

THE *HAPÁG* THAT WE SHARE

*M*ajor life-events are always a cause for the family and the community to celebrate. Be it birth, marriage or death, there is no stopping to celebrate in an appropriate or even festive manner. Rituals, usually of religion, performed for these vital stages always punctuate the celebration. The universal experiences of birthing, marrying and dying are considered turning points, crucial moments and critical times not only in an individual's life but also in the growth of the community where s/he is "localized" or "situated".

Complementing the spirited rhythm or the mourning mode in an even greater share is the partaking of food and drink prepared for the guests or even chance visitors. Hospitality knows no bounds as far the local culture is concerned. The long table, normally associated with a wedding feast, is the usual centerpiece and showcase of local hospitality at its best. The flow of food and drink will depend on the generosity and means of the host. But whether it is a modest or extravagant feast, the people who come to celebrate partake of one and the same table. The table is the locus of exchange not only of food and drink but also of ideas, stories, views, beliefs, perspectives, visions, or even frustrations or disillusionment - the whole gamut of cultural interaction all done in the context of deepening and widening the social nexus.

Common folks gauge the success of any celebration that accompanies these rites of passage with the degree of satisfaction or sympathy exhibited by the guests or those who join the event. More particularly, the food and drink set on the table for everyone to partake of becomes the immediate target of sweet praise, sour remark or a bitter snide in hush.

Thus is born *Hapág* (a Tagalog word for table): a bi-annual review of theological-pastoral research from multi-disciplinary perspectives in the Philippines and Asia-Pacific contexts. It is a collaborative effort of St. Vincent School of Theology (SVST) and Adamson University. The birthing of *Hapág* marks a turning point and a crucial moment. It calls for a unique kind of celebration, as it is an initial attempt of St. Vincent School of Theology to showcase its academic diversity and re-engineered vision-mission. This maiden issue offers a modest fare of local and international flavors, all whipped up to present the cultural dynamics of domestic and global concerns.

Daniel Franklin Pilario writes on the current state of contextual theologies in the Philippines in an attempt to establish a conversation among the differing theological methods. This article contends that one's theological method has a direct relation to one's notion of culture. The author's plea for a concept of culture as praxis aimed to forward a liberationist interculturality is found most helpful to the craft of contextual theologizing. Lode Wostyn, in the second article, surveys the origin, development and challenges experienced by the Philippine Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in the parish level, covenant communities and fringe groups. Despite some tensions this movement is going through, for Wostyn, it can look forward to the future with hope when it heeds some of the recommendations proposed. The article of Dominador Bombongan, Jr. is an in-depth discussion of dependency theory and its critical re-appropriation into the methods of liberation theology. Though dependency theory was an effective tool to analyze the socio-economic and political realities of Latin America in the 1960s-1980s, Bombongan argues for a more adequate instrument to read the complex processes of our new globalized situation so as to articulate more clearly the theological intuitions for our times. The fourth essay by Rolando Tuazon asks the question whether genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in agricultural production solves the problem of famine and starvation as some humanitarians claimed. He asserts that such a simplistic technological quick-fix is insensitive to the real causes of world hunger, i.e., justice in the world, ecological sustainability and the havoc wrought by liberal capitalism not only to the socio-economic and political fields but also to philosophico-cultural frameworks which have become numb to the perspective of the 'victims' of the same system.

Given this modest feast of essays for an initial offering, Hapág is yet another milestone in the life and growth of SVST as a center for theological studies, pastoral formation and research under the Graduate School of Adamson University. Since its inception more than a decade ago, SVST has undergone transformation and reform aimed at forging future ministers and lay leaders attuned to the challenges of the times. Hapág represents one achievement of SVST in its endeavor to project a new direction as an offshoot of institutional re-thinking.

So come and share Hapág. It is yours and ours to partake of and to share. Be our guest and be our gauge.

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