

**Ecclesia of Women in Asia
10th Biennial Conference**

Invitation to join International Video Conferencing Session



On **Thursday, February 24, 2022**, at 8:15pm U.S. Eastern Standard Time there will be an interactive video conference featuring one of the paper sessions at the 2022 conference of the Ecclesia of Women in Asia (EWA).

EWA is a forum of Catholic women doing theology in Asia. EWA's vision is the development of theologizing from Asian women's perspectives and the recognition of Asian Catholic women theologians as equal partners in theological discussions within the Church and academe. This is the 6th video conferencing that EWA is holding in collaboration with partners from the Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church.

The theme of the conference is **Towards Life-giving Communities in a Time of Pandemic: Asian Feminist Theological Perspectives**. Two papers will be presented in the video conference.

Paper 1:

#ChooseToChallenge: COVID-19, Community Research and the Canaanite Woman

Presenters: Dr. Ma. Marilou S. Ibita and Dr. Ma. Maricel S. Ibita

This study stems from the collaboration between the Urban Poor Women and Children with Academics for Reaching and Delivering on UNSDGs in the Philippines (UPWARD-UP) research team and the Alliance of Peoples' Organisation Along the Manggahan Floodway (APOAMF) community.

In this paper, we posit that the theological process of See-Judge-Act-Evaluate-Celebrate/Ritualise using feminist biblical characterisation in interpreting Mt 15:21-28 can serve as a spiritual resource for the Christians who work for the urban poor realisation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. This research highlights the importance of listening to urban poor women and of putting gender equality and women's rights at the center of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts. These are evidenced by the prioritised UNSDGs identified by the community. These SDGs are: 1 – No Poverty; 3 – Health and Well-being (in relation with the Environment); 4 – Quality Education; and 16 – Justice, Peace and Strong Institutions seen from the lens of UNSDG 5 – Gender Equality. The biblical-theological process includes the modified 5-step theological-pastoral cycle. It incorporates the well-known three steps of *see* (the reality), *judge* (social analysis and biblical-theological reflection), and *act* (as biblical scholars, we employ narrative and feminist biblical interpretation). We add two more steps, namely, *evaluate* (assess the effectivity of the action) and *celebrate/ritualise* (integrative and transformative communal activities). We interpret the story of the Canaanite woman (Mt 15:21-28) as a test case that can accompany the community in achieving their prioritised SDGs. Finally, we gather the implications of this academic-community partnership in biblical-theological and sustainability studies.

Paper 2:

Pandemic Oasis: Popular Religiosities as Women's Life-giving *Communitas*

Presenter: Dr. Marinda Keng-Fan Chan

COVID-19, a global pandemic, profoundly challenges all walks of life. It is time to reflect on what a global crisis means to humanity and how we can, amid challenges, still promulgate Pope Francis's understanding of the pandemic as a time when fraternity and solidarity guide human relationships rather than conflict and division. In this paper, I argue and explore how popular Catholic religiosities can serve as an agent of creating life-giving *communitas* for the Macau faithful, particularly for women from an intercultural and inter-ethnic perspective. I employ an interdisciplinary approach to engage the disciplines of theology and visual culture of religion. This study includes qualitative ethnographic research using a combination of data collection methods: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and content analyses of the historical and material sources. This work has been conducted in Macau, China, from the period of March 2020 to October 2021. This article explores the relationship among women, popular religiosities, and *communitas* examined through the Asian feminist perspective. By interviewing six women from three major Catholic ethnic groups – Chinese, Filipino, and Macanese (with Portuguese descent) – we learn how popular religiosities create hope, support and trust particularly in the unprecedented time of pandemic. Women participate in various devotional practices both publicly and privately to create solidarity and life-giving *communitas* that is inclusive, empowering, and fostering human solidarity.

About the presenters:

Dr. Ma. Marilou S. Ibita (Philippines) is teaching at the Theology and Religious Education Department, De La Salle University.

Dr. Ma. Maricel S. Ibita (Philippines) is teaching at the Department of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University.

Dr. Marinda Keng-Fan Chan (Macau, China) earned her PhD from Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley with focus on religion and practice.

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