

## Editor's Words

Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, the Pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, in his keynote address of the Webinar: “International Symposium: The Doors that Propaganda Fide has Opened since 1622,” (August 24-26, 2022) pointed out that “at the center of evangelization or the announcement of the Good News is the person of Jesus Christ.”

Pope Francis in his Apostolic Constitution *Preadicate Evangelium* (Preach the Gospel) on the reform of the Roman Curia regards this mandate Jesus entrusted to his disciples as “the primary service that the Church can render to every individual and to all humanity in the modern world.”

Cardinal Tagle in his address raised the question: Does the Church as Jesus’s body still lives by the dynamic presence of Jesus and his Gospel in the modern world? The Church has to be evangelized constantly by Jesus in order to remain beautiful and attractive to people: hence, the imperative of constant pastoral conversion.

The Propaganda Fide born 400 years ago in its effort to eradicate the negative effects of the *patronato* system – the twinning between colonial powers and the presence of missionaries – still functioned within the mindset of evangelized and non-evangelized countries or mission territories. Today these geographical boundaries and spaces have become fluid due to the movement of peoples and ideas through migration, social communication and cultural exchange.

The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, later renamed the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, has been transformed into one Dicastery, with a section for Fundamental Questions regarding Evangelization in the World, and another for the First Evangelization and New Particular Churches within the territories of its competence. Every baptized person is an evangelizer in need of constant evangelization. This has to be lived in a spirit of communion. Every Church is called to mission. She gives and receives at the same time. Every Church has to be embodied in Christ whatever her political, social or cultural context may be.

Cardinal Tagle reminded us that Vatican II already noticed social communication as an opportunity for evangelization. Social media is not just a means of communication, but has become a world in itself, an eco-system. As a world it needs to be evangelized in order to preserve true communication and authentic community.

Social media and artificial intelligence (AI) are silently redefining or reshaping the human person. The Cardinal asked himself: What is a human person?

Cardinal Tagle invited us to learn from Jesus as an Asian in addressing the present and future challenges and opportunities of evangelization.

Following peer review, eleven papers presented at the three-day long Webinar have been included for publication in this issue of our *Journal for Catholic Studies*.

Three papers review missionary work in Asia, in particular the unique missionary experience from the Korean Catholic Church by a Korean missionary Fr. Michael Hak-Hyeon Kim, titled “From Mission to Mission.” Indonesian Vincentian Fr. Francis X. Eko Armada Riyanto narrates the history of “Propaganda Fide and the Catholic Mission in Indonesia” and Professor Claudia von Collani portrays “Beginning with Obstacles: The First Attempts of the Propaganda Fide to Establish Relations with China.” The presence in China of missionaries from different religious orders and Propaganda Fide resulted in several conflicts, eventually the Chinese Rites Controversy, which the papal Legation of Bishop Charles-Thomas Maillard de Tournon (became cardinal in 1707) failed to resolve.

Five papers focus on social media: communication in the modern world. Professor Francis L. F. Lee in his paper “The Challenges of Communication in the Era of Social Media: Perspectives from Media Studies” evaluates the echo chamber thesis and the fake news problem. Underlying both issues is the concern of people’s capability of communicating across differences, and by implication capability of addressing and resolving conflicts. Professor Anthony S. K. Lam reflects on the role of the Catholic Church in the age of digital social media and Dr. Calida Chu looks at the evangelization of the Christian Church in the twenty-first century from a digital theological perspective. Two well-experienced priests in Catholic social communication, Fr. John Mi Shen in his paper “The Church and Communication” elaborates on the Catholic theology of Trinitarian communication, communion and community. Fr. Mi was asked whether it is possible to communicate Christian faith from mind to mind like in Buddhism, without language or means of communication. In his response, Fr. Mi emphasized the identification of the three elements (sender, message and receiver) in the Catholic communication model and the Catholic tradition of meditation and contemplation. Fr. Bernardo Cervellera, PIME, approaches his subject “Propaganda Fide and Mission as Communication” from a Western historical point of view.

Finally, three papers relate to East meets West in cultural exchange. Professor Xue Yu in his paper “Recreating Mindfulness Meditation in America” shows how different Asian Buddhist traditions over the years took root in America. Some of them re-contextualized in their encounter with Western sciences and developed mindfulness meditation in American middle-class and academic circles. Professor Gianni Criveller, PIME, in his contribution “A Century of Incoherent Missionary Policy. Propaganda Fide and China: From the Accommodation Imperative (1659’s Instruction) to the Condemnation of the Chinese Rites (1742)” analyzes Propaganda Fide’s cultural limitation and incoherent missionary policy which had a lasting impact on the interaction between China and Europe. Professor Thierry Meynard, SJ, in his paper “Promoting the Indigenization of Catholicism in Republican China: the Role of Propaganda Fide in Canton” highlights the important role of Archbishop Celso Costantini, the first Apostolic Delegate in China, and his mentor Vicar Apostolic Anthony Fourquet, MEP, later on Archbishop of Canton.

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