

Franciscan Asian Biennial Book 2 (2018-2019)

To all our friends and benefactors
who always sustain us with strong faith,
constant prayer, and generous sacrifices.
We remember you in our prayers with gratitude.
May God bless you and your families!

Dinh Anh Nhue NGUYEN OFMConv
Jude WINKLER OFMConv (eds.)

Franciscan Asian Biennial Book 2 (2018-2019)

On the Venerable Van Thuan's Spirituality
and Other Essays For/From Asia

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PRESENTATION

This second collective study of the Franciscan Institute for Asian Theological Studies (FIATS) includes essays on the Venerable Van Thuan's spirituality and other contributions on faith living and inculturation in Asia.¹ Like in the first volume of the Franciscan Asian Biennial Book, the readers will find here materials for study, reflection, and information on Christian and Franciscan thought and activities in Asian cultures and societies. Concretely, there are thirteen articles in three sections: Studies, Reflections, and Reports/Book Reviews.

The Studies section has two parts. The first one offers three essays on the Vietnamese Cardinale Nguyen Van Thuan, who has been recently proclaimed "Venerable" by the Catholic Church. Stéphane Oppes OFM presents the figure of Cardinale Van Thuan as theologian and teacher of Christian hope. François-Marie Léthel OCD explores Van Thuan's Eucharistic spirituality, whereas Dinh Anh Nhue Nguyen OFMConv offers *Introductory Remarks on the Inculturated Reading of the Gospel* in the Spiritual Exercises of this Vietnamese Venerable. These three contributions are actually short version of research papers, presented to the First International Symposium on this Venerable's spirituality, organized by FIATS in Rome. They are sort of exclusive English anticipation of the full articles, which will be published in the forthcoming *Acts of the Symposium* in Italian, English, and Vietnamese.²

The second part of Studies section includes three articles exploring inculturation issues from various perspectives. Rita Torti Mazzi, a bib-

1. The book publication was delayed due to the lockdown in Italy caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

2. The Italian version of these papers has recently been published in the academic Review *Miscellanea Franciscana* 119/III-IV (2019) 498-540.

lical scholar, offers a thorough comparative study on Creation and De-creation in the Literature of Mesopotamia and in the Book of Genesis, in order to point out the importance of reading Biblical stories of origin in their Ancient Near Eastern cultural background. Van Vien Nguyen, instead, presents a systematic overview on aspects of inculturation according to the Apostolic Exhortations to regional churches, which would be useful to clarify ideas on the Catholic Church teaching in this regard. In the end, Van Diep Dinh, O.Carm., examines Consecrated Life in Vietnam in light of the local traditions and Christian theology of mission.

The Reflections section of this volume focuses on the life of faith in Japan and North Korea with four essays of various lengths. Some of them are fruit of the FIATS Study Meeting on November 24th, 2018, on the Vietnamese and Japanese Martyrs' spirituality for today. Ken Masuda CMF opens the series with a personal reflection on the Japanese martyrs; Keiko Miyashita continues with a short but intense thought on *How to Live Faith in Today's Japan with the Martyrs' Spiritual Heritage*; Francis Xavier Van Hoai Tran OFMConv reflects on the Vietnamese Catholic Youth in Japan, sharing pastoral concerns and hopes. The section is enriched with a special essay of Paolo Affatato on the situation in North Korea, which is still "Waiting for an Ecclesiastical Spring."

The section of Reports/Book Reviews starts with a lengthy report on the Filipino Friar-Students' pastoral and academic activities during the Year of St. Bonaventure 2018-2019, with a summary of Filipino friars-students' "reception" of the Bonaventurian theological vision and some projects for the future. Next, there is a special report on the International Symposium on Transforming Mission in Asia on December 2019 in Rome to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Papal document *Ecclesia in Asia*. The section ends with a bibliographical overview on books and articles on Asian theology in the period of 2016-2019.

The contributions in this book offer inquiries and reflections in biblical, theological, and Franciscan research, which might seem far

from perfection and need further development. There also may be not many ground-breaking or well-argued theories of Christian faith inculturation. Nevertheless, despite possible imperfections, the volume marks another important step for the work and development of our recently founded FIATS. Therefore, I am grateful to all the contributors and translators, as well as to the English editor, Fr. Jude Winkler, for his enormous and precious help. Hopefully, the book, fruit of our common effort, will serve as a stimulus for Asian Christians, especially for the Franciscans, to reflect and to share with one another thought and experience of living faith in their places.

Dinh Anh Nhue NGUYEN OFMConv



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FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

The Franciscan Institute for Asian Theological Studies or FIATS is a research institution within the Pontifical Theological Faculty of St. Bonaventure – the *Seraphicum* (Rome). It aims to coordinate, encourage and promote reflection on the Christian life of faith and Franciscan spirituality in Asia as well as on the dialogue between the Christianity and Asian cultures. Inaugurated solemnly on March 14, 2015 during the Faculty annual feast, FIATS has its International Center at the *Seraphicum* and collaborators in many Asian countries, including China, India, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka. Among its main activities, FIATS publishes the *Franciscan Asian Biennial Book* which is home to various studies and reflections on Asian theological issues. It also seeks to promote the publication of research monographs on Asian ways of understanding and living Christian faith in a multi-cultural world.

For more information on FIATS current activities and for submitting paper-contribution to the *Franciscan Asian Biennial Book* or manuscript for valuation, please write to Fr. Dinh Anh Nhue Nguyen OFMConv at: fiats2503@gmail.com



