\(^{14}\) Ibid., 35.

\(^{15}\) Purcell, 507-8.

remember that the insertion of the Gospel in past history may not have been pleasant all the time. Coercion of the Chinese sometimes became a way of integration into the Church.

HOSPITALS, PARISHES AND SCHOOLS. After the political changes that transpired in China in 1949, Chinese missionaries and seminarians headed toward the Philippines. These missionaries reestablished their missions and oriented their apostolates to the Chinese in different parts of the country. Inasmuch as the primary motive of the Chinese missionaries was the spread of Christianity in China, these missionaries did not leave their dreams behind, but sought every opportunity to continue the spread of the Gospel to the rapidly growing Chinese community in the country. The earnestness of the missionaries for evangelization brought forth the establishment of parishes, schools, hospitals and other institutions. These institutions existing today all over the Philippines are fruits of the labor of both the Chinese missionaries and the local Chinese-Filipinos.

The second phase of inculturation characterizes the Church as having sufficient ability to understand the various elements of culture and the ability to express the Christian message on various levels of the culture. The social, economic, political, and cultural aspects find their sufficient transformation through the constant interaction with the Gospel. The effects of the process of evangelization now become evident. This is reflected also in the transformation of particular cultural values and in the incorporation of Christian values into the cultural lifestyle. The acceptance of the faith as part of culture evidently shows the transforming power of the Gospel.

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PHASE THREE: SHAPING THE CHINESE-FILIPINO MENTALITY

There are three levels of culture, namely: (a) material forms (consists of the external and phenomenal parts of culture like dress, wood, decorations, dogs, cars, houses, etc.); (b) cultural forms (includes the systems which convey meaning like weddings, communication systems, rules of life, law, ordinances, etc.); and (c) psychological forms, considered the deepest level of culture (consists of the basic psychology of a culture: worldviews, attitudes, ways of reacting, motivations, beliefs, configurations, lifestyles, etc.); these become the focus of evangelization. Inculturation becomes a process of shaping mentalities in the light of the Gospel. It is a challenging aspect of mission, since it deals with the inner logic, systems and deepest charged attitudes of the Chinese-Filipinos.

Environmental Harmony: Feng shui as the Art of Placement

Shaping worldviews of the Chinese-Filipinos includes appreciating their way of looking at reality. Inculturation values how a particular people perceives and reacts to the forces of nature. Part of culture is shown in how they live and create their systems of thought about the world in which they live.

In the case of Chinese-Filipinos, many continue to believe in feng shui. They seek harmony with nature as part of family prosperity. Feng shui\textsuperscript{18} or geomancy is an undoubted indicator of the Chinese-Filipino search for harmony. The location of many business establishments, hotels, houses, and graves is determined through feng shui. In the past, this practice was a method dismissed as superstitious. Chinese-Filipinos were labeled as pagans and animists worshipping

\textsuperscript{18}The Chinese independently used the yin-yang principle and the five elements to explain the movements of nature. The yin and yang represent two opposite and complementary extremes of nature. The balance of the yin and yang is the basis of cosmic harmony.
the wrong God. Today, however, feng shui becomes a common means by which many Filipinos determine the balance of the earth’s forces.

Not all Chinese-Filipinos are rich and influential in society. However, to seek fortune, peace, harmony with nature, and unity with the spirits may be common to all. The Chinese-Filipinos desire prosperity in life. Feng shui is one of their means of addressing the difficulties and challenges posed by economic poverty. The art of placement is believed to have some effects on good living.

**Social Harmony**

Chinese-Filipinos seek social harmony. They build relationships on the social, industrial, religious, political, and economic levels. The changing situations in Philippine society today have provided new levels and trends toward integration. One of the most striking points that has to be taken into consideration is the mentality of younger and older generations; new orientations and problems emerge due to irresistible influences on present Philippine society. Various levels of collaboration among Chinese-Filipinos in society will also largely depend on socially charged emotional attachments.

**LOYALTY AND SYMPATHY.** The loyalty and sympathy of Chinese-Filipinos indicate their desire to build harmonious social relationships. Many Chinese-Filipinos, like any citizen of any country, are culturally attached to places and people; this creates diverse levels of loyalty and sympathy. Charles McCarthy classified three groups of Chinese-Filipinos as far as loyalties are concerned. There are: (a) the China-centered, (b) the local Chinese community-centered, and (c) those committed to the land of domicile, the Philippines.  

Most Chinese-Filipinos in the Philippines are Philippine-centered in lifestyle. They were born here and the kind of culture they adopt is Filipino. The kind of inculturation that has to take place is the

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promotion of the value of a sense of mission. Can the Chinese-Filipino think of evangelization in China using their own resources here? Also, the local Chinese community-centered Chinese-Filipinos are committed to the Philippines and care much for domestic affairs. They exhibit loyalty and sympathy to their own family and the Chinese community in the Philippines.

The China-centered Chinese-Filipinos always look back to the golden days of China. They dream of going back to the Mainland. However, the intensity of this desire has been affected and diminished by the current Philippine environment. This group of Chinese-Filipinos consists of those who belong to the older generation, which comprises a small portion of the whole community in the Philippines.

The preservation of one's cultural heritage is a call to everyone. Although most of the Chinese-Filipinos are Philippine-born Chinese, inculturation would include the preservation of cultural richness shown in the various practices, beliefs, and lifestyles. The Church appreciates cultures and acknowledges what is good in cultures.

All categories of Chinese-Filipinos desire to uphold the Chinese heritage in spite of the loyalties they manifest. The varying responses elicited from this challenge are due to the current situation of Philippine society. Due to the changes in environment, many of the China-centered Chinese-Filipinos have lost their desire to preserve Chinese traditions in their daily life. Teresita Ang See writes: "No matter how hard they tried to resist the changes brought about by their environment, their efforts have been futile and they have learned that integration is a natural sociological phenomenon which nobody can prevent." However, integration does not mean extinction. It has always been the impression of the older generation Chinese-Filipinos that when integration is being discussed, it means losing the Chinese identity. Ang See notes that

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...whenever the topic of the integration of the Chinese into Philippine society is discussed the outstanding concern of the Chinese almost always is a feeling that being integrated with the Filipino community will mean that they are to be absorbed, that they will have to be dispossessed. In short, they will lose their traditional Chinese culture and the values they hold dear.\textsuperscript{21}

The fear of losing one's cultural heritage is not only a reality facing the China-centered Chinese-Filipinos, but some of the other older generation Chinese-Filipinos as well. Yet, loyalty to one's cultural traditions does not appear in the hearts and minds of most Chinese-Filipinos.\textsuperscript{22} The older generation Chinese-Filipinos are apprehensive about the present younger generation. They desire that the younger generation look back at history. It is a fact that the younger generation does not have full knowledge about China and the richness of its cultural heritage. They care only for the Philippines and their own families.

**GENERATION GAPS.** The gap between the older and the younger generations of Chinese-Filipinos is also another major factor. The loyalties of the older and younger generations are diverse, yet indicative of their thirst for the sense of "belonging." The entire Chinese-Filipino community cannot really be reduced to one cohesive group. The tendency of the older generation toward ethnocentrism and chauvinism results in their hard labor to perpetuate "Chineseness," which the younger generation does not strive to uphold. The Chinese saying "Once a Chinese, always a Chinese" has been the ruling passion for most of the older generation.\textsuperscript{23} They believe that fidelity to Chinese traditions and heritage is a way toward social harmony. In tradi-


\textsuperscript{23}Ang See, "The Ethnic Chinese as Filipinos," 168.
tional China, filial piety was not the only virtue placed on the pedestal; loyalty, patriotism, industry, honesty, charity, justice, and humility were also virtues to be cultivated and norms to be followed in human affairs so as to achieve harmony in society.\(^{24}\)

The strong attitude toward ethnocentrism among the older generation can acquire meaning and enrichment through the Gospel. The Church advocates solidarity, while at the same time respecting the human desire to cling to one’s roots. The Second Vatican Council noted in *Gaudium et Spes* (60): “We must do everything possible to make all persons aware of their right to culture and their duty to develop themselves culturally and to help their fellows. Sometimes conditions of life and work are such as to stifle man’s cultural efforts and destroy this urge for culture.”

The local Church is a sign of hope for the older generation and all those who work for the preservation of their cultural heritage. There are some positive efforts, but accomplishing the Church’s mission to foster the preservation of the richness of one’s cultural heritage is a difficult task—especially when we speak of the older generation of Chinese-Filipinos. The building of one’s cultural identity and the assertion of the traditional Chinese lifestyle according to the mentality of the older generation will be difficult for younger people to accept. However, the call of the Second Vatican Council to make people aware of their right to culture includes the re-evaluation and reconsideration of the current situation of the Chinese-Filipino community.

**STRONG “FEELINGS OF SHAME.”** Many Chinese-Filipinos have strong “feelings of shame.” For them, when shame is experienced, one loses harmony within the self, the family, and in the society. It is their task not to “lose face” (*shih lien*) before the society or community. These “feelings of shame” develop because of the kind of family structure they have in relation to society. According to the results of studies, in a society in which the child is trained either by a num-

ber of socializing agents, as in an extended family, or in which train-
ers discipline the child by saying that he will be punished by other social agents, “shame-oriented” personality types are produced. The ideal family for the Chinese is an extended one. The Chinese-Filipino family, having a degree of the ideal Chinese family orientation within a Filipino context, has acquired strong “feelings of shame.”

The “feelings of shame” arise because the individual is afraid of a withdrawal of love by others, of being suddenly out of key with his environment, of not meeting the trust that he has in himself. The strong sense of authority and hierarchical orientation in the family contribute to the development of strong feelings of shame. The person is motivated to avoid shame and anger from others as much as possible. There is much anxiety about the punishment for a wrong act done by the individual. There is a punishment which carries with it the implications of social ostracism and possible destruction.

FEAR AND DISTRUST IN SOCIETY. Many Chinese-Filipino families live in fear today. The spate of kidnappings has traumatized the Chinese-Filipino family and has forced them to keep themselves secluded for security reasons. Exposure to the larger community remains fluid. It is the natural reaction of every Chinese-Filipino family to defend and protect itself from heinous crimes. Because of this difficult situation, they sometimes seek protection from foreign countries. Many think of Mainland China and Taiwan to ensure their safety. They pin their hopes on these countries for social, economic and political pressure. However, the Chinese-Filipinos find themselves helplessly alone in their predicament. Taiwan and Mainland China cannot provide support and protection for them. The Chinese-Filipinos have to

26Ibid., 2.
27Ibid.
stand on their own and strive cohesively to work for unity. They have to face and fight kidnappings, robberies, and murder, which continuously threaten the community. Relying on the government's programs to eliminate these social problems sometimes disappoints them. Even with all the means to eliminate these fears and seek security in established communities, Chinese-Filipinos often place their trust and hope in the local Church for a peaceful Philippine society.

The local Church has to be a sign of hope and protection for the Chinese-Filipino. The struggle of the family to protect itself from kidnappings, robberies, and other social crimes is an indication of its search for peace, tranquility, and harmony in the Philippines. The Chinese-Filipino family seeks protection from society. As Pope John Paul II has written in Familiaris Consortio (45): “The family and society have complementary functions in defending and fostering the good of each and every human being.”

**Phase Four:**
**A New Way of Being Chinese-Filipino Community**

As the new millennium unfolds there are numerous opportunities for Chinese-Filipinos to become involved in the wider society.

**Migration: Becoming a Welcoming Community**

Migration is a continuous phenomenon in the Philippines today. New waves of the Chinese influx are on the rise. Local Chinese-Filipinos are alarmed with Mainland Chinese immigrants in the Philippines today. In a recent consultation of the Chinese-Filipino apostolate, local Chinese-Filipinos expressed alarm over the coming of Mainland Chinese who have their business here and at the same time integrate themselves into the fabric of Philippine society through intermarriage with Filipinas. In business, they sell cheaper goods that are imported from China; this has affected the sales of local Chinese businesses. The recent arrivals do not have religion; they manifest rough attitudes, impolite words, and low educational achievements. Some have a Buddhist orientation. In other words, in many cases
they appear less oriented to the Philippine way of life. What is appreciated in them is that they have a very strong will to survive here and to prosper in business.

Peaceful co-existence and harmony are only achieved when solidarity and respect for the rights of the human person are upheld. Migration is a right of every person and family. The search for work, a decent living, and the constant search for better conditions are the rights of each individual. John XXIII has emphasized that the family has the right to migrate to safeguard and develop family life through the material goods it acquires (cf. Mater et Magistra 45). John Paul II has affirmed this statement saying that, “man has the right to leave his native land for various motives—and also the right to return—in order to seek better conditions of life in another country” (Laborem Exercens 23).

Apostolic work on behalf of migrants is a characteristic of a welcoming Church. John Paul II has noted the following:

...emigration is a massive phenomenon of our time, a permanent phenomenon, which is even assuming new forms, and which concerns all continents, and nearly all countries. It raises serious human and spiritual problems. The apostolate of migrants is not just the work of these detached missionaries: it is the work of the whole local church, priests, religious, and laity; it is the whole local church which must take migrants into account, and be ready for welcome and for mutual exchanges.29

The mass migration of waves of Chinese in the past has become a different phenomenon today; the Philippine local Church has the opportunity to experience a deeper understanding of being a receiving and welcoming Church because of the continuous influx of other migrating people into our country. In addition, the phenomenon of the increasing Filipino migration to other countries can facilitate Filipinos’ understanding of people leaving their homelands; it can also

be an occasion to develop as a welcoming Church. The act of receiving and welcoming makes the local Church experience the universality of the Church. It makes the local Church aware of the interdependence of nations based on solidarity and equality. The movement of people facilitates a growing consciousness that the world belongs to everyone and the right to migrate belongs to all.\textsuperscript{30}

**Revaluing Family Orientations**

Chinese-Filipinos are family oriented people. They believe that peace and harmony should begin in the family. The Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC) has asserted that harmony in the family leads to harmony in society. The FABC has stated:

The disharmony in our society often has its roots in the disharmony in the home. When there is harmony in every home, the nation will be peaceful. In a family centered on God and suffused with love, the primacy of relationships over things, as well as the correct relationship with things, will be fostered.\textsuperscript{31}

The Chinese-Filipino family is the seat of personal development, the transmission of values and life. The challenge is to develop harmony in the family in spite of the challenges of the present day. John Paul II observes the situation of the family today by saying that “the family in the modern world, as much as and perhaps more than any other institution, has been beset by the many profound and rapid changes that have affected society and culture” (*Familiaris Consortio* 3). This is true especially in the Chinese family system.

The traditional Chinese-Filipino family was strictly patrilineal, but a change is manifested in a shift from this traditional type of


\textsuperscript{31}FABC Theological Advisory Commission, “Asian Perspectives on Harmony,” in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, 297.
family to the bilateral, where the affection and the influence of the mother's and father's relatives are equal. Though many changes beset the Chinese-Filipino family today, it is still considered as the basic unit of community and society. The shift of orientation demands a harmonious transition. There are tensions arising between the tradition-oriented Chinese-Filipinos and those who now adopt the bilateral type of family orientation.

The concept of filial piety manifested in ancestor veneration should be understood in the context of the communion of the living and the dead. It is thought that the dead can benefit the living with next-worldly wisdom, whereas the living can benefit the dead through prayers, sacrifices, and commemorations. As there is a synchronistic relationship between humans and natural processes, there is also a synchronistic connection between the living and the dead.32

The custom of the veneration of ancestors demands rethinking and re-evaluation; the purpose of this is to effectively carry out the local Church's mission of evangelization. Maria Aymes notes: "The cult of the dead is a good example of a practice found in non-Christian cultures which could easily be purified and inculturated by sound Christian doctrine."33 Yet, it has to be borne in mind that the veneration of ancestors is a manifestation of the human desire to be in communion with the world beyond. David Jordan affirms that the departed ancestors are thought of as being part of the life of every individual on earth. The veneration of these beings is always tied up with the notion of memorializing the dead and providing for their continued comfort after death.34 This calls for an understanding of

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the Filipino and Chinese worldviews of the soul and spirit in the light of the Christian understanding of death.

Rituals and festivals are inseparable. The Chinese-Filipino festivals and rituals are woven into the very fabric of Chinese-Filipino culture. They play important roles in the life of the individual, the family, and community. Chinese-Filipinos have preserved and safeguarded traditional Chinese rituals and festivals passed on from one generation to another. Today, the traditional Chinese rituals have been threatened by various challenges that favor their extinction or oblivion. A new interest by the local Church to ascertain the value of rituals and festivals will open the door toward a new understanding of the Church’s relationship between rituals as part of the mentality of a people and the Christian faith. Giving importance to rituals will help the local Church carry out its mission of evangelization in a specific Chinese-Filipino milieu.

The complex web of attitudes among Chinese-Filipinos that is influenced by different cultures and subcultures in the Philippines calls for the promotion of cultural unity. Rituals and festivals can serve as means to respond to this desire to affirm cultural oneness. They become the binding force among Chinese-Filipinos and highlight their distinct cultural heritage. As Clifford Geertz has noted, ritual is defined as consecrated behavior.\textsuperscript{35} It is a body of actions that are specifically associated with a religious performance. Rituals and festivals are important to determine a culture mentality. As in the case of the Chinese-Filipinos, there are many rituals that have become less popular, while others still retain their cultural significance. Ancestor veneration, funeral rites, wedding ceremonies, New Year’s Day, the Moon Cake Festival, etc., all continue to be important to the Chinese-Filipinos.

\textsuperscript{35}Clifford Geertz, \textit{The Interpretation of Cultures} (London: Fontana Press, 1993) 112.
Models of Work and Success

Many of the Chinese-Filipinos belong to the economic and commercial sector of Philippine society. They are most influential in the area of business and trade. They dominate a large portion of commerce and industry.  

Chinese-Filipinos value work. One reason for this is that they value the family. To work is not only to make one successful in his profession, but it is every individual’s contribution for the welfare of the family. It is a sign of disrespect to the family when one family member does not work. Thus, work is oriented toward harmony and solidarity in the family. It is a way to build stronger communion and relationships among family members.

Pope John Paul II asserts that working is participating in the creative nature of God who created humanity “in his own image.” God wished humanity to live in harmony and peace, and laid the foundations for this in the very nature of the human being created “in his image.”

Work is a way of searching for harmony. The Chinese-Filipino works to eliminate poverty and misery, which cause disharmony in the family and society. In the past, one of the reasons why the Chinese migrated to the Philippines was to escape the poverty and injustice that were the results of the feudal system of government in Mainland China. They came to the Philippines with a strong will to survive and a determination to fulfill their dreams of acquiring material wealth. One of their primary purposes was to improve their economic status. However, the pursuit of economic progress some-

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times leads one into economic exploitation and dehumanizing situations. The rapid growth of urbanization has resulted in the transfer of rural poverty to the urban setting.40

In 1995, the Sixth Plenary Assembly of the FABC in Manila addressed these pressing problems that have jeopardized and destroyed life instead of promoting it; the FABC stated:

We turned our attention to whatever threatens, weakens, diminishes and destroys the life of individuals, groups or peoples; whatever devalues human beings, conceived, born, infant, old; whatever socio-cultural, religious, political, economic, or environmental factor that threatens or destroys life in our countries. We identified some of these forces of death at work in Asia.41

**Bridging Generation Gaps**

The task of promoting harmony among various groups in the Chinese-Filipino community is an area where the Church can make an important contribution.

**OLDER GENERATION.** The younger Chinese-Filipinos respect the older generation. Although there are problems emerging from the generation gap between the younger and older generations, the older generation is there to perpetuate cultural traditions, both at the family and community levels. Filial piety, for instance, is given emphasis more than any of the other virtues; it gives an identity to the older generation within Philippine society. To be unfilial to parents and ancestors is to lose one's identity as a Chinese-Filipino. The older

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41Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, "Christian Discipleship in Asia Today: Service to Life" [Final Statement of the Sixth Plenary Assembly], in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, 3.
generation serves as a vital force toward the continuance of the cultural identity of the Chinese-Filipinos. The older generation of Chinese-Filipinos is a symbol of tradition and culture. They serve as examples of the Chinese culture mentality to the younger generation. They are bridges of the traditional Chinese culture of the past to the present.

**YOUNGER GENERATION.** The younger generation of Chinese-Filipinos exercises its youthfulness through creativity. They are energetic and vigorous in exploring the world through the use of science and technology. However, they are challenged to utilize their creativity for the service of the Church and the community. The younger generation of Chinese-Filipinos seeks guidance from the community on their own journey toward spiritual growth. In describing them, Ignatius Tsai writes:

...pressed by the struggle for survival, conditioned by the materialistic world, influenced by the traditional culture, and attracted by the collective convenience, they look up to the community for everything in their life and would rarely think of acting differently from the general pattern of behavior. Hence, they become too involved in pursuing the prosperity of this earth, leaving little time or energy for the higher and better prosperity in spiritual life.\(^{42}\)

**Enhancing Mission Orientation**

The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II) underlined the urgency of mission animation and orientation within the Chinese-Filipino context as a new contribution to the Chinese-Filipino apostolate in the Philippines. PCP-II had bishops, priests, and laity as participants and emphasized that the Philippines itself can be described as:

...a vast field of mission to the Filipino-Chinese Apostolate. Less than 20% of the Chinese in the Philippines have had some effective

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evangelization. The progress made in evangelizing through the educational and pastoral work of the Filipino-Chinese apostolate is a great encouragement. We need to intensify this. But we must look beyond our shores and take note of the missionary opportunities opened by the contacts that our Filipino-Chinese brothers and sisters have with East Asian Chinese communities, including the People’s Republic of China whose openness to religion remains fluid. We need to provide encouragement, support, and personnel to this important mission.\footnote{\textit{Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines} (Pasay City, Philippines: St. Paul Publications, 1992) 43.}

The establishment of the Lorenzo Ruiz Mission Society is an advancement on this front. It is intended to form priests with authentic missionary formation and orientation toward evangelization among Chinese-Filipinos as well as the Chinese beyond the shores of the Philippines. It is a response to the challenge of forming a clergy that is deeply rooted within the Chinese-Filipino culture and adapted to this mentality.\footnote{Paul Lu, “Lorenzo Ruiz Mission Society,” in \textit{Asia-Church in Mission}, ed. James H. Kroeger (Manila: Claretian Publications, 1999) 47-51.}

The response to the call for a separate Chinese-Filipino apostolate is further inspired by the words of John Paul II to the Chinese during his visit to Manila in 1981. The Pontiff said that “…if you live inspired by the Christian faith and strengthened by the specifically Chinese moral traditions, you will in a profound way be truly Christian and truly Chinese, and contribute to the richness of the whole Church.”\footnote{John Paul II, “Meeting with the Representatives of Chinese Christian Communities,” in \textit{John Paul II in the Philippines: Addresses and Homilies}, ed. Pedro S. de Achútegui (Manila: Cardinal Bea Institute, 1981) 75-76.}

The Lorenzo Ruiz Mission Society contributes to the building of a Chinese-Filipino community of authentic faith and service. This
advancement is a concrete response to the call for an authentic and inculturated local Church manifested in creative priestly formation. John Paul II and the Asian Bishops set forth this reminder:

All are to have appropriate formation and training, which should be Christ-centered and faithful to their founding charism, with emphasis on personal sanctity and witness; their spirituality and lifestyle should be sensitive to the religious heritage of the people among whom they live and whom they serve.⁴⁶

The establishment of this separate apostolate for the pastoral care of Chinese-Filipinos is also a response to the challenge of the FABC for a "new way of being Church" in the Asian context. This new paradigm of being Church in Asia draws its inspiration from the call of being a participatory Church involving the clergy, religious, and the laity.

The Chinese-Filipino community is prophetic as it supports the formation of Chinese-Filipino priests and religious and as it generously promotes vocations for this apostolate. It is clear that the duty of promoting vocations belongs to the whole Christian community. An international congress on vocations reminded the Christian community that vocations to the ordained ministries are a gift for the Church, for each diocese and parish, for each family and community.⁴⁷ Indeed, the vocation to the ministerial priesthood is both a gift and a response.

A new interest for mission is also manifested through the development of an inculturated liturgy. Chinese Masses are celebrated in some parts of the country and provide an atmosphere of Chinese culture. Chinese songs with a Filipino melody and the translation of common Eucharistic songs are a recent contribution of the Jesuits.⁴⁸

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Such initiatives contribute to the revitalization and revaluing of the Chinese culture in the Third Millennium; they serve as a form of inculturation, which, in turn, is a contribution of the local Church to the Universal Church.

The Chinese-Filipino rituals cannot be divorced from daily life, but the Church needs to purify them and enhance their Christian meaning. Rituals should find their value in relation to the liturgy. Such an integration will make the liturgy and rituals transformed and inculturated by Gospel perspectives. John Paul II says that spiritual aids like rituals particular to the Chinese-Filipinos and the celebration of the liturgy are valuable means toward intimate union with Christ in the context of the Church. The pope in *Christifideles Laici* (4) notes:

> This life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is nourished by spiritual aids that are common to all the faithful, especially active participation in the sacred liturgy. These are to be used by the laity in such a way that while correctly fulfilling their secular duties in the ordinary conditions of life, they do not separate union with Christ from their life but rather, performing their work according to God’s will, they grow in that union.

**Conclusion**

This essay has asserted that inculturation is relevant and finds a special urgency in the Chinese-Filipino context. The Chinese-Filipino culture remains very alive, though some of its cultural values and practices are now being diminished or lost. Revaluing these practices is an essential task of inculturation for the local Church. Inculturation does not only refer to the insertion of the Gospel into a particular culture, but also refers to reviving cultural values that

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can contribute to the growth and strength of the local Church. This task, this imperative, this commitment challenges the local Church in the Philippines at the beginning of the Third Christian Millen-