

Editorial Notes

Dear Readers,

At the start of the third year of our online journal *APMS*, this issue offers a series of articles that may further guide and illumine our pastoral and missionary praxis in particularly challenging times and rapidly changing contexts.

Five contributions deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our lives. After more than a year, it has disrupted and turned upside down our families, communities, social relations, and securities. The pandemic has crudely awakened humanity by exposing the many ills and inequalities in society – both globally and locally. The pandemic has also brought to the surface the best – heroism, selflessness, solidarity, creativity – and the worst – greed, opportunism, cruelty, indifference – in individuals and nations.

The first article, “New Ecological Equilibrium,” by P. Wiryono Priyotamtama, is a passionate appeal to an “ecological conversion” in the Church through adopting the new paradigm of “integral ecology” as articulated by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si’*. Inspired by the encyclical, the author highlights important platforms for action to respond to global ecological crises. The most fundamental challenge is to raise our awareness of the interconnectedness of our own personal equilibrium, social equilibrium, and environmental equilibrium. Because this will require an appropriate pastoral leadership formation, the author proposes five practical guidelines to raise this awareness.

The article, “Rebuilding from COVID-19,” is an inspiring theological and spiritual reflection by Christina Kheng. The author starts with some questions: One year into the pandemic, what signs of “new life”

have emerged? How has the past year been a *kairos*, a “favorable time of the Lord”? What is God’s call for us during this unprecedented time? She then invites us – with the help of other pertinent questions – to take stock of ourselves, of our communities, of the church, and of the world in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This time calls for pastoral leadership that is spiritually rooted, discerning, synodal, humble, and committed to rebuilding a better world. The article outlines a process by which pastoral workers can reflect on the “pandemic year” together with their communities and exercise collaborative leadership. This may bring new vitality to the Church’s life and mission in these challenging times.

In his contribution “Signs of Pandemic, Symbols of Hope,” Antonius Firmansyah offers insightful and creative reflections on the question: What is the impact of COVID-19 on the celebration of our faith? The pandemic has led to the imposition of many restrictions on our social life, our lifestyle, and even our spiritual life. In order to protect the health of the community, we are forced to change the way we celebrate the liturgy. Pastoral workers need to find new ways of respecting the liturgical norms while also sustaining the spiritual motivation of the faithful to personally participate in liturgy. One possibility is through juxtaposing the particular *signs* of the pandemic encountered in our daily life with the *symbols* of liturgical celebrations. The new signs or measures are the masks, disinfectants, social distance markers, and digital devices. When used in the liturgy, how can they become means that support – not prevent – the celebration of our faith?

In the article entitled, “Building Pastoral Capacity in the Post-Pandemic Era Alongside of ‘Human Fraternity,’” Greg Soetomo guides us through an in-depth reading of the *Document on Human Fraternity and Living Together* (HF), by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, after their encounter in Abu Dhabi in 2019. It is a fervent appeal to advance a culture of peace, dialogue, and mutual respect. Fr. Soetomo frequently refers to two documents with the same tenor by Pope Francis: *Life After the Pandemic* (2020) and his third social encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* (2020). By answering some pointed questions, the article gives ideas on how to make effective use of the HF document in building a

harmonious life in general and in sustaining the Christian-Muslim relationship in particular.

The fifth article is entitled “Lamentation and Hope of University Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Light of Psalm 73.” Nikolas Kristiyanto analyzes how the pandemic is challenging our faith and theology to discover the deeper meaning of what is happening. Based on his research among students of Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta, the author tries to analyze the impact of the pandemic by using the structure of Psalm 73: (1) lamentation, (2) hope, and (3) the *credo*. After a careful analysis of Psalm 73, he provides a simple pastoral strategy – with the participation of all lecturers – to help students to reflect and to deepen their experiences during this difficult situation.

In his contribution entitled “Spiritual Life of the Christian Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Family,” Moses Mary Apreku highlights the huge impact of Asia-Pacific Christian immigrants on Western Christianity. Therefore, special pastoral care and spiritual formation should be given to immigrant families so that they can become efficient lay missionaries. Unfortunately, proper faith formation of the lay faithful is often lacking in the Church. Drawing inspiration from the spirituality and the rule of St. Benedict, the author provides a basic *guide for the family’s spiritual life and faith formation* that may help Christian families to become agents of change and strengthen their apostolic fervor.

The last contribution, “Preventive Measures Against the Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults in Pastoral Ministry Today,” deals with a delicate and burning issue in the Church. After an analysis of various aspects of the problem, Nchumbonga George Lekelefac calls the Church to ensure at all levels the efficient protection of minors with attention for their human and spiritual development, in line with the dignity of the human person. The article seeks to raise awareness of this crucial topic among the clergy, religious, and lay faithful who are directly or indirectly involved in pastoral ministry and proposes measures and initiatives to overcome the problem.

Our issue concludes with a review of an important book on recent mission history: Albert Monshan Wu’s *From Christ to Confucius: German*

Missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the Globalization of Christianity, 1860–1950. Fr. Daniel Patrick Huang gives an overview of the content of the book, followed by an extensive, highly appreciative yet critical review.

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