

# ***Kapwa* as Participation: Towards Re-membering the Filipino Passion**

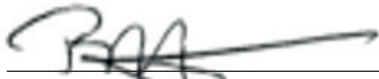
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**May 26, 2020**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Practical  
Theology

St. Thomas University  
Miami Gardens, Florida

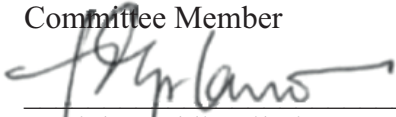
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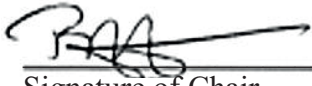
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## Abstract

The experience of extrajudicial killings in the war on drugs in the Philippines, including the stories of victims, their families, and their communities, offers critical insights for theology. This is not only theoretical: it is practical. The integration of social scientific frameworks with the theological tradition provides a means of responding to the crucial ecclesial task of re-membering the others and their stories of suffering. A cultural-performative lens informed by *kapwa* and *memoria passionis* opens pathways to a participatory church with the others that reclaims dignity, promotes justice, and advances reconciliation.

*Keywords:* participatory church, *memoria passionis*, *kapwa*, *pakikipagkapwa*, trauma

## **Dedication**

To the so-called others of the world

Whose cries remain muted and unheard

Whose needs are unacknowledged

To those who are caught in the middle of death and life

victims and victors with scars and wounds

To those others who despite all continue to struggle and bear witness

And to those who join hands with them

in fighting for their hopes and dreams

I dedicate this work to you

As we journey towards a shared humanity,

a new heaven and a new earth,

a participatory church fully yours:

a kapwa church.

## **Acknowledgement**

It takes a community to complete a dissertation. I am grateful for the journey that has been. Of sharing life and vision, wisdom and knowledge, faith and conviction. You are all an embodied presence of the Divine to me in many ways.

For the Archdiocese of Cologne and the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM) Philippine Province for generously supporting this dissertation project. For St. Thomas University through Msgr. Terence Hogan, Dean of the School of Theology and Ministry for the scholarship grant and providing my residence on campus.

For my dissertation chair and program director, Dr. Bryan Froehle whose love and dedicated service created a community among us. Thank you for gently guiding me to listen and to own my voice in practical theology. Thank you for the hours of sharing ideas, discerning directions, and celebrating discoveries. For members of my committee, Sr. Ondina Cortes, Fr. Danny Pilario, and Fr. Roger Schroeder. I am truly honored that you are with me at this pivotal moment. Thank you for your encouragement and witness throughout the process.

For our professors from the Practical Theology Program - School of Theology and Ministry of St. Thomas University – Dr. Ondina Cortes, Dr. Mary Carter Warren, Dr. Jennifer Krysak, Dr. Nathaniel Samuel, and Dr. Bryan Froehle – who made classroom learning an experience of church (even with the countless papers to write and books to read!). We will continue to be together – as we speak truth to power, as we build church wherever we are, and as we strive to shape a better world practically and prophetically.



For my companions in the Practical Theology program with whom I shared the roller coaster adventure of doctoral studies. For my sister colleagues Adeline, Lauren, Leena, Joan, Carmen, Anjeanette, Claudia, and Candace. For my brother colleagues Alex, Wilson, Stephen, Edgardo, Antipas, and Sau. I will always treasure and take with me learning from our diverse cultures, religions, and perspectives. Special thanks to Fr. Anthony Muraya, a friend who was always there to listen and to lend a helping hand.

For my *Bukal ng Tipan* family – Fr. Mark, Fr. Guido, Estela, Aleli, Ading, Jojit, Nap, Noel, Rusty, and Dale. You have taught me all these years what it means to be a participatory church and how it is to be of one heart and one soul. I thank Fr. Mark Lesage, CICM, who taught us all by example to dream and work passionately for a church that lives God’s vision. Close to my heart always, will be our times together celebrating – in Chicago, Miami, and every night at the veranda for our team nightcap. For Dr. Estela Padilla, a constant conversation partner throughout my writing, for patiently reading my manuscript, and for sharing my joy of a completed work.

Lastly, for my family – who knows me inside and out, bears with me even when I was away, and for giving me countless joy-filled moments. Thank you for reminding me what life is all about. To my sister Jana, who would always ask me how I’m doing and who shared beautiful breaks with me while away from home. To my mom Yolanda, the wind beneath my wings. I am most grateful for your faithful and dedicated love for all of us. But more than that, for reminding me to share love, to be a *kapwa* in the everyday – with the people closest to you, in simple acts of kindness, and by walking an extra mile to be with those in need.

Maraming salamat po!

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## INTRODUCTION

On July 23, 2016, the *Pieta* photo of the lifeless body of Michael Siaron carried by his partner Jennilyn Olayres went viral, interrupting the Philippine people's gaze.<sup>1</sup> He was a victim of extrajudicial killing on the war on drugs. As she sat helpless on the pavement, cradling Michael on her lap, people carried on with their responsibilities. Media personnel continued to click their cameras, police officers gathered information, while residents of the community quietly stared at them across the yellow caution tape. Jennilyn was crying and screaming, pleading to all those around her, "Stop it! Please help us!" The photojournalist who took this award-winning photo, stopped and asked the police in charge of the investigations, "Can we not help them?" But the police replied, "There's not much we can do. He is dead."

The agony and suffering of victims of the ongoing war on drugs in the Philippines are captured in countless news articles and thousands of photos and videos. It has caught the attention of the international community decrying human rights abuse. But as their story is reenacted in a thousand more deaths that are still ongoing in Philippine history, the bigger question that deserves contemplation is "why don't people care?" Indifference, silence, and the divided stand within the Catholic Church are alarming for the most Catholic nation in Asia.

Oppression of the poor and marginalized is not a new phenomenon to Filipinos. Poverty has exposed the Filipino body to physical abuse and exploitation. Many overseas Filipino workers are subjected to deplorable living conditions. Over a million work

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<sup>1</sup> Raffy Lerma, "A Night of Anguish and Torment: The Story Behind the Viral Photo," *Inquirer.Net*. July 31, 2016, <https://opinion.inquirer.net/96101/the-story-behind-the-viral-photo>.

overseas without legal documents<sup>2</sup> and many are unjustly imprisoned, raped, or arrive home in a coffin leaving marks of trauma on their families that affect succeeding generations.<sup>3</sup> About 20 typhoons hit the country yearly and the deadliest ones take as many as 2,000 lives.<sup>4</sup> Such trauma naturally reverberates in the life of a person and community for the rest of their lives.

The Philippines has had cases of extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances. Politically motivated assassinations, illegal and summary executions, arbitrary arrest, and detention, extrajudicial killings have been everyday events throughout much of its history. Reports on the human rights abuses under Martial Law during Marcos' rule claim that more than 90,000 people disappeared, were tortured and often executed.<sup>5</sup> The atrocities they have suffered have scarred a nation and yet the fact that it continues to happen manifest the enduring wounds of the past that need attention.

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<sup>2</sup> Elimor Santos, "2015 migrant crisis: Deaths, tragedies, OFW Plight," *CNN Philippines*, updated January 21, 2016, <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2015/12/18/International-Migrants-Day-2015.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Sara Soliven de Guzman, "The Questionable Plight of OFWs," Opinion, *Philippine Star*, September 20, 2010, <http://www.philstar.com/opinion/613272/questionable-plight-ofws>.

<sup>4</sup> When super typhoon *Haiyan* hit the country in November 2013, an estimated 10,000 people disappeared in floods leaving families mourning over missing bodies of relatives as they faced the struggle to reestablish their lost lives. The typhoon *Nina* of December 2016, resulted in few deaths but 380,000 lost their homes.<sup>4</sup> Sophie Brown, "The Philippines is the Most Storm Exposed Country on Earth," *Time*, November 11, 2013, <http://world.time.com/2013/11/11/the-philippines-is-the-most-storm-exposed-country-on-earth/>.

<sup>5</sup> Among them were priests, religious, and lay church workers who had committed themselves to work with the poor. See Ellen-Rae Cachola and Brian Huffman, "The Haunting of Martial Law: Records from the Marcos Regime," *UH School of Law Library*, September 7, 2017, <https://library.law.hawaii.edu/2017/09/07/the-haunting-of-martial-law-records-from-the-marcos-regime/>. However, there are conflicting data regarding Martial law victims. McCoy cites 3,527 extrajudicial killings, 35,000 torture victims, and 70,000 imprisoned. Alfred McCoy, *Closer than Brothers: Manhood at the Philippine Military Academy* (New Haven: Yale, 1999), 10-12. See Rachel Reyes, "3,257 Fact Checking the Marcos Killings, 1975-1985," *The Manila Times*, April 12, 2016, <https://www.manilatimes.net/3257-fact-checkin-g-the-marcos-killings-1975-1985/255735/>. 120,000 victims are reported in *Bulatlat*. Dabet Castaneda, "Human Rights Watch: Compensation Bill Recognizes 3 Salient Points in History," *Bulatlat* VI, no. 20 (June 26-July 6, 2006), [http://www.bulatlat.com/news/6-20/6-20-bill\\_printer.html](http://www.bulatlat.com/news/6-20/6-20-bill_printer.html).

Like the contemporary photo of the *Pieta*, their stories receive attention for a moment, but do not effect change in social or ecclesial life. Those who suffer are not only “marginalized by society,” they are “marginalized in the church.”<sup>6</sup> How can participation happen with and through those who suffer? How are their cries heard? How does their embodied pain participate in the making of a church?

An authentic listening to their stories and a truthful re-membering is called for not only to uncover structures of violence and historical factors that erase and render victims invisible but through a way of listening that will inscribe them into the larger scheme of meaning.<sup>7</sup> It is a re-membering that speaks truth to power and that fights against participation shaping apathy and indifference.<sup>8</sup> This practical theological research responds to such a crucial task - that of re-membering the Filipino Passion and claiming their voice in renewing ecclesial life.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview, Pablo David, Caloocan City, January 13, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 68.

<sup>8</sup> Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans Matthew Ashley (New York: Crossroad, 2007), 66-67.



## **CHAPTER ONE. TOWARDS A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH WITH THE “OTHERS”**

Incarnating God’s vision of a new heaven and a new earth, the church continues to strive to journey with the “others.” While structures and processes embody a church with, for, and by the poor, their ongoing stories of suffering bring out the challenges and complexities of re-membering them. The chapter presents the praxis of suffering, how it has shaped Catholic church in the Philippines, and how various studies and disciplines have engaged in the discourse. It will also provide an overview of the entire study towards re-membering of the Filipino Passion.

### **Praxis of Suffering and the ‘Others’**

The praxis of suffering, as it displays the story of humanity, reinterprets the Christian story, and transforms ecclesial practices and practices of everyday life.<sup>1</sup> It has changed the paradigms of discipleship and leadership in Christian communities. Participatory structures and methodologies create a culture of communion amongst believers and empower grassroots communities to be the church in their milieu and settings. But it also offers critical points for ecclesial renewal and transformation.

Suffering conveys an “ongoingness” and its non-identity character makes it difficult to be fully grasped; theoretically and symbolically.<sup>2</sup> The complexities characterized by the various collective identities of the poor and the forms of oppression they experience, their individual stories, as well as the need to consider both oppressors

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<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Chopp, *The Praxis of Suffering: An Interpretation of Liberation and Political Theologies* (Orbis: Maryknoll, 1989), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Chopp, *The Praxis of Suffering*, 3.

and oppressed in the equation contribute to this impasse.<sup>3</sup> Those considered “others” by society, while their cries and pains may be attended to, are still left out in the equation; theoretically, symbolically, and practically.

### **Otherness and Paradigms of Inclusion**

Otherness is a key terminology in social discourse that explores the construction of majority and minority identities and that critiques the dominant voice that strips people’s capacity for selfhood and agency.<sup>4</sup> The so-called “others” in society are regarded as “insignificant,” and their human rights are not acknowledged as they do not possess economic or social capital nor do their presence count whether in society or the church.<sup>5</sup> The “other” is construed as someone excluded and to a great extent, exiled from the rest, because of forces that dominate, control, and colonize them.<sup>6</sup> Dominant institutions or traditions tend to identify “the others” as those carrying opposing or different principles to that of theirs. In effect, they are left with no voice in prevailing norms.

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<sup>3</sup> Mark Lewis Taylor, “Subalterity and Advocacy as *Kairos* for Theology,” in *Opting for the Margins: Postmodernity and Liberation in Christian Theology*, ed. Joerg Rieger (Oxford: American Academy of Religions, 2003), 31.

<sup>4</sup> It was George Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831) who first introduced the concept followed by Edmund Husserl (1889-1938), and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980). Contemporary thinkers are Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) and Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995). Levinas who earlier formulated the Other as one that comes prior to the self and is superior took Jacques Derrida’s proposal that the other cannot be a pure presence. For Levinas, to come face to face with the other is to allow this other to speak to me and to take my responsibility to them. To talk about ethics in this way, is to look at the good of the “other. See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, “The Situation and Task of Liberation Theology Today,” *Opting for the Margins: Postmodernity and Liberation in Christian Theology*, ed. Joerg Rieger (Oxford: American Academy of Religions, 2003), 97.

<sup>6</sup> Terry Veiling, *Living in the Margins: Intentional Communities and the Art of Interpretation* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 90.

Against the dominant voice, they are not present within the tradition, are not present within the discourse interpreting the tradition, and have no voice in interpreting their identity and self-determination. In the absence of secure objective or experiential foundations, the community of discourse plays a pivotal role. It becomes imperative that those voices excluded from dominant discourse become introduced to the discourse.<sup>7</sup>

Various paradigms classified as universalist, communitarian, and postmodern respond to otherness by focusing on their social arrangements.<sup>8</sup> The universalists attempt to erase otherness by promoting common universal values for all to live by so that people can peacefully coexist. The communitarians oppose this option and prefer to uplift community differences while giving more space to smaller communities that tend to be excluded or isolated from the dominant groups. To a certain extent, such perspective tends to be self-serving since they identify the others to make use of them to “broaden their power base” without promoting any alternative towards their emancipation.<sup>9</sup> The postmodernists give up on the commonalities and differences of configurations and take the individualistic option by expanding the freedom and autonomy of people in society. Such an option diffuses the complexities of the world of the ‘others’ and the tension

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<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, “The Crisis of Hermeneutics and Christian Theology,” in *Theology at the end of Modernity*, ed. Sheila Greeve Davaney (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1991), 136-137. See Veiling, *Living in the Margins*, 91.

<sup>8</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 20.

<sup>9</sup> Joerg Rieger, “Introduction: Opting for the Margins,” in *Opting for the Margins: Postmodernity and Liberation in Christian Theology*, ed. Joerg Rieger (Oxford: American Academy of Religions, 2003), 14.

between the oppressor and the oppressed such that, everyone considers themselves as the other. In the long run, such a perspective fails to provide an alternative.<sup>10</sup>

### **God and the Others**

To re-member the others is not only ethical but also epistemological and theological.”<sup>11</sup> God sees reality through their eyes and until we recognize this, the God we worship may be “a false god” or “an idol of our own making.”<sup>12</sup> God has categorically chosen the excluded, the poor, the invisible (Deut 6:20-25, Deut 26:5-9, Psalm 68:5-6, Psalm 146:7-9) in history. Stories in the Scriptures about a younger brother being chosen over the older one (Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers, David, and his brothers), implies God’s preferential love for the one who is considered the other, defying social conventions.

Jesus did not only choose the “others,” he lived in communion with them. Jesus chose to share his mission to the outcasts of society – those who are sick, the poor, the women, and those who live sinful lives in the eyes of society. He listened and attended to their needs, healed the sick, and preached about loving God and neighbor. It is for this,

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<sup>10</sup> Rieger, “Introduction: Opting for the Margins,” 14.

<sup>11</sup> Roberto Goizueta, “Knowing the God of the Poor,” *Opting for the Margins: Postmodernity and Liberation in Christian Theology*, ed. Joerg Rieger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 144. See also Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World* (Pauline: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), 198.

<sup>12</sup> Goizueta, “Knowing the God of the Poor,” 144.

that we know how the poor do not only “share in the *sensus fidei*, ”<sup>13</sup> but through their life, we come to know the suffering Christ.”<sup>14</sup>

God’s option for the margin embraces a whole variety of people excluded by the hegemonic powers at work in society, including religious society. The embrace of the excluded is attained not by the widening of the boundaries and thus through cultural assimilation, but rather through the emergence of a new center, Jesus Christ, who is to be found among the diverse groups of the excluded. Theology takes place as Christians join Christ, “outside the camp,” sharing in his exclusion.<sup>15</sup>

Jesus also made this preferential option clear that to find the lost, mere identification is not enough. It is the process of finding, understanding, and encountering them that is essential. In the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7), the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10) and the lost son (Luke 15:11-32), Jesus does not only emphasize who or what was lost but how the shepherd and the woman went out of their way to look for what was lost. The father in the third parable, who seemed to have favored the younger son by giving him his share of his inheritance, went out so far to look for the one who was truly lost; the elder son.

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<sup>13</sup> “On the one hand, the *sensus fidei* refers to the personal capacity of the believer, within the communion of the Church, to discern the truth of faith. On the other hand, the *sensus fidei* refers to a communal and ecclesial reality: the instinct of faith of the Church herself, by which she recognizes her Lord and proclaims his word. The *sensus fidei* in this sense is reflected in the convergence of the baptized in a lived adhesion to a doctrine of faith or to an element of Christian *praxis*.” International Theological Commission, *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church*, no.3, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_20140610\\_sensus-fidei\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20140610_sensus-fidei_en.html).

<sup>14</sup> “Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 198.

<sup>15</sup> David Field, “On (Re) Centering the Margins,” *Opting for the Margins: Postmodernity and Liberation in Christian Theology*, ed. Joerg Rieger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 54-55.

## Church and the Participation of the Others

As a witness to the sufferings of the world, the church has tried to explain the complexities of pain brought about by oppression and injustice. On the one hand, some continuously argue against the voice of the powerful, the elite, and the educated in deciding for those who suffer. They posit that the dominant voice reflected in structures and systems continue to stifle the poor and the oppressed in their capacity to transcend limitations.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, some take the irruption and participation of the poor as the very *locus* to understand suffering. Bridging Christian faith and everyday life, dialogue, and collective action is their weapon to transform their story, their situation, and the world.<sup>17</sup>

### BECs and the Church of the Poor

In the local churches in the Philippines, such participation is actualized in the vision of a “church of the poor” and the building of basic ecclesial communities (BECs). In the Second Plenary Council, the Catholic Church in the Philippines declared that its common direction and way of life is to be a church that lives “communion, participation, and mission,” and sees its “priestly, prophetic, kingly” role is accomplished by becoming a “Church of the poor.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Political theologies proposed by Johan Baptist Metz, Jurgen Moltmann, and Dorothy Soelle among many others have worked with the themes of history, incarnation, and solidarity. This paper will explore the theology of Metz but will also be in dialogue with his contemporaries in this field.

<sup>17</sup> This paradigm finds its roots from the Latin American Liberation Theology. Some of its proponents include Gustavo Gutierrez, Jon Sobrino, Segundo Galilea, Aloysius Pieris and many others. However, the church in the Philippines has its own history of liberation theology which will be discussed in the succeeding pages. Some theologians have named this brand of liberation theology as “theology of struggle,” which was developed when the country was under Marcos dictatorship. See Eleazar Hernandez, *Toward a Theology of Struggle* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994).

<sup>18</sup> The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, held in February of 1991, in response to the changing issues and concerns in Philippine society and as a response to the call of the Second Vatican

To be a church of the poor is to embody the paschal mystery in the memory of suffering.<sup>19</sup> It strives to seriously take the task of “remembering and narrating with practical intent,” the *memoria passionis*; Jesus’ passion, death, and resurrection through the stories of the poor and the oppressed.<sup>20</sup> Jesus’ prophetic mission spells out clearly that solidarity is not simply “a negative protest” against injustice and oppression nor is it “passive solidarity with the religious poor.”<sup>21</sup> A church of the poor lives God’s reign “from the wounds of the rejects of society,” and takes them as “bearers of eschatological hope.”<sup>22</sup>

Practices of participation define the church of the poor. While they categorically tilt priorities and perspectives to their favor, the poor deserve equal rights in pastoral life as well as in decision making.<sup>23</sup> It is a church that “defends and vindicates their rights,”<sup>24</sup> against forces of oppression and empowers them to become evangelizers by learning to be with them, to work with them, and to learn from them.<sup>25</sup> Such participation implies the church’s openness to perspectives that will enable a better understanding of the various contexts that shape the lives of the poor and that can attend to the intricate connections of embodied practices and relationships.

**BEC participation in Philippine history.** The journey of BECs in the Philippines attests to how the church has walked in solidarity with the poor. Though

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Council for church reforms. The first plenary council was held in 1953. Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, “Acts and Decrees,” no. 137 pdf version.

<sup>19</sup> Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 106-107.

<sup>20</sup> Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 194.

<sup>21</sup> Aloysius Pieris, SJ, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1992), 49.

<sup>22</sup> Eleazar Hernandez, *Toward a Theology of Struggle*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994), 44.

<sup>23</sup> Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, “Acts and Decrees,” no. 134, 136.

<sup>24</sup> Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, “Acts and Decrees,” no. 132.

<sup>25</sup> Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, “Acts and Decrees,” no. 132.

BECs in the Philippines are “wholly indigenous and not copycat imitations” of the Latin American BECs, the two settings have many commonalities.<sup>26</sup> Aside from a shared history of colonization under Spain, both were under a dictatorial rule in the seventies that caused massive poverty and oppression among people. Religious communities began building BCCs or Basic Christian Communities in Mindanao that shared Latin American liberation theology and pastoral praxis.<sup>27</sup> The movement was supported by the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference (MSPC), the southern regional body of bishops and laypeople, contributing to its growth.<sup>28</sup> Their fight for justice and peace against the “expansion of transnational corporations, aggressive militarization and the ensuing gross violation of the people's fundamental human rights,” became the rallying point of many BCCs empowering the poor to live their prophetic role.<sup>29</sup>

An alliance with community organizers with expertise in socio-cultural analysis and mobilization expanded the name of BCC to BCC-CO.<sup>30</sup> With the two perspectives of Gospel sharing and social analysis, they were provided with new lenses to address the economic needs of its members. Aside from cooperatives and income-generating projects, many BECs fought for their rights and confronted the government regarding corruption and oppression. While developing their community life around the aspect of worship (Eucharist, prayer service, liturgies) and formation (Gospel sharing, seminars,

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<sup>26</sup> Reynaldo Raluto, *Poverty and Ecology at the Crossroads: Towards an Ecological Theology of Liberation in the Philippine Context* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2015), 156.

<sup>27</sup> Karl M. Gaspar, “Will BECs Flourish or Self-Destruct in the Post-Modern Era.” *CBCP BEC Cyber Office*, accessed November 10, 2016. <http://cbcpbec.com/?p=612>, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Amado Picardal, “Basic Ecclesial Communities in the Philippines: A Reception and Realization of the Vatican II Vision of a Renewed Church,” accessed October 20, 2016. <http://cbcpbec.com/?p=277>, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Gaspar, “Will BECs Flourish or Self-Destruct in Post-Modern Era,” 1-2.

<sup>30</sup> Raluto, *Poverty, and Ecology at the Crossroads*, 157.



and ministry training), some involved themselves politically. This caught the ire of the military that many BCC-CO leaders were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and killed. Though the persecutions did not deter the BECs from continuing their mission, the church hierarchy was divided regarding their perspectives towards BEC. Out of fear that the BCC-CO alliance was "infiltrated by members of the leftist movement" and that the term Christian might connect the Catholic Church with communist ideals, the name was changed to Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC).<sup>31</sup> From then on, the 'ecclesial' nature became more synonymous to worship life; thus, converting BECs into the mainstream."<sup>32</sup>

**BEC Structures and Programs.** Most dioceses in the Philippines have structures and programs to support the growth of BECs.<sup>33</sup> A BEC desk at the bishops' conference level stirs the vision and coordinates programs and activities to pursue the vision.<sup>34</sup> Parishes in the urban and rural settings are challenged to adapt BECs as their basic framework in building their parish communities.<sup>35</sup> Training programs are offered from the national to the parish level to train and empower laypeople in building, organizing, and sustaining BECs.

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<sup>31</sup> Francisco Claver, *The Making of a Local Church* (Philippines: Jesuit Communications, 2009), 125.

<sup>32</sup> Gaspar, "Will BECs Flourish or Self-Destruct in Post-Modern Era," 5.

<sup>33</sup> Picardal notes the growing number of dioceses that have adopted the building of BECs as their pastoral priority. In 2008, there were 67 out of 85 dioceses that had structures and programs in place for BEC organizing. Picardal, "The Basic Ecclesial Communities in the Philippines," CBCP BEC Cyber Office, accessed on November 8, 2019 <http://cbcpbec.com/?p=397>.

<sup>34</sup> See "BEC Stories and Case Studies," CBCP-BEC *Cyber Office* which contains various documents of programs and assemblies, as well as related church documents <http://cbcpbec.com/?cat=23>

<sup>35</sup> On the national level, the BEC desk of the CBCP regularly conducts programs and modules for clergy and laity to be formed and equipped with skills for BEC organizing. Some of these programs are downloadable for use by dioceses and parishes. The website also offers resources, books, modules, and articles on BECs developed for various themes and needs. See "BEC Evangelization and Formation Modules," CBCP BEC Cyber Office, <http://cbcpbec.com/?p=3840>.

Local churches follow different approaches to organizing BECs depending on the situation. The parish through its organizers and community representatives could organize masses in the neighborhood to bring people together and present the vision of BECs during the celebration. A team could also be assigned to an area to do immersion and to get to know the people. Thereafter, BEC organizing sessions are conducted to the residents for them to understand the vision and to be formed as a community. In some cases where there are chapels in the area, family groupings are formed. Cooperatives are also set up in neighborhoods to form BECs; focusing on an expressed need of the community.

**BEC life and challenges.** Stories of BECs reveal the power of community solidarity amid suffering.<sup>36</sup> They participate in the life of God through their regular bible sharing sessions following the method of *Lectio Divina*. Focusing on the Sunday Gospel or a particular theme that they choose, members allow the Word of God to illumine their path as they reflect on their personal lives as well as what affects them as a community.<sup>37</sup> As it is both cognitive and affective, the process impacts their way of life.<sup>38</sup> While forming people's faith convictions, it touches into people's deepest desires and longings, empowering them toward concrete action.

BECs contribute to human development by alleviating the poverty of many

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<sup>36</sup> See "Stories and Case Studies," *CBCP BEC Cyber Office*, <http://cbcpbec.com/?cat=23>.

<sup>37</sup> *Lectio Divina* is an ancient practice of reading the Scripture attributed to monks. It follows a sequential pattern of reading, meditation, praying, contemplating and acting the sacred text. M. Basil Pennington, *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures*, (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 3. Many Bible sharing methods used in basic Christian communities follow these steps. Lumko Institute in South Africa offers its own Bible sharing methods. See also <http://keg.mission-blog.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/03/The-Pastoral-Use-of-the-Bible-No.20.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Peter Henriot, "Social Discernment and the Pastoral Circle," in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, ed. Frans Wijssen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), 16.

communities.<sup>39</sup> BECs respond to issues affecting them as they also collaborate with other entities that offer resources both human and material. As their common concerns and struggles become a source of unity, teaching them to rely on one another, they live their call as a church. Community cooperatives, income-generating projects, and housing programs are set up according to the needs and the readiness of the communities. By engaging members to work together towards a common goal, they participate in the life of one another and the life of the world.

BEC's participation in social transformation and political renewal remains a challenge, however, as shown by the difficulties in sustaining its growth, the tendency to become institutionalized, and the lack of a concrete response to social issues and concerns.<sup>40</sup> While many BECs that respond to the daily realities of their communities thrive by their “creativity, adaptability, reflexivity, and grace,” many more BECs do not.<sup>41</sup>

### **Synodality as Participation**

Embodying a church of the poor is not only reflected in the building of BECs but in living in communion as a local church expressed through synodality.<sup>42</sup> *Synod* comes from the word “with” and “path;” defining the “path along which the people of God walk together.”<sup>43</sup> A synod could mean an assembly of believers, a *concilium*, or a council

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<sup>39</sup> See “Stories and Case Studies,” *CBCP BEC Cyber Office*, accessed October 22, 2019, [http://cbcpbec.com/?page\\_id=2281](http://cbcpbec.com/?page_id=2281).

<sup>40</sup> Amado Picardal, “Promoting and Forming Basic Ecclesial Communities: Problems and Prescription,” *CBCP BEC Cyber Office*, Accessed November 3, 2018, <http://cbcpbec.com/?p=188>.

<sup>41</sup> Karl Gaspar, “Will BECs Flourish or Self-Destruct in the Post-Modern Era.”

<sup>42</sup> Paul VI, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation Dei Verbum*, November 18, 1965, 26 [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html).

<sup>43</sup> International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church,” No. 3.

“convoked on various levels (diocesan, provincial, regional, patriarchal or universal),”<sup>44</sup> but it also refers to the spirit by which they come together. Synodality is the specific “*modus vivendi et operandi*” the way of being and doing of the Christian community, the People of God.<sup>45</sup>

Synodality happens when members share and listen to one another about everyday life issues and social concerns that affect them. Through the formation of the parish pastoral councils and the parish finance councils, the lay faithful participate in discernment and decision-making for the life of the community. But even more deeply, synodality is embodied when they participate in the life of God in their search for “meaning and well-being,” as they share their stories, opinions, and practical wisdom, and as they live in solidarity with issues of society “with its harshness and complexities...its beauty and mystery.”<sup>46</sup> Synodality happens as they “dialogue with the Spirit through prayer and discernment;” a doing of theology as a community.

**Synodality and participation of the poor.** Communal theologizing is practiced in assemblies organized in diocesan and national conferences, up to the Vatican synods and assemblies. It begins through a consultation process that encourages grassroots participation in pastoral planning and discernment.<sup>47</sup> Consultation is done either through

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[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_20180302\\_sinodalita\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html)

<sup>44</sup> International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church,” No. 4.

<sup>45</sup> International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church,” No. 6.

<sup>46</sup> Estela Padilla, “Theologizing in the Philippines,” unpublished *InSeCT Report*, accessed November 4, 2018, <https://insectheology.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/regional-report-philippines-theologizingphilippines.pdf5-6>.

<sup>47</sup> The Pastoral Spiral is a method of doing theological reflection that follows a four-step process is Contact/Immersion, Socio-cultural analysis, Theological Reflection, and Pastoral Response. “Pastoral Circle a common term in the United States, Canada, and Africa; and the Pastoral cycle is more popular in

surveys, interviews, or focus group interviews, to listen to their voices – their needs and aspirations.

Representatives are appointed and elected to dialogue further on what was gathered. From listening to the expressed needs of people in the church and the church they dream of fashioning, a critical analysis of society – cultural, political, and economic - is considered in dialogue with other sources of knowledge.<sup>48</sup> In this way, the church is “attentive to the work of *aggiornamento*, to listen to it, to test it against the sources of the past, to ring its diversity into a systematic whole, and to offer it back to the community of faith for the sake of its deeper understanding, interpretation, and application of the faith.”<sup>49</sup> From this process, they can collectively enact effective and relevant pastoral action.<sup>50</sup> Through a collaborative process in the work of *aggiornamento* and discernment, it witnesses to the “dynamism of communion.”<sup>51</sup>

However, a synodal structure, as studies confirm, still fails to engage the “others;” as it notes the absence-presence of the realities of the poor and marginalized in the analysis of church structures, in connecting social analysis and theological reflection, and

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United Kingdom, Australia, and Asia and Pastoral Spiral seems to be an exclusively Asian term. Pastoral Spiral is adopted by the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences, more widely used especially in the Philippines and Indonesia.” Frans Wijzen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia, eds., “Preface,” In *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation* eds. Frans Wijzen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), xxi.

<sup>48</sup> Henriot presents how social discernment in local churches and small Christian communities in Africa were also patterned from the Pastoral Circle. Peter Henriot, “Social Discernment and the Pastoral Circle,” in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, eds. Frans Wijzen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), 15-26.

<sup>49</sup> Ormond Rush, *The Eyes of Faith: The Sense of the Faithful and the Church’s Reception of Revelation* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2009), 206.

<sup>50</sup> Rush, *The Eyes of Faith*, 206.

<sup>51</sup> International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church,” nos. 75-76.

in developing pastoral plans.<sup>52</sup> There is a certain ambivalence reflected in synodal processes that begins by listening to the needs of the people on the ground and yet continues to hold its ground on matters of doctrine.<sup>53</sup> The authentic participation of the poor aims towards a synodality that enacts a “prophetic *diakonia*,” building a social ethos based on fraternity, solidarity, and inclusion.<sup>54</sup>

### **Participatory Methodology: The Experience of *Bukal ng Tipan***

Many pastoral centers around the Philippines strive to create this synodal spirit by empowering the voice of the people of God through faith formation programs and pastoral training. Biblical, catechetical, and pastoral programs enrich parishes and BECs and equip them towards participation with God, participation with one another, and participation with the world especially the poor.<sup>55</sup> Transforming them into Christian agents, it envisions the participation of lay faithful in ecclesial life. Among them is *Bukal ng Tipan* (Wellspring of the Covenant) Center, which strives to “journey with peoples towards a participatory church in the world through an experience of community and

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<sup>52</sup> Josef Elsner, “Pitfalls in the Use of the Pastoral Circle,” in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, ed. Frans Wijzen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), 43.

<sup>53</sup> Danny Pilario, “Doing Theology in a Garbage Dump: The Rough Ground of Theological Method,” Lecture at the World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology (CWCIT) De Paul University Chicago (October 23, 2014), 10. <https://svst.academia.edu/DannyPilario>.

<sup>54</sup> International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church,” no. 103.

<sup>55</sup> Some dioceses as well as religious congregations have established biblical, catechetical, or pastoral center to provide these programs. John Paul 1 Biblical Center founded by the Divine Word Missionaries located in Vigan, Ilocos Sur which conducts programs center on the Word of God such as Word Alive Biblical Institute, Basic Bible Seminar, and Bibliodrama, the Center for Family Ministries (CEFAM) of the Jesuit community focuses in formation on family ministries and in training pastoral counselors, and the Agong Peace Network organized through the Catholic Relief Services in Mindanao is a network of 32 grassroots -based peace organization and peace advocates for vision of building peace in Mindanao.

practical skills training.”<sup>56</sup> The center developed its program from many years of experience in a participatory parish community and the building of basic ecclesial communities.<sup>57</sup>

*Bukal ng Tipan* has two units: the local church unit is concerned in accompanying diocese and parishes and the youth unit offers corresponding programs for the youth in the parishes and schools. Embodying the vision of a participatory church, the center believes that every person has gifts and capacities to share in building up a church that is responsive to the needs of the world.<sup>58</sup>

### ***Bukal ng Tipan History***

From this shared vision and values, the center has developed courses, pastoral skills training, and spiritual experiences to facilitate the journey of local churches towards a participatory church. During its early years, the center offered pastoral courses that equipped participants with skills in Gospel sharing methods, creative liturgies, and faith formation in its in-house courses with the view of developing shared leadership and participatory processes in community life. Through its BEC training courses, pastoral workers were empowered to do the tasks of immersion, organizing, and sustaining basic ecclesial communities.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Estela Padilla, ed., *Handbook for a Participatory Church in the World* (Taytay: Bukal ng Tipan, 2019), 12.

<sup>57</sup> The founding members of Bukal ng Tipan came from the Parish of St. Joseph in Las Pinas Philippines. For more details see Estela Padilla, *Towards a Participatory Church: The Growth of Participation as a Way of Life in the Parish of St. Joseph, Las Pinas* (MA Thesis: Maryhill School of Theology, 1997).

<sup>58</sup> 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12; Ephesians 4; 1 Peter

<sup>59</sup> *Bukal ng Tipan* published manuals for BEC organizing as well as for training BEC facilitators. See Estela Padilla and Aleli Gutierrez, *Simbahan sa Kapitbayan: BEC Organizing Manual*. Taytay: Bukal ng Tipan, 2004. See also Estela Padilla and Aleli Gutierrez, *Facilitating the Emergence of a Church in the Neighborhood: BEC Facilitators' Basic*. Taytay: Bukal ng Tipan, 2004. See also Estela Padilla and Joy

From offering in-house courses, *Bukal* discovered new pathways as dioceses and institutions began inviting the team to conduct courses in their locales. As they touched base with them in their respective settings, *Bukal* realized that its in-house courses did not give due respect to the unique experiences and stories of the communities. This led them to design customized modules in response to the needs and interests of the partner communities. By moving from the “center to the local areas,” *Bukal* became more “context-based,” and in so doing became more “mission-oriented.” From seeing themselves as pastoral consultants, they became more aware of their role as “partners and co-disciples,” with the local church communities they encounter.<sup>60</sup>

### ***Bukal* Journeying Process**

*Bukal's* engagement with local communities follows a community journeying process, which is a modified and expanded version of the Pastoral Spiral. As shown in the figure 1, the process highlights doing theology together as a community.

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Candelario, *Facilitating the Emergence of a Church in the Neighborhood: BEC Facilitators' Advanced Training*. Taytay: Bukal ng Tipan, 2004.

<sup>60</sup> Estela Padilla, *Handbook for a Participatory Church in the World*, (Taytay: Bukal ng Tipan, 2019), 12-13.



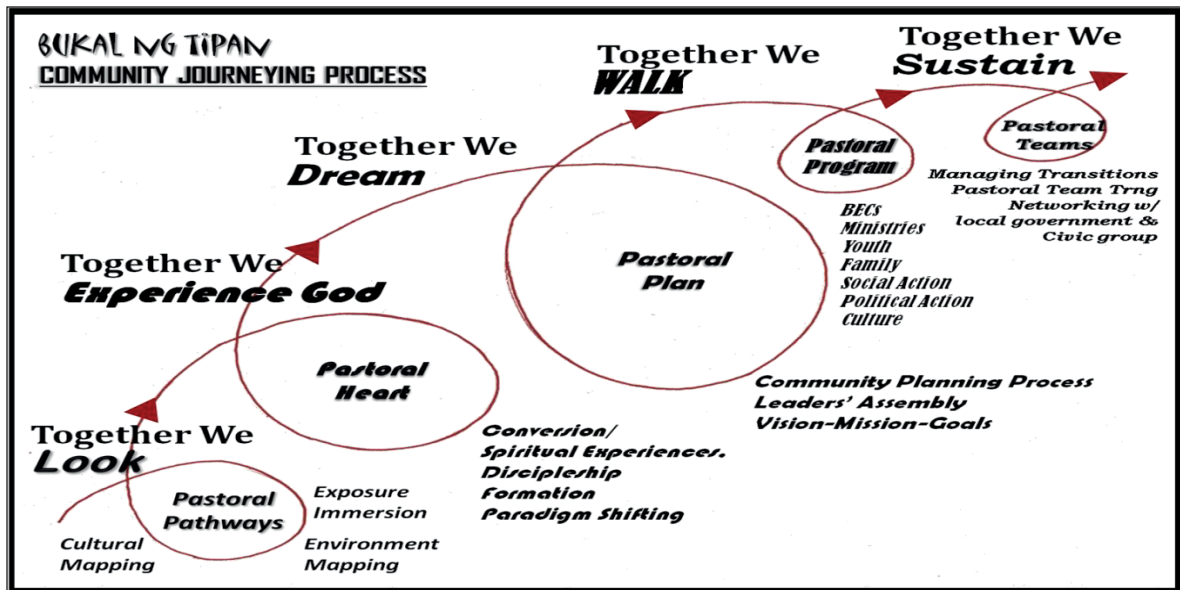


Figure 1. Bukal ng Tipan Community Journeying Process

**Together We Look: Pastoral Pathways.** When a diocese invites the team to journey with them, as an initial step, *Bukal* team conducts exposure-immersion experiences in the community to get to know the people and their way of life, as well as their needs and concerns. Together with local lay leaders and representatives from the diocesan commissions, they conduct cultural research to get to know the community and to find out how to engage people’s participation.

Tools are utilized to gather cultural information such as community history and events that shaped their culture of participation, to understand the level of relationships people share with one another, and to draw out existing problems in the neighborhood and its impact on people.<sup>61</sup> They also utilize neighborhood immersion tools and conduct

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<sup>61</sup> See “Appendix 1 Bukal ng Tipan Profiling Area Tools,” in *Handbook for a Participatory Church in the World*, ed. Estela Padilla (Taytay: *Bukal ng Tipan*, 2019).

house to house visits to find out family demographics of the area.<sup>62</sup> Community sessions are also organized to listen to people's aspirations and vision for their community.<sup>63</sup>

Looking together not only facilitates the gathering of information but also creates a spirit of participation which is at the heart of the process so that discernment, visioning, and decision-making may not only be a meeting of mind but a meeting of the heart.

**Together We Experience God: Pastoral Heart.** The encounter of the heart as an essential step is further facilitated through an experience of God together in spiritual experiences, faith formation, and leadership training in which people are formed from being individuals to becoming a community. As they bring before God what they have discovered as a community, they begin to realize their call as disciples. Together they deepen their relationship with God in prayer, bible sharing, and meaningful participation in liturgies and community celebrations. Drinking from their wells, they realize how they are called to participate in making God's vision and reign a reality in their midst.

**Together We Dream: Pastoral Plan.** The first two steps serve as a foundation for them to dream and craft a pastoral plan that begins from a shared vision and mission. At this phase, the information retrieved from the Pastoral Pathways is taken up to develop a vision and a mission for the entire community. A vision statement is forward-looking as it creates a mental image of their desired destination, the ideal state the diocese or parish wishes to pursue.<sup>64</sup> The drafting of the vision statement follows a bottom-up, top-

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<sup>62</sup> See "Appendix 2 Bukal ng Tipan Neighborhood Immersion Tools 1 and 2" in *Handbook for a Participatory Church in the World*, ed. Estela Padilla (Taytay: *Bukal ng Tipan*, 2019).

<sup>63</sup> See "Sample Community session to gather data about the community," in *Handbook for a Participatory Church in the World*, ed. Estela Padilla (Taytay: *Bukal ng Tipan*, 2019).

<sup>64</sup> "Without a vision the people perish." Proverbs 29:18.

down process and thus ensures that it is a statement that is shared and understood by the members of the community.

**Together We Walk: Pastoral Program.** It is from the vision that mission statements then are developed for commissions, parish communities, and BECs which becomes the basis for developing appropriate programs and strategies for the parish communities and various ministries in the diocese. The walking together means that all systems go to accomplish the vision.

**Together we Sustain: Pastoral Teams.** To sustain together, *Bukal* accompanies the diocese or parish in empowering the pastoral teams assigned to carry out the plan. They provide pastoral training to equip them with skills to design participatory experiences and processes important in deepening participation of people in community and for the concrete implementation of plans. Regular evaluation is also conducted to affirm and renew structures and strategies. Through this process, they expand networks and collaborative efforts to actualize the vision.

***Bukal's Continuing Challenge: Together with the "Others."*** *Bukal* has journeyed with more than 60 percent of dioceses in the country and has extended its service to local churches in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and many other countries.<sup>65</sup> These experiences continuously inform and transform the center's participatory framework. In recent years, *Bukal* has even encouraged that dioceses adapt and modify

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<sup>65</sup> In 2018, *Bukal ng Tipan* reports of serving 17 local dioceses and 12 international dioceses, which includes more than 500 parish communities through its journeying process, conferences, retreats, and workshops. See *Bukal ng Tipan*, "Total Reach of *Bukal ng Tipan* in 2018," accessed September 5, 2019. <http://www.bukalngtipan.net/>

the processes and the tools employed according to their specific needs and contexts; encouraging the creation of their unique paths in building a participatory church.

In all their experiences of partnership with dioceses and institutions as well as in pastoral planning processes, *Bukal* has learned that despite the wide participation of the laity and clergy, and even with a process that attends seriously to socio-political issues around them, the participation and continuous engagement of the “others” are still lacking. Despite synodal structures and processes, communal theologizing tend to be practiced as a form of governance and not to foster a culture of communion and participation. The voiceless remain unattended and dis-membered in church life and the holistic transformation intended by synodality is not achieved.

In a diocese afflicted by a super typhoon, BECs with some of the best practices of community resilience brought about by communal theologizing still fail to impact other BECs and their learning and insight do not purposively shape ecclesial life.<sup>66</sup> In another partner diocese afflicted by the extrajudicial killings, an extensive environmental mapping of the economic, political, and sociocultural contexts of the diocese in which priests and lay participated concluded with the three topmost issues to consider - infrastructures, pastoral formation, and liturgy.<sup>67</sup> Though aware that the killings were a growing concern in many parishes, it was not brought up as an urgent issue for all.

Notwithstanding the church’s concrete and immediate response to their needs, a truly participatory church is one that acknowledges and engages the power and presence

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<sup>66</sup> Details on the stories of the four BECs found in this paper. Estela P. Padilla, “Year of the Poor and *Gaudium et Spes*: Responding to Poverty Through BECs in the Archdiocese of Jaro” *CAL Lecture Series* (2015): 17.

<sup>67</sup> Focus Group Interview, *Bukal ng Tipan Team*, April 2019.

of the poor in understanding the signs of the times and in defining a responsive church for the present. God's justice for the marginalized is not only achieved by the living out of a preferential option for them but it is by recognizing God's presence and revelation through them who are salvific agents for the world.<sup>68</sup>

### **Towards a Participatory Church with the Others**

There is a need for a way of listening so that the voices of the marginalized, the *sensus fidei fidelium* might participate in theological reflection and communal discernment.<sup>69</sup> Such a practice works towards a “conversion to renew solidarity,” as it “carefully and courageously listens to the groans of the Spirit (Romans 8,26).”<sup>70</sup> Synodality may be enriched and renewed by crafting a “style of constructing history”<sup>71</sup> that works towards “pluriform unity.” Amid tensions and conflicts, such a process may hopefully “generate new life and build *authentic* communion amid disagreement.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> David Field, “On (Re) Centering the Margins,” in *Opting for the Margins: Postmodernity and Liberation in Christian Theology*, ed. Joerg Rieger (Oxford: American Academy of Religions, 2003), 51.

<sup>69</sup> Andrew Rogers, *Congregational Hermeneutics* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 6.

<sup>70</sup> International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church,” no. 103-106.

<sup>71</sup> There are different elements of history. First, there is “ephemeral history” with its fast and superficial changes in everyday life. Then a level of “conjectural history,” which is more expansive and has a more profound reach, but also a slower pace of change. Lastly, there is “structural history,” where basic structures of culture are located. The pace of change on this level borders on what changes and what does not. Basic cultural structures – call it worldview, if you will or fundamental mind-set, if you prefer, survive the most radical of revolutions. E. Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* (New York: Seabury, 1979), 577-582. See Jose de Mesa, *Attending to the Cultural in Contemporary Filipino Theologizing* (CICM Ongoing Formation Series, no.67), 30.

<sup>72</sup> International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church,” No.111.

It seeks to “weave webs of connection,” between faith and life,<sup>73</sup> as it is more concerned about “networking than hierarchy” not to create an “inaccessible perfection,” but to cooperate with God’s mission in the world.<sup>74</sup>

### **Constructing History through Local Church Studies**

Local church or congregational studies, which have been greatly influenced by practical theology, begin from a critical analysis of reality and a listening to the voice of the “others,” within the church and in the society.<sup>75</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, practical theology and congregational studies sought to find solutions to the impact of war and the rise of modernity. Through the years various studies have ventured into constructing history to understand church life and faith perspectives vis-a-vis social changes.<sup>76</sup> Local church studies in Europe and North America differ in orientation; the former, more especially, from British church scholars engage more in understanding in-church culture while the latter’s concentration has been more towards understanding local church vis-à-vis social issues and concerns.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Bonnie Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice: Discovering a Discipline* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 18.

<sup>74</sup> Bryan Froehle, “Synodality as Bridge Building,” in *Bridge Building: Pope Francis’ Practical Theological Approach*, eds. Thomas M. Kelley and Bob Pennington (New York: Crossroad, 2020), 13-15.

<sup>75</sup> The development of the field of Practical Theology has evolved to respond to this need. Among the key practical theologians are Richard Osmer, Don Browning, Terry Veiling, Johannes Van der Ven. Within the Catholic Church, Tracy problematized on the process of theologizing in the age of pluralism and concluded that there is a need to revise theology from the philosophical to the practical. See David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996. Tracy also suggested a correlational model of practical theology which uses the arts, aesthetics, and spiritual senses. See David Tracy, “A Correlational Model of Practical Theology Revisited,” in *Invitation to Practical Theology: Catholic Voices and Visions*, ed. Claire Wolfteich (Mahwah: Paulist, 2014): 70-86.

<sup>76</sup> In the 50s, the Institute of Community Studies in London pioneered studies of local churches to find a church solution to problems of society. A similar effort is reflected in an anthropological portrait of Middletown by Lynd and Lynd (1929). See Matthew Guest, “Why Study the Local Church,” In *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook*, ed. Helen Cameron and others (London: SCM Press, 2005), 6.

<sup>77</sup> The difference in perspective has been more influenced by academic funding. Academic research in the UK and elsewhere in Europe are not state funded while US research have received government support. Thus, “divergent traditions shape how studies are funded, which agenda is served, and

There are many approaches to local church studies some of which are reflected in the *Bukal* approach mentioned earlier. Some take a perspective that understands the congregation as a rational entity that constructs and re-constructs responses based on the teachings and official practices of the Church.<sup>78</sup> This has been critiqued in as much as there are multilayered values embodied in church practices that do not necessarily carry the normative perspective. To better listen to the “other voices,” a thick description of realities is further dissected and analyzed to identify existing problems and to find solutions. An ecological frame looks into the context either geographically - globally, nationally, locally, or spatially - political, economic, religious, social, and cultural contexts.<sup>79</sup> A cultural frame assesses the community through their way of life manifested in their rituals, sacred objects, and stories.<sup>80</sup> A resource frame looks at the available capital through manpower, assets, and expertise.<sup>81</sup> A process frame studies organizational processes such as strategies in decision making, planning, and evaluation, to capture the environmental climate of the community.<sup>82</sup>

To further listen to the voice of the ‘other’ especially in the changing cultures, some studies take the various frames in dialogue with ecclesial and cultural theories and

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which methods are deemed most appropriate.” Matthew Guest, “Why Study the Local Church,” In *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook* ed. Helen Cameron and others (London: SCM Press, 2005), 6.

<sup>78</sup> Don Browning is one of the proponents of this approach, adapting from the Jurgen Habermas’ theory of communicative action. See Don Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

<sup>79</sup> Nancy Eiesland and R. Stephen Warner, “Ecology: Seeing the Congregation in Context,” in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, eds. Nancy Ammerman and others (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 40-77.

<sup>80</sup> Nancy Ammerman, “Culture and Identity in the Congregation, in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* ed. Nancy Ammerman and others (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 78-104.

<sup>81</sup> William McKinney and others, “Resources,” in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, ed. Nancy Ammerman and others (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 132-166.

<sup>82</sup> Carl Dudley, “Process and Dynamics of Congregational Life,” in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, ed. Nancy Ammerman and others (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 105-131.

perspectives. For instance, a ‘transformatory’ ecclesiological study that sought to develop a theory of the church, considered three aspects that shape ecclesial life: the core functions of the church, elements of the culture of modernity, and theological codes of the church.<sup>83</sup> The function of identity and vision takes the theological code of People of God and the Jesus movement. The second function of integration or community is brought in dialogue with the code of “body of Christ.” The third function of policy expressed through projects and processes is engaged with the “gifts of the Spirit.” Finally, the fourth function of management is developed with the code of “the church of the poor.” While it interestingly analyzes the church as a cultural system that continually engages with the voice of culture and social change, it tends to analyze from a perspective of established norms leaving the voice of the “other” still left out of the conversation.

### **Attending to Participation and the Other Voices**

Oppressed bodies that remain voiceless in society cannot compete with existing narratives represented by those in power. It requires a rereading of narratives in a space where bodies are free to express their voice. Re-engaging the voices in the construction of history means understanding that dynamics of power, truth, goodness, and reason are not reflected as transcendent ideals but they are embodied, enacted, and performed as practices in communities.<sup>84</sup> By focusing on bodily participation especially in its

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<sup>83</sup> The term transformatory ecclesiology was coined by the Van der Ven to nuance the ecclesiology in context he is proposing. Johannes van der Ven, *Ecclesiology in Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), xii.

<sup>84</sup> Elaine Graham, *Words made Flesh: Women, Embodiment and Practical Theology* (London: SCM, 2009), 115.



“performative, incarnational nature,”<sup>85</sup> the “others” are acknowledged as active agents, “creators, as well as the creations of human relations.”<sup>86</sup> Recognizing the critical and reconstructive role of the voiceless in transforming the Christian community attends to themes of “embodiment, suffering, and ethics,”<sup>87</sup> brings new perspectives on healing and empowerment, and renews rituals and practices in conversation with them.<sup>88</sup> Embodying their suffering, a “moral sensibility grounded in communicative intersubjectivity” is achieved.<sup>89</sup>

Listening to the others engages various voices in ecclesial life – the espoused voice (what Christians say they believe), the normative voice (what is passed on by tradition), the formal voice (manifested by church teachings and by theologians), and the operant voice (what practices disclose about lived theology).<sup>90</sup> It also brings forward the importance of “ordinary theology” existing in conventional and popular religion, as well as in organized and non-organized religion.<sup>91</sup> They go by various names such as “*lo cotidiano*” or theology of the everyday life “and *la lucha* or in the struggle.”<sup>92</sup> *Lo*

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<sup>85</sup> Graham, *Words made Flesh*, 109.

<sup>86</sup> Elaine Graham, *Words made Flesh*, 115.

<sup>87</sup> Elaine Graham, “Only Bodies Suffer: Embodiment, Representation and the Practice of Ethics.” In *Words Made Flesh: Writings in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (London: SCM 2009), 116.

<sup>88</sup> Graham, *Words made Flesh*, 110.

<sup>89</sup> Graham, “Only Bodies Suffer,” 119.

<sup>90</sup> Rogers cites from the Action, Research, Church, and Society Project from Heythrop College that developed the terminology to distinguish the different voices in theology. Andrew Rogers, *Congregational Hermeneutics: How Do We Read?* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2015), 5-6.

<sup>91</sup> While conventional religion is reflected in prescribed beliefs and practices in the church tradition and structure, popular religion refers to that which is transmitted outside the structure, but which people find meaningful in expressing their beliefs. On the other hand, there are beliefs and practices that are found in “organized equivalents to religion” present in arts, music or political activities or those that are non-organized practices that reflect values such as those regarding sexuality and survival. Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology: Looking, Listening, and Learning in Theology* (London: Ashgate, 2002), 91.

<sup>92</sup> Women-centered liberation or *mujerista* theologians like Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz believe in the power of lived experience and the everyday. Their work takes two axes – liberation epistemologies and decolonizing epistemologies. The former looks into the various deep resources of oppressed people of Latin America and the irruption of *comunidades de base* (basic ecclesial communities) while the latter argues

*cotidiano* is “intrinsically linked with common sense,” and as it characterizes the messiness of life, can be unmethodical, and has no time to deal with problems one at a time.<sup>93</sup> Considering that majority of Christians are not in church, their everyday practices and interaction also reveal the sense of faith so often overlooked in ecclesial life.

With only ten percent of the Catholic population having formal theological training, access to popular religiosity is the only existing theology and spirituality for the non-specialists who compose the vast majority of the ordinary Catholic faithful. Since they have no access, they are also not heard. But even in the language of Catholic theology, these voices from the ground – the *sensus fidelium* – should be listened to since they are also considered a *locus theologicus*, one of the fundamental sources of the faith.<sup>94</sup>

By attending to everyday practices, a study about an interracial church that envisioned to welcome “people who aren’t like us,” highlighted their practices of inclusiveness and equal opportunities given to people with profound disabilities but it also brought out practices that still reflect attitudes of racism and classism that are otherwise overlooked.<sup>95</sup> Through an ethnographic take on formation practices, worship practices, homemaking practices, as well as interpretive practices, the research uncovered exceptional practices of welcome which makes it distinct but also revealed “a variety of

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against the privileging of Western theories in discourses and the uplifting of indigenous theories that privilege the local and particular. See Ada Maria Isasi Diaz, and Edgardo Mendieta, “Introduction: Freeing Subjugated Knowledge,” in *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*, ed. Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Eduardo Mendieta (New York: Fordham, 2012), 1-12.

<sup>93</sup> Ada Maria Isasi Diaz, “*Lo Cotidiano*: A Key Element in *Mujerista* Theology,” *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 10, no. 1 (8-1-2002): 5-7.

<sup>94</sup> Danny Pilario, “Catholics in Asia,” in *Christianity in East Asia and Southeast Asia*, ed. Kenneth Ross, Francis Alvarez and Todd Johnson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

<sup>95</sup> Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church* (New York: Oxford, 2007), 6.

positionings ...with difference” that are oblivious and aversive and shaped by socio-political processes.<sup>96</sup>

Ethnographic studies of communities among marginalized Filipinos have helped advance their needs and concerns but also provided new perspectives in community resilience and social performance. A study among the *Bakwits* or internally displaced people in the southern Philippines who have been in the midst of war and conflict and have transcended the odds, brought out their survival tactics, creativity, assertiveness, and communal power.<sup>97</sup> A study of the journey and practices of resistance by *lumads* or the indigenous communities in Mindanao, bring out unique cultural rituals that harness their gift of community, to be who they are; helping them stand against threats to their lives and enable them to survive as a people.<sup>98</sup> As a kind of participatory ethnography, the research highlighted collective movements that converge politically with the culture for both the community and the researcher in which both embark on generating cultural energies to respond to the local issue.<sup>99</sup>

Participatory researches have also developed practical theologies of reconciliation and peace practices. By bringing into conversation Christian understanding regarding healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation with practices that embody these understandings, and by looking for parallel practices in the larger, non-Christian public sphere, practical

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<sup>96</sup> Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church*, 17.

<sup>97</sup> See Canuday, Jose Jewel. *Bakwit: The Power of the Displaced* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009).

<sup>98</sup> Albert Alejo, *Generating Energies in Mount Apo* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000), 236.

<sup>99</sup> Albert Alejo, *Generating Energies in Mount Apo*, 11.

theology of reconciliation could be developed.<sup>100</sup> Many Christian communities also reimagine their life of suffering through collective theological reflection.<sup>101</sup> Through openness to listen to the “other” by engaging with them holistically and by “transforming the ubiquitous presence” of the Catholic Church, many communities discover creative peacebuilding practices with groups in war situations and tribal conflicts.<sup>102</sup>

### **Re-membering the Filipino Passion**

Continuing these innovative ways of studying local church and re-membering the others, the research particularizes on “the voice of praxis from the rough grounds,”<sup>103</sup> the practices of participation of individuals and communities in the phenomenon of extrajudicial killings and the war on drugs in the Philippines guided by the following questions: In what way did the war on drugs impact bodies? What do the bodies in power, dead bodies, and suffering bodies convey? What bodily participation has been made evident by this phenomenon? How are these practices informing and transforming ecclesial life and practices? How are these practices critiquing ecclesial and everyday life

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<sup>100</sup> One of the leading theologians in this realm is Robert Schreiter who authored many books and articles on Peacebuilding and Reconciliation as well as engaged in actual conflict resolutions of communities around the world. See Robert Schreiter, “A Practical Theology of Healing, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation,” in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, ed. Robert Schreiter, R. Scott Appleby, and Gerard Powers (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010), 366-397. Also see Michael Amaladoss, “A Cycle Opening to Pluralism,” in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, ed. Frans Wijzen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), 169-181.

<sup>101</sup> Michael Amaladoss, “A Cycle Opening to Pluralism,” 169-181.

<sup>102</sup> William Headley and Reina Neufeldt, “Catholic Relief Services: Catholic Peacebuilding in Practice,” in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, eds. Robert Schreiter R. Scott Appleby, and Gerard Powers (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010), 125-154.

<sup>103</sup> To theologize from the rough grounds is to practice theological reflexivity, which is not only about instilling an attitude of humility to accept that one’s language is limited in understanding or articulating the plight of the poor in theological discourse but it is a “structure rooted in the epistemological and sociological dimensions of our being human.” Danny Pilario, “Doing Theology in a Garbage Dump: The Rough Ground of Theological Method,” Lecture at the World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology (CWCIT) De Paul University Chicago (October 23, 2014), 9. <https://svst.academia.edu/DannyPilario>.

practices? In what way can it contribute towards the re-membering of the Filipino Passion in a participatory church?

As a work of practical theology, the study insists on a practice-theory-practice approach to doing theology. It seeks to advance ecclesial self-understanding from the experience of participation in the ongoing story. It is not to develop a pastoral program or project that directly responds to those victimized by extrajudicial killings, but rather to respond to an even more fundamental need of the Catholic Church in the Philippines: to engage the suffering bodies as actual participants in the making of church and its self-understanding. Up to now the Catholic Church in the Philippines has had many ways of theologizing and responding to stories of suffering. As a practical theological project, it brings forward the potential of the suffering body to participate in the shaping of ecclesial life and practice. An ecclesial self-understanding grounded on the body will allow a more comprehensive response to the suffering body and its participation in the life of the Church.

To enter the *memoria passionis* of today and giving due attention to the stories of those who suffer and those who suffer with them, the lens of performance studies, which developed from the realm of theater can open pathways towards re-membering the “others.” Its playfulness, openness, and fluidity makes it liable to criticism but it is the same elements that enable performance studies to contribute to the understanding of life – in all its complexities.<sup>104</sup> At the onset, performance is hastily interpreted as an act of

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<sup>104</sup> Sruti Bala, “The Entangled Vocabulary of Performance,” *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities – Special Issue on Performance Studies* V, no. 2 (November 2, 2013): 12-21.

staging, an artistic practice. While it is, there is more to performance than simply a spectacle to watch.

The etymology of the word theater the-in, which means “ways of seeing” expands its perspectives as it also connects with *thea-tron*, *theo-ria*, and *thea-mai*. Performance, and in our purview, participation is a communicative process and a historical and cultural event. As an example, the Sinulog, a popular dance ritual and tradition with the image of Santo Nino from the Southern Philippines showcases the Filipino identity in the south as it conveys a multilayer of meaning through its dance movements.<sup>105</sup> The dance choreography and historical development embody the intersections where the “warrior and the saint, the local and the foreigner, the Christian and the infidel, the families of the poor and the rich, the colonial and the nationalist,” complement and also contrast one another.<sup>106</sup> The different versions of the dance capture the common bonds of meaning between performers, choreographers, church and government organizers, as well as vendors and spectators.<sup>107</sup>

A story of suffering such as the ongoing extrajudicial killings in the Philippine society brings out multilayered participation and performance of the social body. Despite many lead actors in the story, every member of the society has a part to play. Every aspect of the story branches out in subplots that implicate different settings and backgrounds of people including the setting of the ecclesial community.

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<sup>105</sup> Sally Ann Ness, *Body Movement, and Culture: Kinesthetic and Visual Symbolism in a Philippine Community*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1992), 41-47.

<sup>106</sup> Ness, *Body Movement, and Culture*, 174.

<sup>107</sup> Ness, *Body Movement, and Culture*, 222-225.

## Overview of the Chapters

The succeeding chapter will present the cultural-performative framework suggested through the *memoria passionis* and *kapwa*. The *memoria passionis*, the dangerous memory of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is the core story that binds all Christians and is reinterpreted in the stories of the suffering of the "others" in history. The concept of *kapwa* and the Filipino value structure as developed by *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* or Filipino Indigenous Psychology articulates the Filipino psyche and personhood characterized as relational and communal.

Chapter three begins with the question 'who is your neighbor?' and will seek to uncover the answer through a retelling of the *memoria passionis* in the ongoing extrajudicial killings in Philippine society instigated by the war on drugs. As a story that implicates everyone as a neighbor, the chapter elaborates on how the present government created the narrative of a "dangerous *kapwa*," out of drug users and drug pushers, through systematized othering and how this process continues through the death-dealing experiences their left-behind families face. It also explores ecclesial practices in the story and how they illumine the same process of othering in the public sphere. The story of Kian de los Santos may have awakened the ecclesial community through acts of solidarity and resistance but the story, powerful as it was, failed to effectively give voice to truth and impact changes in the society and within the church structure. It then presents the local communities where the research was conducted and *pakikipagkapwa* as the method. As a framework that is both epistemological and methodological, it advances a *habitus* for ecclesial practices that grounds itself in the *memoria passionis* and *kapwa*.

Chapter four explores the stories of male victims alluded to as Men of Good Friday. The war on drugs not only reveal stories of widows and mothers in the aftermath but stories of the dead victims – those fathers and sons who have been brutally killed. Like the story of the passion of Jesus, the war on drugs highlights the participation of men. Subaltern studies suggest that to understand the poor and the oppressed, victims and sufferers, is to embrace the complexities attached to them and to understand their subordination and the state of being others in society.<sup>108</sup> Through the lens of masculinity studies, it will explore the different forms of masculinities (hegemonic, marginalized, complicit and subordinated) that are present in the ongoing story. Stories of victims as told by their family members, why, and how they were killed, are analyzed and assessed in this section. Though they have been collectively defined by poverty, their individual stories provide a complex web of relations, as well as structures in which faith and church life are interwoven.

Trauma studies also inform individuals and groups that are ministering to the left-behind families. Chapter five will refer to *communitas* founded and established at the point of crisis to respond to the liminal experiences of victims and survivors. Through a model approach in analyzing the three existing *communitas*, their best practices of ministry towards victims and survivors will be brought in dialogue with trauma

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<sup>108</sup> Mark Lewis Taylor, “Subalterity and Advocacy as Kairos for Theology,” 30-31.



theories.<sup>109</sup> Trauma as the “lens that casts the relationship between death and life,”<sup>110</sup> bring people who experience trauma in a “suspended middle territory, between death and life,” and that the “key to articulating a theology of redemption,” is to understand what it means to be a “witness who remains.”<sup>111</sup> The themes derived from the best practices would be a proposal of a church in the middle territory characterized by listening, margin-dwelling, and recreating.

Chapter six covers the phase of reaggregation and focuses its attention on the web of life in a local community afflicted by extrajudicial killings and members who in varying levels are facing the “ongoingness” of trauma. The weaving of a new story happens when the testifier and witness decide to journey together with others. The multiple voices of others in the aftermath highlight the importance of solidarity of ‘others’ in reworking the map of trauma and in suggesting new ways of ministering seen through their strategies and tactics of resistance and hope.

The concluding chapter provides pathways towards a participatory church with the others through a three-fold praxis informed by the *memoria passionis* - praxis of communion, praxis of reconciliation and praxis of solidarity. The *kapwa* paradigm can be further explored as a framework in journeying towards a participatory church with the others utilized in developing a culture of inclusivity, in crafting practices that uplifts

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<sup>109</sup> Trauma theorists include Judith Herman, Flora Keshkegian, Serene Jones and Shelly Rambo. Rambo, who did extensive work on trauma from different disciplines. Trauma theory may have developed out of the experience of the Holocaust of survivors and has evolved through engagement of the field of psychology and humanities. Female theologians like Serene Jones and Shelly Rambo have engaged with trauma studies in many of their writings.

<sup>110</sup> Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma, A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 11.

<sup>111</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 25-26.

Filipino values, culture, and history, and in designing pastoral approaches especially in facing the post-traumatic scenario of resurrecting wounds. Sensing the sacred from a fragmented, broken body of Christ today challenges a church that is more open to being changed by the others.

## CHAPTER TWO. MEMORIA PASSIONIS AND KAPWA

*The key figure in the Christian faith involves a story of suffering so that others do well. You're only going to get so much liberation, you're only going to get so much transformation, from a system that is based on suffering.*

*Anthony Pinn* <sup>112</sup>

Truth, goodness, and beauty became alive in the person of Jesus, and his life, death, and resurrection. It is his story, the *memoria passionis* that continues to inspire us in creating a “community of the beautiful,” through the “experience of beauty in the furnace of a violent history.”<sup>113</sup> God reveals Godself to humanity and continually transforms the world through what is true, good, and beautiful – even in pain and violence. But this story is reinterpreted to us every day within our culture and way of being. The story of Jesus inculturated in the Filipino psyche and personhood is powerful and transforming.

This chapter presents two lenses that will inform the research. First, it will explore the *memoria passionis* from the perspective of performance studies to bring out the multilevel dimensions involved in the stories of suffering today; as a story where each one has a role and where the past is always connected to the present, the *memoria*

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<sup>112</sup> Meara Sharma, “Anthony Pinn on Divine Acquisition,” *Guernica*, accessed March 31, 2020. <https://www.guernicamag.com/divine-acquisition/>.

<sup>113</sup> As a Latin American theologian, Rivera conceives of a “community of the beautiful,” from the history of Latin American church. Despite the difference of language and culture, European missionaries in Latin America creatively merged Christian and indigenous symbols to evangelize Latin Americans. The Medellin conference which gave birth to Liberation theology, experience this reinterpretation of Christianity through the irruption of the poor. Alejandro Garcia Rivera, *Community of the Beautiful* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2017), 11, EBSCO Publishing: eBook Collection (EBSCOhost) – printed on 2/25/2020.

*passionis* becomes our story. Second, it will provide the framework in which this story is being enacted in the here and now. The *kapwa* as a Filipino core value provides a cultural perspective in the understanding of the *memoria passionis* as our story. While it is one thing to be part of the story, it is another level to be involved and to participate in its making and remaking. It happens when one takes the perspective of a Filipino, who is a *kapwa* and who embodies *pakikipagkapwa*.

### ***Memoria Passionis* as a Praxis of Suffering**

The *memoria passionis* is the central truth, the distinct memory, which unites Christians to a common vision of hope for the world. God, who became man through Jesus, embodied participation in the fullest way, and the Christian faith is expressed, embodied, and lived through his dangerous memory. When memory is awakened, identity is formed; an essential “category of liberation.”<sup>114</sup> It provides us a “sense of who we are, where we belong, what we expect, and what or who we ultimately trust.”<sup>115</sup>

As the bearer and witness of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, the church is challenged to continually understand itself and prove itself through this memory.<sup>116</sup> The *memoria passionis* is not one that saves one from the dangers the future brings

On the contrary, it holds particular anticipation of the future as a future for the hopeless, the shattered, and the oppressed...it is a dangerous and liberating memory, which badgers the present and calls it into question, since it does not remember just any open future, but precisely this... and because it compels

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<sup>114</sup> Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 75.

<sup>115</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory* 102.

<sup>116</sup> Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 88.

believers to be in a continual state of transformation (in order) to take this future into account.<sup>117</sup>

By becoming human, Jesus embraced the historical struggle of people of his time as his own, becoming the other, a *kapwa tao* (fellow human being). Jesus' creation of a *communita* through a small group of 12 men enabled him to proclaim a vision of a new world for the poor and oppressed. In the life of the parish, in the BECs, and even in the family, it is this memory that binds people to one hope and dream. When Christians recall what happened to Jesus, it becomes a memory of what will happen to those who believe.<sup>118</sup> The memory of Jesus is the memory of the future, the "eschatological hope," the operative narrative of those who follow Christ. Jesus' life as a memory of hope conveys memories of a God who became man and who is faithful, true, and steadfast in his unconditional love.<sup>119</sup>

The stories of those who have gone before us but have suffered on earth as well as those who in every part of the world continue to resist and fight for justice and peace, concretize Jesus' dangerous memory today. To be in solidarity with the poor and marginalized is not only to look forward to the ethical perspectives for the next generations but to also look backward to the memory of the dead and the vanquished through mystical-universal solidarity; engaging those who suffer towards their agency in the ultimate transformation of society by their participation.<sup>120</sup> Such engagement is a

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<sup>117</sup> Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 89.

<sup>118</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory* 100.

<sup>119</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory* 101.

<sup>120</sup> Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 67, 210-211.

"mysticism of open eyes," a mysticism of "suffering unto God."<sup>121</sup> It facilitates the crucial role of the church as a "political actor," who by existing and acting politically towards ongoing history, effectively articulates the dangerous memory of Jesus in the world today.<sup>122</sup>

Remembering the subjugated from their experience of victimization is problematic when it is interpreted by the dominant voice.<sup>123</sup> To facilitate their "passage from subordination to selfhood," and to enable them to be both "agents and vehicles of divine disclosure," it is important to let the bodies of the poor and oppressed become the very site of revelation and resistance.<sup>124</sup> As "sacraments of the Divine"<sup>125</sup> and as a "unique site of suffering and joy," it is a "place for crucifixion and oppression," as well as resurrection.<sup>126</sup>

In solidarity with them, the living "communion of saints;" the so-called "friends of God and prophets" expand the dangerous memory of Jesus.<sup>127</sup> As "partners, companions, comrades, co-disciples;" they embody love through their "heroic

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<sup>121</sup> James Matthew Ashley, *Interruptions: Mysticism, Politics, and Theology in the Work of Johann Baptist Metz*. (Notre Dame: Notre Dame, 1998), 31.

<sup>122</sup> Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 88.

<sup>123</sup> This is central to the work of feminist theologians such as Elizabeth Johnson, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, M. Shawn Copeland, and Ivone Gebara. Johnson lifts practices that recover stories of women who suffered but resisted as she argues how remembering while remaining in the status quo does not respond to the dangerous memory. See Elizabeth Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets* (New York: Continuum, 1999), 142-ff. As a Biblical scholar, Schussler Fiorenza's great contribution is rereading the Christian story from the perspective of women. See Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 19. Other female theologians mentioned in this book are cited for their work on body theology and bodily practices.

<sup>124</sup> Graham, *Words made Flesh*, 109.

<sup>125</sup> Graham, *Words made Flesh*, 119.

<sup>126</sup> Ivone Gebara, *Out of the Depths: Women's Experience of Evil and Salvation*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 20.

<sup>127</sup> Elizabeth Johnson, *Truly Your Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 306-307.

sanctity.”<sup>128</sup> Together with those who suffer, they proclaim the *memoria passionis* as the key to society’s healing and transformation.

It was the story of Jesus that gave hope to Filipinos to overcome obstacles that kept them from dreaming of a better future. Colonized for hundreds of years, the story of Jesus reinterpreted in the form of the *Pasyon*, awakened Filipinos to their right for freedom and liberation.<sup>129</sup> While the missionaries originally intended it as a catechetical tool and an instrument to “inculcate loyalty to Spain and Church,” the *Pasyon* became a medium to inspire Filipinos’ ideals and vision for a new life. It inspired them to organize the revolutionary movement that fought against the Spanish and American colonizers. Identifying themselves in the image of Christ who was willing to suffer and die, the *Pasyon* prepared them to portray the character of Jesus in real life and become liberators in the nation’s fight against foreign domination.<sup>130</sup>

Stories of suffering present new forms of the *Pasyon* to the Filipinos. Every story enfleshes the *memoria passionis*; a praxis of suffering that may reignite people in their social responsibility and their participation with others. Many times, however, the *memoria passionis* is presented simply as a story of suffering from the past creating a “false consciousness” and “opium for the present.”<sup>131</sup> Considered as history or a distant event, it fails to draw us out existentially in the present.<sup>132</sup> Detaching the memory of

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<sup>128</sup> Johnson, *Truly Your Sister*, 310.

<sup>129</sup> The *Pasyon* is an epic composed of 3,150 stanzas with five lines of eight syllables and translated into seven Filipino languages. Though there are several versions of the *Pasyon*, the most popularly used by the masses was published in 1814. See Reynaldo Clemena Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution. Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979), 12.

<sup>130</sup> Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 19.

<sup>131</sup> Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 106.

<sup>132</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory*, 98.

Jesus from dangerous memories today takes away the power of the story of redemption.<sup>133</sup> Like the soap operas Filipinos follow on television, it will only disrupt people's gaze momentarily; they can empathize and identify with suffering for a while but soon forget.

It for this reason that the *memoria passionis* needs to be read and interpreted from a performative framework. The term performative is to suggest how bodily practices and participation interrupt, confront, disrupt, and transform. It suggests a framework that develops a movement from "*mimesis* to *poiesis*," and from "*poiesis* to *kinesis*."<sup>134</sup> A framework that focuses on *kinesis* looks at re-membering through actions and movements that cross boundaries.

Violence is a performance that involves individuals and communities in a complex and unimaginable way. As painful as it is to witness people's helpless reactions before the body of a loved one or a neighbor who was shot, such a scene belongs to a bigger story that involves each one of us. The practices of participation of individuals and communities on the issue of extrajudicial killings reflect the different stages of a social drama.<sup>135</sup> It also involves a traumatic phenomenon that impacts both individuals and communities and inspires collective action to respond in multilayered and multidimensional ways.

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<sup>133</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory*, 96.

<sup>134</sup> Dwight Conquergood, "Of Caravans and Carnivals: Performance Studies in Motion," *MIT Press Journals* 39, no.4, (Winter 1995):27.

<sup>135</sup> Victor Turner proposed the theory of social drama after his immersion in the Ndembu community in Nigeria. Alongside this theory, he proposed other concepts such as *communitas* and liminality. Turner's discoveries took a performative turn when he met Richard Schechner a dramatist and performance theorist.



## ***Memoria Passionis* as Social Drama**

The theory of social drama believes that stories of suffering are composed of units of “aharmonic or disharmonic social process, arising in conflict situations,”<sup>136</sup> that erupts an existing social system develops “interactions, transactions, reciprocities” among individuals and communities to restore order and stability.<sup>137</sup> Any story of suffering, the *memoria passionis* of today, is a social drama that goes through four phases – the phases of breach, crisis, redressive action, and reintegration.

**Breach.** A breach is an “act or a result of breaking,” or an “infraction or violation, as of a law, truth, faith or promise,”<sup>138</sup> and which is done deliberately by an individual, who may think about it as an altruistic act for and on behalf of others. In remembering the story of Jesus, many times, Jews are seen to be the cause of the breach and for centuries, this misinterpretation has also caused many wars and ongoing conflicts in the world. Jesus himself delivered what he has promised; “to set fire upon the earth” He created the breach by preaching the beatitudes, rallying for the poor and oppressed, and calling for reforms in the practice of Jewish rituals. He embodied his dissent through radical acts that disrupted and disturbed people.

**Crisis.** As a “stage of instability or danger,” a crisis is a dramatic moment that impacts society on different levels. Depending on how the breach is handled, a crisis can be short-lived, in which case, the “breach can be sealed off quickly within a limited area of social interaction” or escalated when the crisis extends with some “dominant cleavage”

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<sup>136</sup> Victor Turner, *Drama, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (London: Cornell, 1975), 17.

<sup>137</sup> Victor Turner, *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience*, ed. Edith Turner (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1985), 196.

<sup>138</sup> OED, Oxford English Dictionary See *Breach* <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/breach?s=t>.

or crack from the “widest set of relevant social relations” to which the conflicting parties belong.”<sup>139</sup> A crisis, however, provides turning points or moments of danger and suspense that expose the reality to be addressed.<sup>140</sup> The stage of a public crisis is what is called a “liminal phase,” a “threshold,” where those who are involved are challenged to address or manage it.<sup>141</sup>

The attributes of liminality or liminal *personae* (“threshold people”) are necessarily ambiguous since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, or to the eclipse of sun or moon.<sup>142</sup>

Such a state can be characteristic of people undergoing life transitions like childhood to puberty or getting into a new role like marriage or becoming a mother. But liminality is characterized by stories of suffering where people are stripped from their life roles and

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<sup>139</sup> Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, 38.

<sup>140</sup> Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, 39.

<sup>141</sup> Turner derived his concept of liminality from Van Gennep’s rite of passage which posits that people go through a transition process in every change of status or situation. First, the person is disengaged from the society and his own status. Second, while being detached from society, the person is accompanied or supervised. Third, at the post-liminal stage, the person returns to society with a new status.

<sup>142</sup> Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (New Jersey: Rutgers, 2011), 95.

relationships while going through a stage of healing and transformation. For people who have lost loved ones, such a liminal process is important to express grief and bereavement. For the poor and the subjugated however, liminality is not a phase that they go through. It is their lived experience. To re-member them demands to understand this space of liminality which is complex and multilayered especially for victims of complicated deaths.

**Redressive action and *communitas*.** During the stage of redress, strategies are employed, either formal or informal to deal with the crisis. Ritual processes include “divination into the hidden cause of misfortune,” those that have to do with rituals of healing, as well as “rituals of affliction” created to assuage fears but also to provide healing to those afflicted and bereaved.<sup>143</sup> There are also rituals likened to “life-crisis ceremonies” that people undergo to celebrate a passage from one stage of life to the next or to resolve conflicts.<sup>144</sup>

It is at this stage that *communitas* is formed, which offers an unstructured space of social bonding distinct from the official structure.<sup>145</sup> There are three types of *communitas* namely: “a) existential or spontaneous *communitas*, b) normative *communitas* referring to those which are organized social systems with goals to pursue, and c) ideological *communitas*, referring to utopian models of societies.”<sup>146</sup> When individuals enter into *communitas* they become “liminal entities,” that “have no status... rank or role, position

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<sup>143</sup> Turner, “Are There Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual, And Drama?” *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theater and Ritual*, ed. Richard Schechner and Willa Appel, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 11.

<sup>144</sup> Turner, “Are There Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual, And Drama?” 11.

<sup>145</sup> Turner, *Ritual Process*, 95-97.

<sup>146</sup> Turner, *Ritual Process*, 131-132.

in a kinship system.”<sup>147</sup> and they live within the margins or the lower rungs of social structure.<sup>148</sup> Within and among them, they experience new life; refreshing and revitalizing the structure. It is important for both *communitas* and structure to continue to coexist and to be in dialogue with each other.<sup>149</sup> The life of *communitas* can be maximized in as much as there is a continuous dialectic between other *communitas*, characterized by undifferentiated equality and the structure, which is a “system of social positions,” that is hierarchical and differentiated.<sup>150</sup>

**Re-Aggregation Phase.** When individuals in *communitas* are re-aggregated back in the society or community, they take on a different status achieved through these ritual processes. If this new status is not achievable, a schism takes place, which begins a new phase in the individual’s identity and the development of new structures to support the change.

**The Church as *Communita*.** An analysis of the church as a cultural system through several existing *communitas* highlights the importance of this theory in ecclesiology.<sup>151</sup> In Philippine history, the EDSA Revolution reflected as a social drama uniquely displays these four stages. The years of dictatorial rule, divided the nation, brought poverty and oppression to millions. When key military leaders took a stand to

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<sup>147</sup> Turner, *Ritual Process*, 95.

<sup>148</sup> Turner, *Ritual Process*, 125.

<sup>149</sup> Turner, *Ritual Process*, 140.

<sup>150</sup> Turner, *Ritual Process*, 131.

<sup>151</sup> Examples of *communitas* such as the new tribal religious movements gaining ground in sub-Saharan Africa, the basic ecclesial communities found in Latin America, and the growing women’s churches in Europe, challenge the institutional church through what is called an “ecclesiology of processual dynamics.” New rituals, processes and structures it employs in dialogue with church norms and tradition informs and transforms their respective *communitas* but also the institutional church. Carl Starkloff, “Church as Structure and *Communitas*: Victor Turner and Ecclesiology,” *Theological Studies* 58,4 (December 1997): 643.

oust the government, Filipinos' united with them in the fight. The peaceful revolt brought out the dynamics of Filipino culture and the Christian faith through ritual practices that embodied *lakas-ganda* (gracious power), *lakas awa* (compassionate force), and *lakas saya* (indomitable joy).<sup>152</sup> *Lakas* or power expressed with *ganda* or beauty was conveyed by the expression of faith by the people with their rosaries and statues as they barricaded the camps and stood in front of tanks manned by soldiers. Power conveyed with *awa* or compassion was exemplified by the response of people to the call of the Cardinal to prevent bloodshed between the military against the military. Power conveyed with *saya* or joy was expressed by the way the revolution turned out to be a feast as people shared food and sang songs together at the crossfire. The revolution highlighted the critical-collaboration between the church and the people. Though it has affirmed the Filipino culture of peace and solidarity, this social drama continues as the fight for freedom from oppression and violence is ongoing to this day and age.

The war on drugs is a social drama that gave birth to different categories of *communitas* engaged in different levels. It also uplifts the continuous struggle between the ruling forces and the Filipino poor, how Filipino embody *pakikipagkapwa tao* during conflicts, and how creativity is exhibited to provide healing and transformation.<sup>153</sup> This crisis impacts the church and society as it critiques and reshapes our shared values and tradition. Collective actions in response to the conflict reawaken us to who we truly are and what values continue to shape us anew.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Christina Astorga, "Culture, Religion, and Moral Vision: A Theological Discourse on the Filipino People Power Revolution of 1986," *Theological Studies* 67 (2006): 585-590.

<sup>153</sup> Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1974), 38-42.

<sup>154</sup> Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, (New York: PAJ Publications, 1987), 3.

## ***Memoria Passionis* as Trauma**

But the story of the war on drugs, especially to victims of extrajudicial killings, has inflicted pain and “suffering that does not go away” and to study its impact is to understand “what remains.”<sup>155</sup> Trauma is a pain that is “too overwhelming, threatening, and incomprehensible” that “it is dissociated rather than fully experienced and expressed.”<sup>156</sup> Post-traumatic symptoms in individuals such as emotional distress, bodily sensation, nightmares, and the continuing invasion of memory into the present also impact the social realm.<sup>157</sup> The inability of individuals to integrate the experience into their understanding of reality results in the repetition of these events manifested in their emotions, behaviors, psychological state, and relations with others ultimately affecting the social body.<sup>158</sup>

**Collective Trauma.** The phenomenon of extrajudicial killings is a collective trauma as it has affected families, communities, and the entire society, creating a “blow to the basic tissues of social life,” and shattering the basic “sense of communality,” among people.”<sup>159</sup>

The collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it that it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with “trauma.” But it is a form of shock, all the

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<sup>155</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 15.

<sup>156</sup> Pamela Cooper White, “Suffering,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* ed. Bonnie Miller-McLemore (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2012), 25.

<sup>157</sup> Karen O’Donnell, *Broken Bodies: The Eucharist, Mary, and the Body in Trauma Theology* (London: SCM, 2018), 4.

<sup>158</sup> Karen O’Donnell, *Broken Bodies*, 4.

<sup>159</sup> Kai Erickson, *Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976), 153-154.

same, a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared... “We” no longer exist as a connected pair or as linked cells in a larger communal body.<sup>160</sup>

The impact, therefore, may not be readily seen but it works gradually in the recesses of the social psyche. When trauma is understood as a socially constructed phenomenon, we can inquire into how participation and performance of individuals and communities hinder or facilitate healing and transformation. Traumatized individuals and communities suffer “emotional numbing and cognitive shutdown,” leaving them unable to speak about their experience. But in their minds, there is a “compulsion to repeat the violence,” by simply “repeating or recycling” the experience.<sup>161</sup> The violence that continues in families, communities and the entire Philippine society are indicators that insidious trauma has not been attended to.

**Trauma and the Community.** Trauma theories suggest a reordering of the collective imagination through re-engaging suffering bodies in three steps. First, individuals and communities should be able to tell their story and that means that they should be able to testify to what happened to them. Second, there needs to be a witness to the testimony; to “receive the words” spoken in a safe space. Third, from this encounter, there needs to be a new story woven together by both witnesses and the testifier.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Several authors of Trauma have cited this definition of collective trauma. Kai Erickson, *Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976), 153-154. See also Jeffrey Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2018), 4.

<sup>161</sup> Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace* (Louisville: Westminster, 2019), 29.

<sup>162</sup> Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, 32.

Aside from individuals, collectivities also develop mechanisms that result in a “collective denial or collective forgetting” that could either disrupt or solidify community identity.<sup>163</sup> If a collectivity believes and proclaims that a traumatic event has caused an adverse and indelible effect on them, has violated a basic cultural value, or has threatened the life of the members of a society, a collective trauma can be elevated into a cultural trauma.<sup>164</sup> In this way, a collectivity can recreate the narrative that produced it, especially when it is represented as a memory that is indelible or unshakeable.<sup>165</sup> As it is an event that was “remembered” it can then be “culturally relevant” or “made to be remembered.”<sup>166</sup>

When trauma is considered a socially constructed phenomenon, the power to destroy can be found from the events themselves.<sup>167</sup> Aside from the possibility of constructing new meaning from the experience, collective actors also begin to understand their participation in the shaping of the trauma. Collective actors are agents whose sense of identity is shattered through the social process of cultural trauma. There are three elements, deemed important in this process: “claim-making or the spiral of signification which refers to the symbolic representations developed, carrier groups involved in the meaning-making process, and the audience and situation – speech act theory or how the trauma is projected.”<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Neil Smesler, “Psychological and Cultural Trauma,” in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* ed. Alexander Jeffrey and others (Berkeley: University of California, 2004), 43.

<sup>164</sup> Smesler, “Psychological and Cultural Trauma,” 44.

<sup>165</sup> Smesler, “Psychological and Cultural Trauma,” 42.

<sup>166</sup> Smesler, “Psychological and Cultural Trauma,” 36.

<sup>167</sup> Jeffrey Alexander, “Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey Alexander and others (Berkeley: University of California, 2004), 8.

<sup>168</sup> Alexander, “Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” 11.



Developing a new master narrative requires, therefore, the use of the process of trauma creation. By doing so, it is possible to clarify how “stigma remains embedded in a community and real stories are never solved.”<sup>169</sup> The re-creation of trauma uncovers ascriptions made to victims, rituals employed, and symbolic actions undertaken not only when the event occurred but before and after.<sup>170</sup>

### ***Memoria Passionis* as Transformative Action**

The story of the ongoing war on drugs has also induced collective action from the governing structures as well as from new forms of collectivities aroused by the event. But there are various ways by which people and society respond to suffering and trauma. The approaches they exhibit in responding to trauma may be rooted in paradigms that continue people’s victimization and deny the sense of agency for all.

**Lay Approaches to Trauma.** Rational approaches that view “trauma as a rational response to abrupt change” carry out actions that are geared towards solving the problem.<sup>171</sup> Street lights are put up in places where salvaged victims are dumped or where people are held up. At the height of the bomb scare in the 80s, students had to carry transparent bags to school. Lawmakers passed the bill to lower criminal liability to 12 years old offenders (instead of proposed 9 years old) believing that this will curb

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<sup>169</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 13.

<sup>170</sup> Alexander, “Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” 8.

<sup>171</sup> Alexander, “Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” 3.

criminal behavior among young people.<sup>172</sup> *Barangay* curfew time for teenagers was set at 10 in the evening.<sup>173</sup>

Psychoanalytic approaches respond to the need to “restore collective psychological health by lifting societal repression and restoring memory.”<sup>174</sup> Rituals of bereavement such as lighting candles and offering of flowers at the site of the killing, funeral marches, and creation of memorial markers by individuals, church, and other groups, have helped assuage feelings of the traumatized populace. Such collective processes provide a space to express pent-up emotions of anger, fear, and grief as well as create communal bonding among victims and survivors. While activating memory and imagination, they focus on displacing feelings through action.

The truth about the experience is perceived but only unconsciously. In effect, truth goes underground, and accurate memory and responsible action are its victims. Traumatic feelings and perceptions then, come not only from the originating event but from the anxiety of keeping it repressed. Trauma is resolved, not only by setting things right in the world but by setting things right in the self.<sup>175</sup>

While these symbolic actions have helped address the impact and effects of trauma by providing positive ways to move forward, it fails to investigate the levels of meanings constructed by the event. As a cultural process, trauma effects a “spiral of

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<sup>172</sup> House bill 8858 proposed lowering the age of criminal liability to nine years old. Lawmakers however agreed on the age of 12 years old calling it social responsibility. This move however, contradicts with child protection laws of the country. [http://www.congress.gov.ph/legisdocs/first\\_17/CR01071.pdf](http://www.congress.gov.ph/legisdocs/first_17/CR01071.pdf).

<sup>173</sup> Ordinance No. 10-091. [caloocancity.gov.ph/images/pdfs/ordinance/ORDINANCE-NO.-0702--Curfew-Ordinance.pdf](http://caloocancity.gov.ph/images/pdfs/ordinance/ORDINANCE-NO.-0702--Curfew-Ordinance.pdf).

<sup>174</sup> Alexander, “Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” 7.

<sup>175</sup> Alexander, “Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” 5.

signification;” a continuous interaction between power structures and human agency.<sup>176</sup>

Investigating a traumatic event as a cultural process uncovers mechanisms that facilitated its success. It is retracing the script that has shaped the identity of victims and clarifying their relationship with the wider audience. It also analyzes the responsibilities of various sectors.

**Reworking the Map of Trauma.** The task of remembering and re-membering endeavor to “rework the map of trauma,” as it investigates how “violence continues to mark persons and communities long after the violent event.”<sup>177</sup> Traumas allude to ascriptions made to victims, rituals, and symbolic actions not only when the event occurred but before and after.<sup>178</sup> To challenge the dominant narrative in the construction of trauma will involve an understanding of the impact of the pain inflicted, the identity of victims and their relations to processes and structures in society, the participation of people, and attribution of responsibility.<sup>179</sup> The stigma that remains embedded in the community can find a counter-story and stories of pain can be transformed into stories of hope. The process will also uncover the “insidious trauma,” that is characterized by the ongoing violence and death suffered by victims.<sup>180</sup> Aside from constructing new meaning from the experience is to understand how one is implicated in the shaping of the trauma.

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<sup>176</sup> Alexander, “Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” 10-12.

<sup>177</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 13.

<sup>178</sup> Alexander, “Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” 8.

<sup>179</sup> Alexander, “Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” 12-15.

<sup>180</sup> Shelly Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Afterlife of Trauma* (Waco: Baylor University, 2017), 78.

As a cultural trauma, collectivities like the church can identify with suffering and claim their responsibility for it. The power relations, processes, and practices of *communitas* on the war on drugs reflect these multilayered and multidimensional elements of the performance. Recreating the narrative and intervening in the spiral of signification will be possible by focusing on the meaning-making processes of individuals and communities involved. In this regard, the church can contribute to resisting, transforming, and most of all, renewing structures that create a cultural trauma.

### **Kapwa**

When the *memoria passionis* is interpreted as a social drama, trauma, and transformative action, it facilitates the re-membering of stories of suffering today as a human experience in which all can participate. Reworking the map of suffering and investigating the participation of people, however, demands a space where voices can be heard freely and bodies subjugated can speak. Dominant voices may continue to speak through practices that further hides the roots of trauma instead of lifting it for transformation to take place.

In the Filipino culture, when one shares the same story with the other, one becomes a *kapwa* and embodies *pakikipagkapwa*. *Kapwa* characterizes the Filipino psyche and defines the relational and communal reality of Filipino culture. Taking *kapwa* as a cultural lens and as a practical theological framework provides possibilities for the participation of the “others” and their stories of suffering in renewing ecclesial understanding and practices.

## ***Kapwa* as Participation**

*Kapwa* means “fellow or both.”<sup>181</sup> While it is used to refer to a person who shares the same position or responsibility with another like *kapwa estudyante* (fellow student) or *kapwa tao* (fellow human being), it also connotes sameness as in *kapwa matalino* (both intelligent) or *kapwa hirap sa buhay* (both are suffering in life).

Though the word *kapwa* in English can be loosely translated as “others,” for Filipinos, it means that the self is one with the other and not in opposition to it. To speak of the *kapwa* is to refer to “the one who is the same as I am” not the one who is different from me.<sup>182</sup> Because it stresses sameness, it can also be defined by being “together with the person;” which emphasizes that “there is no self,” since the starting point is “together.”<sup>183</sup> Asian philosophies that focus on common humanity, filial piety, and unity reflects this “loss of self.” The “vision of the self (*Aman*) with ultimate reality (*Brahman*) is the foundation for one’s wholeness and liberation.”<sup>184</sup> There is no self but ‘together with the Absolute’ when one is called Brahman (Hindu), Nirvana (Buddhist), Buddha, or Tao.

The root word of *kapwa* is *ka-puwang*. *Puwang* means a “gap,” “space,” or “separateness.” With the prefix *ka* it means “connecting the gap;” conveying a oneness, a

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<sup>181</sup> In the Western world, it was Ferdinand de Saussure who saw the value of understanding language as a structure and its importance in the study of culture. Filipino scholars have used language as a methodology to understand Filipino worldview and culture. Among them are Leonardo Mercado (Philosophy), Zeus Salazar (History/Anthropology), Jose de Mesa and Dionisio Miranda (Theology). For details on methodology see Leonardo Mercado, *Filipino Thought* (Manila: Logos, 2000), 19-ff.

<sup>182</sup> De Mesa defines *kapwa* with the stress on the sameness and not the “one who is different from me.” He also notes how the word *kapwa* also alludes to Filipino terms that do not make a distinction between a brother or a sister ( *kapatid*), or *siya* (he or she). Jose de Mesa, *Why Theology is Not Far Away from Home* (Manila: De la Salle University, 2003), 147.

<sup>183</sup> Jeremiah Reyes, “*Loob and Kapwa: An Introduction to a Filipino Virtue Ethics*,” *Asian Philosophy* 25, no. 2 (June 2015): 1-24. doi: 10.1080/09552367.2015.1043173.

<sup>184</sup> John Koller, *Asian Philosophies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 9.

unity between two separate beings. To speak of *kapwa* means to have a “shared identity” with the other, to have an external self through the other.<sup>185</sup> It is a “shared self,” in which the “I” is extended to the “other” and vice versa.<sup>186</sup>

The *ako* (ego) and the *iba sa akin* (others) are one and the same in *kapwa* psychology. *Hindi ako iba sa aking kapwa* (I am no different from others). Once *ako* starts thinking of himself as separate from *kapwa*, the Filipino “self” gets to be individuated in the Western sense and, in effect, denies the status of *kapwa* to the other. By the same token, the status of *kapwa* is also denied to the self.<sup>187</sup>

To be a *kapwa* and to *embody pakikipagkapwa* is to be a communal person, to value relationships, and to be part of the building and sustaining of community.<sup>188</sup>

#### **From *Ibang Tao* to *Hindi Ibang Tao* (From Outsider to One-of-us).**

*Pakikipagkapwa* is a people-centered lifestyle – one that takes the “other” as important. It is growing in friendship and a willingness to give what can help the other, whether materially or in kind, such as spending time and volunteering services when needed. This community-oriented spirit has been shown throughout history as a core Filipino value.

Participating in the life of another can be seen in two levels - the other is either treated as *ibang tao* (outsider) or *hindi na ibang tao* (one-of-us). The table 1 shows how there are distinct levels of interaction between the two.

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<sup>185</sup> Enriquez was a proponent of liberation psychology and considered the father of Filipino Psychology. He pioneered in understanding Filipino personhood including understanding the philosophy of *kapwa*. His exploration of *kapwa* as a core Filipino value has also influenced the birth of the *pakapa-pakapa* (“groping”) approach in indigenous research. Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology* (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 1992), 52.

<sup>186</sup> Katrin de Guia, “Indigenous Values for Sustainable Nation Building,” *Prajna Vihara* 14, nos.1-2 (January-December 2013): 175-192.

<sup>187</sup> Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology* (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 1992), 54.

<sup>188</sup> Katrin de Guia, “Indigenous Values for Sustainable Nation Building,” 181.

**Table 1**

*Kapwa behavior Towards Ibang Tao (Outsider) and Hindi Ibang Tao (One-of-us)*

IBANG TAO (OUTSIDER)	HINDI IBANG TAO (ONE OF US)
<i>pakikitungo</i> (transaction/civility with)	<i>pakikipagpalagayang loob</i> (acceptance with)
<i>pakikisalamuha</i> (interaction with)	<i>pakikisangkot</i> (being involved)
<i>pakikilahok</i> (joining/participating)	<i>pakikiisa</i> (being one with)
<i>pakikibagay</i> (in conformity with/in accord with)	
<i>pakikisama</i> (being along with)	

A Filipino tries to relate to one who is *ibang tao*, through *pakikitungo* (transaction/civility with), *pakikisalamuha* (interaction with), *pakikilahok* (joining/participating), *pakikibagay* (in conformity with/in accord with), and *pakikisama* (getting along with).<sup>189</sup> *Pakikisama* was defined by foreign scholars who rely on western analysis to understand Filipino culture, as “smooth interpersonal relationship” which can be reflected by behaviors such as “yielding to the leader or the majority.”<sup>190</sup> They tend to refer to *pakikisama* as a distinct Filipino value when it is only one of the many different levels of relating to the *kapwa* especially to one who is *ibang tao*.<sup>191</sup> It is by relating in these ways that Filipinos grow in relationship with another and that the ‘other’ becomes ‘one of us.’

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<sup>189</sup> Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino, “*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology),” 56.

<sup>190</sup> Virgilio Enriquez, “Filipino Psychology in the Third World,” *Philippine Journal of Psychology* 10, No. 1 (1977): 5.

<sup>191</sup> Virgilio Enriquez, “Filipino Psychology in the Third World,” 5.

If one is *hindi ibang tao* (one of us), a Filipino would behave towards the other through “*pakikipagpalagayang-loob* (being in -rapport/understanding/acceptance with), or *pakikisangkot* (being involved), or the highest level of *pakikiisa* (being one with).<sup>192</sup>

*Pakikipagkapwa* is much deeper and profound in its implications. It also means accepting and dealing with the other person as an *equal*. The company president and the clerk in an office may not have equivalent roles, statuses, or incomes but the Filipino way demands and implements the idea that they treat one another as fellow human beings (*kapwa tao*). This means a regard for the dignity and being of others.<sup>193</sup>

To embody *pakikipagkapwa* is to take any form of human exploitation towards others as a personal affront. *Pakikipagkapwa* not only has socio-psychological dimensions; it has “a moral and normative aspect as a value, and *paninindigan*,” an ethical commitment.<sup>194</sup> A Filipino proverb expresses it fully when it says, “*madaling maging tao, mahirap magpakatao*;” it is easy to become human but not to be humane.

***Kapwa and Loob.*** Another indigenous concept that relates to the *kapwa* is *loob*. The *loob* which means “inside,” “interior,” or “internal,” refers to the “internal dimension of one’s identity.”<sup>195</sup> Many studies on Filipino philosophy and personality have referred to *loob* as a core concept. *Loob* is referred to as a “cave containing Filipino thought,” the

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<sup>192</sup> Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino, “*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology),” 56.

<sup>193</sup> Enriquez, “Filipino Psychology in the Third World,” 7.

<sup>194</sup> Enriquez, “Filipino Psychology in the Third World,” 7.

<sup>195</sup> Rogelia Pe-Pua, “Unpacking the Concept of *Loob*: Towards Developing Culture-Inclusive Theories,” (2017) In *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Perspectives and Methodology*, Vol. 1, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018), 382.



“true self,” “the center of personality, and the world of being.”<sup>196</sup> As an “embodiment of personality, character, and humanity,” *loob* has “breadth and depth,” and it also relates to one’s “thought, awareness, memory, volition, and emotion.”<sup>197</sup> If one is true to one’s *loob*, he or she can be true with one’s relationship with others. To be indifferent and apathetic is to lose one’s sense of *kapwa*, and in turn, breaking one’s *loob*.

*Loob* as a potency that manifests itself through action makes sense in ordinary life. *Loob* is not so much known through reflection more than by living in relationship with others. How I treat others reveals who I am and what my *loob* is. And conversely, I know the other person most when I am on the receiving end of his (own) actions.<sup>198</sup>

The *loob* is known through one’s relationship and interaction with others since the “virtues of the *loob* are also directed towards others.”<sup>199</sup> Some words connecting with the *loob* express virtues that are embodied with others – *kabutihang loob* (goodness), *kagandahang loob* (kindness), *kusang loob* (out of one’s initiative or volition), *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude). While the *loob* defines Filipino personhood and personality from within through words like *malay* (consciousness), *dama* (feelings), and *ugali* (traits), as

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<sup>196</sup> *Loob* has been explored by many scholars from different disciplines. It was Albert Alejo who has done extensive work on the *loob* and has compiled the different interpretations of the *loob* in his book. Among those who contributed in the understanding of the *loob* are Emmanuel Lacaba, Jose de Mesa, Leonardo Mercado, Dionisio Miranda. See Albert Alejo, *Tao po! Tuloy! Isang Landas ng Pa-unawa sa Loob ng Tao*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1990.

<sup>197</sup> Pe-pua presents 19 forms of *loob* confirming how the *loob* “covers aspects of Filipino character and personhood.” Among them are the “Strength of *loob* (*lakas-hina ng loob*), Weight of the *loob* (*gaan/bigat ng loob*), good-bad *loob* (*buti/sama ng loob*), soft-hard *loob* (*lambot/tigas ng loob*), temperature of *loob* (*lamig/init ng loob*), Space of *loob* (*sikip-luwag loob*), open-closed *loob* (*bukas-pikit loob*),” Pe-Pua, “Unpacking the Concept of *Loob*,” 382.

<sup>198</sup> Jeremiah Reyes, “Loob and Kapwa: An Introduction to A Filipino Virtue Ethics,” 7.

<sup>199</sup> Jeremiah Reyes, “Loob and Kapwa: An Introduction to A Filipino Virtue Ethics,” 5.

the *loob* interacts with another *loob*, encounters can be congruent (*malay-malay, dama-dama, ugali-ugali*) or incongruent (*ugali-dama, malay-dama, ugali-malay*).<sup>200</sup>This implies how a person's character is shaped through the *kapwa*, one's participation, and relationship with others.

**Filipino Values Rooted in Kapwa.** As a core Filipino value, *kapwa* is reflected as the root of a system of Filipino values.<sup>201</sup> The table 2 shows how *kapwa* as the core value links with other sets of values that are manifested in an interpersonal level and societal level. There are four categories of values – the core value of *kapwa*, surface values, pivotal values, and societal values. The accommodative surface values are those that Filipinos naturally embody in interpersonal relationships which lead non-Filipinos to perceive Filipinos as “other-oriented.” These are *hiya* (shame or propriety), *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude or being in solidarity), and *pakikisama* (companionship and esteem).

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<sup>200</sup> Dionisio Miranda, *Loob, The Filipino Within: A Preliminary Investigation into a Pre-theological Moral Anthropology* (Manila: Logos, 2003), 55.

<sup>201</sup> Adapted from Virgilio Enriquez, “*Kapwa: A Core Concept in Filipino social psychology*,” in *Mga Babasahin sa Agham Panlipunang Pilipino: Sikolohiyang Pilipino, Pilipinohiya, at Pantayong Pananaw*, ed. A. Navarro and F. Bolante (Manila: C&E, 2007). The table has been revised in various studies. See Jose Antonio Clemente and others, “Revisiting the *Kapwa* Theory: Applying Alternative Methodologies and Gaining New Insights,” *Philippine Journal of Psychology* 41, No. 2 (2008): 1-32. Also see Katrin de Guia, “Indigenous Values for Sustainable Nation Building,” 175-192.

**Table 2***Filipino Behavior Patterns and Value Structure: Surface, Core, and Societal*

<b>Colonial</b>	Hiya	Utang na Loob	Pakikisama
<b>Accommodative</b>	(Propriety	(Gratitude/Solidarity)	(Companionship/
<b>Surface Value</b>	/Dignity)		Esteem)
<b>Confrontative</b>	Bahala Na	Sama/Lakas ng Loob	Pakikibaka
<b>Surface Value</b>	(Determination)	(Resentment/Guts)	(Resistance)
<b>Pivotal</b>		Pakikiramdam	
<b>Interpersonal Value</b>		(Shared Inner	
		Perception)	
<b>Core Value</b>		Kapwa or (Pagkatao)	
		(Shared Identity)	
<b>Linking</b>		Kagandahang Loob	
<b>Sociopersonal Value</b>		(Pagkamakatao)	
		(Shared humanity)	
<b>Associated Societal</b>	Karangalan	Katarungan	Kalayaan
<b>Value</b>	(Dignity)	(Justice)	(Freedom)

The confrontative surface values of *bahala na* (determination), *lakas ng loob* (resentment/guts), and *pakikibaka* (resistance), may appear latent in the Filipino personality but are expressed when the situation calls for it. Filipinos embody these values; whether it is about their resilience during hardships and struggles,<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Ma. Regina Hechanova and others, "The Development and Initial Evaluation of *Katatagan: A Resilience Intervention for Filipino Disaster Survivors* (2015)," in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Application*, Vol. 2, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: University of the Philippines Press, 2019), 258-272. Ayshia Kunting, "*Kalinisan, Lakas, at Tibay ng Loob sa Praktis ng Sabil sa Sulu noong Digmaang Pilipino-Amerikano* (2013)," in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Applications* Vol. 2, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019), 55-66. Almond Aguila, "*The Filipino, Diaspora, and a Continuing Quest for Identity* (2015)," in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Application*, Vol. 2, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019), 77-98.

understanding the Filipino male and female traits, roles, and relations,<sup>203</sup> or spirituality and their relationship with God.<sup>204</sup>

Key to the embodiment of these values is *pakikiramdam* or shared inner perception and a “heightened awareness and sensitivity” for the other.<sup>205</sup> *Pakikiramdam* is “a tacit cognitive process that assembles information from a multitude of fragments and impressions” suggesting how emotions in the Filipino context are “participatory, open, and constantly shared.”<sup>206</sup> *Pakiramdam* also alludes to the indirect way Filipinos communicate through their voice, through verbal expressions, and body language. *Pakiramdam* is the exercise of “empathy, sensitivity, and awareness” without making a distinction between *hindi ibang tao* or *ibang tao*.<sup>207</sup>

On a socio personal level, the value of *kagandahang loob* or a “beauty of the will” is best exemplified by one’s willingness to care for another.<sup>208</sup> It also means a “shared inner nobility” which acts as an anchor that grounds *kapwa* and *pakiramdam* in the enduring beliefs of Filipino indigenous knowledge.

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<sup>203</sup> Carmen Santiago, “*Ang Kahulugan ng Pagkalahati sa mga Pilipino (1975)*,” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology* Vol. 2, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019), 154-163.

<sup>204</sup> Homer Yabut, “Isang Paglilinaw sa mga Paniniwala at Pagpapakahulugan sa Espirituwalidad at Relihiyon ng mga Pilipino (2013),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology* Vol. 2, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019), 303-315. Also see Violeta-Villaroman Bautista, “*Gaan at Gana* in Life: Psychology of *Sarap, Ligaya, and Ginhawa* from the Perspective of Clinical Psychology (1999),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology* Vol. 2, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019), 230-242.

<sup>205</sup> Virgilio Enriquez, “Indigenous Personality Theory (1990),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Application* Vol. 2, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019), 32-33.

<sup>206</sup> Katrin de Guia, “Indigenous Values for Sustainable Nation Building,” 182.

<sup>207</sup> Some respondents in the study do not make a distinction between *kapwa* (one of us) at *di kapwa* (outsider) referring to all as *kapwa*. M. Cecilia Gastardo-Conaco, “*Pakikiramdam* and *Kapwa*: Reading Emotion in a Personalistic Culture (2009),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Application* Vol. 2, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019), 382-383.

<sup>208</sup> Jeremiah Reyes, “*Loob* and *Kapwa*: An Introduction to a Filipino Virtue Ethics,” 2.

These are basic: God is good. Life is about learning, creating, and sharing. Life is good, even if there in hardship. Every sunrise brings a new day, a new horizon.

There is always hope.<sup>209</sup>

*Kagandahang-loob* enables Filipinos to also care for the needs and vision of a larger group. Through *kagandahang-loob*, an embodiment of power and beauty, a Filipino could fight for *karangalan* (dignity), *katarungan* (justice), and *kalayaan* (freedom).

### ***Kapwa and Sikolohiyang Pilipino***

The *kapwa* is pivotal in the indigenization and decolonization of Psychology in the Philippines and its basic tenets embody the same ideals of a church of the poor.<sup>210</sup>

*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (SP) or Filipino Indigenous Psychology advocates for a “liberating, liberated, and interdisciplinary Filipino psychology,”<sup>211</sup> emphasizes Filipino “identity and national consciousness, social awareness, and involvement, ethnic cultures, and languages, and pushes for its application in health practices, mass media, education, religion, etc.”<sup>212</sup> By drawing from the Filipino psyche, thought, and experience, folk and indigenous practices as well as concepts from religious and political movements, SP facilitates the empowerment of the voiceless.<sup>213</sup> SP also draws inspiration from

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<sup>209</sup> Katrin de Guia, “Indigenous Values for Sustainable Nation Building,” 183.

<sup>210</sup> “There are four lines of filiations of psychology in the country: academic-scientific psychology, academic-philosophical psychology, ethnic psychology (which is the major basis of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*) and the psycho-medical system (Salazar 1985).” Rogelia Pe-Pua, “Indigenous Psychology (*Katutubong Sikolohiya*) (2015),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Perspectives and Methodology*, Vol.1, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018),113.

<sup>211</sup> Rogelio Pe-pua and Elizabeth Protacio-Marcelino, “*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology): A Legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez,” *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 3 (2000): 34.

<sup>212</sup> Virgilio Enriquez, From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: The Philippine Experience,” 30.

<sup>213</sup> It is also called *sikolohiyang pangnayon*, or community and rural psychology because it calls students and academics of psychology to go back to the people and learn from them.

phenomenological and behavioristic methods but is more communal in orientation as it believes in the collective consciousness and communal culture of Filipinos.<sup>214</sup>

**Decolonizing Filipino Stereotypes.** SP sought to correct foreign scholars' interpretation of some Filipino values that are still reflected in many Filipino learning materials resulting in a "distorted and false picture of Filipinos."<sup>215</sup> *Bahala na*, interpreted as "fatalistic resignation," is seen by SP as "determination and risk-taking," in which one stores enough courage to not give up despite obstacles. *Hiya*, understood as "shame," is only an external manifestation because *hiya* understood from the internal motivation means a "sense of propriety." *Utang na loob*, which has been widely understood as a "debt of gratitude" to a benefactor, thus advancing an image of one being perpetually colonized, actually means "gratitude/solidarity."

However powerful the reinterpretations were in positivizing the Filipino image, it failed in erasing the colonial framework.<sup>216</sup> While the early phases of decolonizing stressed more on reversing these negative Filipino stereotypes, SP sought to follow the principle of "indigenization from within," that completely rejects the colonial framework. It was through conversations with indigenous sources (historical, ethnographic, ethnolinguistic, etc.) and with various disciplines (anthropology, psychology, and history, etc.) that the *kapwa* concept was further developed.<sup>217</sup> The SP's contribution to the

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<sup>214</sup> Rogelio Pe-pua and Elizabeth Protacio-Marcelino, "*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology): A Legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez," *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 3 (2000): 54. Also see Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: The Philippine Experience*, 34.

<sup>215</sup> Pe-pua and Protacio-Marcelino, "*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology)," 55-56.

<sup>216</sup> S. Lily Mendoza, "Theoretical Advances in the Discourse of Indigenization," in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Perspectives and Methodology* Vol. 1, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018), 256.

<sup>217</sup> Indigenous theorizing has also developed further in the perspective of history and politics. One of the great contributors in this area is Melba Maggay who distinguished between "*kapwa* core values," and

indigenization process has been to raise Filipino consciousness regarding the “national psyche” that remains “captive to a colonial imaginary.” SP endeavors to work on two distinct processes – “cultural domination,” and “decolonization, counter-domination, and empowerment” which SP distinguishes through the components shown in the table below.<sup>218</sup>

**Table 3**

*Components of Cultural Domination and Decolonization*

<b>Phases of Cultural Domination</b>	Denial and withdrawal (i.e. repression of indigenous life and expression) Destruction and Desecration (of cultural artifacts and sacred ritual grounds) Denigration and marginalization (of the Filipino soul, identity, values, artistic expressions, appearance, etc.) Redefinition and Token Utilization (of indigenous cultural elements as means of colonial co-optation) Transformation and Mainstreaming (nativization of aspects of dominating culture to facilitate acceptance) Commercialization and Commodification (of indigenous knowledge and resources for capitalist greed and profit)
<b>Decolonization, Counter-domination, and Empowerment</b>	Indigenous Theorizing and Empowerment Counter-domination through Indigenous Research Methods Indigenous Resistance to Oppressions Resisting Class Oppression Resisting Gender Oppression Resisting Academic Dependency

survival values which are “coping strategies in the face of colonial oppression and marginalization.” Mendoza, “Theoretical Advances in the Discourse of Indigenization,” 257.

<sup>218</sup> Virgilio Enriquez, *Pagbabagong-Dangal: Indigenous Psychology and Cultural Empowerment* (Quezon City: Akademya ng Kultura at Sikolohiyang Pilipino, 1994), vi-viii. See S. Lily Mendoza, “Theoretical Advances in the Discourse of Indigenization,” 259.

**The *Pakapa-kapa* Method.** SP has also contributed to the development of indigenous personality measures and research methods.<sup>219</sup> The *pakapa-kapa* (groping) indigenous research method, “a suppositionless approach to social scientific investigations,” developed through the SP.<sup>220</sup> *Pakapa-kapa*, which means groping, is characteristic of many indigenous production activities and is reflected in many social science methods.<sup>221</sup>

The method advocates for the exploration of data without determining a theory or paradigm to employ before the actual observation. To gather information, *pakapa-kapa* approach uses ethnographic techniques such as “*pagmamasid* (observation), *pagtatanong-tanong* (asking questions), *pagsubok* (verifying), *pagdalaw* (visiting), *pakikilahok* (participating), and *pakikisangkot* (getting involved).”

As a “non-experimental or uncontrollable,” method, it faces the same criticism hurled on grounded theory or field approaches that rely on “cultural, social or psychological data without the chains of overriding theoretical frameworks,” from scientific psychologists who question the reliability and validity of the method.<sup>222</sup>

**Filipino Indigenous Community Practices.** The *pakapa-kapa* has enriched Filipino understanding of sexuality, community practices, and communication patterns to

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<sup>219</sup> Virgilio Enriquez promoted the exploration of indigenous Filipino personality to promote a truly Filipino national identity not determined through Western paradigms. See Carmen Santiago and Virgilio Enriquez, “*Tungo sa Maka-Pilipinong Pananaliksik (1976)*,” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology*, Vol. 1, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018), 411-415. See also Virgilio Enriquez, “Cross-Indigenous Methods and Perspectives (1979),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology*, Vol.1, ed., Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018), 416-427.

<sup>220</sup> Amaryllis Torres, “*Pakapa-kapa* as an Approach in Philippine Psychology (1982),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Perspectives and Methodology* Vol.1, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018), 428-430.

<sup>221</sup> Groping in this regard is like one searching in the dark and not as a sexual term.

<sup>222</sup> Amaryllis Torres, “*Pakapa-kapa* as an Approach in Philippine Psychology,” 428-430.



name a few. In the exploration of paradigms of intervention, between the vulnerability paradigm and competency paradigm for sexually abused children, the *pakapa-kapa* discovered indigenous healing practices supporting competency paradigms.<sup>223</sup> These practices enable the healing not only of individuals but of the community through cultural rituals and participatory processes.

Through *pakapa-kapa* method, indigenous community practices of accompanying people have been developed. One example is the *Pagdadala* Model, a community counseling method based on the ground experience.<sup>224</sup> Filipinos feel a sense of responsibility and accountability not only in attending to their personal burdens but also those of others. The model suggests an indigenous approach of the counseling process explored through behaviors that manifest the *pagdadala* (burden-bearing).

The *kapwa* framework in dialogue with postmodern paradigms including indigenous culture is hope-giving.<sup>225</sup>

The *kapwa* orientation trains us on how to blend and collaborate, how to enhance and support one another! It coaches people to pool their strength and achieve common goals by working together; and instead of hoarding and racketeering, it

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<sup>223</sup> See Elizabeth Protacio-De Castro, "Integrating Indigenous Knowledge and Practices into Psychosocial Help and Support for Child Survivors of Trafficking and Sexual Abuse," (2002) in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology Volume 2: Perspectives and Methodology*, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019): 117-134.

<sup>224</sup> Edwin Decenteneo, "The *Pagdadala* Model in Counseling and Therapy," *Philippine Journal of Psychology* 32, nos. 2 (1999): 89-104.

<sup>225</sup> Katrin de Guia, "Connected with all Life – The Enduring Filipino *Kapwa* Orientation, The Filipino Shared Self in a Postmodern Context" (2017) In *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Perspectives and Methodology, Vol.1*, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018):310-328.

encourages surplus sharing...*kapwa* makes sure that the heart is also full, not just the stomach or the bank account.<sup>226</sup>

The rich body of research confirms and provides understanding about *kapwa* as participation and can enrich the movement in building a participatory church with the others.

### **Debates and Conversations on *Kapwa***

The *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (SP) has been engaged with other disciplines but like proponents of indigenous psychology elsewhere in the world, it faces similar opposition from colleagues who strongly adhere to long-held Western methods.<sup>227</sup> There are critiques against the SP but its enriching interdisciplinary conversations have also nourished understanding regarding religious practices and spirituality. Parallel efforts in theology are also reflected in inculturation and contextual discourses.

**Criticisms against the *Kapwa*.** Though the SP and its interpretation of Filipino values such was groundbreaking towards a truly Filipino Psychology, various scholars have expressed their critique against it among them, its “dubious project of nationhood,” and the agenda of constructing a “national civilization,” its tendency to homogenize to develop a “*kabuuang bayan* (national whole),” the “problem of cultural and linguistic “essentialism,” the “unwitting re-inscription of the functionalist paradigm,” and the “charge of culturalism.”<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Katrin de Guia, “Connected with all Life – The Enduring Filipino *Kapwa* Orientation,” 322.

<sup>227</sup> Rogelia Pe-Pua, “Indigenous Psychology (2015)” *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Perspectives and Methodology* Vol.1, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018):109, 117.

<sup>228</sup> S. Lily Mendoza, *Between the Homeland and the Diaspora: The Politics of Theorizing Filipino and Filipino American Identities* (Manila: UST, 2006), 216.

Among academics in the field of Psychology, one either belongs to the Western, empirical, behaviorist block, or a proponent of purely indigenous methods. Even proponents of indigenization in the Philippines have opposing views regarding the use of the local language in doing research as well as whether it should completely detach from Western models or not.<sup>229</sup> Additionally, in countries like the Philippines in which English is not the first language, using the local language to articulate their discourses are met with cynicism and still fails to receive support from the academe. Thus, even when indigenous concepts and theories are developing, it fails to inform and transform the existing bias.

The *kapwa* framework has been questioned primarily for its lack of empirical basis and the lack of clarity regarding the concepts, for example, its definition of values.<sup>230</sup> However, in the last 30 years of SP and the *kapwa* concept, many cross-cultural studies and interdisciplinary conversations have been conducted to respond to such criticisms as well as expand understanding of indigenous psychology and indigenous theorizing.<sup>231</sup> Cross-indigenization and developing indigenous psychology can respond to the need to reach its real audience to whom the findings may be more relevant and

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<sup>229</sup> Virgilio Enriquez the founder of Sikolohiyang Pilipino and Zeus Salazar, a historian, who founded the *Pantayong Pananaw*, though sharing the same roots in the vision for Filipino indigenization, digress in many aspects. See Rogelia Pe-Pua, "Filipino Psychology: Legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez (2002)," in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Perspectives and Methodology* Vol. 1, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018):172-174.

<sup>230</sup> Jose Antonio Clemente and others, "Revisiting the *Kapwa* Theory," 1-32.

<sup>231</sup> Jose Antonio Clemente, "An Empirical Analysis of Research Trends in the Philippine Journal of Psychology: Implications for *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (2011)," 180-199. Also see Narcisa Paredes-Canilao and Maria Ana Barbaran-Diaz, "*Sikolohiyang Pilipino*: 50 Years of Critical-Emancipatory Social Science in the Philippines (2013)" in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Perspectives and Methodology* Vol. 1, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018): 200-215.

meaningful and to depart from a system that is characterized by “intellectual prejudice,” “entrenched intellectual habits,” and “cultural myopia.”<sup>232</sup>

***Kapwa and Religious Psychology.*** The study of religious psychology, a discipline that seeks to understand people’s complex response to the supernatural which is rooted in one’s history of emotions, needs, and motives, has also developed through indigenous psychologizing.<sup>233</sup> Though various Filipino scholars have been engaged with the study of religion,<sup>234</sup> many SP scholars have expanded the understanding of religion from a psychological perspective. A study about Filipino spirituality, confirms how Filipinos link their understanding of God with the culture and with the notions of *kapwa* and *pakikipagkapwa*.<sup>235</sup> Cultural practices and the patterns of relationship with others are essential sources to better understand Filipino spirituality. Their participation in religious and church practices, thus informs the way to re-member them in ecclesial life.

Another interesting study suggests how the rich and the poor have different concepts of God. Respondents coming from a higher economic status saw God as benevolent while those from a lower social class carry an image of a God who is powerful.<sup>236</sup> It also reveals how people from higher social class expressed more belief in the Catholic creed, adhere more to the practices of the faith, and feel more a sense of

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<sup>232</sup> Rogelia Pe-Pua, “Indigenous Psychology,” 273-284.

<sup>233</sup> Violeta Villaroman Bautista, “*Gamit at Etika ng Sikolohiyang Pangrelihiyon* (1999),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Application*, Vol. 2, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019): 273-284.

<sup>234</sup> Among them are sociologists and anthropologists like Leonardo Mercado, Prospero Covar and F.L. Jocano.

<sup>235</sup> Homer Yabut, “Isang Paglilinaw sa mga Paniniwala at Pagpapakahulugan sa Espirituwalidad at Relihiyon ng mga Pilipino (2013),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Application*, Vol. 2, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019): 303-316.

<sup>236</sup> Rita Mataragnon, “God of the Rich, God of the Poor,” *Philippine Studies* 32, no. 1 (1984): 22.5-26.

closeness to God compared to those from the lower class. This suggests how ecclesial participation ought to take consideration of people's varying realities and understanding of the divine.

Concepts of validity of indigenous Filipino spiritual groups suggest how they are “interiorly attentive;” meaning, they validate truth from empirical but also internal sources.<sup>237</sup> Experiential sources conveyed through dreams, apparitions, dead relatives, and faith healers, for instance, are accepted as valid sources of information. Attending to these sources as valid spaces for the transition to a new life may renew ecclesial practices and processes of healing and reconciliation.

***Kapwa and Theology.*** *Kapwa* and *loob* are at the heart of many theological discourses to articulate a Filipino understanding of Christian beliefs and practices.<sup>238</sup> *Kapwa* is also central to developing a more profoundly Filipino understanding of Christian moral theology and ethics.<sup>239</sup> Alongside other Filipino values, *kapwa* shapes Filipino relational ethics, which in turn are rooted in human relationships.<sup>240</sup> Jesus' mission and his relationships reinterpreted using the lens of *kapwa* challenges the

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<sup>237</sup> Serafin Talisayon, “*Patotoo*-Concepts of Validity among Some Indigenous Filipino Spiritual Groups (1994),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Application Vol.2*, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019): 273-284.

<sup>238</sup> De Mesa, through his hermeneutics of appreciation, re-engaged Filipino values like *kapwa* and *loob* in theology, and reinterpreted Filipino understanding of Christian beliefs and practices. See Jose de Mesa, “Tasks in the Inculturation of Theology: The Filipino Catholic Situation,” *Missiology: An International Review* (April 1998) <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F009182969802600208>. See also Jose de Mesa, *In Solidarity with the Culture: Studies in Theological Re-rooting* (Quezon City: Maryhill School of Theology Press, 1987).

<sup>239</sup> Dionisio Miranda presents a framework moral theology in dialogue with Filipino language and culture. He has written extensively on moral discourses on the *loob*. See Dionisio Miranda, *Kaloob ni Kristo: A Filipino Christian Account of Conscience* (Manila: Logos, 2003).

<sup>240</sup> Jeremiah Reyes, “Loob and Kapwa: An Introduction to A Filipino Virtue Ethics,” 8.

embodiment of the church of the poor,<sup>241</sup> engages family values as a domestic church<sup>242</sup> and extends Filipinos' relationship with nature.<sup>243</sup>

Three types of contextual theologies in the Philippines have pursued a vision of a more Filipino Catholic faith and thus converse with *kapwa* from different perspectives. One type emphasizes the magisterium, another inculturation theologies, and the third liberation theologies.<sup>244</sup>

The first type is a “theology of bits and pieces” such as those that are reflected in pastoral statements issued by the bishops’ conference in response to critical events.<sup>245</sup> They dialogue on prevailing concerns, discern through church teachings, especially those from Vatican II and the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC)<sup>246</sup> and they are written “in hours of doing and suffering, in dialogue and confrontation,” effecting a *kairos* moment.<sup>247</sup> However, such statements can be confused as the only way of theologizing.<sup>248</sup> The theologian who speaks on behalf of the magisterium becomes the voice of orthodoxy when reality may be challenging magisterial views that need reinterpretation for a more responsive church.<sup>249</sup> For example, while the crucial role of

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<sup>241</sup> Aaron Reyes, “*Kapwa at ang Church of the Poor*,” in De la Salle University, NCCRE 2016 Vol. 1 Issue (2016): 64-65.

<sup>242</sup> Levy Lanaria, “The Filipino Family – Lights and Shadows,” in *Asian Horizons* 7.2 (June 2013): 244-245.

<sup>243</sup> Agnes Brazal, “Renventing *Pakikipagkapwa*: An Exploration of Its Potential for Promoting Respect for Plurality and Difference,” in *Pluralism and Fundamentalism in the Church* (Manila: Dakateo, 2003), 50-70. See Kristine Meneses, “*Pakikipagkapwa*: A Filipino Value in Attempt to Counter Biodiversity and Cultural Diversity Loss,” *Solidarity: The Journal of Catholic Social Thought and Secular Teachings* 8, Issue 1 (2018), 7.

<sup>244</sup> Arevalo, “Filipino Theology,” in *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives* ed. Karl Muller and others (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997), 63-165.

<sup>245</sup> Arevalo, “Filipino Theology,” 163-164.

<sup>246</sup> Arevalo, “Filipino Theology,” 163.

<sup>247</sup> Daniel Franklin Pilario, “The Craft of Contextual Theology: Towards a Conversation on Theological Method in the Philippine Context,” *Hapag* 1 no. 1 (2004): 17.

<sup>248</sup> Pilario, “The Craft of Contextual Theology,” 20.

<sup>249</sup> Pilario, “The Craft of Contextual Theology,” 21.

the church in the People Power Revolutions that ousted President Marcos (1986) and President Estrada (2001) cannot be denied, its absent critical voice in behalf of the poor may have also been the cause for the third people power revolution that displayed a huge crowd from among the masses who were paid by corrupt politicians for their selfish motives.<sup>250</sup>

Inculturation theologians begin from culture and make use of language employing a “hermeneutics of appreciative awareness.”<sup>251</sup> Inculturation theologies are affirmed in its contribution in decolonizing cultural values and concepts by “rerooting the Gospel,” and recovering the parts of the past that may have bearing to the concerns of the present. Reinterpreting theological themes has been noteworthy and much appreciated as it “evokes emotions and significations which are otherwise absent in mere transliteration.”<sup>252</sup> However, its view of a culture that is damaged by colonization and that needs to be retrieved nuances on a dualistic view of Filipino personhood and may convey the tendency to downplay the Filipinos’ sense of agency which has been proven in history.<sup>253</sup> Moreover, the use of dynamic equivalence in translating theological themes may imply that Christianity is not embodied and reshaped by culture.

Although there are many strands of liberation theologies in the Philippines, it is collectively known as “theology of struggle (TOS).”<sup>254</sup> Unlike its Latin American

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<sup>250</sup> Pilario, “The Craft of Contextual Theology,” 22.

<sup>251</sup> Arevalo, “Filipino Theology,” 164. Jose de Mesa and Lode Wostyn advocated for contextual theologizing and insisted on the importance of human experience and re-appropriating the Christian tradition considering culture and context. See Jose de Mesa and Lode Wostyn, *Doing Theology: Basic Reality and Processes* (Manila: Wellspring, 1982).

<sup>252</sup> Pilario, “The Craft of Contextual Theology,” 25.

<sup>253</sup> Pilario, “The Craft of Contextual Theology,” 30.

<sup>254</sup> Arevalo identifies three subgroups of liberation theologians. The EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians) and the Christians for National Liberation do social analysis in dialogue with left wing political ideologies. There are those considered “centrist” liberation theologians as

counterpart that emphasizes on the goal (liberation), the TOS looks at the process (struggle). It is in the struggle, in the questions they face, that they discover their responsibility as a people.<sup>255</sup> In so doing, a new spirituality and a new way of being a people emerge.<sup>256</sup> Espousing a decentering of faith, through the doing of theology in community, liberation theologians insist on the need for their insertion in the setting to understand suffering through the lens of the people. However, one can still argue for the articulation of the authentic voice of the people, which may not be heard but experienced through embodied practices of everyday life.

### ***Kapwa and Memoria Passionis: Re-membering the Filipino Passion***

This chapter has laid down the perspective from which the research takes off: re-membering the Filipino Passion through a cultural-performative lens informed by *kapwa* and *memoria passionis*. As a practical theological research, it proposes a methodology that works for a “theology for the masses,” which is synodal and bridge-building.<sup>257</sup> Seeking to listen to the *sensus fidelium*,<sup>258</sup> the *phronesis*, or practical wisdom embedded in the lives of people,<sup>259</sup> it is communal theologizing that is shaped by living theologically not by simply making theology practical but by making practices in daily life theological.<sup>260</sup> In this way, the *sensus fidei* as a “practical, sapiential, and critical

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they consciously do social analysis in dialogue with official church teachings. Lastly, BECs and other grassroots theologies have also emerged, and they embody varying perspectives regarding reality. Arevalo, *Filipino Theology*, 163-164.

<sup>255</sup> Eleazar Hernandez, *Toward a Theology of Struggle* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994), 21.

<sup>256</sup> Hernandez, *Toward a Theology of Struggle*, 23.

<sup>257</sup> Bryan Froehle, “Synodality as Bridge Building,” in *Bridge Building: Pope Francis’ Practical Theological Approach*, eds. Thomas M. Kelley and Bob Pennington (New York: Crossroad, 2020), 13-15.

<sup>258</sup> Ormond Rush, *The Eyes of Faith: The Sense of the Faithful and the Church’s Reception of Revelation* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2009), 206.

<sup>259</sup> Bonnie Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice: Discovering a Discipline* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 18.

<sup>260</sup> Veiling, *Practical Theology*, 77-78.



sense” may be lifted from concrete everyday reality, “bridging faith and reason, story and significance, Gospel and context, the teaching of the magisterium and one’s life.”<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Rush, *The Eyes of Faith*, 227-229.

**CHAPTER THREE. FROM THE WAR ON DRUGS TO PAKIKIPAGKAPWA  
AND BACK AGAIN**

*And who is my neighbor?*

*Luke 10:29<sup>262</sup>*

Re-membering the Filipino passion is an invitation to be transformed by the story and to embrace the *memoria passionis* as the subject of our lives.

The matter of the text and what I call the world of the work is not *behind* the text...but *in front of* it, as that which the work unfolds, discovers, reveals.

Henceforth, to understand is to understand oneself in front of the text. It is not a question of imposing upon the text our finite capacity of understanding, but of exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self.<sup>263</sup>

One can interpret the enlarged self to be *kapwa* and embodying *pakikipagkapwa*. When one embodies *pakikipagkapwa*, the story is a shared reality with the other who is part of me.

The chapter will develop into three parts. First, it retells the ongoing phenomenon of extrajudicial killings of the war on drugs as it uncovers the narrative of the dangerous “others” in society as well as practices that continue to disembody *kapwa* in ecclesial life. Second, it will present the story of a local community where the research is conducted.

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<sup>262</sup> Luke 10:29. New American Bible Revised Edition. All succeeding bible citations are taken from the same edition.

<sup>263</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and Human Science: Essays on Language, Action, and Interpretation* trans. and ed. John Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 143.

Third, it will introduce *pakikipagkapwa* as a practical theological method, the framework employed in this theological inquiry.

### A War Against the Poor

The phrase “war on drugs” was first heard during the campaign against illegal drugs launched by the United Nations in 1971.<sup>264</sup> While it included policies for the prevention of new addicts and rehabilitation of users, “war on drugs” became a byword that declared drug abuse to be “public enemy number one.”<sup>265</sup> In 2011, fifty years after the war on drug declaration, a global commission of self-imposed leaders stated that the war on drugs has failed based on the ironic increase of drug abuse through the years. Moreover, it has even brought about the “criminalization, marginalization, and stigmatization,” of people in the world.<sup>266</sup> From many studies confirming the impact of the war on drugs in the world, the campaign was in effect, “a systematic process of victimization” designed to “exclude, marginalize, control, alienate or even victimize...the other.”<sup>267,268</sup>

Ironically, the Philippine administration uses the term, and in fact, upgrades this policy, as the new Philippine President in 2016 orders law enforcers to kill all drug

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<sup>264</sup> Ed Vullamy, “Nixon’s war on drugs began 40 years ago, and the battle is still raging,” *The Guardian*, July 24, 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2011/jul/24/war-on-drugs-40-years>.

<sup>265</sup> Emily Dufton, “The War on Drugs, How President Nixon Tied Addiction to Crime,” *The Atlantic*, March 26, 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/03/the-war-on-drugs-how-president-nixon-tied-addiction-to-crime/254319/>.

<sup>266</sup> (*War on Drugs: Report of the Global Commission on Drug Policy* June 2011. [https://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/themes/gcdp\\_v1/pdf/Global\\_Commission\\_Report\\_English.pdf](https://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/themes/gcdp_v1/pdf/Global_Commission_Report_English.pdf).

<sup>267</sup> Biko Agozino, “Theorizing otherness, the war on drugs and incarceration,” *Theorizing Criminology* (2000) <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.197.445&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

<sup>268</sup> Randy David, “Othering and Reactionary Populism,” *Inquirer.net*, October 6, 2019. <https://opinion.inquirer.net/124427/othering-and-reactionary-populism>.

pushers and users through a program that gained record-breaking popular support from the majority of the population.<sup>269</sup> Projecting drug users and pushers as the “dangerous other” and a menace to society, a ritualized killing continue to rage around the country. The table below shows the incidence of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines brought about by the war on drugs. More than 40 percent of the killings took place in Metro Manila especially in urban poor communities within Manila, Quezon City, and Caloocan, while about 60 percent are scattered in different provinces in the country.<sup>270</sup>

Many have likened the killings as rituals of sacrifice that are performed as a sacred obligation and that are executed with violence. In many cultures, like in the Old Testament, such rituals reflect the scapegoat mechanism; a practice in which an individual or a group of people is selected as a victim to be punished for the sake of maintaining communal peace and order.<sup>271</sup> From the book of Leviticus, which captures the rituals of sacrifice offered by Israelites, one goat is offered to bear the guilt for them.

Aaron will then lay both his hands on its head and over it confess(es) all the guilt of the Israelites, all their acts of rebellion and all their sins. Having thus laid them on the goat’s head, he will send it out into the desert under the charge of a man waiting ready, and the goat will bear all their guilt away into some desolate place.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Regine Cabato, “Thousands dead. Police accused of criminal acts. Yet Duterte’s drug war is wildly popular,” *The Washington Post: Democracy dies in Darkness*, October 23, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/thousands-dead-police-accused-of-criminal-acts-yet-dutertes-drug-war-is-wildly-popular/2019/10/23/4fdb542a-f494-11e9-b2d2-1f37c9d82dbb\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/thousands-dead-police-accused-of-criminal-acts-yet-dutertes-drug-war-is-wildly-popular/2019/10/23/4fdb542a-f494-11e9-b2d2-1f37c9d82dbb_story.html).

<sup>270</sup> Table 1 shows incidence of drug-related killings from May 19, 2016-September 29, 2017. Map 1 shows killings in Metro Manila and Map 2 shows the deaths in different provinces around the country. <https://drugarchive.ph/post/26-the-drug-killings-who-what-where-when-how-master>.

<sup>271</sup> Rene Girard, *Violence and Sacred* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1972), 1-10.

<sup>272</sup> Leviticus 17: 21-22, New American Bible Revised Edition

The scapegoat mechanism develops from what is called a mimetic desire which explains how in society, people tend to imitate each other's desires.<sup>273</sup> As it becomes a source of unity for one group, their desire also brings them in conflict with another group or class who may either be competing with them for this desire or hindering their group's capacity to acquire it. When conflict arises and either group is put at risk, a scapegoat is chosen to carry the brunt. For it to work, the scapegoat needs to be projected as someone who has violated rules and has disrupted the system; not an innocent one. Between the choice of "doing violence to the text," which means the creation of a narrative of a "dangerous other," than letting the text forever do violence to innocent victims," the former is chosen to justify the act of exclusion and extermination.<sup>274</sup>

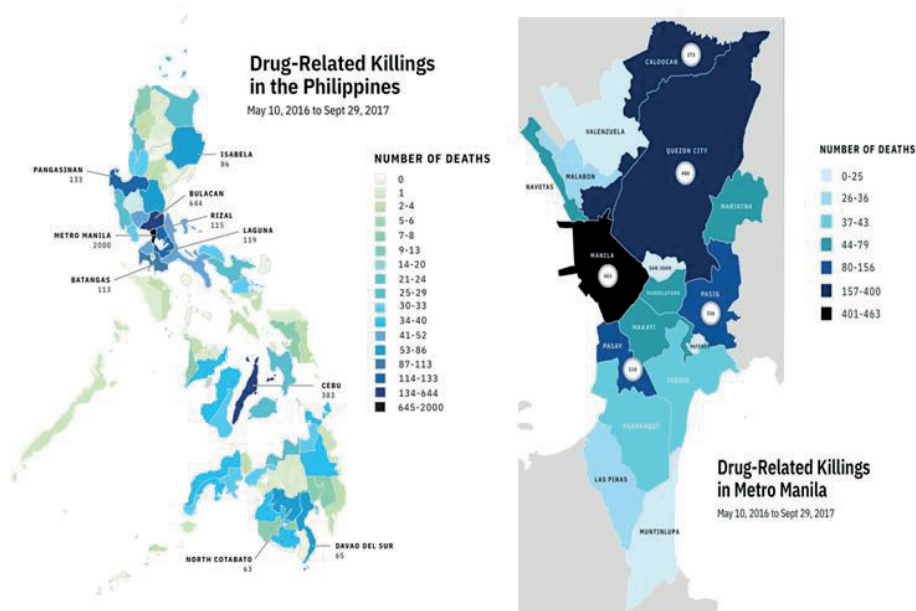


Figure 2. Incidence of Extrajudicial Killings in the Philippines<sup>275</sup>

<sup>273</sup> Rene Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1986).

<sup>274</sup> Rene Girard, *The Scapegoat*, 8.

<sup>275</sup> Source: Data taken from The Drug Archives, <https://drugarchive.ph/post/26-the-dru-who-what-where-when-how-master>.

## Creating the Dangerous *Kapwa*

The national leadership's track record in instilling peace and order and his speech act against the body<sup>276</sup> makes him a credible "mediator;" one who, "justifies and facilitates the belief" that the 'other' is dangerous to the rest of the society.<sup>277</sup> Though statistics from the Dangerous Drug Board estimates the number of people suffering from substance abuse only at 1.8 million or 2.3 percent of the population,<sup>278</sup> the present administration declares that there are 8 million people.<sup>279</sup> They are projected as people who are "*katok na* (crazy)" and thus, it will be a waste to spend money on their rehabilitation as they are already "useless."<sup>280</sup> Data of people killed by the war on drugs attest to this characterization as they are "low-level drug suspects;" the majority of them were tricycle drivers and construction workers, and most of their names were included on the drug watch list.<sup>281</sup> The table that follows presents a profile of casualties on the war on

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<sup>276</sup> The speech-act theory suggests that language does not only convey or express action, it is a performative act. The theory was first developed by J.L. Austin, who characterized performative utterances to be either locutionary (performance of an utterance), illocutionary (performance of the act with a specific intention), and perlocutionary (when what is said affects the listener)." John Langshaw Austin, "Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy," accessed August 6, 2019, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/austin/>.

<sup>277</sup> Girard, *The Scapegoat*, 15.

<sup>278</sup> Jodesz Gavilan, "DDB: Philippines has 1.8 Million Current Drug Users," *Rappler*, September 19, 2016, <http://www.rappler.com/nation/146654-drug-use-survey-results-dangerous-drugs-board-philippines-2015>.

<sup>279</sup> In 2016, President declared that the Philippines has an estimated 3 million drug users. While this number has been repeatedly contested by statistics, he also corrects this estimate with different numbers. See Jonathan de Santos, "PNP, PDEA, NBI Agree: Duterte's estimate of 8M has basis," *Philstar*, February 28, 2019, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/02/28/1897470/pnp-pdea-nbi-agree-dutertes-estimate-8m-drug-users-has-basis>. See also Efen Montano, "Duterte: Philippines has 3 million drug users," *People's Journal*, December 24, 2018, <https://journal.com.ph/news/metro/duterte-philippines-has-3-million-drug-users/>. Ellen Tordesillas, "Opinion: Duterte revises his number of drug addicts in the Philippines," ABS-CBN News, March 12, 2018, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/blogs/opinions/03/12/18/opinion-duterte-revises-his-number-of-drug-addicts-in-the-philippines>

<sup>280</sup> Danilo Andres Reyes, "The Spectacle of Violence in Duterte's War on Drugs," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 35:3 (2016): 118.

<sup>281</sup> The Drug Archive, "The Drug Killings: Who, What, Where, When, How?," accessed March 9, 2020, <https://drugarchive.ph/post/26-the-drug-killings-who-what-where-when-how-master>.

drugs which confirm the identity created of the dangerous *kapwa* who are mostly coming from the margins of society.<sup>282</sup>

Killing the criminals offers a promise of personal safety, public safety, and law and order, which is very appealing to ordinary people who experienced insecurity in their daily lives. By killing the criminals, Duterte claims he could protect and “care for law-abiding, god-fearing young persons (...) because they are our resources.”<sup>283</sup>

This kind of claim-making made to be believable and acceptable through corresponding symbolic representations helps in the construction of cultural trauma.<sup>284</sup> The macho leadership style performance with the promise to bring about peace and order in a “swift and decisive manner” makes this narrative of “crushing the dangerous other,” popular and palpable.<sup>285</sup> Moreover, it develops supporters who agree to the narrative, and they, in turn, become the “mob;” “potential persecutors” who “dream of purging the community of the impure elements that corrupt it, the traitors who undermine it.”<sup>286</sup> Such sentiments are shared by many, as the program addresses people’s anxieties and provides hope for a better and peaceful life in the country.<sup>287</sup> People who feel threatened support leadership that operates to maintain security and stability, as well as social order and

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<sup>282</sup> Table 2: Who were killed? Adapted from The Drug Archive, “The Drug Killings: Who, What, Where, When, How?” accessed March 9, 2020, <https://drugarchive.ph/post/26-the-drug-killings-who-what-where-when-how-master>.

<sup>283</sup> Reyes, “The Spectacle of Violence in Duterte’s War on Drugs,” 118.

<sup>284</sup> Jeffrey Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* (Main: Polity, 2018), 15-17.

<sup>285</sup> Nicole Curato, “Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope: Penal Populism and Duterte’s Rise to Power,” In *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 35 (3): 94-95.

<sup>286</sup> Girard, *The Scapegoat*, 16.

<sup>287</sup> Curato, “Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope,” 94-95.

cohesion.<sup>288</sup> These people are innately motivated by three factors: their loyalty to family or traditional institutions, respect for established authority, and a feeling of disgust towards those who violate group norms.<sup>289</sup>

In interviews conducted, people admit that they have a family member or relative affected by the war on drugs because they were drug users. This gives them enough reason to believe that the program is effective since it comforts most of the people to know that the government is eradicating them. Those who are more concerned about their family's safety support the program because it reminds them about the evil of drug addiction which they will make sure their children will not be engaged in. However, many interviewees would also declare that the program only targets poor people who experience violence as part of their reality. One mentions how those who are opposing the program are not aware that it is not new for people in urban poor communities. "It is because you are outsiders. We live right there. For me, it has no impact at all. Violence is a daily reality for us. It is just how life has been for us."<sup>290</sup> One interviewee mentions that this sentiment is shared by most of his neighbors conveying that the victims are *ibang tao* (outsider) to them.

We have neighbors who rejoice and celebrate when someone has been killed.

They say they are *salot ng bayan* (a pest of society). They are the notorious ones that people are all afraid of. They were untouchables in the neighborhood. You

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<sup>288</sup> Randolph Nerrona, "War on Crime and Drugs: Understanding Support for the Anti-Crime and Anti-Drugs Campaign," *Philippine Journal of Psychology* Vol. 50, No. 2 (2017): 39.

<sup>289</sup> Nerrona, "War on Crime and Drugs," 4.

<sup>290</sup> Focus Group Interview, Labor Sector Group, Taytay, February 28, 2019.



can't file a complaint against them because they'll make sure that they give you a hard time. So, when these guys were killed people felt relieved.<sup>291</sup>

Almost all interviewees from the local community have either personally witnessed extrajudicial killings (EJK) or have experienced violence in various forms. However, when asked about the impact of the war on drugs on them, many have expressed the constant fear and anxiety regarding their safety as well as their family. To witness a death naturally brings out the *kapwa* in them. They feel their pain since their stories are intertwined with theirs.

I saw someone killed in broad daylight. We were inside the jeepney and right in front of us, the traffic enforcer who was manning the traffic was shot. The jeepney driver was shocked. He couldn't move. Inside the jeepney, we were equally fearful and shocked. We looked at each other in silence. I was so afraid. In my mind, I was thinking what if my father at home would be shot too? What if they killed him and my brothers? I was also looking at the wife of the man who was killed and I felt sorry for her. She was hysterical and couldn't stop herself from crying. She was asking for help but no one among us, even I, dared to help.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Focus Group Interview, Labor Sector Group, Taytay, February 28, 2019.

<sup>292</sup> Focus Group Interview, Youth Scholars, Caloocan City, April 18, 2019.

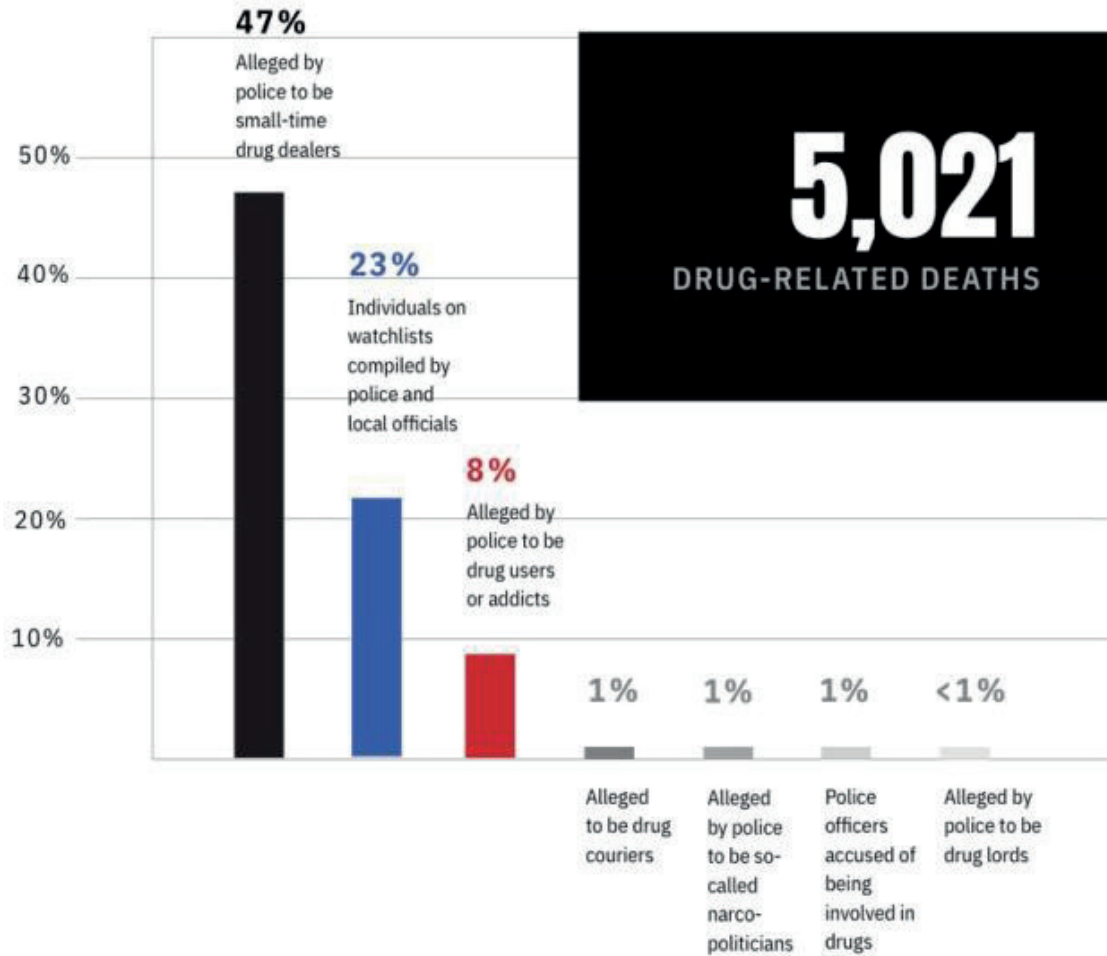


Figure 3. Who are the Casualties?<sup>293</sup>

However, attitudes of people that cuddle and support the evil act convey a different picture. Because they are projected as the dangerous *kapwa*, they are *ibang tao*. People’s complicity in the summary executions reveals paradigms of evil operative in the

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<sup>293</sup> Source: Data taken from The Drug Archives, <https://drugarchive.ph/post/26-the-drug-killings-who-what-where-when-how-master>.

war on drugs that underscore the systematic othering.<sup>294</sup> First, the evildoer is characterized as a “satanic figure,” who is not deserving of a second chance. Second, the evildoer is considered as a victim whose plight is in the hands of enforcers rewarded for his death. Third, the act itself is seen as a “necessary evil,” for a better society. Fourth, the evildoer is a “self-deceiver who is aware of the evil,” but avoids it to “shield the self from getting tainted with the knowledge of one’s complicity with evil.” Through compartmentalization, people deceive themselves in their complicity towards the evil act. Some executioners are good family men, witnesses who will not testify to the crime and will be present at the funeral, or priests who refuse to assist the families of victims. Embodying a totalitarian ethic, these behaviors oppose the Christian ethic that calls one to respond to the *kapwa*, the ‘other;’ the marginalized and oppressed in society.<sup>295</sup>

### ***Ibang Tao: Systematic Othering***

The PNP Oplan-Double Barrel/ Project *Tokhang* is the policy created to curb illegal drugs by investigating, arresting, and apprehending drug criminals in the country.<sup>296</sup> *Tokhang* is a Visayan word which is a shortened version of *Tok-tok Hangyo* (knock and plead) in which the law enforcers would knock at the door of people identified as drug users or dealers, and plead to them to surrender to authorities for assessment, monitoring, or apprehension. The first step of *Tokhang* is to identify these

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<sup>294</sup> Agnes Brazal, “Complicity in the Summary Executions in Duterte’s Drug War,” *Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church*, November 4, 2017, [www.catholicethics.com/forum-submissions/complicity-in-the-summary-executions-in-dutertes-drug-war](http://www.catholicethics.com/forum-submissions/complicity-in-the-summary-executions-in-dutertes-drug-war).

<sup>295</sup> Brazal, “Complicity in the Summary Executions in Duterte’s Drug War.”

<sup>296</sup> The Philippine National Police (PNP)’s project name *Tokhang* is a play of words with a Filipino practice of visiting a home. The guest usually knocks and says “*tao po*” (a person is out here) and when the host hears this, he responds with “*tuloy po*” (come in). The host only responds when he hears a voice of the guest and the guest only enters when he is invited.

people in the *barangay* (village). *Barangay* chiefs were tasked to submit a list of names of residents who they suspect are “pushers, dealers, users, and couriers.”<sup>297</sup> It was presumed that since they have jurisdiction over a small area of about 5,000 families or more, they can easily identify these personalities.<sup>298</sup> Since the *barangay* leaders were mainly responsible for maintaining peace and order in the community as well as in settling conflicts among residents, they know who these people are. Police assigned in stations within the *barangay* were also expected to assist in identifying these personalities. To create the list, some *barangays* even employed strategies that engaged the residents such as setting up a drop-box or a text-hotline so that they can send names without fear of retaliation from the person.<sup>299</sup> Since there were no documents required for one to be included in the list, there was a tendency to abuse and misuse the system.

When they visit the homes of people included on the drug watch list, the team composed of the police, the *barangay* official, as well as representatives from the community, is supposed to ‘plead’ to the drug personality to surrender and to submit himself for testing and rehabilitation. After the initial drug test, which will classify their level of substance abuse, those arrested by the *Tokhang* are either advised to undergo rehabilitation or detention. Since most of the drug users do not need to be

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<sup>297</sup> Colina, Antonio, “Incoming PNP Chief Optimistic about Oplan Tokhang’s nationwide implementation,” *Mindanews: This is our Mindanao*, June 3, 2016, <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2016/06/incoming-pnp-chief-optimistic-about-oplan-tokhangs-nationwide-implementation/>.

<sup>298</sup> The *barangay*, a village or *barrio*, is the smallest administrative unit. It is governed by a *Barangay* chairman with seven legislative council member and a youth representative. See Urban *Barangays* in the Philippines, <https://psa.gov.ph/content/urban-barangays-philippines-based-2010-cph>.

<sup>299</sup> Rambo Talabong, “DILG orders LGUs to set up dropboxes for drug-crime reporting,” *Rappler*, October 5, 2017, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/184038-dilg-orders-lgus-drop-boxes-drug-crime-reporting>.

institutionalized, they are advised to attend a community rehabilitation program. Those who are proven as drug dealers and pushers are detained.

The scheme, however, became more focused on eradicating the small-time drug personalities; the manner of which further manifests this scapegoat mechanism and systematized othering.<sup>300</sup> In the execution of the program, the body came to be symbolized and objectified through words such as ground zero (referring to the *barangay* with many arrests and killings or also to a person targeted to be arrested or killed), *palit-ulo* (exchange heads), or *palit-katawan* (exchange bodies).<sup>301</sup> During the time of arrest, when the suspect is not found at home, whoever welcomes the *tokhang* team at the door will be the one arrested or killed as it happened with a drug pusher who lost his mother during a raid.<sup>302</sup> Similarly, there are stories of wives and sisters being used as *palit-katawan*; if the suspect allows his wife or sister to have sex with a law enforcer, he will be freed.<sup>303</sup> These practices suggest an understanding that the *kapwa*, my son or brother, or daughter, is me. The term ground zero referred to places that are the most notorious area for arrests, deaths, and killings. Communities labeled as ground zero were

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<sup>300</sup> Simangan argues how the *Tokhang* and the massive killings can be likened to genocide. Though genocide are “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, the scheme reflects the stages of “classification, symbolization, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, and extermination, and denial” which take place sequentially and intermittently in the process of its implementation. See Dahlia Simangan, “Is the Philippine “War on Drug an Act of Genocide?” *Journal of Genocide Research* October 2017: 1-3. See also Gregory Stanton, “The Eight Stages of Genocide,” Genocide Watch: The International Alliance to end Genocide,” accessed October 23, 2019. <http://www.genocidewatch.org/genocide/8stagesofgenocide.html>.

<sup>301</sup> ABS-CBN News, “Robredo Reveals Palit-ulo Scheme,” ABS-CBN News, March 15, 2017, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/03/14/17/robredo-reveals-palit-ulo-scheme-in-war-on-drugs>.

<sup>302</sup> Focus Group Interview, Women Pastoral Workers, Caloocan City, March 7, 2019.

<sup>303</sup> Fieldwork Observation, Meeting of EJK Providers, Manila, February 26, 2019.

prejudiced by people. Students who live in the area were ridiculed by fellow students.<sup>304</sup> Taxi drivers refuse to take passengers from these neighborhoods.<sup>305</sup>

But one can also be referred to as ground zero, when his name is on the drug watch list or if he is forewarned to be arrested or killed anytime.<sup>306</sup> During police raids in communities, men were arrested and were gathered at the center of their neighborhood, horrifying residents. At times, they are handcuffed and made to squat or sit on the floor like captives prepared to be slaughtered. The operation would turn up thousands of drug addicts in the city and municipal jails which is the cause of a 612 percent increase of detainees (a total of 146,302 inmates) in prisons around the country.<sup>307</sup>

Implementors of the *Tokhang* are alleged to abuse the scheme as it eventually became a knock and kill. The table below shows that majority of the *Tokhang* victims were killed by policemen during police operations with a big percentage also done by unknown assailants who are masked and are riding a motorcycle.<sup>308</sup> This began a spike of killings that created horrible pictures of bloodied and lifeless bodies on the streets, on crowded path walks, and in homes of urban poor families; displaying a “spectacle of humiliation and violence,” through the body.<sup>309</sup> Police raids were reportedly turned into

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<sup>304</sup> Focus Group Interview, Youth Scholars, Caloocan City, April 18, 2019.

<sup>305</sup> Focus Group Interview, Women Pastoral Workers, Caloocan City, March 7, 2019.

<sup>306</sup> The drug watchlist was also an instrument of people in power. They would inform relatives and friends included in the list so that they can hide. There are cases where officials would erase the names for a fee. A father mentions how his son got off the hook because of his *compadre*, the barangay captain with whom he owes a debt of gratitude (*utang na loob*).

<sup>307</sup> Ayalin, Adrian, “Overcrowded PH jails housing over 146,000 inmates, above 20k capacity: COA,” ABS CBN News, July 3, 2018, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/03/18/overcrowded-ph-jails-housing-over-146000-inmates-above-20k-capacity-coa>.

<sup>308</sup> Table 2 “Who were the Killers?,” *The Drug Archive*, <https://drugarchive.ph/post/26-the-drug-killings-who-what-where-when-how-master>.

<sup>309</sup> Danilo Andres Reyes, “The Spectacle of Violence in Duterte’s War on Drugs,” 111.

shoot outs between the law enforcers and the suspects. But many stories attest that the police killed their loved one. Some of them were killed inside their homes, before their wives, mothers, and children. Lola Remy witnessed her son killed in their home.<sup>310</sup>

He was forewarned that he was on the drug watch list and was advised to hide or perish. He disappeared for a few weeks but promised to be home for the birthday of his daughter. When he was out, police came by to arrest him, and because he was not around, his wife, who was pregnant was arrested on his behalf through what is called *palit-ulo* (head-exchange). The wife was reported to have given birth while in prison and her baby was forcibly taken from her. Meanwhile, the father comes home late in the evening. The following day as he was preparing spaghetti for his daughter, police came to arrest him. His seven children were told to leave the house. One daughter who hugged her father so tight insisted to stay behind and so witnessed her father's plea to spare his life for the sake of his children. But in a few seconds, gunshots were heard by the children and in a few minutes, they found their father's lifeless body lying on the floor.<sup>311</sup>

Lola Remy, in her late 80s, is now taking the responsibility for her seven grandchildren.

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<sup>310</sup> Missio Munchen, "Extrajudicial Killings," Published on October 31, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEuLu9FsRco>.

<sup>311</sup> Interview, Caroline, Cainta, January 10, 2019.

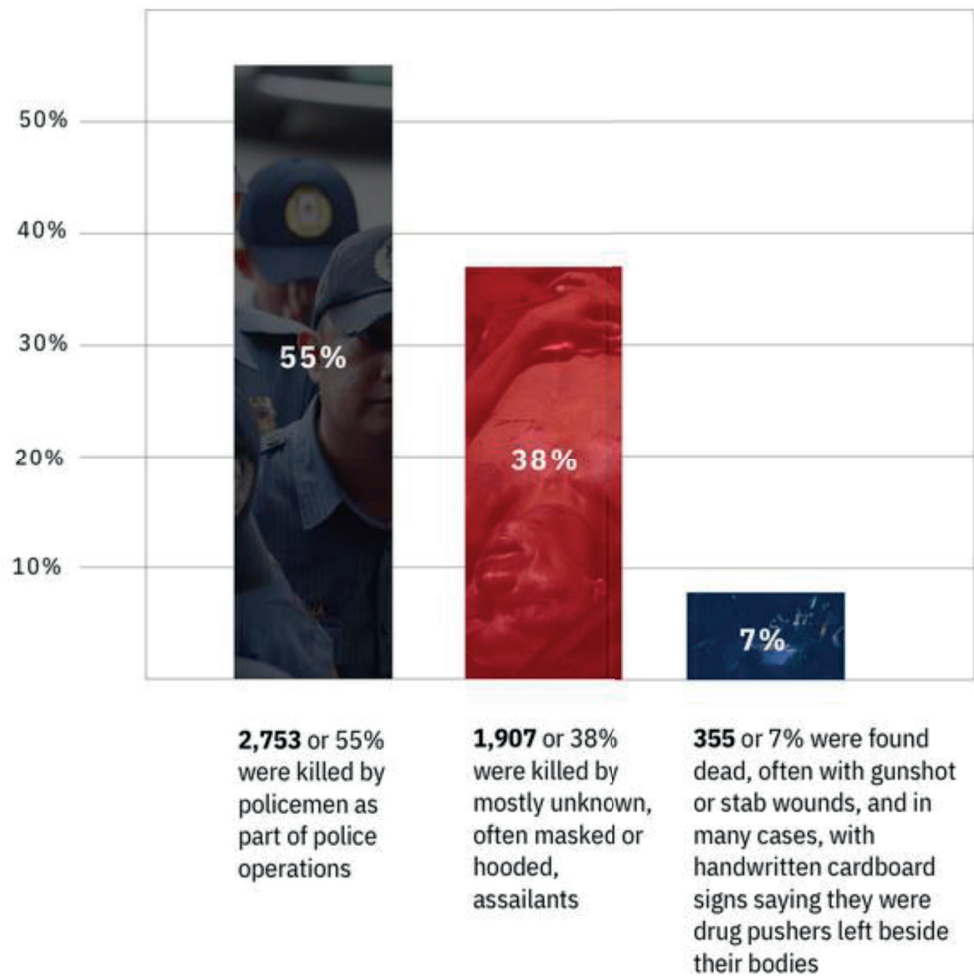


Figure 4. Who were the killers?<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Source: Data taken from The Drug Archives, <https://drugarchive.ph/post/26-the-drug-killings-who-what-where-when-how-master>.



The *Tokhang* also created a ritualized killing of people on the streets further objectifying the body.<sup>313</sup> The “riding in tandem” scheme had two people, usually with covered faces on a motorcycle, shooting a suspected drug user/pusher on the street, and immediately escaping from the scene. Some of them are vigilantes who are convinced that it is the right thing to do.<sup>314</sup>

Those we kill are not good people. They are not regular people. They are wicked ones. They destroy the lives of more people, compared to us. We are just cleaning the trash and they’re the trash. They should be erased from the world.<sup>315</sup>

The dehumanization is made more graphic and blatant as some of them, who are killed at night by the same scheme, would leave the dead body on the streets hogtied, with face and body duct-taped, and with a placard on which is written, “I am a drug pusher. Do not imitate me.” As the placards suggest an admission of guilt on the part of the victim, it emphasizes the narrative of ‘othering’ and justifies the killing.<sup>316</sup> Since the body cannot be touched until police officers and the SOCO (Scene of the Crime Operatives) arrive, the grief over such a complicated death intensifies not only for the relatives but to onlookers as well.

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<sup>313</sup> Danilo Andres Reyes, “The Spectacle of Violence in Duterte’s War on Drugs,” 117.

<sup>314</sup> AJ+, “The Philippines’ Drug Problem: Hitmen, Dealers and Duterte’s War on Addicts |AJ+,” *AJ+*, December 3, 2016, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atuqx5Ubr5o\\_](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atuqx5Ubr5o_). See also Journeyman Pictures, “Roger Duterte is Sanctioning Murder in the Philippines,” *Journeyman.TV/Dateline*, November 2, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5phg6y9Zzg>. BBC Documentary, “The Truth Behind: BBC Documentary EJK Philippines,” BBC, March 10, 2017, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSvkC65qclA\\_](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSvkC65qclA_). CBC News: The National, “Horror of the Philippines’ Drug War,” April 12, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0v9IcZRfhY&t=38s>.

<sup>315</sup> AJ+, “The Philippines’ Drug Problem: Hitmen, Dealers and Duterte’s War on Addicts | AJ+,” *AJ+*, December 3, 2016, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atuqx5Ubr5o\\_](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atuqx5Ubr5o_).

<sup>316</sup> Cherry Ruth R. Soriano, Clarissa David, and Jenna Mae Atun, “Crystallizing the official narrative: News discourses about the killings from the Philippines government’s campaign against illegal drugs.” *Journalism* (2019): 9. 10.1177/464884919867820.

I watched my husband's lifeless and gun riddled body on the street from a distance. While the body was being cordoned off, I stood among the crowd. I was grieving inside and yet I was silent. I couldn't utter a word of plea let alone a scream at the demise of my husband. I didn't go near him too as I felt my husband was telling me not to. He didn't want me to get involved. But I am still in that scene as if my soul was left behind with him. I am dead like him.<sup>317</sup>

A CCTV footage captures the killing of a tricycle driver in broad daylight by six masked men in three motorbikes who were riding in tandem.<sup>318</sup> They stopped the traffic like policemen would, as one of them goes down, shoots, and leaves with his partner. A second one, who is called a finisher, shoots the victim with a few more bullets, to make sure he is dead. They all leave, and traffic goes on normal. The dead body lies in the middle of the road for five hours without anyone bothered by it.

The pyramid economy created by these deaths has further reinforced the killings. Police officers are alleged to be incentivized to carry out this task with the promise of promotion and monetary rewards on arrests and deaths.<sup>319</sup> Hired killers are paid \$150 for

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<sup>317</sup> Fieldwork Notes, Manila, February 9, 2019. *See also* Patricia Evangelista and Carlo Gabuco, "In the Name of the Father," *Rappler*, December 8, 2016, <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/duterte-drug-war-name-of-the-father-impunity>. *See also* Patricia Evangelist and Carlo Gabuco, "Where the Drug War Began," *Rappler*, April 24, 2017, <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/investigative/beginning-war-on-drugs-philippines>.

<sup>318</sup> Interview, Pablo David, Caloocan City, January 19, 2019.

<sup>319</sup> Manuel Mogato and Claire Baldwin, "Special Report: Police describe kill-rewards staged crime scenes in Duterte's drug war," Reuters, April 18, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-duterte-police-specialrep/special-report-police-describe-kill-rewards-staged-crime-scenes-in-dutertes-drug-war-idUSKBN>. *See also* Lara Tan, "War vs. Poor: Police pair per killing – Amnesty International," CNN Philippines, February 2, 2017, <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2017/02/01/war-on-drugs-extrajudicial-killing-Duterte-Amnesty-International.html>. *See also* Carlo Gabuco, "License to Kill," *Human Rights Watch*, August 1, 2016, [https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/03/02/license-kill/philippine-police-killings-dutertes-war-drugs\\_](https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/03/02/license-kill/philippine-police-killings-dutertes-war-drugs_)

killing a drug user and \$400 for a smalltime drug pusher.<sup>320</sup> The *Tokhang* illumines the theory on the “political economy of the body;” that the body is used to exert political power, to instill discipline and punishment, and to establish authority over people.<sup>321</sup> The “body is invested with relations of power and domination” and though used for production as in labor power, it can only be maximized if submitted to a “system of subjection.”<sup>322</sup>

This subjection is not only obtained by the instruments of violence or ideology; it can also be direct, physical, pitting force against force, bearing on material elements, and yet without involving violence; it may be calculated, organized, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use of neither weapons nor of terror and yet remain of (a) physical order. That is to say, there may be a knowledge of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them; this knowledge and this mastery constitute what might be called the political technology of the body.<sup>323</sup>

The use of the body “as a type of ritual, a liturgy,” to expose the power of the government over bodies, is typical in many countries.<sup>324</sup> The “school to prison pipeline,” phenomenon in the United States for instance, which shows how students, especially

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<sup>320</sup> Dona Pazzibugan, “PNP paid killers P5,000 per drug user,” *Inquirer.net.*, February 2, 2017. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/867389/pnp-paid-killers-p5000-per-drug-user>

<sup>321</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1995), 25.

<sup>322</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 26.

<sup>323</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 26.

<sup>324</sup> William Cavanaugh, “The Body of Christ: The Eucharist and Politics,” *Word & World* 22 Number 2, Spring 2002: 171.

students of color, who don't perform well are criminalized for minor violations in school manifests this systematized othering and the commodification of the body.<sup>325</sup> Stories of torture victims, femicide, and other victims of political violence in Latin American countries reflect this subjection through the body.<sup>326</sup>

The killings continue and have morphed in the killings of media personnel, activists, human rights lawyers, and other personalities that speak out against the administration.<sup>327</sup> In this way, not only bodies physically tortured and killed are subjugated. The narrative successfully trains bodies to react and participate. Creating mobs from the crowd who are “potential persecutors,” supports the plan in “purging the community of the impure elements that corrupt it.”<sup>328</sup>

### ***Buhay na Patay: Death after Death***

This systematic commodification of the body and strategies of othering have caused not only the physical death of individuals but a traumatic life for those remaining. Those imprisoned must suffer in overcrowded jails, without enough space, food, and protection. Some of those in jail but are bailed out by family are killed immediately when

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<sup>325</sup> Andrew Bacher-Hicks, Stephen Billings, and David Deming, “The School to Prison Pipeline: Long-Run Impacts of School Suspension on Adult Crimes,” *The National Bureau of Economic Research*, NBER Working Paper no. 26257 (September 2019) [http://conference.iza.org/conference\\_files/Education\\_2019/bacher-hicks\\_a28539.pdf](http://conference.iza.org/conference_files/Education_2019/bacher-hicks_a28539.pdf).

<sup>326</sup> Pineda-Madrid presents the social suffering evident in the femicide in *Ciudad Juarez* where women are killed and tortured and which the culture has learned to accept. She argues how this phenomenon of torture and death is reflective of the social imaginary of people and that salvation is only possible when the religious space can be claimed as “fragments of salvation,” where political subjectivity can also be expressed and embodied. See Nancy Pineda Madrid, *Suffering and Salvation in Ciudad Juarez* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011).

<sup>327</sup> See Nick Aspinwall, “Duterte turns Death Squads on Political Activists,” *FP Insider Access*, June 20, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/06/10/duterte-turns-death-squads-on-political-activists/>. Also see Jee Geronimo, “Duterte normalized act of extrajudicial killings,” *Rappler*, January 6, 2017, [https://www.rappler.com/nation/157528-duterte-extrajudicial-killing-human-rights\\_](https://www.rappler.com/nation/157528-duterte-extrajudicial-killing-human-rights_).

<sup>328</sup> Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, 16.

they are released. The execution continues with families of victims whose lives are continually threatened as they suffer ongoing wounds of trauma.

The death of their loved one is only the beginning of prolonged misery. The poor family must shoulder the funeral cost. There are funeral homes, in cahoots with some police authorities, that would arrive at the crime scene ahead of time. Funeral homes charge the bereaved family exorbitant fees sometimes about 40,000-50,000 pesos, rates that are 200-300 percent higher than typical.<sup>329</sup> The family must borrow money or ask for help to be able to do that. At the peak of the killings, people were even afraid to support the families for fear of being suspected as accomplices. The corpse cannot be recovered from the funeral company until the death certificate is issued by the police station and a certain amount has been paid. It usually takes time for the police station to release the documents not only because of the circumstances of the death but also because their operatives were involved.

The death certificate is also important for the family to ask for help from organizations. It is already an ordeal for the bereaved families to run from one office to another and to plead for these documents. But when a family is in a state of shock handling their dead amidst all these other concerns, it makes things doubly traumatic. To visit the different offices means to spend for transportation when they could barely have food on their table once a day. When they could finally claim the body for wake services, they will be indebted to the funeral company. The date of the funeral cannot be

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<sup>329</sup> Rina Jimenez David, "Justice for EJK Victims, Survivors," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 10, 2018, <https://opinion.inquirer.net/116645/justice-ejk-victims-survivors>.

ascertained until the family can collect the amount that they owe the funeral company. It takes them at least two weeks to a month before the funeral is held.

Wakes and funerals are community events. In normal circumstances, death and bereavement practices are observed even in urban poor communities. The coffin is placed in the homes where prayers are offered by the family and the community. People remain for a few hours to chat with the bereaved but also with one another as a way of showing support and sympathy to the family. In poor neighborhoods, the community organizes gambling tables in front of the house of the bereaved family to help them cover funeral expenses. A percentage of the proceeds is remitted to the family every night. However, in cases of extrajudicial killings, such practices are not possible since people avoid paying their respects in the evening for fear of being killed themselves. Some families decide to move to another place where people do not know them for fear of being killed especially if they witnessed the death of their loved one. Moreover, many of them fear to report or allow the case to be documented by church or human rights groups for fear of retaliation.

As shown by these experiences, the needs of the bereaved in cases of complicated mourning are grossly overlooked.<sup>330</sup> Their need to mourn and their fight for life compete. Families of painful death experiences face various challenges such as “media concepts of grief versus family realities, societal narratives versus family narratives, money, being a symbol.”<sup>331</sup> Aside from this, the bereaved need to face the task of reconstructing the circumstance of death to understand and respond to it, attending to feelings of

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<sup>330</sup> Teresa Rando, “Complications in Mourning Traumatic Death,” in *Dying, Death, and Bereavement: Theoretical Perspectives and Other Ways of Knowing*, ed. Inge B. Corless, Barbara B. Germino, and Mary Pittman (Boston: Jones and Barlett, 1994), 254.

<sup>331</sup> Paul C. Rosenblatt, “Grieving Families and the 9/11 Disaster,” in *Death, Bereavement and Mourning*, ed. Samuel Heilman (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2005), 85-103.

vulnerability and loss of control and more intense emotional reactions such as anger and guilt, among many others.<sup>332</sup> This situation is heightened when the bereaved belong to the lower strata of society. While they go through the denial, repression, or avoidance of the loss and the need to hold on to the dead, they have no choice but to respond to the needs for survival. Thus, these deaths do not only signal the bereavement over death; it shouts out the death of bereavement. Distorting the narrative of victory of life over death, these situations “can beget more death if it does not lead to reconciliation, regeneration, and rebirth.”<sup>333</sup>

### **Ecclesial Participation (or Non-Participation) with the Others**

The enacted narrative of the war on drugs presents a dangerous *kapwa* in the person of the poor through a systematized process of othering that creates deaths after deaths even for those alive. In numerous pastoral statements, the Catholic bishops conference called for the restoration of the Filipino value of *pakikipagkapwa* (being a neighbor) together with their plea to “stop the killings.” They have asked that “the healing must begin. *Malasakit* (compassion) must be restored. *Pakikiramay* (empathy-sympathy) must be active. It further declares that “the church must either be at the forefront of the intense and fervent struggle against a culture of death or the Church betrays Christ.”<sup>334</sup> However, ecclesial actions in response to the war on drugs expose the absence-presence of the value of *kapwa* and *pakikipagkapwa*.

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<sup>332</sup> Rando, “Complications in Mourning Traumatic Death,” 259.

<sup>333</sup> Samuel Heilman, “Introduction,” from *Death, Bereavement and Mourning*, ed. Samuel Heilman (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2005), 4.

<sup>334</sup> Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, “Lord Heal Our Land. See 2 Chronicles 7:14,” *CBCP Online*, September 12, 2017, <http://cbcponline.net/lord-heal-our-land/>.

## A State of Confusion and Ambivalence

At the onset of the killings, the call for active resistance has been heard from the church, the academe, and different sectors.<sup>335</sup> Fighting against the cultivation of a culture of violence and death, prophetic voices speak of resisting in the “open democratic spaces,” to resisting through “civil disobedience,” when not enough. People are called to resist by breaking the culture of silence, participating in communal discernment and collective action, and by responding to the needs of victims and their families.<sup>336</sup> The mere mention however of the topic in table conversations even among peers draws out deep emotions among people. In social media, to courageously talk about the issue will result in being blocked by friends.

In various spaces, Christians are called to honor the 30,000 victims of the war as new martyrs because they bear witness to the truth and to show resistance by telling their stories and documenting their deaths.<sup>337</sup> Various church groups have organized protests in collaboration with ecumenical, professional, and political movements to speak out against the killings. On the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the EDSA Revolution, an ecumenical gathering entitled “One Faith, One Nation, One Voice,” was held in which church leaders from different denominations voiced their sentiments and expressed solidarity with the families of victims.<sup>338</sup> The Walk for Life organized by the Council of the Laity of the Philippines

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<sup>335</sup> Danny Pilario, “Extrajudicial Killings: The Church Confronts the State in the Philippines,” Delivered at De La Salle University in the International Conference on Theology and Religion: Church and State Relations on July 26, 2019. [https://www.facebook.com/notes/danny-pilario/extrajudicial-killings-the-church-confronts-the-state-in-the-philippines/10157446976989700\\_](https://www.facebook.com/notes/danny-pilario/extrajudicial-killings-the-church-confronts-the-state-in-the-philippines/10157446976989700_)

<sup>336</sup> Pilario, “Extrajudicial Killings,” [https://www.facebook.com/notes/danny-pilario/extrajudicial-killings-the-church-confronts-the-state-in-the-philippines/10157446976989700\\_](https://www.facebook.com/notes/danny-pilario/extrajudicial-killings-the-church-confronts-the-state-in-the-philippines/10157446976989700_)

<sup>337</sup> Pilario, “Extrajudicial Killings,” [https://www.facebook.com/notes/danny-pilario/extrajudicial-killings-the-church-confronts-the-state-in-the-philippines/10157446976989700\\_](https://www.facebook.com/notes/danny-pilario/extrajudicial-killings-the-church-confronts-the-state-in-the-philippines/10157446976989700_)

<sup>338</sup> Fieldwork Observation, EDSA Rally, February 23, 2019.



has become a yearly gathering since 2017 to protest against the war on drugs and other issues against life. There were more than 20,000 attendees during the first gathering in 2017. In 2019, simultaneous programs were organized in Quezon City, Tarlac, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, and San Pablo.<sup>339</sup>

As a study indicates, however, church leaders have varying opinions regarding the war on drugs.<sup>340</sup> Though some strongly oppose the program stating the sacredness and dignity of life, many pastors and priests also imply support for the government plan as they believe that drug addicts have transgressed the law and that the government is predestined by the Divine to lead people to repentance. Some of those interviewed had even cited Biblical passages to defend their position as they confirm support for a theocratic government in which the president takes the role of God.

But such belief may also come out of their lived experience of violence and death. An interview with a priest in charge of a mission station plagued by killings has this to say:

Being amid pain and suffering, I am honestly confused as to where to stand regarding the issue. While on the one hand, I know that it is a sin to take someone else's life, I also witness how the death of some people is giving life to their families who have been suffering because of their addiction.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Joe Torres, "Filipinos march to express concern over 'threats to life'," *UCA News*, February 18, 2019, <https://www.ucanews.com/news/filipinos-march-to-express-concern-over-threats-to-life/84534>.

<sup>340</sup> Jayeel Cornelio and Erron Medina, "Christianity and Duterte's War on Drugs in the Philippines," *Politics, Religion, and Ideology* 20, 2 (2019): 160-161, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2019.1617135>.

<sup>341</sup> Interview, Jason, Caloocan City, October 23, 2019.

In two focus group discussions, the mothers debated whether one neighbor deserves to be killed or arrested. One says, “I don’t want him killed because he was good to us. He only did bad to residents of Phase 5, not our neighborhood. He protected us.”<sup>342</sup> Another mother expressed, “I know it is God who gave us life and so God is the only one who can take it away from us. But what do you do with someone who has caused harm to people and could have also taken someone else’s life? How can we allow him to continue to cause death to our neighbors?”<sup>343</sup>

It was surprising that stories of deaths and arrests were not shared openly with others. In several focus group interviews in which people knew each other as friends, co-workers, or co-members in a church ministry, it was the first time for some people to disclose that they have a family member or relative who was killed or arrested. It is *nakakahiya*, shameful for family members to even admit that one of them is in any way connected to the story of the war on drugs.

### ***Palimos: Distant Suffering***

The church at large has been always responsive to victims of war and famine; ready to assist when the need arises. Left-behind families of extrajudicial killings receive assistance in the form of food subsidy, scholarships, various healing workshops for the women and their children. These are offered as they come and while supply lasts; that is, as individuals and groups offer financial resources and/or their expertise.

Though such assistance is needed, these may be ways of surfacing wounds that reflect a kind of “distant suffering,” a “politics of pity,” that views the other as pitiful,

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<sup>342</sup> BEC Focus Group Interview, Bagong Silang, March 20, 2019.

<sup>343</sup> Pastoral Workers Focus Group Interview, Bagong Silang, March 20, 2019.

*kawawa*, and from the vantage point of the privileged.<sup>344</sup> It reflects the kind of response affluent countries have extended in reporting atrocities from countries that are suffering while neglecting to respond to their contribution to the web of oppression and injustice which caused it.<sup>345</sup> The war on drugs has been broadcast all over the world in this way; helping propel the much-needed international attention. It has inspired protests, support for the victims, and the ongoing international court proceedings on human rights violations. Such action however that “remains within the camp” and that is “isolated from the realities of the exploited and the excluded,” may not be enough.<sup>346</sup> Although dangerous memory can convey religion as an interruption, interrupting trauma is not by itself redemptive.<sup>347</sup> Filipinos’ love for telenovelas echo this kind of interruption that takes people back to their emotions in a “safe space,” and yet fails to teach them to go back to life and transform their situation. Christianity is not just about “comforting the afflicted,” but “afflicting the comfortable.”<sup>348</sup> To re-member people and their suffering is to discover a crossing through trauma; one that does not delete the memory but makes it a “site of potential transformation” for all.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> Distant suffering refers to the dilemma of conveying humanitarian aid through a mediated spectacle of suffering. It either conveys an “abstract universalism or a local particularism,” that embraces global solidarity and yet excludes the ‘others’ who are in one’s immediate space. See Luc Boltanski, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media, and Politics*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Cambridge, 1999), xiv-xv.

<sup>345</sup> Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, 30.

<sup>346</sup> David Field, “On (Re)Centering the Margins: A Euro-African Perspective on the Option for the Poor,” In *Opting for the Margins: Postmodernity and Liberation in Christian Theology*, ed. Joerg Rieger (Oxford: Oxford, 2003): 61.

<sup>347</sup> Flora Keshgegian, *Redeeming Memories: A Theology of Healing and Transformation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 143.

<sup>348</sup> Interview, Pablo David, January 13, 2019.

<sup>349</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 91.

In the process of becoming a witnessing community how the story is told and interpreted is crucial. Without consideration of its roots and context from the past, such gazing may still be reflective of the dualistic view the society holds regarding the oppressed and the oppressor, the exploiter and the exploited. Distant suffering may appear to respond to the wounds but in truth, it only responds to the wounds that are skin deep.

Many ecclesial practices suggest this way of telling the story; one in which suffering remains to be the situation of the “other;” someone who is not part of us, not included in the body. The *Pondo ng Pinoy* suggests such a tendency. This foundation has been instrumental in funding various programs on evangelization as well as community development projects in parishes and dioceses. For the past fourteen years, it has provided resources to help alleviate communities from poverty. A statue was designed to represent the foundation, which is seen in many middle to upper-class parishes in the Philippines. The statue depicts a pitiful, helpless image of a poor boy dressed in tattered clothes, barefooted, and holding a can to beg for alms. The image reminds one of the homeless children on the streets who have the pavements as their bed and who feast on leftover food from restaurants. Seeing this image in the church brings out encounters with the ‘others,’ those who are not part of church celebrations but who is the object of our Christian obligation. The statue brings this memory back and affects the person such that it results in one dropping a coin (or some peso bill) on the box beside the statue. While such encounters bring about *awa*, pity, raises awareness for the plight of many, and offers an opportunity to re-member the ‘others,’ most encounters become that one-time act to

express one's moral responsibility. While it conveys the marks of crucifixion, there are deeper wounds that need to be addressed and which each one is responsible for.

### ***Tapal-Tapal: Practices of Sacred Bandaging***

*Pakikipagkapwa* is shown collectively through worship and rituals. At the height of the killings, parishes are united with orphans and widows by lifting their concerns during the Sunday mass.<sup>350</sup> The Christmas story was reinterpreted according to the cries and memory of those vanquished as their stories are showcased in rituals and stage plays that memorialized the dead and raised funds for their loved ones.<sup>351</sup> Such initiatives can interrupt and disrupt people from their inattention to the needs of the others and enable them to turn to them in prayer and concrete help.

Again, these are practices that may provide temporary relief but do not guarantee the healing needed. *Tapal-tapal* refers to traditional practices of plastering wounds with herbal leaves to provide immediate relief to wounds. Though the traditional practices of healing have proven effective, contemporary practices of *tapal-tapal* do not subscribe to the traditional one. People tend to refer to *tapal-tapal* now as immediate relief.

It is similar to the kind of “sacred bandaging” or the “band-aid narrative” that tends to spiritualize, interiorize, or privatize the wounds.<sup>352</sup> While it can soothe the present pain, without critical reflection, it may create a pseudo-resurrection experience that only attends to marks of crucifixion and not to wounds that resurrect. It is easy to fall into “resurrection traps” which “compromise the redemptive power of resurrection.”<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Focus Group Interview, Youth leaders, Bagong Silang, March 14, 2019.

<sup>351</sup> Focus group Interview, Youth leaders, Bagong Silang, March 14, 2019.

<sup>352</sup> Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds*, 73-75.

<sup>353</sup> She notes resurrection traps that may lurk in ministry to those who suffer. “A potential trap of resurrection faith is precisely seeking to dissolve the ambiguity, to make resurrection faith be more about

Surfacing wounds involve ambiguities which Christian practices sometimes avoid. These are practices that make the resurrection story seem like a “final event” and not a “paradigmatic narrative of promise and resisting of power.”<sup>354</sup>

Resurrection mediated by the memory of suffering means that there is a meaning for the dead, for those already defeated and forgotten, that has not yet been made good on. History’s potential for meaning does not depend only on those who have survived, the successful ones who have made it. Meaning simply cannot be a category reserved to the victors.<sup>355</sup>

The gaze should reach the stage of “resisting in solidarity” in which unity is achieved; one in which “the oppressed and the privileged stand together in solidarity,” to develop an “imaginal-political vision” together.<sup>356</sup>

### **“Who is My Neighbor?”**

During the time of Jesus, people were governed by Judaic law that tells them to share what they have with others and to treat foreigners and neighbors as their own (Leviticus 19:18, Deuteronomy 14:29) because God loves them (Deuteronomy 10:18). Despite this, Jews came to practice neighborliness only towards their fellow Jews and proselytes. Even the laws came to subscribe to this cultural interpretation and thus,

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belief than hope. Another trap is to make resurrection a final event rather than a paradigmatic narrative of promise and resisting power. Yet another is to explain it away as wish fulfillment. A more common trap is to view resurrection as a miraculous event that proves God’s power to intervene dramatically not only in history, but in nature.” Flora Keshgegian, *Redeeming Memories: A Theology of Healing and Transformation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 181.

<sup>354</sup> Flora Keshgegian, *Redeeming Memories: A Theology of Healing and Transformation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 181.

<sup>355</sup> Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 109.

<sup>356</sup> Susanna Snyder, “*La Mano Zurda* with a Heart in its Palm: Mystical Activism as a Response to the Trauma of Immigration Detention,” in *Post-Traumatic Public Theology*, ed. Stephanie Arel and Shelly Rambo (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016):217-240.

neighborliness was practiced as a preferential preference for fellow Jews, in deference to the ‘others.’

It is also reflective of the war on drugs which uncovers the process of “othering” that has taken place in society and ecclesial life. The figure below shows how practices from the public sphere and within ecclesial communities contribute to the spiral of signification that creates the “dangerous others.” As systematized othering happens through practices of the war on drugs, it is also reflective of ecclesial practices that intentionally respond to the needs of victims, and yet because of its inattentiveness to the roots of trauma, fail to effect change and continue the narrative of othering through practices of participation.

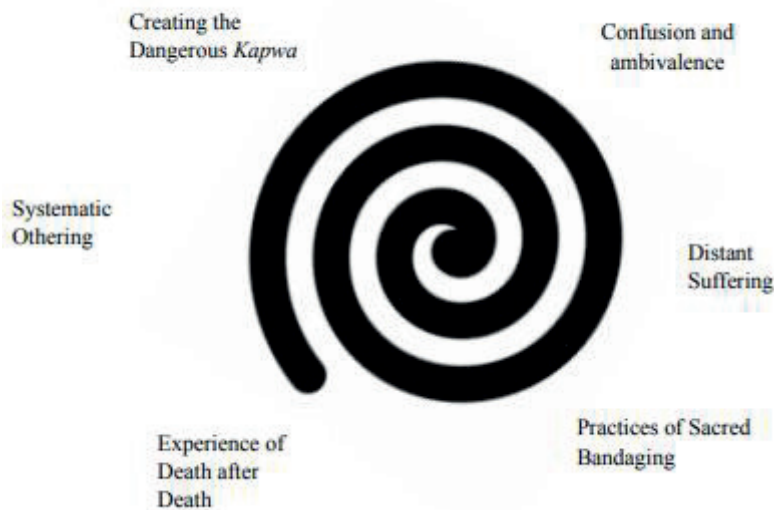


Figure 5. Spiral of Signification: *Ibang Tao* (The Other)

It is said that when the “others” are given a name, a face, a story, their plea might be heard. It may rouse the call of being *kapwa*. Through a real story, the breach and crisis from the public arena become personal and political.

Kian de los Santos' story became the counter-narrative to the dangerous others. His story awakened people to the reality that the others are not necessarily dangerous. They could be us. While the story provided a name to the countless unknowns killed on the streets,<sup>357</sup> the counter-story failed to bring about change.

### **The Story of Kian**

Kian was a 17-year-old boy who was arrested and killed even after he pleaded to the policemen who arrested him. Though the police have admitted that he was not on the drug watch list in his barangay, he was, however, accused of being a drug runner.<sup>358</sup> Police reports claim that he was killed because he fought back but the story as told by witnesses and through CCTV footage was different. Kian was killed by his arrestors who picked him up from his home. He was found dead in one corner, lying in a fetal position, and with a bullet wound on his head.

Media played a big role in creating Kian's story as a counter-narrative to the prevailing one. Kian came to represent the thousands who are unknown and unnamed victims. Kian's story proved those police officers could kill those they arrest. His story showed evidence of an unarmed civilian being arrested and shot mercilessly. The media captured it on television, social media, and broadsheet. People followed up on the events empowering witnesses to come forward and testify against the policemen. Other sectors,

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<sup>357</sup> Online sources generated more than 1 million sources of his story suggesting how his death was pivotal for the extrajudicial killings. See Jessica Bartolome and Jannielyn Anne Bigtas "The Kian de los Santos Case," GMA News Online, November 29, 2018, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/specials/content/24/the-kian-delos-santos-case-a-timeline/>. Also see Jodesz Gavilan, "Timeline Seeking Justice for Kian de los Santos," *Rappler*, Updated November 29, 2018, <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/217663-timeline-justice-trial-kian-delos-santos>.



including the church hierarchy, intervened to protect witnesses and provide enough grounds for litigation.<sup>359</sup>

Public outrage grew via social media and thereafter, in commemoration of the death anniversary of Ninoy Aquino,<sup>360</sup> a “Revolution for Kian” rally was held at the People Power’s Monument by groups from various sectors of society. The Movement against Tyranny, a coalition of church workers, artists, lawyers, journalists, and lawyers, was also formed on August 28, 2017, after the huge protest march against Kian was staged. One year after he was killed, a memorial marker was placed at the San Roque Cathedral in his honor and all those who were killed in the bloody drug war.<sup>361</sup> Like the Samaritan, who stopped on the road for the victim, people’s attention and collective action in defense of Kian gave the victim the status of an insider; a claim that he is *hindi ibang tao*.<sup>362</sup>

From nameless victims to one story that spoke truth to power and brought people in action, Kian’s story was pivotal in the war on drugs discourse. For many people, despite photos of dead bodies flooding the news, Kian’s case is the only story they could

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<sup>359</sup> “Through Kian, the victim had a face. He had a name and now he is no longer a stranger. He could be your son. He could be your brother. It is in this way that the dynamic of compassion grows. One cannot feel compassion for someone (who is) an “other,” that you and the narrative of the government is othering. They’re very good at it. They’d say these are other than you. These are people we are protecting you from. They are criminals. But Kian’s story counters their claim. For Kian can be your brothers and sisters. They can be your sons and daughters. And then it changes their perspectives.” Interview, Pablo David, Kalookan City, January 13, 2019.

<sup>360</sup> Ninoy Aquino was assassinated in August 21, 1983 upon his arrival in Manila after a 21-year exile to the United States in protest of the Marcos dictatorship. Until now, his murderers have not been convicted.

<sup>361</sup> Jodesz Gavilan, “Timeline: Seeking Justice for Kian de los Santos,” *Rappler*, updated November 29, 2018. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/217663-timeline-justice-trial-kian-delos-santos>.

<sup>362</sup> Pablo David, Kalookan City, January 13, 2019.

recall about the war on drugs.<sup>363</sup> However, after the funeral march caught the headlines and the marker was placed as a reminder for people about Kian and thousands of victims, people have lost attention. Kian and the other victims are soon forgotten. This is a typical pattern of many tragic events.

The spiral of signification flattens out, affect and emotion become less inflamed, preoccupation with sacrality and pollution fades. Charisma becomes routinized, effervescence evaporates, and liminality gives way to reaggregation. As the heightened and powerfully affective discourse of trauma disappears, the lessons of the trauma become objectified in monuments, museums, and collections of historical artifacts.<sup>364</sup>

With the initial fizzle of the protest and resistance of various groups, wounds surfaced and for a while reimagined a collective identity but as it did not provoke strong emotions, it fails to heal the wounds.<sup>365</sup> The story ends in the same way as many other stories of suffering that have disturbed the Filipino social body for a moment and yet forgotten and denied its capacity to facilitate societal transformation.<sup>366</sup>

When Jesus was asked by the man of the law, “who is my neighbor?” he proceeds to tell a parable that responds to another question, “what does it mean to be a

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<sup>363</sup> In the focus group interviews conducted outside the community, only those representing ground zero areas or those coming from urban poor communities would have a personal experience to share. But almost all of them recall details of the Kian story that has been followed in the news for over a year.

<sup>364</sup> Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, 26-27.

<sup>365</sup> Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, 27.

<sup>366</sup> There are many stories of suffering that represented situations of the Filipino suffering body. They receive the same attention but was not consciously re-membered to transform present practices and understanding. Some of these stories are Flor Contemplacion’s story as the Filipina overseas worker who was hanged in Singapore for allegedly killing another Filipina and the boy, she was taking care of and Dolzura Cortez, the first Filipina who admitted to being contaminated by the HIV virus.

neighbor?” It was the man who fell on the road, his wounds and his situation, that shaped the response of the one who was a neighbor. But this one who showed himself to be a neighbor was a Samaritan, a “genealogical outsider” and not the priest and Levite who were “genealogical insiders.”<sup>367</sup>

### **Wounds and Insidious Trauma**

Christian practices tend to “erase wounds’ by insisting on “pure beginning that hovers above the soil” but “denies harm done to bodies on the ground.”<sup>368</sup> The Good Samaritan story tells us what is called for us to do

He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him on his (own) animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day, he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’<sup>369</sup>

The Samaritan approaches the victim and personally takes care of his wounds. Though the story didn’t mention what kind of wound the man had, by his insertion in the situation, the Samaritan could look closely at the wounds to respond fully.

What do wounds tell us? As a “damage or disruption to the normal anatomical structure and function” physical wounds vary in terms of the impact it has caused the body depending on whether the injury affected the joint, nerve, a major blood vessel, or

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<sup>367</sup> Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper One, 2006), 148. See Mark Proctor, “Who is my Neighbor? Recontextualizing Luke’s Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37),” *JBL* 138, no.1 (2019): 207.

<sup>368</sup> Shelly Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Afterlife of Trauma* (Waco: Baylor University, 2017), 77.

<sup>369</sup> Luke 10:34-35

an internal organ.<sup>370</sup> It can be an abrasion if it is only a scratch on the surface of the skin like when one falls from a bicycle. It is a laceration when the skin is already torn caused by a deep cut from a sharp object. A puncture cuts a hole through the skin and though it may not bleed on the surface, there might be internal damage that has to be checked to prevent infection. An avulsion happens when a part of the skin is completely torn including tissues underneath it. This happens in bloody accidents on the road or when one gets multiple shots or stabs. It can be painful especially when one investigates the deepest part of the wound. While an abrasion does not take much effort at healing, there is a need to attend to it to protect the wound from infection. At the same time, an avulsion can take a longer time to heal, and attending to the different phases of healing is important.

### **The Stages of Healing**

The task of re-membering the Filipino Passion as seen from the experiences requires an investigation into the conditions that facilitate this process. Insidious trauma refers to the multilayered needs of trauma, indicating how a violent event such as the deaths from the war on drugs, is a result of a continuing process embedded in ongoing life.<sup>371</sup>

As wine is used to cure the wound and the oil to relieve the victim from the stinging pain that will continue to disturb him, it suggests an attention to the multilayered needs among those afflicted. It is interesting how a wound is healed through the tissues and cells of the body, rearranging, contracting, and extending itself on the wound.<sup>372</sup> The

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<sup>370</sup> T. Velnari, T. Bailey, and V. Smrkolj, "The Wound Healing Process: An Overview of the Cellular and Molecular Mechanisms," *The Journal of International Medical Research* 3 (2009): 1529.

<sup>371</sup> Shelly Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds*, 78.

<sup>372</sup> John Maynard, "How Wounds Heal: The 4 Main Phases of Wound Healing," *Shield HealthCare*, accessed February 2, 2020,

first phase is done right after the injury and the aim is to stop the bleeding. During this time, the “emergency repair system,” which prevents blood to clot, blocks the drainage by forming a dam. The second phase is called defensive/inflammatory because it needs to protect the wound by “destroying bacteria and removing debris.” Once the wound is thoroughly cleansed, in the proliferative phase, three things take place. First, the tissues surround the wound to form new blood vessels. Then, these tissues from the margin contract to fill the center of the wound. Eventually, epithelial cells migrate on the wounds to fill and completely cover it up. These new tissues need strengthening at the maturation phase which takes a longer time.

### **Healing as a Systemic Process**

Touching wounds can be complicated. Many faith-based agencies and institutions are established to attend to wounds up close. Mother Teresa of Calcutta’s shining example of the mission to the poorest of the poor, of being with them amid suffering has inspired many. The way she has touched their wounds by living amongst them and being like them is an embodiment of a church of, for, and with the poor. But their experiences can attest to how touching wounds is not only about first aid healing; it is a systemic process.

He lifts him on his mount. Participation is to take the other as one’s own; as part of oneself. He allows the wounded stranger to take his place on the horse as he goes on foot. It is more than a sharing of space; it is allowing one to take one’s place. He took him to an inn and lived together with him. But by giving instructions to the innkeeper, it

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<http://www.shieldhealthcare.com/community/popular/2015/12/18/how-wounds-heal-the-4-main-phases-of-wound-healing/>

also implied that participation is a community experience. It is opening one's home to the stranger, who is welcomed and cared for by all.

To address the wounds is not only to investigate the Good Friday experience of death and how the Easter resurrection is made possible. Resurrection or the way to it cannot be found outside but within the story of suffering. Thus, resurrection is "also death;" because it is not a "once and for all" solution but a solution for one time, then another time, and then a thousand times.<sup>373</sup> It is understanding the ongoing nature of the cross from the Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday experience of life. In this way, the task of re-membering happens by unmasking the ways we have been taught to forget.

There is a choice to go back to re-member the *memoria passionis* as individuals called to be disciples. Those who did so are awakened by their forgetfulness and have decided to resist. But as the body of Christ, we are called to discipleship together. Re-membering is the work of the entire body, with its cells and tissues. Participating in the life of God is entering the *memoria passionis*, together as a body.

### **The Local Community and their Stories**

Though the war on drugs was implemented as a national program and extrajudicial killings took place in many parts of the country, to enter the *memoria passionis* necessitates an actual community, a body. While a community may be described as a geographical location, in the context of the research, it is more than that.

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<sup>373</sup> Gebara, *Out of the Depths*, 126.

To refer to a place as “a structure of lived, corporate, and bodied experience,”<sup>374</sup> “bodied ingression into the world,” the selected community is key to understanding.<sup>375</sup> The place is a “matrix or constellation,” that includes the “aesthetic and experiential,” transcending the “dualisms of mind-body, mental-physical, and self-world.” It includes people who are members of a family or peer group, or they may be neighbors or church mates connected from the past to the present. From the notion of a “living human document,” or a lived body, place reveals, the “living human web” of relationships, practices, rituals, and ritualizing; it “gathers reality” as well as connects “conflict and contradiction.”<sup>376</sup>

Both communities are in the city of Caloocan, an urban city that is part of Metropolitan Manila and the National Capital Region. With a population of approximately 1.5 million people, Caloocan is the fourth most populated city in the country. It is divided into two sections: Caloocan South, which comprises *Barangays* 1-164 and Caloocan North which includes *Barangays* 165-188.<sup>377</sup> The name Caloocan is said to have been derived from its geographical location. While it may come from the word *look* means bay as it is located near the Manila Bay, Caloocan could also mean *sulok* or corner alluding to how the city is in the *kasuluk-sulukon* or the innermost area or at the peripheries of the metropolis.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Mary Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a World Church* (New York: Oxford, 2007), 25.

<sup>375</sup> Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 25.

<sup>376</sup> Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a World Church*, 27.

<sup>377</sup> City Population, “Caloocan City,” accessed May 9, 2020, <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/philippines/caloocan/>.

<sup>378</sup> GOVPH, “Republic of the Philippines: City of Caloocan,” accessed May 9, 2020, [http://www.caloocancity.gov.ph/departments-offices1/26-about-us/26-history-of-caloocan\\_](http://www.caloocancity.gov.ph/departments-offices1/26-about-us/26-history-of-caloocan_).

The first local community where the research was conducted is in Caloocan North and is in one of the biggest barangays in the Philippines where informal settlers were relocated thirty years ago. *Barangay 176, Bagong Silang* which means new birth or new beginning, is a resettlement area established during the Marcos era for people coming from crowded and notoriously violent areas around the metropolis among them Tondo, Divisoria, Valenzuela, Commonwealth, and Payatas.<sup>379</sup> During the 70s, the *barangay* gained a reputation for violence not only among gangs but also between the military and the new people's army (NPA) and since then became a hotspot for the police. *Bagong Silang* is divided into ten phases and each phase is further subdivided into packages (or cluster areas). With a population of about 245,000, there are plans of dividing it further into smaller barangays to better serve its residents.<sup>380</sup> At the time of the research, Bagong Silang has one of the highest numbers of documented cases of extrajudicial killings in the country.<sup>381</sup>

There are five established parish communities in *Bagong Silang*. The local parish community located in Phase 10 is managed by a religious congregation and has an estimated population of 35,000 people. The parish community has an extensive social action ministry with about 17 different services that cater to the needs of its parishioners. The parish runs a scholarship and tutorial program for elementary, high school, and

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<sup>379</sup> Steffen Jensen and Karl Happal, "Policing Bagong Silang: Intimacy and politics in the Philippines," ed. Peter Albrecht and Helene Maria Kyed (New York: Routledge, 2015), 35-36.

<sup>380</sup> Nathaniel Melican, "Largest Barangay in PH can't live up to its hope image; split pushed," *Inquirer Net*, September 17, 2013, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/488987/largest-barangay-in-ph-cant-live-up-to-new-hope-image-split-pushed#ixzz3DSXnEBpk>.

<sup>381</sup> PhilRights, "War on the Poor: Extrajudicial Killings and their Effects on Urban Poor Families and communities," accessed May 9, 2020, <https://www.philrights.org/the-war-on-the-poor-extrajudicial-killings-and-their-effects-on-urban-poor-families-and-communities/>.



college students, a parish pharmacy that sells medicine at a very low price, a feeding program for malnourished children, ministry to the elderly, an optical clinic, and a savings and loan cooperative, among many others. The parish is structured in BECs but during the immersion stage, many of these communities were inactive. Except for the observance of the Lenten stations of the cross, only a few of the existing BECs continue to meet for their regular bible sharing and fellowship.

The second community where the research was conducted was a mission station located in *Barangay Tangos*, Caloocan South. *Tangos* is one of the 18 *barangays* in the town of Navotas, known as the largest fishing port in Southeast Asia and the third in Asia.<sup>382</sup> The establishment of mission stations came as a concrete response of the diocese to the war on drugs and to Pope Francis' call to build the church in the peripheries.<sup>383</sup> Mission stations have a smaller jurisdiction compared to ordinary parishes and are not necessarily administered by an ordained minister. In Caloocan, there are mission stations that are handled by a lay movement or a religious congregation of sisters or brothers. The mission station where the research was conducted, however, is assigned to a religious missionary congregation. A newly ordained priest, who was supposed to be sent for overseas mission, is presently assigned in the mission station. It is his first assignment as a parish priest. The mission station has more than 35,000 residents with three chapel stations. Only in its second year, the mission station has very few pastoral programs and activities. Each chapel has a few lay leaders who help organize and take on tasks in the

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<sup>382</sup> Jhaypee Guia, "Navotas City: Fishing Capital of the Philippines," *Pilipinas Kong Mahal*, October 22, 2012, <https://www.vigattintourism.com/tourism/articles/Navotas-City-Fishing-Capital-of-the-Philippines>

<sup>383</sup> Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 20.

Sunday liturgies, street masses, and other activities. While all thirteen mission stations are notorious for extrajudicial killings, this mission station is one of the three that have the highest number of documented cases in the diocese. It is the life and stories of the individuals and families of these two communities that give shape to this research and that gives direction to the crucial task of re-membering the Filipino passion in ecclesial life.

### ***Pakikipagkapwa and the Circle Method***

This section presents the theology of bridge-building embodied in the Circle Method using Filipino *kapwa* concepts. *Kapwa* reflects “Filipino identities (ontology), wisdom (epistemology), ethics (axiology), and research approach (methodology),” allowing one to “see wholeness in fragmentation, relationality in estrangement, and sameness in otherness.”<sup>384</sup> To understand God’s revelation in this perspective is to connect knowing with being as well as thinking with acting; it is to look at what is theological as both practical and pastoral.<sup>385</sup>

As the movements of the Circle Method build “blocks of insights” towards practical wisdom,<sup>386</sup> it generates theories<sup>387</sup> inductively and comparatively.<sup>388</sup> More than

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<sup>384</sup> Almond Aguila, “*Pakikipagkapwa* Endography: An Indigenous Approach to Ethnography (2017),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Perspectives and Methodology* Vol.1, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018), 487.

<sup>385</sup> Terry Veiling, *Practical Theology: On Earth As it is in Heaven* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), 6.

<sup>386</sup> Bryan Froehle and Agbonkhanmeghe Orobator, “World Christian Revitalization and the Circle Method,” in *Emerging Patterns of African Christian Identity in Urban Settings* (Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2015), 15.

<sup>387</sup> Glasser and Strauss developed the approach in 1967, through the concept of symbolic interactionism which believes that people’s behaviors and enactment of life roles are based on how they create meaning and interpret symbolic action. Rosalinda Buff, “Grounded Theory: The Methodology,” in *Qualitative Research in Health Care*, ed. I. Holloway (London: Open University, 2005), 147.

<sup>388</sup> Like the grounded theory, the method makes use of theoretical sampling, coding, theoretical saturation, and constant comparison. Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Oxford: Oxford, 2016), 572-573.

a method, it is a prescribed *habitus*, a “way of life,” in which action is a reflection of the meeting of the mind and heart, a work of the Spirit from within.<sup>389</sup> The movements are embedded in the entire practical theological inquiry and thus practical wisdom or *phronesis* is created by embodying *pakikipagkapwa* in the fullest sense.

**First Movement: *Panunuluyan at Pakikiisa***

Inquiry begins by asking the question “what is happening?” One does this by identifying with and inserting oneself in the place of inquiry. In this way, it is attending to the people and their context and it is listening to what is going on as one recognizes God’s presence and revelation in all situations.<sup>390</sup> Though this movement accomplishes the “descriptive-empirical task,” it is done in a “spirituality of presence” characterized by an openness and prayerfulness with the “other,” guided by the Spirit.<sup>391</sup> The first movement carries out this task through *panunuluyan* (inserting or living with) and *pakikiisa* (uniting oneself with or identifying with) in the community.

**A Spirituality of Presence.** In Filipino culture, a spirituality of presence is embodied when one establishes a relationship with a *kapwa*.<sup>392</sup> Relating to someone who is *ibang tao* is different when relating to someone who is *hindi ibang tao*. While the researcher is a Filipina and can readily insert herself in the story, how she identifies with them may still be coming from biases and prejudices from her social location as a

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<sup>389</sup> Veiling, *Practical Theology*, 16.

<sup>390</sup> James Whitehead and Evelyn Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry* (Chicago: Sheed and Ward, 1995), 69-71.

<sup>391</sup> Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 34.

<sup>392</sup> Carmen Santiago and Virgilio Enriquez, “Tungo sa Maka-Pilipinong Pananaliksik (1976),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology Volume 1: Perspectives and Methodology*, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018): 414.

pastoral worker and researcher.<sup>393</sup> As the researcher is also *ibang tao* (outsider) to the community, she needed to take time to know them and vice-versa so that she could be *hindi-ibang tao* (insider) to them.<sup>394</sup> It is important to establish this level of relationship since the people of the community are considered co-researchers, a *kasama* (companion/partner) who offers practical wisdom embedded in lived experience.<sup>395</sup> It is for the life of the community that the research is undertaken. It is about them and for them and thus, with them is the only way.

The researcher in this movement needs to do *pagbisita* (visit) and *panunuluyan* (sleeping and eating) with the community. Before the actual *panunuluyan*, the researcher visited the community several times, introduced herself to key people, which includes the pastoral team and the parish priest, to share the purpose of the research. *Panunuluyan* is exemplified by the incarnation of God pitching a tent among God's people through Jesus.<sup>396</sup> Jesus himself, the "Word became flesh," made his dwelling among us, and practiced *panunuluyan* by entering into the world to be one with us. Jesus embodied *pakikipagkapwa* and by doing so – was *makaDiyos* (God-centered) and *makatao* (people-centered).

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<sup>393</sup> The *Pakapa-kapa* ("groping") method, a kind of grounded theory approach, provides helpful nuances to this step as it undergirds the research as a communal process. As a "suppositionless approach to social scientific investigation," *pakapa-kapa* is "characterized by groping, searching, and probing into an unsystematized mass of social and cultural data," to develop a process in understanding a phenomenon. See Rogelia Pe-Pua and Elizabeth Protacio-Marcelino, "*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino psychology): A Legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez," *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 3 (2000):49-71.

<sup>394</sup> Amaryllis Torres, "Kinship and Social Relations in Filipino Culture," 493.  
<http://lynchlibrary.pssc.org.ph:8081/bitstream/handle/0/1221/Kinship%20and%20Social%20Relations%20in%20Filipino%20Culture.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>395</sup> Christian Scharen, "Ecclesiology from the Body: Ethnographic Notes toward a Carnal Theology," in *Perspective on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Pete Ward (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 52.

<sup>396</sup> Exodus 33:7, John 1:1-14

In the Filipino value structure, *pakikiramdam* or shared inner perception is pivotal in the deepening of values significant in interpersonal relations as well as in responding to daily life situations. In daily life interactions, one grows in openness through *pakikiramdam* which involves sensing non-verbal cues of the other, “controlling one’s impulses,” and “putting oneself in another’s shoes.”<sup>397</sup> By doing so, the researcher does not only give importance to the feelings of the other but she attunes herself to her positionality. Through *pakikiramdam*, a person can clarify an ambiguous and therefore critical situation to arrive at an appropriate response. When a Filipino enables *pakikiramdam*, one grows in an openness to the other.

As an outsider or *ibang tao*, one has to establish the relationship in several stages or steps: from *pakikitungo/pakikisalamuha* (dealing in a manner expected of good manners and right conduct) to *pakikibagay* (adapting the language and the manners of the other), to *pakikisama* (seeking to relate and engage for friendship’s sake). One can be *makapal ang mukha* (thick faced) or *mayabang* (arrogant) if these behaviors are not shown even toward strangers.

Though these ways of relating develop openness and attentiveness to the other, a spirituality of presence is embodied by one who treats the other as “one of us,” through *pakikipagpalagayang-loob* (acceptance of each other), *pakikisangkot* (involvement with) and *pakikiisa* (being one with). *Pakikipag-palagayang loob* happens when both are willing to get to know one another and seek to find a connection with each other's inner

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<sup>397</sup> M. Cecilia Gastardo-Conaco, “Pakikiramdam and Kapwa: Reading Emotion in a Personalistic Culture (2009),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Application Vol.2*, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2019): 382.

selves. In the process, both can become a “being-with” by sharing complete trust.<sup>398</sup> To trust is not to fear about expressing feelings to one another. It is a legitimate move towards *pakikisangkot* (involvement with) and *pakikiisa* (being one with others). *Pakikiisa* is being united with the other, heart and soul, and sharing the vision of the other most fully.

***Nakikiugaling Pagmamasid: Fieldwork and Participant Observation.*** In technical terms, the *panunuluyan* is fieldwork and participant observation, which are ethnographic techniques that focus on local and lived theology to draw out connections and disconnections between faith and everyday life.<sup>399</sup> Whether participating in activities and events for families of victims or various community events, the researcher took field notes of her observations as well as information obtained from interaction with other participants. Whenever necessary, she would ask questions to clarify information or to understand the situation in a deeper way. This experience calls her constantly to be reflexive; that is, reflecting on her impressions and the actual encounters through journal writing after every encounter. Observations are substantiated by historical information and other records pertinent to the community being studied and the themes that emerged from the engagement.<sup>400</sup>

Aside from participating in the everyday life activities and concerns of the community, the researcher was able to get in touch with various people and groups. After an initial meeting with the pastoral team who gave her an overview of the parish and their

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<sup>398</sup> Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: The Philippine Experience* (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2016), 76.

<sup>399</sup> Mary Clark Moschella, “Ethnography,” *The Wiley Blackwell Companion of Practical Theology* ed Bonnie Miller McLemore (London: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 224-225.

<sup>400</sup> Moschella, “Ethnography,” 226.

impressions regarding the issue, they introduced her to a parishioner who was appointed as the vicariate coordinator for families of victims. It was through her that the researcher got to know the families of victims and involved herself in organized activities for them. By accompanying her in her home visits to the families, the researcher was able to get to know ten family members of victims of extrajudicial killings.

The creation of a thick description of what was happening at the time of *panunuluyan* and throughout the theological process inscribes information shared verbally or bodily. Though initially inserting oneself in the story has provided data, as the Circle Method proposed, the process of gathering information did not commence until a point of saturation was achieved.

#### ***Patanung-tanong at Pakikipagkuwentuhan (Interviews as Storytelling).***

Filipino culture is built on storytelling and the process develops as they exchange questions and ideas together. Respecting this process, the researcher remembered key topics or themes that need to be covered during the time of *pakikipagkuwentuhan* (storytelling). There were two groups of interviewees. There were ten members of families of victims of extrajudicial killings who the researcher got to know during her immersion in the local community. Accompanied by the pastoral worker who coordinates services to families of victims, the researcher visited their homes and engaged with the families. Interviews were conducted to mothers, wives, or grown-up children of victims.<sup>401</sup> Twenty ordained ministers/pastoral workers/lay volunteers were interviewed. They were approached for their work and experience with survivors and victims.<sup>402</sup> Though the

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<sup>401</sup> See Appendix C for Interview Protocol – Families of Victims.

<sup>402</sup> See Appendix D for Interview Protocol – Ministers.

interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview protocol, it was mainly *pakikipagkuwentuhan* or storytelling, in which the process of questioning or *patanung-tanong* was more directed by the flow of conversation.

The atmosphere of the 45 to 90-minute interview was open, free, and honest. It was a sharing of stories and feelings as well as information and opinions regarding the topic.<sup>403</sup> Depending on the need for further elaboration about their stories, some of them were interviewed more than once. The interviews or *pakikipagkuwentuhan* were scheduled at different times and days, making sure that there were not more than three individuals in a day.

***Ginabayang Talakayan: Focus Group Discussions.*** Aside from the individual interviews, the researcher also had group storytelling or focus group discussions as it allows an interactive process among a group of individuals. A total of 15 focus group discussions were conducted belonging to two categories. The first group of interviewees was randomly selected to represent different sectors (students, labor workers, young professionals, church workers) not necessarily representing the local community where the insertion was conducted. It was helpful to conduct focus group discussions with them because they provided a general picture of the feelings and opinions of Filipinos as well as the most common stories that have circulated regarding the war on drugs.<sup>404</sup> The second group was composed of groups of individuals belonging to a ministry or basic ecclesial community in the two local communities. With this group, the discussion could

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<sup>403</sup> Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 466-69.

<sup>404</sup> See Appendix E for Focus Group interview Protocol – Sectoral.



focus more on the concrete stories within the community regarding extrajudicial killings, stories of violence, and its impact on their lives.<sup>405</sup>

***Kuwentuhan ng Bayan (Community Storytelling)***. The research also engaged the larger community in the conversation by gathering information regarding extrajudicial killings and the war on drugs from news stories, photos, studies, and other pertinent materials. Photos taken during the time of immersion and various interactions were also taken as sources of information. By engaging them in dialogue with the stories taken from actual interviews and fieldwork, other *kapwa* are involved as it becomes a community telling the story from different perspectives and settings.

### **Second Movement: *Pagdama at Pagsusuri***

The second movement answers the question “why is this happening?” This is also called an “interpretive task;” pursuing a depth understanding of the situation achieved using various sources of knowledge.<sup>406</sup> The first source is people’s participation in which “critical personal reasoning” happens as people, who are “agent-subjects” are asked the “why and how” of the situation.<sup>407</sup>

The second movement is *pagdama*, which means to sense and to feel, comes from the word *pakiramdam*, and *pagsusuri* which means to analyze. *Pakiramdam* at this level is entering into the story and taking the same space with the “other,” through an attitude of reflexivity and empathy; a feeling with, which can also be imaginative and visceral. During the *pakikipagkuwentuhan* or storytelling interviews, though guided by an

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<sup>405</sup> See Appendix F for Focus Group interview Protocol – BEC and Ministry members.

<sup>406</sup> Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 79-128.

<sup>407</sup> Thomas Groome, *Shared Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, The Way of Shared Praxis* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1991), 187.

interview protocol, *pakikidama* was exercised with the intent to lift feelings and to connect stories. Participants were frequently asked how they feel about the situation and what stories are connected to the present situation to engage their memory of beliefs, relationships, and practices. Questions also shift to other topics as the researcher use *pakikidama*. Because time and *kalooban* (inner self) are intertwined through *pakikiramdam*, questions like, “*anong naramdaman mo?*” (how did you feel?) or “*saan kaya siya nanggagaling sa sinabi niyang iyon?*” (where do you sense him coming from when he said that?), the interviewee is led back to the original experience or to also be one with the “other” and to express their feelings and perception regarding the situation and the people involved.<sup>408</sup>

It is in this way that the researcher and co-researchers understand their location in the story. Together, they realize what is essential; when their life roles and relationships are intertwined with the ongoing situation. Such critical reflection can facilitate “imagination...rooted in history,” and “enhance the revelatory possibilities of present praxis.”<sup>409</sup>

*Pagdama* is continually embodied by the researcher as she further ruminates on the experience and stories of the community. Reflexivity, or “relational interiority” that activates *abot-malay* (sphere of consciousness) and *abot-dama* (sphere of feelings) draws the process towards a deeper reflection regarding praxis.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: The Philippine Experience* (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2016), 77.

<sup>409</sup> Groome, *Shared Faith*, 196-197.

<sup>410</sup> Albert Alejo, “*Loob ng Tao* (2017),” in *Handbook of Filipino Psychology: Perspectives and Methodology* Vol.1, ed. Rogelia Pe-Pua (Diliman: The University of the Philippines Press, 2018): 369. See also Albert Alejo, “*Loob* as Relational Interiority: A Contribution to the Philosophy of the Human Person,” *Social Transformations* 6, no. 1(May 2018): 43.

*Kaya nga, kung nakaupo man ako ngayon dito at nagsusulat, dala-dala ko naman sa loob ko ang maraming larawan, taglay ko sa aking katawan ang maraming karanasan. Maihalintulad ko ito sa pagkalula mula sa pag-ahon sa bapor. Wala na ang bapor at ang maalong dagat, subalit hanggang ngayon ay tila idinuduyan pa rin ako ng aking mga nasaksihan at napagdaanan...Parang naririto lamang sila, kapiling ko, o parang naroon ako, kapiling nila. Subali't naalala ko lamang ba sila? Totoo nga, sa paglalarawan ni San Agustin, mahiwaga ang katotohanang parang buhay na buhay sila sa aking gunita. Ngunit higit pa yata ang nagaganap. Nadarama ko rin ang kanilang paghihirap. Kahit kaunti lamang. At itong isang uri ng pakikiisang-loob ay pumupukaw sa akin ng hindi iilang pagtatanong – pagtatanong para sa kanila.<sup>411</sup>*

Even as I sit here and write, I bear in my *loob* many images for I have in my body many experiences. I can liken this to the dizziness one feels after getting off a ship. The ship and the wavy sea are gone, but even now it is as if I am being rocked by what I have witnessed and gone through. Even now, the faces of people I have met come to me...It is as if they are just here, with me, or as if I am there, with them. But do I only remember them? It is true that, in the words of Saint Agustin, it is mysterious how they seem so alive in my memory. But maybe there is something more going on. I also feel their suffering. Even by just a little. This is a kind of oneness in *loob* (*pakikiisangloob*) that awakens in me many questions—questions that I ask for them.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> Albert Alejo, “*Loob ng Tao*,” 369.

<sup>412</sup> Albert Alejo, “*Loob as Relational Interiority*,” 32-33.

*Pagsusuri* or assessment is done through the lens of social analysis. The *memoria passionis* is a shared memory and understood as a social drama in which everyone is implicated and thus doing it together is the way to find solutions. The storied assessment and analysis now extend understanding through - historical, socio-cultural, political, and religious contexts with different frames and disciplines in dialogue.<sup>413</sup> It is at this level that the participation of the bigger community that is immersed and embedded in the story, from the past and the present, are also remembered and re-engaged as a way of seeking the truth to freedom.

### **Third Movement: *Pag-uugnay-ugnay at Paghaharap-harap***

The third movement is also called the “normative phase,”<sup>414</sup> or bringing in the “Christian story and vision.”<sup>415</sup> As a task of “prophetic discernment,” it uplifts the Christian story actualized in history and the ongoing relationships and practices of people.<sup>416</sup> The story is a “metaphor of the historical roots and realization of Christian faith over time and in its present community—the church.”<sup>417</sup> This step calls for the weaving of the Christian story, the *memoria passionis*, as it correlates with the various aspects of the situation and as it confronts a reinterpretation of it for the Christian community’s transformation. Thus, the third movement can be described in two actions - *pag-uugnay-ugnay* (correlating) and *paghaharap-harap* (confronting).

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<sup>413</sup> Peter Henriot, “Social Discernment and the Pastoral Circle,” in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, ed. Frans Wijssen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), 20.

<sup>414</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 129-174.

<sup>415</sup> Groome, *Shared Faith*, 249-263.

<sup>416</sup> Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology*,

<sup>417</sup> Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 216.

The Christian story is not “a made-up story.” It is a universal story, reinterpreted in every story of truth and grace in the world, even from other traditions.<sup>418</sup>

To engage present *praxis* in a performative way is to employ the “hermeneutics of retrieval, suspicion, and creative commitment” to the text<sup>419</sup> through which “subjugated or forgotten memories,” can breathe new life.<sup>420</sup> The Christian vision found in the sacred narratives is the very means by which individuals and the community can rediscover their identity and capacity to recreate their lives.<sup>421</sup> But instead of presenting it as “reified and absolute,” the Christian vision retold through the stories of suffering and Christian practices presents the Scripture and tradition as “sources of trustworthy guidance” to enable people to become who they are called to be.<sup>422</sup>

The hermeneutical connection with the Christian vision as an important element in Christian pedagogy is critical but playful. It stirs the *sensus fidelium* and facilitates the incarnation for the here and now. Through a creative and imaginative process that weaves the *memoria passionis* today with the dangerous memory of Jesus, a collective renewed consciousness on a “personal, political, and religious” level becomes a way towards human flourishing.<sup>423</sup> Engaging with the language of Scripture is an “act of religious imagination” that involves “incarnation, revelation, power, and recreation.”<sup>424</sup> The story of the incarnation is reenacted at this step when one understands through “concrete

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<sup>418</sup> Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 216.

<sup>419</sup> Groome, *Shared Faith*, 230-235.

<sup>420</sup> Groome, *Shared Faith*, 232.

<sup>421</sup> Groome, *Sharing the Faith*, 217.

<sup>422</sup> Groome, *Sharing the Faith*, 219.

<sup>423</sup> Falcones, John. “Peirce, Pragmatism, and Religious Education: Participating More Deeply in God’s Imagination,” *Religious Education* 111:4-81 (2017) doi:10.1080/00344087.2016.1185809.

<sup>424</sup> Maria Harris, *Teaching and Religious Imagination: An Essay in the Theology of Teaching* (New York: Harper, 1987), xiv.

experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.”<sup>425</sup> While providing practical wisdom - *phronesis*, it also develops a knowing through imagination – *poiesis* shaping the whole person.<sup>426</sup>

The “surplus of meanings,” that can be derived from the sacred text can give birth to new interpretations in response to the pressing needs of the times.<sup>427</sup> *Memoria passionis* seen as trauma and as transformative action, likewise, provide new lenses to correlate and confront Christian beliefs and practices embodied in the present praxis. Expanding possibilities of interpretation by listening to the stories of the present, it can also be “suspicious” of accepted truths to “subvert personal and social sinfulness and pose new possibilities of conversion and social transformation.”<sup>428</sup>

This movement also invites correlating the situation with examples from the past; the *memoria passionis* in its role in the Philippine revolution, for instance, or the best practices of Filipino martyrs and saints. Similarly, the process of correlating and confronting could also take place in pastoral experiences as well as limit situations of people in the community confirming God’s incarnational movement that continues and is never-ending. For instance, the ecclesial responses to the war on drugs and the collaborative endeavors reinterpret the *memoria passionis* as shared memory today and thus, provides pathways to transforming practices.

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<sup>425</sup> Harris, Teaching and Religious Imagination, 43.

<sup>426</sup> Bass, Dorothy, “Biblical Imagination as a Dimension of Christian Practical Wisdom,” 239.

<sup>427</sup> Groome, Sharing Faith, 234.

<sup>428</sup> Groome, Sharing Faith, 233.

#### **Fourth Movement: *Pagpapagaling at Pagpapatibay***

Toward the end of the process, one asks the question, “what are we called to do? or how is the story empowering us to become a better church for each other and the world? This is the stage of “conversion or metanoia,” in which the research is brought to bear towards transformative action.<sup>429</sup> This movement makes concrete the re-membering of the Filipino Passion through a renewal of ecclesial identity, community life, the image of God, and a vision of the world. It is renewing the paths of discipleship, one where people are challenged to participate in the “ministry of reconciliation, teaching, and healing of Jesus.”<sup>430</sup>

Many times, the *memoria passionis* of the voiceless “others,” aside from being attended to in a very minimal way, is left to be forgotten as soon as another set of stories take over; as if the last tragedy has no connection with the new one. But *pakikipagkapwa* that activates *abot-malay* (sphere of consciousness) and *abot-dama* (sphere of feelings) enables one to reach out through *abot-kaya* (sphere of strength). *Abot* means “I am here but at the same time I am also there.”<sup>431</sup>

This “relational interiority” is enfolded in this movement through transformed praxis. A good measure of transforming practice is to find victims becoming agent-subjects in the transformation of others; thus, the action of *pagpapagaling* (healing) and *pagpapatibay* (strengthening). To empower those hurt is to accompany them towards full and holistic healing – personal and communal, as well as creating structures and

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<sup>429</sup> Froehle, “World Christian Revitalization and the Circle Method,” 19.

<sup>430</sup> Froehle, “Synodality as Bridge Building,” 21.

<sup>431</sup> Alejo, “*Loob* as Relational Interiority,” 43.

processes that enable the continued transformation of victims, perpetrators, and every member of the community. Healing as a bodily experience impacts “cognitive, affective, and behavioral” dimensions as it transcends from a personal to an interpersonal and social/political level.<sup>432</sup> A new story and vision can be embodied fully when one believes the truth about oneself and community, courageously embraces the wound that remains as a *stigmata* for a new life and responds to life with the will to change and make a difference. In this performative framework, the fourth movement provides recommendations towards a plan of action that is both faithful and feasible to re-member the Filipino passion in ecclesial life.<sup>433</sup>

In the succeeding chapters when the stories of victims of extrajudicial killings, *communitas* of survivors, and practices of solidarity of various groups and individuals, are engaged with, it will reflect these four movements in a dynamic process that expresses the experience of *pakikipagkapwa*.

### **The Circle Method and the *Memoria Passionis***

As a symbol of incarnation, passion, and resurrection, the cross conveys the *habitus* called for by the method. The cross throughout history has symbolized all forms of human suffering. The Roman practice of crucifixion finds its roots from the Persians. Since the fifth century, there have been recorded crucifixions of people. There are many ways by which it was done – from simply transfixing the body on a piece of wood to

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<sup>432</sup> Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 270.

<sup>433</sup> “The underlying purpose of practical theological reflection is to sustain a disciplined conversation between a faith community’s vision of the world as it should be and the often-harsh realities of the world as it is, a conversation that leads to faithful and feasible action.” Michael Cowan and Bernard Lee, *Conversation, Risk and Conversion: The Inner and Public Life of Small Christian Communities* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997), 71.



public execution to the cross as the means for a slow and painful process of death.<sup>434</sup>

Crucifixion was a form of punishment by the ruling powers only for the people of the lowest class, the poor, and the slaves to instill fear and enforce control. Executed in public and before one's foes, crucifixion was so designed to humiliate and shame the accused.

Such was the symbol of the cross for first-century Christians that for Jesus, a Jew, to have been crucified by the Romans was viewed as “foolishness to Gentiles,” and a “scandal to Jews” (1 Cor 1:23). By being crucified on the cross, Jesus took the form of a slave and identified himself with the poor and the marginalized. By living, suffering, and dying like them, Jesus manifests the powerful truth of the incarnation as embodied and concrete. However, for many centuries, Jesus' act of carrying the cross has been interpreted by Christianity as an act of sacrifice to God and that suffering makes one holy. While Jesus' endurance on the cross tells us of the human capacity to endure, it doesn't tell us to tolerate or accept the cross as an excuse for people's evil acts.<sup>435</sup>

Embodying the Circle Method is following Jesus through his way of the cross. The Circle Method, in the context of the *memoria passionis*, presents both the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of the cross. God made incarnate through Jesus (vertical) who becomes one with humanity and embodies God's love through his life (horizontal), and in his mission through his passion, death, and resurrection (vertical). In the same way, it reflects the other as the divine *kapwa*.

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<sup>434</sup> Donald Senior, *Why the Cross? Reframing New Testament Theology* edited by Joel B. Green (Nashville: Abingdon, 2014), 2-6.

<sup>435</sup> Wonhee Anne Joh, “A Postcolonial Spectrality of the Cross,” In *Postcolonial Theology: Concilium 2* (2013), eds. Hille Haker, Luiz Carlo Susin, and Eloi Messi Metogo (London: SCM, 2013), 41-50.

The other is ethically transcendent and irreducible as a concrete unity of her vertical relation to the divine in her interiority and her external relations to society and history in her externality, that is, a totality of her constitutive relations to transcendence and history.<sup>436</sup>

This reinterprets the three aspects of participation envisioned in a participatory church. Participation in the life of God is embodied by the first step of inserting and identifying. Like God, who embodied *panunuluyan* (sleeping/living with) and *pakikiisa* (being united with) most fully through Jesus, the researcher immersed herself in the daily life of the community, and with the co-researchers they entered the ongoing story through attentive *patanung-tanong* (asking questions) and *pakikipagkuwentuhan* (storytelling). By entering into the story, they could participate more deeply in the life of one another through *pagdama* and *pagsusuri* (analyzing and assessing) and *pag-uugnay-ugnay* and *paghaharap-harap* (correlating and confronting) the *memoria passionis* of today with stories from the past, as well as stories reflected in practices of participation. From these two horizontal movements, deeper participation in the life of the world happens through the movement of *pagpapagaling* and *pagpapatibay* (healing and strengthening).

Many times, the three components of a participatory church are seen to begin from participation in the life of God and proceed accordingly. But the arrows in the diagram, which form a circle around the cross indicate the circular and iterative process, an embodiment of a theology of bridge-building, of synodality and participation.

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<sup>436</sup> Anselm Kyongsuk Min, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World: A Postmodern Theology after Postmodernism* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 14.

The succeeding chapters will follow the Circle Method, an embodiment of *pakikipagkapwa* as it unpacks the *memoria passionis* of today – the Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday of individuals and communities in the war on drugs.

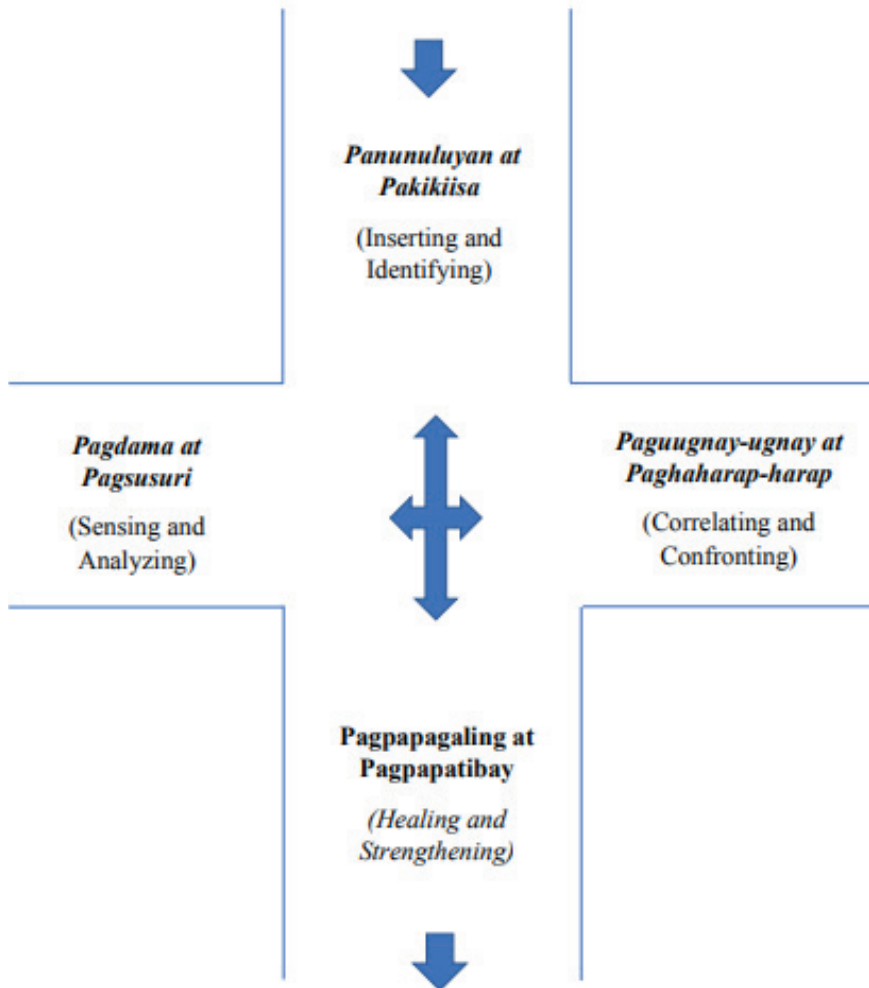


Figure 6. The Cross as the Circle Method

**CHAPTER FOUR. PAKIKIPAGKAPWA-IBANG TAO: THE MEN OF GOOD  
FRIDAY**

*Knowledge of the future grows from the soil of the memory of suffering, a knowledge that does not at all mean a formless anticipating, but rather takes up the quest for a more human way of life based on the experience of men and women being a new creation in Christ.<sup>437</sup>*

*Johann Baptist Metz*

*Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground.*

*John 18:4-6*

The Passion Narratives depict the suffering and death of Jesus vividly, attending to every detail that exemplifies human suffering. It tells of the story from the leaders of the Sanhedrin's plan to arrest him (Matthew 26:3-4), the Last Supper with his disciples (Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:7-39, and John 13:1-17:26), to his arrest and trial by the Roman authorities (Matthew 26:30-75, John 18:1-19:16). It highlights the betrayal of his friends - Judas (Mark 14:10-11, Matthew 24:14-16, and Luke 22:3-6) and Peter (Luke 22:54-62, Matthew 26:69-75, John 18:15-18, 25-27, Mark 14:66-72), his trial before Pilate in front of the crowd (Matthew 27:1-2, Mark 15:1, Luke 23:1-2, John 18:28-32), and his carrying of the cross and crucifixion executed by the Roman soldiers (Matthew 27:2-44, until his death on the cross (Matthew 27:45-56, Mark 15:33-41, Luke 23:44-49, John 19:28-30). Interestingly, most of the characters are men who conspired to

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<sup>437</sup> Metz, Faith in History and Society, 108.

Jesus' suffering and death. In all these, the crucified Christ, who embodied blessing and redemption at the point of suffering and death, revealed his identity, as he took on his role, and endured the agony on the cross.

Like the Passion Narratives and the Good Friday rituals, the participation of men engaged in different capacities punctuates the present-day crucifixion of the war on drugs. Aside from exposing various forms of masculinities that participate in the story of suffering, it exposes the victims - boys and men from the marginalized sector. Their stories lift factors that promote or hinder their development and expose social practices and ways of relating in the family, among peers, in the neighborhood, as well as church practices that shape the crisis.

### **Masculinities in the War on Drugs**

Gender studies emerged out of feminist theories that argue for the cultural construction of gender.<sup>438</sup> While gender can be determined by one's biological category or by the roles expected in society, theorists suggest a third approach, and that is to consider gender as a "social structure of gender relations."<sup>439</sup> This makes gender dynamic, fluid, relational, and situational. As a "public action and performative act," it

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<sup>438</sup> Feminist theorists have argued against the biological construction of sex and sexuality that follow the views of phenomenologists like Merleau-Ponty who distinguished between biological constitution and historical embodiment. It was Judith Butler who first proposed that gender is performance and is constituted accordingly. See Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay on Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1988): 521-522.

<sup>439</sup> Though there were men's studies in the early 70s that sought liberation of men, it was Raewyn Connell who developed masculinity studies from his empirical research on social relations of teenagers in the educational setting where they discovered the existence of multiple forms of masculinities and femininities. Connell pursued his theory on gender as a social structure through further research in the 80s. His initial work has led to many empirical studies on men in different settings and backgrounds. The collaborative and interdisciplinary work of masculinity studies has also informed many social and political policies. Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California, 2005), xi-xiii. Also see Michael Kimmel, Jeff Earn, and Raewyn Connell, "Introduction," In *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, eds. Michael Kimmel, Jeff Earn, and Raewyn Connell (London: SAGE, 2005), 1-12.

cannot be defined solely as an individual choice because as gender is performed, its contact with reality constantly reshapes and reinterprets it.

Masculinities, therefore, are not genetically programmed nor are they fixed by social structure before social interaction because, with various resources and strategies, masculinities exist as people act and interact.<sup>440</sup> Masculinities can be individual or collective, and there are multiple forms of masculinities and hierarchies.<sup>441</sup> Various forms of masculinities - hegemonic, subordinated, complicit, and marginalized emerge in the war on drugs.<sup>442</sup>

### **Hegemonic Masculinities: From Top to Bottom**

Hegemonic masculinity refers to a configuration of gender practices that shapes patriarchy. The term hegemony was first referred to as the position in which a cultural group claims primacy over other groups in society.<sup>443</sup> Shaped and built by those who benefit from it, the position of dominance becomes an ideal that people in society strive to achieve. Hegemonic masculinity then is

[A] set of values, established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organize society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power

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<sup>440</sup> Raewyn Connell, *The Men and the Boys*, (Berkeley: University of California, 2000), 8.

<sup>441</sup> Connell, *The Men and Boys*, 10-14.

<sup>442</sup> Connell developed these forms of masculinities from his studies on men and masculinities. The typology is highly utilized in many settings to understand masculinities. Some of these studies are mentioned in this chapter.

<sup>443</sup> Though the term hegemony, has been alluded to Marxist philosophers like Vladimir Lenin, it was Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist philosopher, who further developed the theory of cultural hegemony. See Antonio Gramsci, "Intellectuals and Hegemony," in *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings*, ed. Charles Lambert (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 259-261.

(over women and other men), and the interplay between men's identity, men's ideals, interactions, power, and patriarchy.<sup>444</sup>

Though hegemonic masculinities may vary in every setting, it is generally determined by the ideal and image held by both the culture and institutional power, and which the collectivity considers as the norm.<sup>445</sup> Such dynamics allow hegemonic masculinities to change and erode over time. It exists at a local (families, organizations, and immediate communities), regional (cultural or nation-state), and global (world politics and transnational business and media) level.<sup>446</sup> Through hegemonic masculine symbolism and the interplay of specific local masculine practices on a regional level, an existing masculine reality dominates societal discourse and relations.<sup>447</sup>

In the war on drugs, the new national leadership reinforced hegemonic masculinities as it created the narrative of a dangerous other expressed through the speech-act against drug addicts and drug pushers, misogynistic statements against women, and offensive stance against the Catholic Church. Using the image of the body to humiliate and inflict violence, the present leadership has disparaged bodies considered criminals and has succeeded to create a hegemonic masculine image of being a father-protector for all.<sup>448</sup>

Hegemonic masculinity is then cascaded down and exhibited by male officials in government structures, the police force, drug enforcement personnel, legislative and

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<sup>444</sup> Morrell R., Jewkes R., Lindegger G., "Hegemonic Masculinity/ies in South Africa: Culture, Power and Gender Politics," *Men and Masculinities* 15 (2012), 11–30. doi: 10.1177/1097184X12438001.

<sup>445</sup> Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California, 2005), 77.

<sup>446</sup> Raewyn Connell and James Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (December 2005), 849, doi.10.1177/0891243205278639

<sup>447</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity," 849.

<sup>448</sup> Danilo Andres Reyes, "The Spectacle of Violence in Duterte's War on Drugs," 112.

administrative personnel, as well as cultural and entertainment figures who enact the national leadership's policy. An interview with a local official reflects this hegemonic masculinity

If you were shot that means you transgressed the law. Media only sensationalizes the killing by portraying them as innocent. But try to ask around, people are happy because they are gone... In my neighborhood, I know the addicts, pushers, rugby boys, and hold-uppers. It's peaceful now because all of them were killed... It was their choice because they have been warned that it will be bloody. If you are a *pasaway* (nuisance) and you try to play with this president, you are doomed.<sup>449</sup>

In a community afflicted by everyday violence, hegemonic masculinity appears visible through gangs and their leaders that control the neighborhood. In the community, residents have memories of unending gang wars that killed many of its young men. Masculine practices manifested in everyday life shape this hegemonic masculinity that perpetuates a cycle of violence typically experienced by boys and men in urban poor environments. Hegemonic practices are manifested by the control of an area as evidenced by *purok* leaders who are disciples of certain gangs and who are complicit to the proliferation of the drug trade and other criminalities in the area.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Interview, Ryan, Caloocan City, May 12, 2019.

<sup>450</sup> *Purok* refers to the cluster groupings of several neighborhoods within a *barangay*. Each *purok* has an appointed official with his members. They instill peace and order in the neighborhood as well as handle simple neighborhood or family disputes that do not need to be taken up in the *barangay* level. Jensen and Happal, "Policing Bagong Silang," 5-8.



## **Subordinated and Complicit Masculinities**

In between the continuum are the subordinated and complicit masculinities. Gay masculinities are classified under subordinated masculinities since they are put in comparison with heterosexual men who are the dominant figures in society. Even if they have the same capacity and stature as the hegemonic masculine, they are subordinated because of their sexual preference. In the context of the war on drugs, there are also other personalities in the community that may experience domination by the hegemonic masculinity. It was interestingly significant how only female participants would accede to participate in the focus group interviews conducted in the community. Whenever the researcher would ask about the men, they would not hesitate to say that men would rather not talk about the issue as it puts them in a situation where they need to make a stand. The killings have continued because many witnesses are afraid to speak up. Even families of victims prefer to leave the trauma behind even if they know it is not possible. At the wake of a victim, conversations with the family members express this

My husband is innocent. He was a good man. He had never been involved in the drug trade and my neighbors can attest to that. My child and I saw who killed my husband. They woke us up in the middle of the night as they mercilessly shot him. My child has been suffering from nightmares since then. But we will get over it. I bought her a toy from the market; maybe she will soon forget.<sup>451</sup>

He was my only brother and he was my best friend. We have never been involved in drugs. But my sisters and I have decided to just let it go. We have no money to

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<sup>451</sup> Interview, Pacita, Caloocan City, January 3, 2020.

pay for a lawyer and even if we get help, we don't have the luxury of time to file a complaint and attend the court hearings.<sup>452</sup>

Complicit masculinities refer to those who are “benefitting from the patriarchal dividend” without having to take the “frontline troops of patriarchy.”<sup>453</sup> Hegemonic masculinities are not that many, but they are propelled to power by complicit masculinities. In this case, these are fathers, sons, brothers, who would either be cheerleaders of the hegemonic masculine or would be quietly doing their daily chores. They are good fathers and husbands but will not lift a finger to make a stand. The *purok* leader (neighborhood leader) and *tanod* (neighborhood guards) who carry out arrests and house raids on the war on drugs are generally happy and satisfied with the drug campaign because it has brought about peace and order in the community.<sup>454</sup>

For me, it is all right that these killings happened. There is no other solution if we want lasting peace in our neighborhood. We can see the fruits of the war on drugs now. There are no riots at night. We are not awakened by complaints from neighbors about drug addicts who come stealing in the middle of the night.<sup>455</sup>

A male victim Ronaldo was shot by an unknown assailant in front of their *purok* leader who refused to testify to the killing.<sup>456</sup> Complicity to the war on drugs is also manifested by church officials, pastoral workers, and others who tolerate the mass killings by their silence, by their refusal to provide help to victims or by defending the campaign.

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<sup>452</sup> Interview, Bong, Caloocan City, January 3, 2020.

<sup>453</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 81.

<sup>454</sup> Purok leaders- Focus Group Interview, Caloocan City, April 12, 2019.

<sup>455</sup> Purok leaders- Focus Group Interview, Caloocan City, April 12, 2019.

<sup>456</sup> Interview, Rose, Caloocan City, March 13, 2019.

## **Marginalized Masculinities**

Marginalized masculinities are shaped relative to the dominant group. An example of this is black American men who are marginalized masculinities in North America and remain marginalized even if some of them are applauded and recognized for their achievements. As a class, they remain marginalized in American society. In the war on drugs, the image of the marginalized Filipino male is one who lives in urban poor communities and is collectively categorized as the drug addicts and drug pushers, who are “not human...and deserve to die.”

### **Of Boys and Men: Seven Stories**

Though gender studies have emerged out of the “gender hierarchy and structural inequality paradigms,” masculinity theorists suggest more context-based and process-oriented approaches to better determine ways to move towards gender equality.<sup>457</sup> While issues of patriarchy and power cannot be downplayed, the emancipation of men and women cannot be solved if societies still carry the structural gender systems. With the view of masculinity as a social practice, the story of men on the war on drugs will be analyzed through and with the stories of participation in the family, among peers, and in the neighborhood providing ways of re-membering them in ecclesial life.

Most of the victims of extrajudicial killings, about 95 percent of them were male adults, who have low paying jobs, have not completed high school education, and have

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<sup>457</sup> Oystein Gullvag Holster, “Social Theories for Researching Men and Masculinities: Direct Gender Hierarchy and Structural Inequality,” in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, ed. Michael Kimmel, Jeff Earn, and Raewynn Connell (London: SAGE, 2005), 15-33.

limited access to employment or other forms of livelihood.<sup>458</sup> Interviews with ten families of victims provide stories of Filipino males as victims. The majority of the victims are construction workers or tricycle drivers who are “low-level drug suspects” whose involvement in the trade comes with the need to survive.<sup>459</sup> Construction workers are usually hired on a project basis and in some cases in urban poor communities, they are contracted by people who receive a commission in every project they get. The reported shortage of construction workers in the country because those who are skilled prefer to be employed overseas, may indicate the lack of skills of those who are hired on a seasonal basis, and do not have a fixed source of income.<sup>460</sup> When they are hired, they are sometimes required to stay at the job site and work for 12 straight hours. This takes them away from the family in which case they cannot carry out their responsibilities as fathers and husbands fully to their children. Tricycle drivers are employed by owners on an hourly basis each day (usually about 8-12 hours). In some areas, drivers take graveyard shifts (midnight onwards) too. It is in these situations that the temptation is high to take drugs to keep up with the long shifts. At the same time, they are also tempted to be involved in small-time peddling to help them sustain their use of the drugs. Among the seven stories mentioned, however, three of them did not have any source of income

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<sup>458</sup> PhilRights: Claim and Defend, “The War on the Poor: Extrajudicial Killings and their Effects on Urban Poor Families and Communities,” *PhilRights*, accessed March 9, 2020, <https://www.philrights.org/the-war-on-the-poor-extrajudicial-killings-and-their-effects-on-urban-poor-families-and-communities/>

<sup>459</sup> The Drug Archive, “Who are the casualties?,” accessed August 2, 2019, [https://drugarchive.ph/post/26-the-drug-killings-who-what-where-when-how-master\\_](https://drugarchive.ph/post/26-the-drug-killings-who-what-where-when-how-master_)

<sup>460</sup> Analou de Vera, “Shortage of Construction Workers traced to Low Pay, Poor Access to Certification,” *Manila Bulletin*, February 15, 2019, <https://news.mb.com.ph/2019/02/15/shortage-of-construction-workers-traced-to-low-pay-poor-access-to-certification/>

except through their association with the drug trade. Below is a composite picture of seven victims as narrated by family members and close friends.

**Ronald: Risking Body to Survive**

Ronald was a construction worker who was arrested when the barangay enforced the incarceration of those listed on the drug watch list. After his wife paid the bail of 10,000 php, he was set free. His friends and family told him to leave immediately and hide because they were certain that he would be killed just like many others. But he believed there was no need for him to do so. If he was going to die, he would rather die living. He went back to work as a construction worker, right after he was freed because he had mouths to feed; five children including families of his children. For Ronald, life was a gamble. He had to find ways to make ends meet. When he was released from prison, Ronald worked hard for his family more than he ever did before. Every day, after working hours, he continued to work by doing repairs on some parts of their house. Before he died, he repaired their kitchen. After three months of freedom, in the middle of the night, seven armed men came. They ordered his wife and children to leave the house while they surveyed the four rooms of the small house. A brother and his family were on the second floor while the family of his daughter and son were in one of the small rooms. Ronald was left alone with three police officers in the main house. While waiting outside, the family hears three gunshots and the fourth one after a few more minutes. His wife claims that the first three were used to kill him since there were three bullet wounds on his body, and the last one was meant to prove that he fought back. Ronald's case is one of

those submitted to the international court to prove that many of the deaths were done by men in uniform.<sup>461</sup>

### **Bernabe: Breadwinner Stretching the Hours**

Bernabe was a tricycle driver. Though single, Bernabe was the sole breadwinner of his family, which consisted of his parents, a sister who was jobless and separated, and her three children. His mother admitted that Bernabe would take drugs. But why? Because he wanted to earn a little more for the family. Drugs gave him enough energy to endure sleepless nights. On the day when he was killed, Bernabe took home a lottery ticket, hoping that they could win the jackpot. He and his father were scrambling at the numbers he chose, which looked very close to the winning series. They weren't lucky, however, and Bernabe said, they better try another time. But when he left the house to look for passengers on the road, he was killed instantly through the "riding in tandem" scheme. He laid on his motorbike, with his blood spilling all over it. Life has been a Calvary for the family since Bernabe was killed. His father, almost 70 years old, long retired from driving, is now back as a tricycle driver to provide for the family. The children, who were going to school before, had to stop school until their mother finds a job that will provide for them.<sup>462</sup>

### **Rico: Thirsting for a Full Life**

Rico just turned 20 when he was killed. He was good looking and popular among his friends. He was part of a gang with whom he learned to play it tough in life. They gave him the gift of friendship and made him feel powerful. They also taught him to fight

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<sup>461</sup> Interview, Joanna, Caloocan City, March 24, 2019.

<sup>462</sup> Interview, Marilen, Caloocan City, March 29, 2019.

it out in life and to take risks. Aside from using drugs, he took part in many escapades. Petty thefts in the neighborhood and in the market area to buy him what he needed which included drugs they would take whenever they have their boys' hang out. His parents wanted him to study but he was stubborn and left home as a teenager. Through the gang, he met his wife with whom he became a young father. Things happened so fast as it reflected his thirst to find joy in life. His wife experienced Rico as a difficult husband who never took responsibility for the family. They were used to him not coming home to them. However, one day, at the height of the killings, Rico disappeared for several days. They looked around for him – at the police station, funeral home, and every place they knew where he would normally be seen. But they couldn't find him until the news from the television reported about an unidentified body lying along a creek, miles away from their residence. They went immediately and found his body in a morgue. Now that he is gone, Rico's wife can't help but admit feeling a sense of relief that he is gone. He was too adventuresome for her and it was difficult to cope with his lifestyle. Now that she is single again, she thirsts for her dreams of finishing her studies and of taking good care of her child. Rico is gone but he is alive in her dreams for her child.<sup>463</sup>

### **Hernan: Small Time-Big Time Drug Lord**

Hernan was a father, a long-time drug addict, and a drug pusher who also involved his wife in the trade. His daughter admits that her father provided for the needs of the family through the business of selling illegal drugs. His daughter could share stories of escapades of her father who was constantly hunted by armed men even before

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<sup>463</sup> Interview, Gina, Caloocan City, March 15, 2019.

the war on drugs started. One night they picked him up and he disappeared for several days. When the family thought that he was already killed, a ransom letter arrived asking for a 100,000 php payment for his return. The family looked for ways to cover the amount but only managed to collect 30,000 php.<sup>464</sup> After the family was able to pay his captors, Hernan was dropped off in front of their house before midnight, naked and bruised from too many beatings. This did not stop him from continuing as a drug dealer, even after his brother was killed and despite warnings. He was shot on a quiet afternoon, a few meters from his house. At that time, he left the house only to buy cigarettes but was killed by the “riding in tandem” scheme. Ivy, his daughter, however, had fond memories of her father. Even when their parents separated and her mother decided to take all of them home to her family, Ivy decided to stay with her father to take care of him. For her, he was a good and loving father to his children notwithstanding his mistakes.<sup>465</sup>

### **Edmon: Like Father, Like Son**

Edmon was a high school dropout and a member of a notorious neighborhood gang. At the time of his death, he was working who worked as a tricycle driver and informal traffic enforcer. He was the eldest among eleven siblings and his mother worked as a housekeeper to provide for them. Edmon’s father was an alcoholic and was abusive towards his children. His mother couldn’t take the hard life with him that when the eldest daughter found a job and promised to help the family, she took the courage to leave her husband with her eleven children. At that time, Edmon was already hooked on drugs and his involvement with the neighborhood gang was beyond control. His mother defends her

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<sup>464</sup> PHP refers to Philippine peso is approximately 50 pesos to the dollar.

<sup>465</sup> Interview, Yolanda, Caloocan City, April 4, 2019.



son's wayward life and blames her husband who never showed his children love and affection. Besides that, she believed Edmon was not any different from the rest of the kids his age in the neighborhood. Boys will be boys, she said. They all grow up in a gang. She knew Edmon was a drug user but for her, he was better than her husband who was an alcoholic and who would beat them up after a round of drinks. Edmon was quiet when high on drugs. She claims to have never seen him selling drugs. But she confesses that there were times when he entertained visitors (who may be his drug clients) outside and would not let her go out. Edmon took part in neighborhood fights and robberies that usually happened in the middle of the night. Many times, they would be awakened by the noise of boys running after each other around their alleys and on the roofs of houses. Edmon was killed while working as a traffic boy down the street. For his mother, Edmon had a beautiful death because he fell facing heaven with open hands, no shirt, no slippers. She believes that Edmon's death spared his friend, a married man, who was with him at that time. Though she mourned for the loss of her son, she confesses that his death also brought her a deep sense of relief. She says, "I don't like that my son was killed, but it is also good for his six brothers so that they do not imitate him." "Now I can say that I feel more peaceful. I can sleep at night without having to worry about him and without witnessing his involvement in neighborhood fights." Being a mother, I was always there to look out for him and to defend him no matter what. But I felt better during his funeral as if a thorn was removed from my heart."<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> Interview, Benilda, Caloocan City, March 15, 2019.

### **Angelo: An Accidental Victim**

Angelo was a 15-year-old, a student in eighth grade, when he was killed along with six others, three of whom were teenagers like him. He was a young boy with ambition. He promised his mother that their life will be better when he graduates from high school. He was determined to pursue his studies even if the family couldn't afford to provide for his school allowance. For this reason, he decided to work as a part-time house help even as he was still expected to take responsibility for cooking and taking care of his younger siblings and nephew when his mother was not around. Angelo was invited to attend a party at the house of a friend's girlfriend to celebrate the newly installed electricity of the house. But a few minutes upon their arrival, several men came, looking for the uncle of the host. When they could not find the person they were looking for, they sprayed bullets on all those who were there, killing them instantly. They were so-called victims of *palit-ulo* (exchange heads). Angelo was found dead underneath two other bodies. It was the most painful death for the community because three young people died senselessly and violently. The town mourned over the three young boys who were buried together side by side each other. After his death, Angelo's mother and sister were accompanied by an organization through grief counseling and were given training on advocacy and mobilization. They now serve as area coordinators for families of victims, embracing them as their own, accompanying them in their grief and their cry for justice.<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>467</sup> Interview, Lynda, Caloocan City, March 29, 2019.

## **Tomas: The Frat Leader**

Tomas was a construction worker, single and breadwinner of his family consisting of his parents, a sister who was a single mother with two children, and to his other siblings whenever they were in need. Tomas remained single for the family even when his girlfriend had already asked him that they get married. Tomas had friends who were involved in the drug trade as users and small-time pushers, but his parents were certain that their son was not involved in the drug trade. His father, who worked as a barangay employee for many years, said that he would have been the first one to take Tomas to jail or a rehabilitation center if he was ever involved in drugs. But he insists, he was not. During his younger years, Tomas was an active leader of the *Tau Gamma* fraternity chapter in the neighborhood.<sup>468</sup> Though he is no longer active, he maintains his ties with his contemporaries, some of who have been identified as drug personalities in the area. When the killings were happening in the neighborhood, he was advised by his parents to avoid them in the meantime. However, he was invited to a party, where a man comes and shoots at them, leaving four of them dead and three others wounded. Tomas survived the first shots. But the assailant returned after seeing some of them still alive. When he proceeded to kill them all, Tomas instinctively shielded the body of his friend and boss,

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<sup>468</sup> The *Tau Gamma Phi* fraternity founded in the early 70s as a “protest fraternity,” aimed to counter the rampant violence in the universities, fight against elitism, and promote egalitarian principles among its members. In its desire to reach out to men in the local communities, the fraternity also developed local chapters among urban poor boys and men. Fraternity members from the universities who are residents in the community became its first leaders. Because they were educated and influential among the men in the community, the frat culture became an alternative for men to receive support. However, like their university chapters, fraternities became notorious and violent. They were in constant conflict with other gangs of the neighborhood and was the cause of many killings in the community. Steffen Jensen, “A World of Significance: Equality, Ritual, and Violence in a Manila Fraternity,” in *Sporadically Radical: Ethnographies of Organized Violence and Militant Mobilization*, eds. Steffen Jensen and Henrik Vigh (Denmark: Museum Tusulanum, 2018), 160-162.

and he was killed instantly. His mother says it is something Tomas always did in his life. As a young boy selling his mother's cooked food in the market, he would leave some for his friends who didn't have much to eat at home. As a construction worker, he would offer his services for free to neighbors who needed their house repaired but couldn't afford it. He always found a solution to problems that came their way, offering his last centavo for the needs of the family. When at times, he didn't have money left, he would borrow money from a friend to buy his family their meal for the day.<sup>469</sup>

### **The Filipino Male and Masculinities**

The stories of the Filipino male victims reflect family and community practices that shape masculinities and clarify ecclesial participation with those who suffer. While it is crucial to understand the clash of masculinities in the phenomenon of extrajudicial killings, gender relations between men and women from the family to society are also significant in the spiral of signification of Filipino male victims. It may help to consider features such as power relations, production relations, and cathexis or sexual desire, in the development of masculinities.<sup>470</sup>

While power relations (*lakas sa lakas*) generally refer to the overall subordination of women and the dominance of men or patriarchy, power relations also reflect among masculinities. Power relations have the most potent factor in the staging of a crisis. The tension in power relations begins from the family and felt at different levels which if unresolved results in greater impact in the society.<sup>471</sup> Power relations come from role

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<sup>469</sup> Interview, Edrin and Donna, Caloocan City, March 15, 2019.

<sup>470</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 8.

<sup>471</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 85.

expectations in society. The mothers, as the “*ilaw ng tahanan*,” light of the home, and the fathers as the *haligi ng tahanan*, the foundation or pillar of the home, manifest the power that each one carries and which each one is expected to fulfill. When these expectations are not met, it results in a breach creating crisis. In many urban poor communities, domestic violence of women by their male partners remains high.<sup>472</sup> On the other hand, even if the father is the head of the family, it is women who hold power, since the mother is perceived by children to be the decision-maker, the strongest link, and inspiration in their homes and not their fathers.<sup>473</sup>

Production relations (*lakas sa paggawa*) which refer to the “allocation of tasks” as well as its “economic consequence” also compounds the crisis.<sup>474</sup> Women compared to men, have more opportunities to find sources of livelihood while at the same time carrying out their responsibilities in the home. In contrast, there are very limited job opportunities for the urban poor Filipino male. In urban poor communities, women are given responsibilities in church and community affairs, which does not only provide them with sources of income but with social capital. Men who do not wield power at the workplace consequently manifest their dominance at home by a show of “machismo and sexual prowess” or among their peers through “acts of collective bravado, with fighting, with public rowdiness, and drinking.”<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> Laune-Serquina-Ramiro, Bernadette J. Madrid, and Ma. Lourdes Amarillo, “Domestic Violence in Urban Filipino Families,” *Asian Journal of Women’s Studies* 10, Issue 2 (2016): 97-119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2004.11665971>. Also see Racidon Bernarte and others, “Violence Against Women in the Philippines,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 6, no. 1 (February 2018), 1-2.

<sup>473</sup> Amaryllis Tiglao-Torres, “Gender Imagery in Philippine Psychology: A Critique of the Literature,” *Philippine Journal of Psychology* 21, 24-38 (1988): 61.

<sup>474</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 8.

<sup>475</sup> John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture* (Philadelphia: Open University, 2002), 20.

*Cathexis* or sexual desire (*lakas ng puso*, “power of the heart”) is the “emotional energy attached to an object.”<sup>476</sup> The lack of employment opportunities, significant social position or responsibilities, or emotional support from family members compel men to find other companions to engage in activities with and to find motivation. Membership in gangs provides for this lack which in most cases also reinforces addiction, crime, and violence.

These factors are significant in the stories of male victims of extrajudicial killings. Closer attention to their stories in the settings of the family, neighborhood, and peer groups or gangs highlight social practices that contribute to creating an *ibang tao*, an outsider, out of our Filipino urban male.

#### ***Ka-Pamilya: Family Relations***

Victims tend to come from large families. They are either sons who have many siblings or fathers who have between 5-11 children. Since the father in Filipino culture is expected to be the provider or breadwinner, poverty and unemployment may shape the fatherhood role differently.<sup>477</sup> In this case, parenting responsibilities especially of providing for the needs are shared by both parents. In some cases, as in the case of Bernabe, however, older siblings take over this role. Since the Filipino family structure, similar to Southeast Asian countries, is a “bilaterally extended kinship system that highly

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<sup>476</sup> Connell, *The Social Organization of Masculinity*, 8.

<sup>477</sup> David Morgan, “Class and Masculinity,” in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2005), 6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452233833.n10>.

values reciprocity,” mothers, children, and extended family become the *tagasalo* (the one who assumes the role) to provide for the family or respond to other needs.<sup>478</sup>

**The Father Role.** As fathers, most of them were not emotionally involved with their children. The wives express that their husbands were not always present, either because they had to work or they would prefer to be with their friends. Reflecting the social construction of gender that assigns men in the public sphere and women in the domestic sphere, it makes fathers unable to develop emotional connections with their family.<sup>479</sup> In-home visits conducted to pregnant women and malnourished children in the community show how fathers were typically absent from dialogue with the pastoral worker. When the pastoral worker arrives, fathers who are present, intentionally leave the house while the dialogue was going on. Conversations between the pastoral worker and the women, however, covered other issues and concerns in the home like finances and employment, housing, neighborhood safety, and schedule of visitation at the center; all of which were responsibilities of husband and wife.

A fourfold typology of the Filipino father role mentions four classifications of a father in the Filipino household namely – the procreator father, the dilettante father, the determinative father, and the generative father. The procreator father is one who is most concerned about his “immortality and the continuity of his lineage” but looks at his

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<sup>478</sup> Maria Caridad H. Tarroja, “Revisiting the Definition and Concept of Filipino Family: A Psychological Perspective,” *Philippine Journal of Psychology*/ Psychological Association of the Philippines 43, 2 (2010): 179-180.

<sup>479</sup> Michele Adams and Scott Coltrane, “Boys and Men in Families: The Domestic Production of Gender, Power, and Privilege,” In *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2005): 6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452233833.n10>.

primary role as “provider,” as most important.<sup>480</sup> The dilettante father has positive relationships with their children and yet is low in activity. This is typical of the construction workers who will be out for weeks or months for faraway projects but when back, enjoy being with their children at their convenience. A child for a dilettante parent is seen as a companion and a long-time friend. The determinative father is high in activity but does not develop positive relationships with their children. Since fatherhood is a responsibility he must bear, the determinative father makes sure that he has objectives for his children which they should comply with. As a “molder” of people, the determinative father tends to control their movements thinking that they are not capable to fulfill their tasks without his help.<sup>481</sup> He has accomplished his mission when he sees that his children have fulfilled the goals he has set for them. The fourth and last type is a generative father who is both high in the activity and affective dimensions. The generative father typically views parenthood as a major life transition and crisis.<sup>482</sup> For him, undertaking the task of fatherhood is a source for personal growth and self-fulfillment.

Fathers in the lower-income strata of society tend to fall under the procreator and dilettante type because of the limited role that they play in their children’s growing up years.<sup>483</sup> These types of father image may also be reflected in the kind of relationship they have towards God and the church in general. Looking at God as a provider and a

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<sup>480</sup> Allen Tan, “Four Meanings of Fatherhood,” *Philippine Journal of Psychology* Vol. 22, (1989): 179-180.

<sup>481</sup> Tan, “Four Meanings of Fatherhood,” 182.

<sup>482</sup> Tan, “Four Meanings of Fatherhood,” 180.

<sup>483</sup> Tan, “Four Meanings of Fatherhood,” 185.



being they run to during times of need can be seen by the way many of the interviewees describe the church as *tagabigay ng biyaya* or provider of blessings.

We have benefitted so much from the church. It has never let us down because they always call us when they have *biyaya* (blessings) to share with us. I have a son, who was also a church scholar. We also benefit from their feeding program and occasionally when I have nothing, the church provides me with some rice and noodles so that we could survive even for a few days.<sup>484</sup>

As the typology of fatherhood likewise suggests, this relationship can be very limited and limiting. Without a strong foundation of participation in their lives, they remain dismembered. This confirms why during the darkest time of their lives, when their sons and husbands were killed, no one among those interviewed came to the church to ask for help.<sup>485</sup> When they were asked, many of them mentioned that they didn't know the church can help in such a case. Another said it was too embarrassing to talk to them about what happened.

**Co-Dependence.** The quality of relationships within and among family members is a crucial factor in understanding their situation. Signs of codependence manifested by behaviors such as “denial, control, difficulty in trusting, low self-esteem, weak boundaries, and over-responsibility” are evident in the stories.<sup>486</sup> In the case of Hernan, his mother was aware of his drug use because of work and was constantly reminding him

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<sup>484</sup> Interview, Yolanda, Caloocan City, April 4, 2019.

<sup>485</sup> All ten families interviewed did not approach the church for help. Of the estimated 30,000 plus deaths, only a very small percentage have sought the help of authorities. Many would prefer to distance themselves and/or be silent about what happened.

<sup>486</sup> Susan Uhle, “Codependence: Contextual Variables in the Language of Social Pathology,” *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* Vol. 15, Issue 3 (1994).

to stop, but she admits that because Hernan was supporting the family, she felt powerless to persuade him to seek help.

When I see him at home quiet and smiling, I know that he just took his daily dose.

I told him once to stop. But what can I do? I know if I make him stop, he might lose his job and that's the end for us.<sup>487</sup>

Edmon's mother justifies her son's habit by blaming her husband who did not give his children the love and support they needed from him. She admits to providing him with allowance for his vices

When he stopped going to school, I just let him do what he wanted to do with his life. I have six younger boys to take care and if I worry about him constantly, it will not be of help for them and me. That is why, when he asks for money, I just give in to his wishes.<sup>488</sup>

Extrafamilial relations also manifest this codependent behavior which proves to be harmful leading boys and men in an endless cycle of victimization.

I turned over my son to the police because of addiction. He could be freed if he paid 3000 php.<sup>489</sup> I refused to do that even if I had money. I told my children to let him stay in jail to let him learn his lesson. But you know what happened? His friend, who was arrested with him, bailed him out. They got out after paying only 3000 php for both.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> Interview, Marilen, Caloocan City, March 29, 2019.

<sup>488</sup> Interview, Benilda, Caloocan City, March 15, 2019.

<sup>489</sup> Philippine peso rate to the dollar is roughly 50 PHP to 1 dollar.

<sup>490</sup> Interview, Hilda, Caloocan City, May 15, 2019.

While codependence was first used in relationships of people in substance abuse, psychologists also use the term codependency in people who have experienced poverty, trauma, and abuse.<sup>491</sup> Codependency is also evidenced in pastoral relationships between pastoral workers and members as well as among those who minister. Reliance on one lay leader to decide on pastoral concerns without consulting a representative body, fear of confronting those in need of pastoral correction, as well as allowing ministry activities to continue despite mismanagement and lack of direction also reflect codependence and create ripple effects on pastoral practice and ecclesial life.<sup>492</sup>

### ***Ka-Barkada: Gangs and Risk-Taking Behavior***

There are also single men among the victims who are part of a neighborhood gang, fraternity, or any group of men. Tomas and Angelo were killed in the company of friends since they are associated with a group of men who are on the drug watch list. Rico and Edmon share notorious risk-taking behaviors with their gangs and they are known in the neighborhood to steal and engage in other petty crimes.

***Barkada System.*** The socio-cultural influence of the *barkada* system in male and masculine roles in Philippine society is worth exploring. *Barkada*, which comes from the Spanish word for boat, *barko*, means “passage in a boat,” or “boat-load.”<sup>493</sup> It interestingly shares the same root word with *barangay*, the smallest political unit that

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<sup>491</sup> Harvey Irwin, “Codependence, Narcissism, and Childhood Trauma,” *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 51, no. 5 (September 1995): 658-665.

<sup>492</sup> These behaviors were observed by the author in many ecclesial experiences as well as in the communities where she did her immersion. Co-dependent behaviors may be symptomatic of personal realities faced by ministers that are not addressed as well as ecclesial structures and processes that have no spaces for communal discernment and dialogue. See Marlene Klunzinger and Michael Moore, “Codependency and Pastoral Care: A Report from the Trenches,” *Restoration Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (7-1-1996):163.

<sup>493</sup> Jean-Paul Dumont, “The Visayan Male *Barkada*: Manly Behavior and Male Identity on a Philippine Island,” *Philippine Studies* Vol. 41, no. 4 (1993): 404.

governs the community. Male *barkada* as a form of “homosociality and masculine solidarity,” has a powerful impact on shaping men’s attitudes towards women, violence, and vices and their presence compensates for the lack of family training for men.<sup>494</sup>

Personal experience shows how women are more prepared with life skills in the family.<sup>495</sup> Aside from witnessing the prominent matriarchal role in family responsibilities and decision-making processes, women are more expected to help in the various household chores. On the other hand, families do not expect much from boys. While they are free to play and carry out their endeavors, men are given more access to the bigger world because they are presumed to be able to protect themselves more than women.

Gangs grow out of “disadvantaged and marginalized neighborhoods of large cities,” in which the presence of the police force may be very limited and government services are not provided adequately.<sup>496</sup> While gangs respond to the need for a “sense of belonging to a group,” and the need to achieve a “personal status” in community, it also gives young men “a sense of purpose” in life.<sup>497</sup> Gangs orient men to the “life on the streets,” which is “governed by rules of masculinity.”<sup>498</sup>

The development of self-identity which includes an understanding of one’s

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<sup>494</sup> Leonora Angeles, “The Filipino Male as *Macho-Machunurin*: Bringing Men and Masculinities in Gender and Development in The Philippines,” *Kasarinlan Journal of Third World Issues* 16, no. 1(2001): 13.

<sup>495</sup> In many families, daughters are trained early in life to handle responsibilities in the home which includes cleaning the house, cooking, and even in decision making.

<sup>496</sup> Olivier Bangerter, “Territorial Gangs and their Consequence for Humanitarian Players,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 92 no. 878 (June 2010): 392.

<sup>497</sup> Bangerter, “Territorial Gangs and their Consequence for Humanitarian Players,” 392.

<sup>498</sup> Geoffrey Hunt and Karen Joe Laidler, “Alcohol and Violence in the Lives of Gang Members,” *The Journal of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism* 25, no. 1 (February 2001): 66-71.

gendered social roles is directly linked to context.<sup>499</sup> Adolescent boys in urban poor communities, while securing their safety and coping with the fear of real or imagined threats, develop hypermasculine behavior to hide or deny their fear of being victimized.<sup>500</sup> A Brazilian expression captures membership in a gang as *puoco como um rei, ou muito como um ze* (a little like a king or a lot like a nobody), as it is the only choice left for someone with very limited social and economic opportunities.<sup>501</sup> The time spent hanging out with the gang is an important aspect of their life together.

...the everyday practice of doing nothing is often an intense and busy period and the activities that occur include talking, recounting details from previous events, joking, discussing business, defending one's honor, maintaining one's respect, fending off insults, keeping the police at bay, cruising around in a car (*or a tricycle, motorcycle*), doing a few deals, defending turf, and getting high.<sup>502</sup>

Residents of the community are aware of these hangout places of gangs in their neighborhood. They are usually homes of one of their gangmates where they gather at certain times during the day (or night). Neighbors note men would be seen arriving individually and inconspicuously at the gathering place where parties, drinking or drug sessions are held.<sup>503</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Margaret Beale Spencer and others, "Understanding Hypermasculinity in Context: A Theory-Driven Analysis of Urban Adolescent Males' Coping Responses," *Research in Human Development* 1,4 (2004): 229-ff.

<sup>500</sup> Spencer and others, "Understanding Hypermasculinity in Context," 237.

<sup>501</sup> Bangerter, "Territorial Gangs and their Consequence for Humanitarian Players," 392.

<sup>502</sup> The italicized words are additions by the author. Hunt and Laidler, "Alcohol and Violence in the Lives of Gang Members," 68.

<sup>503</sup> BEC Focus Group Interview, Caloocan City, March 29, 2019.

Drinking works in several symbolic ways in the gang. Because drinking is an integral and regular part of socializing within gang life...drinking works as a social lubricant, or social glue, to maintain not only the cohesion and social solidarity of the gang but also to affirm masculinity and male togetherness.<sup>504</sup>

Drugs, like alcohol, serve as the glue to bind men but also to provide them a means of livelihood; something which is difficult for them to acquire, given their status.

Involvement in the drug trade through gang-mates provides the social connections they need to feel protected in the trade. With the gang, they do not only feel powerful and emotionally supported; it also facilitates their need for economic opportunities.

**Risk-Taking Behavior.** Five out of the seven stories exhibited risk-taking behaviors beyond substance abuse. Although not all families admitted to their family members' involvement in the actual sale of drugs, many have hinted on their knowledge of it. Edmon and Rico were both involved in petty thefts in the neighborhood and neighborhood fights that resulted in frequent arrests and altercations with the local police force. Hernan was kidnapped and brutally handled by his captors for drug-related conflicts but days after his release he continued to sell drugs. Ronald, who was arrested because he was included on the drug watch list, also chose to remain in his house despite people's warnings. Such risk-taking behaviors suggest defiance against danger and threat to their lives.

Hypermasculinity, or an "overemphasis and exaggerated adherence to the traditional male gender roles," is bound to develop among men especially those involved

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<sup>504</sup> Hunt and Laidler, "Alcohol and Violence in the Lives of Gang Members," 70.

in gangs.<sup>505</sup> The hypermasculine male is not only iconized in the entertainment and advertising industry, but in real-life encounters between kidnappers, criminals, police, and urban hitmen; shaping the “hypermasculine-violent culture,” witnessed in heinous and violent crimes.<sup>506</sup> The connection between gang membership, crimes, and fights suggests how the social structures shaping masculinities also impact the challenges they face in society and the forms of violence they are capable of embodying.<sup>507</sup>

The hypermasculine males are violent and aggressive against the enemy or the “other,” dominate and abuse women, and exhibit a “benevolent paternalism.”<sup>508</sup> Looking deeper into their stories, one can surmise how hypermasculinity is a “coping response to fear” especially for boys still seeking to know themselves and men who are incapable to carry out their economic roles as fathers.<sup>509</sup> Before extrajudicial killings became a norm through the government war on drugs program, violence in urban poor neighborhoods were typically staged by gangs and neighborhood fraternities. When there is a threat of them being victimized, enlistment in a gang, and exhibiting hypermasculine tendencies, help them to survive. Poverty and a culture of violence propel the emergence of territorial

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<sup>505</sup> Alex Zernehel and April Perry, “The Final Battle: Constructs of Hegemonic Masculinity and Hypermasculinity,” *College Student Affairs Leadership* 4 Issue 1 Art 6 (2017):3, [http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/csai/Vol.4/iss1/6?utm\\_source=scholarworks.gvsu.edu%2Fcsal%2FVol.4%2Fiss1%2F6&utm\\_medium=PDF&utm\\_campaign=PDFCoverPages](http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/csai/Vol.4/iss1/6?utm_source=scholarworks.gvsu.edu%2Fcsal%2FVol.4%2Fiss1%2F6&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages).

<sup>506</sup> Angeles, “The Filipino Male as *Macho-Machumurin*,” 14.

<sup>507</sup> James Messerschmidt, “Men, Masculinities, and Crime,” in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2005): 3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452233833.n12>.

<sup>508</sup> Maria Tanyag, “Duterte, Hypermasculinity and the Key to Populism,” *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, March 6, 2018, <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/duterte-governing-hypermasculinity-philippines/>.

<sup>509</sup> Spencer and others, “Understanding Hypermasculinity in Context,” 236.

gangs and with the expansion of urban dwellings, their membership tends to expand and continue through generations.<sup>510</sup>

### ***Kapitbahayan at Karahasan: Experience of Lived Violence***

Most of the stories shared about the victims indicate experiences of violence either at home or in the neighborhood. Although recent data show that Caloocan City is the 8<sup>th</sup> city with the lowest crime rate and the only one listed among the cities from the National Capital Region, it is the third-largest city in the country in terms of population.<sup>511</sup> Crime rates are proportionately related to population rate and stories of violence are not fully accounted for in urban city dwellings.

**A Cycle of Violence.** Domestic violence and experiences of abuse shared by the victims are seldom reported. Hernan's daughter shared how her parents were also fighting and how her father would always physically hurt her mother.<sup>512</sup> Edmon and his other siblings suffered beatings from their father. His mother suggests that those beatings pushed him to be involved in drugs and gangs. Such stories are not uncommon in the community.<sup>513</sup>

Abuse also takes the form of marital infidelity and neglect of family responsibilities. In the Seven Last Words prayer service, these stories were shared by daughters, wives, and mothers. Four out of the seven stories that were shared were about

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<sup>510</sup> Angela Higginson and others, "Youth Gang Membership and Violence in low- and middle-income countries: A Systematic Review," *International Initiative for Impact Evaluation* (September 2016): 63-65.

<sup>511</sup> City of Caloocan. [caloocancity.gov.ph/programs-and-projects/news/463-calooacan-city-top-8-with-lowest-crime-rate-in-the-philippines](http://caloocancity.gov.ph/programs-and-projects/news/463-calooacan-city-top-8-with-lowest-crime-rate-in-the-philippines). See Biggest Cities in the Philippines <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/biggest-cities-in-the-philippines.html>

<sup>512</sup> Interview, Yolanda, Caloocan City, April 4, 2019.

<sup>513</sup> Interview, Benilda, Caloocan City, March 15, 2019.



fathers and husbands who have been the source of pain and suffering in the home. A daughter recalled the beautiful memories of her father and their entire family and how it all changed when he began to engage in an extramarital affair with another woman. Another young lady shared about their family's travails when the mother decided to work abroad and provide for them financially. She shared how the father became abusive of his role as father and how he spent the money the mother would send them for gambling and drinking leaving them to suffer shame in school for not paying their school tuition. A teenage girl also shared how she got pregnant and the father of her child abandoned her upon knowing about it. Another young mother shared how her husband disappeared one day and did not return home. For months, she looked for him, informed the police authorities, and asked help from relatives and friends to find him but there was no sight of him. They already declared him dead until one of her friends saw him with another woman. Women in ministry attest to these experiences in their personal lives and in the families they serve.<sup>514</sup> Gloria, a fulltime pastoral worker, in one of her Sunday home visits to families, shared extensively about her family revealing her difficult life.<sup>515</sup>

I, together with my five kids had to suffer living with my husband, who was at one stage, both an alcoholic and a drug addict. He was very violent towards my children especially the older boys. They grew up being beaten by their father. They also witnessed how he was violent towards me whenever he was drunk. I also had to deal with his womanizing. He had affairs with women and spent most

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<sup>514</sup> In interviews conducted with parish volunteers and community residents, stories of violence that they have experienced as well as those they have witnessed in the neighborhood were caused by men.

<sup>515</sup> Fieldwork notes, Caloocan City, March 17, 2019.

of his money on them. In fact, until now, as he is jobless, he plays around with a girl in our neighborhood while I am at work. I caught him several times giving gifts to that woman. My son also confronted him about it, and my husband simply denied the allegations. He was also verbally abusive towards his daughters. One of my daughters grew up being shouted at and criticized by her father. Ironically, she is now the one supporting our family.<sup>516</sup>

The experience of violence begins in the family. Studies reveal how the early experience of violence results in embodying violence as adults.<sup>517</sup> More than 90 percent of the incidence of violence in Filipino homes are instigated by men.<sup>518</sup> Many men, however, grow up witnessing their fathers abusing their mothers and siblings. Conflicts arising from marital problems – unemployment, infidelity, jealousy, and nagging, often lead men to exercise their power over women.<sup>519</sup> About 83 percent of men in urban poor homes have experienced violence before the age of 18.

This violence, in turn, shapes their sense of ‘manhood’ and increases the chances that they too will turn to violence as part of being a man. Where rates of urban violence were high, relations between men and women were more adversarial and gender norms less equitable. Lower levels of exposure to violence were linked to more equitable gender norms.<sup>520</sup>

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<sup>516</sup> Interview, Gloria, Caloocan City, March 17, 2019.

<sup>517</sup> International Research Development Center, “Gender and Violence in Cities,” October 19, 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/gender-and-violence-cities>.

<sup>518</sup> Only about 10% of reported cases of violence are instigated by women, while more than 90% by men. Racidon Bernarte and others, “Violence against Women in the Philippines,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 6, no.1 (February 2018):121.

<sup>519</sup> Bernarte and others, “Violence against Women in the Philippines,” 121.

<sup>520</sup> International Research Development Center, “Gender and Violence in Cities”

The communities where male victims live have witnessed violence. Although many Caloocan city urban poor dwellings have progressed through the years, there are still places which are “no-go zones,” where “chronic violence transforms social networks and relationships,” that impact economic opportunities as well as effective community relations.<sup>521</sup> Violence and crime rate increase as the poverty rate increases (3.4% annually).<sup>522</sup> A grandmother shares how the cycle of violence has affected her son and grandson.

When they were little, they told me that when their father was drunk, he would threaten to kill them with a knife. We have a neighbor, who also showed my son his gun, and when my son attempted to play with it, he threatened to kill him by placing the bulletless gun on his head and pressing the trigger. My grandson was given a bike for his birthday and was happy to ride around the neighborhood. But one day, he went home without it because an older boy threatened to kill him if he didn't let go of it. Now that he is older, he might be telling himself, 'it's my turn.'<sup>523</sup>

Violence implies a breach as the cycle of violence among males may indicate the failure to meet role expectations and to resort to other means to regain their status in family and society.

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<sup>521</sup> The World Bank, *Violence in the City: Understanding and Supporting Community Responses to Urban Violence*, (Washington: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2010), 15-16, [https://www.unicef.org/protection/Violence\\_in\\_the\\_City.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/protection/Violence_in_the_City.pdf).

<sup>522</sup> Marife M. Ballesteros, “Linking Poverty and the Environment: Evidence from Slums in Philippine Cities,” *Philippine Institute for Development Studies*, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://dirp4.pids.gov.ph/ris/dps/pidsdps1033.pdf>.

<sup>523</sup> Interview, Hilda, Caloocan City, May 15, 2019.

## **Forming of Masculinities**

The web of stories connected with the Filipino male victims confirms the factors that develop different forms of masculinities. The diagram in the succeeding page suggests how power relations (*lakas sa lakas*), production relations (*lakas sa paggawa*), as well as sexual desire or *cathexis* (*lakas ng puso*) indicated through social practices, support and hinder the development of the Filipino male from the smallest unit of the family to the different roles and relationships that they have.

The concentric circles of the environment where men belong from the family to the society indicate how they are directly related and directly influencing the development of masculinities. From the crucial role of the family in preparing men for their responsibilities, it also reflects the importance of developing social structures in the other circles that can support men in their roles in society. These social structures also suggest the dynamics between men and women (as husband and wife, father and mother, brother and sister), and between men and men (sons and fathers, peers, male gangs, male authorities).

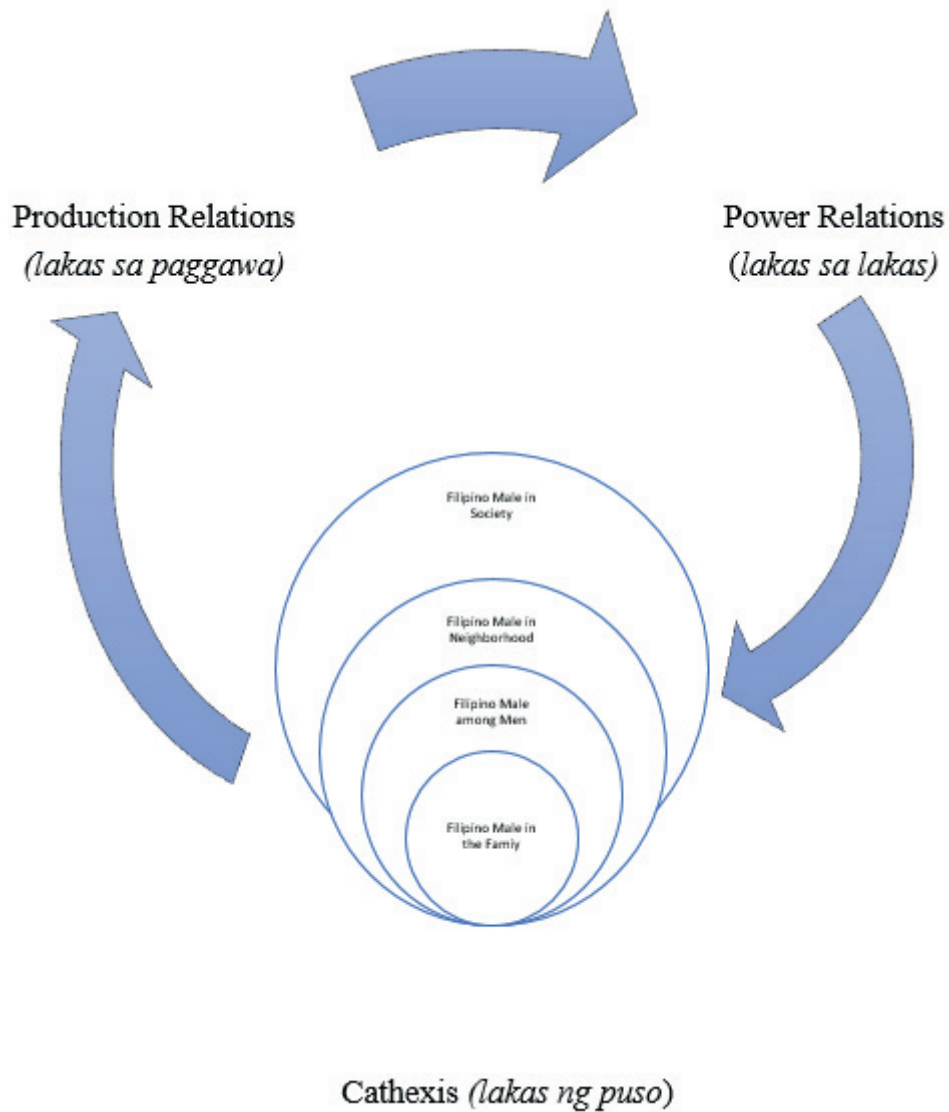


Figure 7. Men and Masculinities

### Jesus as the Hegemonic Masculine

The Gospels through the lens of hegemonic masculinity present not only “the story of a fallen and redeemed mankind” but a “story of failed and redeemed

masculinity.”<sup>524</sup> The Greco-Roman masculine, is hegemonic, characterized by an “avoidance of unmanliness, penetration and impenetrability, power and dominance, education, and self-control.”<sup>525</sup> Unlike feminist studies that viewed Jesus as someone who fought against patriarchy during his time by confronting the culture and offering an alternative view of life and power relations, masculinity studies interpret Jesus as a typical Greco-Roman masculine who used the very same imperial masculine ideologies to fight against the empire.<sup>526</sup>

Jesus takes the public sphere as his world, he was with male friends, he was proclaimed with titles identified with people in authority (Son of David, King, Lord) during that time, and he had the guts to defend himself and his principles when challenged publicly.<sup>527</sup> Jesus possessed the power of the Spirit to fight against the temptation of the devil and to heal the sick. He had intellectual capabilities to preach and to discuss with the learned. Most importantly, Jesus faced an excruciating public crucifixion and death with distinguished courage and nobility of a Greco-Roman masculine.

### **Heroic Hegemonic Masculinities**

As Jesus exemplified, heroic hegemonic masculinity stands against the powers that be. Heroes in Philippine history exhibited hegemonic masculinity in the fight for the

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<sup>524</sup> Colleen Conway, *Behold the Man. Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (New York: Oxford 2008), 12.

<sup>525</sup> Eric Stewart, “Masculinity in the New Testament and Early Christianity,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 46, no. 2 (2016): 94-96. DOI: 10.1177/0146107916639211.

<sup>526</sup> Conway, *Behold the Man*, 12.

<sup>527</sup> Jerome Neyrey, “Jesus, Gender, and the Gospel of Matthew,” *New Testament Masculinities*, eds. Stephen Moore and Janice Capel Anderson (Atlanta: Semeia 45 Society of Biblical Literature, 2003): 43-66.

country's sovereignty and freedom.<sup>528</sup> The first Filipino hero, *Lapu-Lapu*, the chieftain who led the Battle of Mactan, holds the record as the only "decisive native victory in the Spanish conquest of the sixteenth century."<sup>529</sup> In the years of the Revolution, the heroes of the Katipunan exhibited exemplary bravery and patriotism. Andres Bonifacio and Jose Rizal were both instrumental in fanning the flames of nationalism against the Spanish regime. Andres Bonifacio founded and led the revolutionary group the *Katipunan*, which fought against the Spanish regime.<sup>530</sup> Although Jose Rizal's participation in the revolution, is still debated upon by historians, Rizal's conviction of instilling change through educating the Filipinos about their plight, is reflected in many of his writings.<sup>531</sup>

In the war on drugs, some men also took the side of resistance and embodied heroic hegemonic masculinity in defense of the oppressed.

***Paninindigan sa Katotohanan: Firm Defiance to Protect the Truth.*** A bishop of a local diocese, heavily affected by the killings, was instrumental in the Kian story by providing sanctuary to a witness, by securing all legal means and support to protect her and her family.<sup>532</sup>

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<sup>528</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 253.

<sup>529</sup> "The result was defeat, and, ironically, the Battle of Mactan was the only "decisive" native victory, since Magellan's death forced the Europeans to leave the Philippine islands in the interim." Jose Amiel Angeles, "The Battle of Mactan and the Indigenous Discourse on War," *Philippine Studies* 55, no. 1 (2007): 40, <http://www.philippinestudies.net/files/journals/1/articles/2883/public/2883-3322-1-PB.pdf>

<sup>530</sup> See Bienvenido Lumbea and others, *Salita ng Sandata: Bonifacio's Legacies to the People's Struggles*. Quezon City: Ibon Foundation, 2013.

<sup>531</sup> Flora Quibayen, "Rizal and the Revolution," *Philippine Studies* 45, no. 2 (1997): 225-257.

<sup>532</sup> Bp. Pablo David heads the Diocese of Caloocan and he has been outspoken against the war on drugs and the extrajudicial killings of drug users and dealers. The national leadership has taken offense against his prophetic stance that he would announce false stories about him. See Paterno Emasquel II, "Duterte said kill the bishops – and his word become flesh," *Rappler*, Updated December 4, 2019. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/224537-duterte-word-became-flesh-kill-bishops>.

You know there was a stand-off here at the cathedral. My cathedral was surrounded by policemen. Then they came here - the CIDG (Criminal Investigation and Detection Group) and then representatives from the department of justice pressuring me to give up the witnesses. One of the major witnesses was a girl, whose mother was in the Middle East as an OFW (overseas foreign worker) and whose father was in jail for drug cases too. The father could not claim as a guardian. The mother could not do it because she was abroad. What we did was to communicate with her and to ask her to execute a written affidavit allowing us to take custody of her children. She executed it so that we could take custody of the children. We were advised to do it legally. I had the paper.

Do you know what they did? They bailed out the father. The people from the public attorney's office saw that he could be released and pressured me to release the children. The father came here together with the police. He brought with him a letter, which was a very strongly worded letter telling me that I have no right to keep his children. "I am the father you must surrender them to me. I can decide where to protect my children. My wife and I decided together that we would rather have our children back; you don't have the right to keep my children." I spoke to him and asked him, "so you are the father of the children and you and your wife talked about this." He said, "No. I don't have the number of my wife." And I asked, "how come it's in the letter? Who wrote the letter? It's like you don't even know what's in the letter. It's like people from the CIDG wrote it." The policeman who was with him asked, "Why? Why is it important that the mother should know? She is away, she is in another country. The mother



is away, and he is right here.” “Sir,” I said, “I do recognize it, and I want to ask him if he desires to get his children back.” I asked the father, “Is it your desire because then I have to ask your wife who wrote this affidavit. And he said, “Yes sir.” All right no problem. I will ask the children to be brought here. I will turn them over to you but we will execute a document. But when the children came here, they talked to the father. When they talked to the father, they wanted a private moment with the father. When they had a private moment here, one of the children had a cellphone to call the mother and it so happened that we had wifi here so they could call free through an application. They were able to call each other. When the mother was connected, they were able to talk.

The mother was more sensible. She said, “Are you crazy? Your children witnessed a crime committed by the police and you will surrender them to the police? You should be happy that the bishop is providing a sanctuary. How come you still want to take them?” Then he said, “because they bailed me.” She said, “No, I don’t agree.” He changed his mind. Then when he faced the police, he said, “Sir I have changed my mind, I would rather seek sanctuary from the church.” Oh my God, they were really upset. The CIDG director, he was so incensed, he pulled him and said, “Okay if your children don’t want to come, I’ll take you back.” The children grabbed their father and there was a tug of war here. We’ve experienced that tension before. We were finally able to solve the problem. We called a lawyer and we asked, “Can he be pressured?” “No,” the lawyer said, “all he has to do now is to write an intent.” So, he wrote it and was able to stay with me.

Fighting for justice demands such courageous persistence to face dominant structures and forces that usurp their power to conceal the truth. When one holds on to the truth that lies, not in abstract truths, but real bodies, bodies are awakened to their denial and fear.

***Boses ng Pagbabago: Voice of Change.*** One of the first ecclesial responses that stood defiant against the *tokhang* was a foreign-born parish priest. The government had asked the church to partner with them to knock at the homes of drug addicts and invite them to surrender. But the parish priest who supported the program did not believe it would work.

I was very blunt with the police. I told them, “Even if you are friendly and smiling, people are scared of you.” If I’m into drugs, and the police come at my door and knocks, I will dig a tunnel and hide. We want a different approach. Give us the list and we will handle it ourselves. I will send the BEC leaders, mothers, and grandmothers who these people know. They will not be afraid of them because they are from the church and they will believe that it is for their good to surrender. The police allowed us to do it...It was dangerous for everybody to do that. But it worked.<sup>533</sup>

On the day of surrender, realizing that without any protection, the vulnerability was high, the parish under his leadership invited media outfits – journalists and radio personalities, local government officials, as well as church officials. He was interviewed on TV and the

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<sup>533</sup> Fr. Luciano Felloni, a priest from the Diocese of Calooan was born in Argentina. When he entered the seminar to become a priest, he was sent to the Philippines and decided to remain in the country and serve the local church. He was a parish priest for the Our Lady of Lourdes in Camarin, Novaliches, a community that suffered many deaths at the onset of the war on drugs by the Philippine government. Interview, Luciano Felloni, Camarin, March 28, 2019.

mass surrender was announced on TV and radio. His hegemonic masculine response proved successful. Killings dropped in their place and church and government fully supported their proposal for a community-based rehabilitation program. In this story, it might be argued that the dynamics of power relations among men played a role since before a white man, the local hegemony stands subordinate. But when hegemonic bodies are also engaged to witness and to testify to the truth, they cannot resist.

***Pagpukaw Kamalayan: Conscientization.*** A well-known priest-theologian likewise stand defiant against the ongoing killings.<sup>534</sup> During weekdays, he teaches at the school of theology and on weekends he serves in a dumpsite community. The community was also burdened by the slaughter of people involved in the drug trade. The parishioners expressed their fear and anxiety over the rampant killings and as the killings increased through the weeks, the pastoral team decided to gather the affected families.<sup>535</sup> Apart from attending to the needs of the families of victims, there was a need to conscientize the parishioners of their role in the ongoing killings. In December 2016, as the community prepared for Christmas through the nine-day *Simbang Gabi* (dawn masses), the body of a resident who was killed was still waiting to be buried because of the insufficiency of funds. To raise awareness on what was happening and since most of the residents remain supportive of the government leaders and its program, his homilies for the nine days revolved around the issue. He was clear about his stand, “this is wrong; no

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<sup>534</sup> Danny Pilario is a member of the Congregation of the Mission, the Vincentians. A prominent Filipino theologian, he is Dean of the St. Vincent School of Theology. Fr. Pilario, together with the pastoral team of *Ina ng Lupang Pangako* Parish in Payatas, founded the SOW (Support for Orphans and Widows) for left-behind families of victims of extrajudicial killings in the parish. Fr. Pilario has written extensively from the “rough grounds of *praxis*,” and has courageously spoken against the war on drugs.

<sup>535</sup> The story of SOW (Support for Orphans and Widows) will be presented in Chapter 4.

matter what you think of it, your neighbor died. Whether he was an addict or not, he was killed.”

For example, for us here celebrating *simbang gabi*. Just by the next block, there is a decaying body. It is already smelling. They have no money to bury him. We are happy here. We do *beso-beso* (kiss) Merry Christmas, but our neighbor is rotting away. Can you take that? What is the use of celebrating mass if we can't bury him? As I spoke, I was really angry. Then I said, tomorrow we will be here again for *simbang gabi* and that body is still rotting away. What kind of Christmas are we preparing for? What kind of Christianity are we trying to celebrate here in the first place? You know, after the mass, the mothers went around to ask for donations from the neighbors so that they can bury the body. The knights of the altar passed by the house. That was the first time they visited their neighbor! My homily affected them. They were able to bury him at three pm on December 24. Then I said, now we can truly say, “Merry Christmas.”

By proclaiming the Gospel imperative fearlessly and awakening bodies to the power of becoming the body of Christ, people take the courage to care for the victims and their families. These stories are examples of heroic hegemonic masculinities that recreate the narrative and confront the spiral of the signification of victims. Their courageous resistance deprives the dominant voice of its *pathos*.<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>536</sup> *Pathos* is the “emotional and psychic yielding to the drama being enacted or intimated through the master story.” Jennings, “War Bodies: Remembering Bodies in a Time of War,” 28.

### ***Malakas at Maganda: A Shared Identity***

There is one more hegemonic reality, however. It is the *kapwa* as a shared identity between man and woman and *pakikipagkapwa*, which is best expressed and embodied fully by facilitating the presence of both the feminine and the masculine in ecclesial life. The beauty of the Christian faith can only be fully expressed in shared power.

A classic Filipino creation story speaks of this shared identity between the first man, *Malakas*, and the first woman, *Maganda*. God created the world with the sun and the moon, the clear blue skies, and the stars. God created grass, trees, and flowers, as well as the oceans and rivers. But at the end of the days of creation, a bird went flying around when it heard a voice coming out from a bamboo plant. It was pleading to him to peck the bamboo hard so that it could come out. The bird, though at first afraid, obliged. It pecked on the talking bamboo and out came the first man on one side of the bamboo, who is named *Malakas* (power) and the first woman, on the other side of the bamboo, who is named *Maganda* (beauty). Showing equality between a man and a woman, it also alludes to the beautiful combination of power and beauty reflected in Filipino values. The victims' stories and the making of masculinities through gender relations and practices of socialization in society confirm findings of development theories and the global trend towards essentializing masculinities. Many feminist thinkers are now advocating to emancipate women's status in society by being attentive to forms of masculinities and to developing shared leadership between men and women. Church ministries are also influenced by this framework in pastoral care.

## **Women-in-Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) Framework in Development**

Development paradigms are foundational in the socialization of gender and gender relations in society. In the Philippines, development paradigms have been largely influenced by the Women-In-Development (WID) framework that believes in the importance of the empowerment of women in poverty alleviation.<sup>537</sup> This framework was propelled in the early 1970s by feminists from the Global North who have based their conviction from their context and were convinced that promoting the liberation of women will respond to the poverty and oppression globally.<sup>538</sup> It is from their personal and political lens that third world analyses were undertaken through which successful programs for women's empowerment, as well as development concerns in the area of health, women's rights protection, crisis intervention concerning women, were implemented. Grameen banking, which originated in South Asia, was one of the first microfinancing programs offered to poor communities that sought to break the cycle of poverty.<sup>539</sup> The program provides financial capital to communities of women who want to start a source of livelihood together. Through the program, many cooperatives that are

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<sup>537</sup> Although development programs in the Philippines are characterized as gender responsive, most of its activities focus on poverty alleviation through empowering women. See United Nations Development Program, "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Philippines," *UNDP Philippines*, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/philippines/docs/Governance/fastFacts%20-%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20Women%20Empowerment%20in%20the%20Philippines%20rev%201.5.pdf>. Also see Commission on Women, "Philippine Initiatives on Gender-Responsive Governance," accessed April 3, 2020, <https://www.pcw.gov.ph/focus-areas/gender-responsive-governance/initiatives>.

<sup>538</sup> Ruth Pearson, "Which Men, Why Now? Reflections on Men and Development," *IDS Bulletin* Vol.31, no. 2 (2000): 42-43.

<sup>539</sup> Grameen reframed misconceptions about the poor such as – they were not capable of "renumerative occupations...not bankable...cannot save..." or would not pay back their loans, by creating communities of women and equipping them not only with financial capital but human resources. <http://www.grameen.com/breaking-the-cycle-of-poverty/>

run by women were established.<sup>540</sup> The *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program or 4Ps, a poverty alleviation program that aims to provide financial assistance to poor families as well as providing support for health and educational needs, is also implemented through the wives and mothers alone without the men.<sup>541</sup>

Paradigms on gender such as discourse analysis and deconstruction have strongly opposed the discourse of male dominance and women's oppression reflected in development programs.<sup>542</sup> Many express that the narrative of women as victims who need to be empowered has become an indirect and subtle strategy towards "silencing dissent, containing dissonance, and maintaining orthodoxies."<sup>543</sup> Though foundational in the poverty alleviation process of many communities, a "women-in-development" framework has also failed to achieve its purpose as the cycle of poverty continues.<sup>544</sup> By essentializing one gender and not acknowledging the shared power and production relations between men and women, family life and parenting issues are not also addressed.

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<sup>540</sup> Women farmers are not only provided with capital to start their business. Grameen also engaged them with other players in the field and provided training for capacity building to succeed in the industry. See The story of Edna (Tata), accessed April 3, 2020. <https://grameenfoundation.org/stories/stories-of-change/edna-story>.

<sup>541</sup> Official Gazette, *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program, accessed March 10, 2020, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/programs/conditional-cash-transfer/>.

<sup>542</sup> Cornwall, "Men, Masculinity, and Gender in Development," *Gender and Development ISSN* 1364-9221 Vol. 5, no. 2 (June 1997): 7.

<sup>543</sup> Andrea Cornwall, "Missing Men? Reflections on Men, Masculinities and Gender in GAD. *Institute for Development Studies Bulletin* 31 (2): 22. See also Richard Eves, "Men, Masculinity and Development in the Pacific," *State, Society and Governance in Melanesia* No. 2 (2009): 2.

<sup>544</sup> Fernando Abocejo and others, "Microfinance Lending Program of Cooperatives in Cebu, Philippines: Realities, Benefits and Women's Participation," *CNU Journal of Higher Education- Special Edition of Poverty Alleviation* (2012): 25-39, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287196765\\_Microfinance\\_Lending\\_Program\\_of\\_Cooperatives\\_in\\_Cebu\\_Philippines\\_Realities\\_Benefits\\_and\\_Women's\\_Participation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287196765_Microfinance_Lending_Program_of_Cooperatives_in_Cebu_Philippines_Realities_Benefits_and_Women's_Participation)

The shift from Women-in- Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) has called for the “inclusion of men, male identities, and masculinities in mainstreaming gender within development discussions.”<sup>545</sup> Not only are women in need of empowerment but also men. Social issues related to poverty, such as violence, risk-taking behavior, and unemployment are seen to affect more men than women.

By disregarding the complexities of male experience, by characterizing men as “the problem,” and by continuing to focus on women-in-general as the “oppressed,” development initiatives that aim to be ‘gender-aware’ can fail to address effectively the issues of equity and empowerment that are crucial in bringing about positive change.<sup>546</sup>

Re-engaging the male *kapwa* should, therefore, work towards more “male-sensitive and male-centered approaches for interventions” to “avoid demonizing and stereotyping men.”<sup>547</sup>

### **Female Leadership to Shared Leadership in Pastoral Care**

The feminist framework in the analysis of human development is also reflected in church ministry. Social action ministries that seek to alleviate poverty and respond to needs of families reach out primarily to women and children. In focus group interviews conducted in the parish, women would share about sons or husbands of their companions or beneficiaries who are involved in the drug trade. When asked if there is any concrete

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<sup>545</sup> Leonora Angeles, “The Filipino Male as *Macho-Machunurin*,” 4.

<sup>546</sup> Andrea Cornwall, “Men, Masculinity and Gender in Development,” 8.

<sup>547</sup> Romeo Lee, “Filipino men's familial roles and Domestic Violence: Implications and Strategies for Community-based Intervention,” *Health and Social Care in Community* (19 August 2004), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2524.2004.00512.x>



plan of action to reach out to them, they would mention ways by which they reach out to the mothers, wives, or their children.

We have a feeding program. They are in the church too. The father has been in prison, but he was already released last Sunday. I don't know which is worse; that he is in jail or here. They have two kids. They don't have water electricity and they are renting a room. The kids are malnourished and always sick. To help them, we take the kids for to the doctor for regular checkup.<sup>548</sup>

We have other cases. I do not know where the wife's whereabouts are. The husband is here. He is a drug addict. He has three daughters and they are renting a house. One daughter is one of our scholars. The father gives them money occasionally, but it was the eldest daughter who was working who was providing more for the family. But now this daughter got married and left them. With the two kids, we are taking them to an institution. Luckily, even if he is not a good father, he allowed us to do it.<sup>549</sup>

The absence-presence of the male body in ministry is also reflected in pastoral responses to victims. During an interview with a pastoral worker coordinating services to the families of victims, there was a call from the bishop's office informing them about Gina, one of their members, who was arrested together with her husband, the night before. It happened because Gina's husband, who was on the drug watch list, went home after being in hiding for months. He was caught immediately and because Gina resisted, they

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<sup>548</sup> Interview, Sr Andrea, Caloocan City, April 20, 2019.

<sup>549</sup> Interview, Sr. Matilda, Caloocan City, March 9, 2019.

took her with him to prison. The pastoral workers invited the researcher to join their visit to the detention cell.

The detention cell for the men was bigger and had more detainees. There were about 30-40 of them – mostly topless, sitting on the floor in rows. Two hammocks were hanging over them – each one with two bodies sleeping. It was lunchtime. Some detainees were having their lunch. This included three other men who seemed to be inmates as well, who were outside the cells. In the detention cell for women, there were about four of them. They were quiet. There were four women - an elderly and three younger ones. Gina was surprised to see the two pastoral workers. She was wearing a pair of house shorts and sleeveless body-hugging tops. She didn't look like she was prepared to be arrested. Gina was in tears, whispering the story to the two pastoral workers. The conversation went on in whispers. The two pastoral workers stayed close to the grills to catch what Gina was narrating in between her sobs. The women were quiet the entire time and the men on the other side of the cell looked curious as to how the encounter would proceed. After they have taken all the information they needed, the two said that we were ready to go. We hurriedly left without meeting the husband who might have been waiting for his turn to be interviewed. After we have left, the two realized that they forgot to speak to the husband. When we proceeded to the Public Attorney's Office, they regretted not doing it. Gina was detained because of him. Her case cannot be addressed without details about her husband. Though

the lawyer was informed about it, the pastoral workers had to leave for another activity.<sup>550</sup>

The fact that most, if not all parish workers or volunteers, are women could be a factor to such a response. Most of the involved men are only visible on Sundays and they are in upfront liturgical functions. Women workers, who may have also experienced physical abuse or domination from their husbands, or are accepting of their subordinated role vis-à-vis men, may already feel threatened when they carry out roles that cross the line. It is ironic how most of those tasked to reach out and document the cases of victims, are women pastoral workers. Many of them respond because there was no one else to carry the much-needed service. Since most social action ministries are also managed by women, the task of attending to the victims and their families is largely placed on the hands of women.

There are obvious dangers involved in carrying out this ministry since many of the families of victims do not want to be interviewed. One female worker shared how she was threatened by the family members and their neighbors, that she would be killed if she ever visited them again.<sup>551</sup> When asked why only women are involved in this work, the pastoral worker reasoned out that men do not typically engage in social action ministries because it is only for women. Then she said, “but Father (referring to their priest) is our coordinator; he tells us what to do.”

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<sup>550</sup> Fieldwork Notes, Caloocan City, January 25, 2019.

<sup>551</sup> Interview, Darwin, Caloocan City, March 4, 2019.

## Engendering Worship Spaces

Aside from gendered practices in pastoral care, expressions of worship tend more towards a feminized Christianity. Practices that promote devotion to the Virgin Mary, rosaries and novenas, even practices from various charismatic movements appeal more to women. Basic ecclesial communities are still largely a women's movement.

Devotion to the Black Nazarene however, which is more popular among men, may provide elements that can help promote masculinity in the ritual spaces. The ritual performance of devotees to the Black Nazarene characterized as masculine can enable the exploration of power and participation.<sup>552</sup> The practices involved in being *hijos* (sons) or *mamamasan* (the one who carries) suggest ways to facilitate an engendering of practices of worship. The devotion to the Black Nazarene has a wide following among Filipinos.<sup>553</sup> Many of the devotees belong to poor communities both in urban and rural settings. To be a devotee entails living out of a *panata* (commitment), an embodiment of one's relationship to the *Poon* (Lord Jesus). This commitment is lived out for the rest of one's life and passed on to the next generation. A male devotee from the community shares how it has helped him live a good life despite experiencing violence in the neighborhood.

I started my devotion since I was 17 and I have never wavered since then. When my sons turned 17-18, they also became devotees. Now, my whole family is

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<sup>552</sup> Paul Francois Tremlett, "Power, Invulnerability, beauty: producing and transforming male bodies in the lowland Christianized Philippines," *School of Oriental and African Studies, University Centre Website* (2016): 13-15. See also Jazmin Badong Llana, "Inaesthetics of Performance in the Black Nazarene Procession," *What is Performance Philosophy? Staging a New Field International Conference* (University of Surrey, April 11-13, 2013).

<sup>553</sup> Antonio Gonsalves, "Understanding the Fierce Devotion Behind the Black Nazarene," *Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene Website*, accessed August 21, 2019, <http://www.quiapochurch.com/author/clemignacio/>.

involved. The *Poon* has guided me in all my life decisions. As a family, we have been blessed by the *Poon* with good health. He has kept me safe from accidents. Even with my daily problems with money and family relationships, I have witnessed how the *Poon* has helped me carry my cross and emerge victoriously.<sup>554</sup>

Devotees reflect an identification to Jesus who carried the cross and continue to stand up despite falling. The act of standing is an act of resistance to failure and giving up. Rather than seeing him as the “suffering servant,” exemplified in Isaiah, Jesus is the servant who perseveres and overcomes suffering. A story is told about a statue of the *Poong Nazareno* created by a carver from Laguna that was not acceptable to the devotees because his face conveyed suffering not triumph in suffering.<sup>555</sup> The *panata* is embodied in practices manifested in gestures and movements like *pagpahid ng tuwalya at panyo* (touching the image with towel and handkerchief), *pagyayapak* (bare footedness), *pagpapasan* (carrying of the cross), and many others, manifesting this devotion to the *Poon* (Jesus the Nazarene).<sup>556</sup> Thus, it is not only a commitment expressed intimately to the *Poon* but expressed outwardly enacted before the others and with others.

Being a member of a *Balangay* (chapter) requires following a set of rules and commitments. On January 9, during the *Traslacion* or the solemn procession of the image along the streets of Quiapo, close to 300,000 devotees, mostly men participate.<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>554</sup> Jack, Caloocan City, May 12, 2019.

<sup>555</sup> Mark Calano, “The Black Nazarene, Quiapo, and the Weak Philippine State,” *Kritika Kultura* 25 (2015): 172.

<sup>556</sup> Calano, “The Black Nazarene, Quiapo, and the Weak Philippine State,” 173.

<sup>557</sup> Robin Gomes, “Thousands of Filipinos join Black Nazarene procession in Manila,” Vatican news, accessed August 21, 2019, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2019-01/black-nazarene-philippines-manila-tagle-devotion-fanaticism.html>.

The ritual has been characterized as chaotic and fatal, owing to injuries and deaths caused by heat, fatigue, and being crushed by the crowd.<sup>558</sup> But it is astounding how male unity, masculine strength, and perseverance is showcased throughout the procession.

When an *hijo* commands *indayog* for example, during the procession, he refers to a unison of dance-like and cadence movement that accompanies the *salya* (forward push) to prevent devotees from harming one another because of the large number. So that in the event of a loosened rope attached to the *andas* which poses a grave danger to everyone, and *Hijo* shouts *otso!* This is the signal to stop. Once it is ahead, devotees are quick to raise the rope above their heads to avoid struggling, and eventually harming or killing, a devotee, or *mamamasan*. *Pagsuko* is also another interesting practice, which (literally) means to surrender. A *mamamasan* or devotee signals this by raising his right hand if the procession has already overwhelmed him. In this case, one of the *namiminga* (a *mamamasan* who is near the wood called *pinga* or support of the *andas*) plucks him out of the multitudes for him to be carried like a crowd surfer directly towards the first aid station nearby. According to one of my informants, *pagsuko* is symbolic of the popular and transcendent wisdom that accompanies this devotion; not all participants get to touch the *Poon* and not everyone gets to finish the *traslacion*. That too is *biyaya* (grace).<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>558</sup> Rambo Talabong, “Zero Fatalities, hundreds injured in Nazareno 2018,” *Rappler*, January 10, 2018, [https://www.rappler.com/nation/193283-zero-casualties-hundreds-injured-nazareno-2018\\_](https://www.rappler.com/nation/193283-zero-casualties-hundreds-injured-nazareno-2018_)

<sup>559</sup> Calano, “The Black Nazarene, Quiapo, and the Weak Philippine State,” 173.

As shown in the rituals, the devotion not only conveys piety but understanding of power, the role of men in society, and relationships as well.<sup>560</sup>

Obtaining a blessing from the Black Nazarene is an occasion for men to demonstrate their physical prowess by gaining proximity to power. The blessing itself secures a variety of things: it confers, for example, potency or virility, protection against illness and accidents, and confirms or raises the status of both individuals and fraternities competing for limited resources of symbolic power. Importantly, the aim of obtaining a blessing is to transcend a condition of weakness and vulnerability, and this point is perhaps especially salient given the youth of many of those involved in the ritual.<sup>561</sup>

In the staging of the *Via Crucis*, where male devotees reenact the crucifixion by actual nailing on the cross, research findings show that though the ritual is a “showing of doing” it is mainly an affective experience for the main actor. Though the actual nailing “fosters a real, immediate and corporeal relationship with Christ,” it is facilitated through the “interpersonal and inter-individual relationships of trusting faith.”<sup>562</sup>

Integrating masculine rituals and practices in the worship space may enhance the presence of male bodies in ecclesial life as well as promote masculine practices that are also needed in re-membling the voiceless and the traumatized.

During a pastoral council meeting to prepare for the Holy Week, there was a long discussion about whether women should be represented among the twelve disciples

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<sup>560</sup> Tremlett, “Power, Invulnerability, Beauty,” 13-15.

<sup>561</sup> Tremlett, “Power, Invulnerability, Beauty,” 15.

<sup>562</sup> Julius Bautista, “*Hesukristo* Superstar: Entrusted Agency and Passion Rituals in the Roman Catholic Church,” *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 28 (2017): 160-162.

during the Paschal Triduum.<sup>563</sup> The Catholic sisters among them were appalled that it was the women themselves who did not want fellow women to join. “How sad that these women prefer to remain subordinate to the men in the community.” But when the women were asked why they chose not to let the women participate, their answers were far from the religious sisters’ interpretation. They remarked, “It is only on Good Friday that “other men” can be seen at the altar.” The “other men” meant, those who are subordinated from the ones taking the liturgical roles every Sunday. Some simply said, “We don’t want to carry the cross! It is too heavy for women.” This suggests how practices play a role in the absence-presence of male bodies in ecclesial life. As it helps to integrate them, it also develops the much-needed communication between women and men towards interdependence and shared leadership in family and community life. If the church seeks to mediate God’s presence and bring about God’s salvation in concrete terms, ritual practices as spaces where people articulate their God-experience in ‘the everyday,’ also uplift ways by which the Church can walk and think with them.<sup>564</sup>

### **The Men of Good Friday**

The Good Friday of the war on drugs highlights hegemonic masculinities that perpetrate the narrative of death and marginalized masculinities that are embodied by victims. The stories of victims reveal gender relations and social practices from the family to the society that impact their development as men. Confronting the narrative of death is a proposal of heroic hegemonic masculinities patterned after Jesus as a

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<sup>563</sup> The Holy celebrations included reenactments of the passion story of Jesus that need the presence of the twelve disciples in the Maundy Thursday Washing of the Feet, in the Good Friday procession, and other celebrations and rituals.

<sup>564</sup> Danny Pilario, “Praying Bodies, Dying Bodies: Reflection on the Nazareno and Santo Nino: A Commentary,” *Philippine Sociological Review* 65 (2017):161.



hegemonic masculine and the development of a shared identity between men and women in ecclesial practices.

## CHAPTER FIVE. PAKIKIPAGKA-PUWANG: HOLY SATURDAY AND COMMUNITAS

*The took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden, there was a tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the 4<sup>th</sup> Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.*

*John 19:41-43*<sup>565</sup>

*You have laid me in the depths of the Pit, in dark places, and the abyss.*

*Psalms 88:7*

Holy Saturday is the day between Good Friday and Easter Sunday when the body of Jesus is laid to rest in the tomb. From his brutal crucifixion at Calvary on Good Friday, Jesus is dead on this day. In the Christian tradition, Holy Saturday is a non-event for on that day everything has ended. Besides an ancient homily to serve as a reflection, there is no celebration of the Sacraments, the altars are stripped, and to celebrate the Eucharist is superfluous. But in truth, like the day after a funeral, when the physical body is no longer seen and death becomes a reality, Holy Saturday is a “period of chaos, misrecognition, and strange reversals.”<sup>566</sup> As a state of numbness and seemingly blank space on the canvas of the Triduum, Holy Saturday presents a meaning-filled emptiness and a transforming silence that in the end “says everything.”<sup>567</sup> This chapter presents the Holy Saturday life of survivors at the aftermath as they live the posttraumatic scenario and the

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<sup>565</sup> All Biblical citations taken from New American Bible Revised Edition. Washington: United Catholic Bishops’ Conference, 2011.

<sup>566</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 56.

<sup>567</sup> Alan Lewis, *Between the Cross and Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 3.

ministries established to journey with them in their grief and suffering. Their experience redefines a church at the gap providing new ways to re-member the others.

### **Trauma and Holy Saturday**

In the past decades, trauma theologians have alluded to the mystery of the Holy Saturday providing new understandings of suffering and redemption. Survivors of trauma cannot identify with a victorious or redemptive experience of their sufferings, but they can recognize that which remains and exceeds death.<sup>568</sup> For many left-behind families of victims of extrajudicial killings (EJK), death and life are a daily event. Trauma is a “living on,” and since people never really “get over,” it, one can only “develop the capacity to bear it.”<sup>569</sup> The survivors represented by the widows, mothers, and orphans experience the reality of Holy Saturday in their lives.

It has been a year since my son was killed but life has not returned to normal. I still avoid the place where he was shot. Even if I did not see his lifeless body lying there, I still picture it in my mind. Like a film strip being replayed over and over, this memory keeps coming back to me. I still feel the guilt for leaving him behind to neighbors and relatives when he was a young boy because I had to work. This is where he led a wayward life of substance abuse and violence. On the one hand, I feel relieved that he is not here anymore. I had years of agonizing over how to raise money to bring to him when he was in jail when his other

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<sup>568</sup> Jaesung Ryu, “Trauma and Holy Saturday: Remembering and Mourning with WWII Comfort Women,” *Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology* 3, no. 1 (2017):128.

<sup>569</sup> The term “living on,” is quoted by Shelly Brown from Jacques Derrida. See Shelly Rambo and Serene Jones. *Shelly Rambo*, “Theologians engaging Trauma Transcript,” *Theology Today* 68, 3 (2011): 227, doi:10.1177/0040573611416539.

siblings also needed to be fed. He was a headache, but he was my son. How could I feel this way for him?<sup>570</sup>

The inner guilt of omission in the past creates tension with the feeling of relief. These are signs of the misrecognition and chaos seldom verbalized but always embodied. It also reveals itself through dreams and fantasies; spaces where the traumatized also find answers to their questions and relief from their pain.

That day I was so sad and lonely. I was looking up to heaven. In my dreams early in the morning, I saw him. I saw all four of them. There were big trees, they were all there. My son was sitting by the tree and he was topless. It was a little blurred and I couldn't recognize his face. His back was facing me. His best friend was the one facing me. I asked how he is. He said we are ok now where we are. I asked if he could turn around so I could see him. I asked why he has his back turned against me. Then he stood up and approached me and told me, "Ma, may I hug you?" That was the only time I could hug him. I asked, "why did you leave us?" But he didn't respond. Then I kept crying. Then he disappeared.<sup>571</sup>

Something is missing and will never be filled for those who live in this middle territory.<sup>572</sup> The mourning never stops and the feeling of in-between can be bridged by moments; it will suffice until the next pangs of grief set in again.

One day I woke up feeling that I miss my son. I was crying and I didn't know how to appease myself. I walked outside and passed the houses that he helped to

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<sup>570</sup> Interview, Susan, Navotas, October 22, 2019.

<sup>571</sup> Interview, Edrin and Donna, Caloocan City, March 15, 2019.

<sup>572</sup> Rambo describes Holy Saturday as a middle territory. A permanent space that the traumatized do not complete leave as mourning, grief and the marks of trauma never disappear but is something that one integrates and reinterprets throughout one's lifetime.

build. He was a good carpenter; people loved him for his craft. Yet he died. Why? I continued walking and saw his friend from way back and I remember how he stole food from the house to give to this kid. Then my feet led me to where he was killed. I was sobbing right in front of the house when the mother of his other friend who died came out. We cried together. No words were uttered.<sup>573</sup>

This experience of “absence and presence, intimacy and separation, nearness and distance, alienation and consummation in hell,” is also reflected in those who opt to remain amid people’s suffering.<sup>574</sup> People who descend and plunge into suffering accept the absence of dichotomies; “here, we have the good and the bad together.”<sup>575</sup> They understand how hell can be eternal; “in poverty and violence, there is no easy way out.”<sup>576</sup> On the other hand, for those who suffer, it is the decision to remain despite everything: “*laban lang!*” (“just struggle!”).<sup>577</sup>

In the Apostles’ Creed, Christians proclaim Jesus who “descended into hell.”<sup>578</sup> The “harrowing of hell” of Jesus,<sup>579</sup> does not signify victory: “instead, the Son is a dead man in hell.”<sup>580</sup> Though this death, expresses Jesus’ experience of total abandonment and isolation, it also proclaims his unique and lasting relationship with God. Jesus’ return to

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<sup>573</sup> Interview, Donna, Caloocan City, March 19, 2019.

<sup>574</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 69.

<sup>575</sup> Interview, Alice, Bagong Silang, March 2019.

<sup>576</sup> Interview, Rachel, Barangay Holy Spirit, January 16, 2019.

<sup>577</sup> Interview, Lydia, Bagong Silang, February 7, 2019.

<sup>578</sup> The Creed is a statement of Christian belief proclaimed by the congregation during Sunday liturgies. The creed is structured according to the Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

<sup>579</sup> That “the gospel was preached even to the dead,” suggests the significance of this moment of Holy Saturday, the state from death to life in the Christian life. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 5, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_INDEX.HTM](https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM).

<sup>580</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*. 63.

the Father confirms his assurance that he will never be alone and that the Father is with him (John 16:32).

In the whole economy of the Incarnation, the divine intimacy of the Father and Son in the Holy Spirit assumes only another modality, occasioned by the absorption of human, sinful alienation in this intimacy, as a new expression of their selfless, surrendering love. The return of the Son to the Father who has raised Him from the dead is nothing other than the transparency of this modality of alienation in what it already is in truth: the eternal intimacy of divine love.<sup>581</sup>

There are two sets of characters at this point in Jesus' death. Mary and John at the foot of the cross, who was there before he breathed his last, where he told them to take care of each other.

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.<sup>582</sup>

They both witnessed his death and even when all the disciples had disappeared for fear of their lives, the two stood at the foot of the cross. Watching your friend and your son at the moment of death is a harrowing of hell. But they remained. The following day, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus arranged for the tomb where his body could be laid.

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<sup>581</sup> Hans Urs von Balthazar, *Explorations in Theology: Spirit and Institution*, Vol. 4 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 436.

<sup>582</sup> John 19:25-27

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom.<sup>583</sup>

They took the courage to speak to the authorities and took responsibility to secure the place and handle practical concerns. They took the risk of being identified with Jesus because they believed in him. It was a harrowing of hell for both.

### **Trauma and the Creation of *Communitas***

Witnesses to trauma encounter both human vulnerability but also, it's capacity for evil.<sup>584</sup> Between these two options, one cannot simply remain neutral but pushed to take sides. By being silent and doing nothing, one decides to take the side of the perpetrator who appeals for us to “see, hear, and to speak no evil.”

The victim, on the contrary, asks the bystander to share the burden of pain. The victim demands action, engagement, and remembering... To hold traumatic reality in consciousness requires a social context that affirms and protects the victim and that joins the victim and witness in a common alliance.<sup>585</sup>

To witness for the victims is an ongoing relationship with a three-fold task.<sup>586</sup>

Since violence and pain disrupts the bodily integrity of victims and survivors, the first is

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<sup>583</sup> John 19, 38-40

<sup>584</sup> Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 4.

<sup>585</sup> Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 4,

<sup>586</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 155.

to ensure the survivor's safety both physically and psychologically. It is in such an environment that the rupture of time is healed through facilitating memory work through remembrance and mourning. When such a process is achieved, the third step is their reconnection and reintegration into ordinary life. It also demands that they to give voice to their trauma and suffering in the political space and to ensure that justice is served. To attend to the individual victim is taking the role of John and Mary at the foot of the cross. To attend to the sociopolitical space alludes to what Joseph and Nicodemus did when they handled the practical concerns that ensure Jesus' body is buried; where new life could take place.

Traumatic events disrupt the relationship between survivors and victims with others. Separated from reality, they experience being at the 'threshold,' a 'liminal phase' where *communitas* is formed and with whom their self-esteem, trust, and confidence in the world may be renewed.<sup>587</sup> *Communitas*, from the Latin noun that denotes an unstructured community, also means an experience of communal spirit and oneness. Differentiated from a geographical or organized community, or between a secular and a sacred entity, *communitas* provide victims protection from further traumatization and eventual despair.<sup>588</sup> As trauma dehumanizes the victim, *communitas* restores their humanity.<sup>589</sup> From being "shamed and stigmatized' in society, *communitas* accompany

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<sup>587</sup> It was Victor Turner who developed the concept of liminality from Van Gennep's concept of rite of passage in which people go through three stages when experiencing change in status or relationships – separation, margin, and aggregation. Turner developed the second stage – margin, which comes from the word *lumen* or threshold.

<sup>588</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 153.

<sup>589</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 154.



them through communal healing and an experience of solidarity with people who join them in their struggle.

### **EJK (Extrajudicial Killings) and *Communitas***

In the Diocese of Novaliches, a comprehensive program in response to the war on drugs was launched in December of 2016 after an organized summit which included all stakeholders - Philippine National Police, Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, city government representatives, and representatives of all parishes.<sup>590</sup> The assembly provided information on the issue of drug addiction and the drug trade as well as the many ways by which support can be provided to them. Ninety-four percent of the diocese were affected by the war on drugs and only 8 out of 142 *barangays* did not experience arrests and killings in the neighborhood. The diocesan program reaches out to drug dependents that have surrendered through a rehabilitation process that involves a drug recovery program for them (patient care), a family intervention program for their families (family care), as well as a community care program that aims to make the community the center of healing and protection especially for drug dependents and their families. The program adopts a community-based approach also proposed by Filipino psychologists<sup>591</sup> and is replicated in other dioceses.<sup>592</sup> As the number of extrajudicial deaths was accumulating, some dioceses expanded family care to include left-behind families of victims.

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<sup>590</sup> Diocese of Novaliches, Summit Meeting on Church's Response to War on Drugs Documentation Report. Accessed July 23, 2019. <https://novalichesdiocese.org/summit-meeting-on-churchs-response-to-war-on-drugs-documentation-report/>

<sup>591</sup> Ma. Regina Hechanova and others, "The Development of a Community-based Drug Intervention for Filipino Drug Users," *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology* 12, e12 (2018):1-10.

<sup>592</sup> *Sanlakbay* is short for One Journey. See Caritas Manila <https://caritasmanila.org.ph/manila-archdioceses-community-based-rehabilitation-program-to-be-launched-sunday/>. *Salubong* means to encounter and is an Easter Filipino ritual in which the image of Mary encounters the Risen Jesus who lifts

*Communitas* of EJK survivors are created through collaborative efforts by like-minded entities, professionals, and community-based groups.<sup>593</sup> It has facilitated interfaith and ecumenical endeavors, partnerships between NGOs and church-based organizations, as well as networking within the Catholic church.<sup>594</sup> Many NGOs automatically responded to victims' needs as it reflected their organization's vision and mission.<sup>595</sup> Some institutions were established after identifying a *lacuna* in the services being offered to victims. The fight for their rights, for instance, has encouraged many law firms to extend services *pro bono* and create partnerships with church groups.<sup>596</sup> There are various initiatives on areas such as "awareness-raising and education," "documentation, monitoring, and database (litigation and storified/simple documentation)," "drug awareness, rehabilitation and counseling," "financial support, burial support, and livelihood program," "forensic services, legal support, partnerships and organizing the protection of human rights," and "psychosocial and medical support."<sup>597</sup>

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her veil of mourning. See Diocese of Novaliches <https://dioceseofkalookan.ph/pastoral-program/salubong-rehabilitation-program-for-drug-defendants/>

<sup>593</sup> EJK is acronym for extrajudicial killings. The acronym is commonly used to refer victims of the war on drugs.

<sup>594</sup> Fieldwork Notes, Manila, February 26, 2019.

<sup>595</sup> Fieldwork Notes, Manila, February 26, 2019.

<sup>596</sup> Legal groups like the IDEALS and FLAGS are lawyers that have offered help in handling legal documentation and litigation processes for EJK survivors. IDEALS have entered partnership with dioceses such as the Diocese of Novaliches to go to the parishes and interview EJK survivors. The experience in the parishes have also made them aware of other needs that need to be attended to such as the processing of legal documents like birth certificate, marriage contract, land titles, etc. which urban poor settlers always have problems obtaining.

<sup>597</sup> Eloisa Lopez, "A Different *Undas*: Remembering the victims of the drug war," *Rappler* October 31, 2017, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/features/186897-different-undas-remembrance-victims-drug-war-sampaloc>.

The following pages present three of these *communitas*. Two of these are parish communities – Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and *Ina ng Lupang Pangako* (Our Lady of the Promised Land) Parish both part of the Diocese of Novaliches. The third group is AJ *Kalinga* – Program *Paghilom*, an initiative from a religious congregation that serves survivors from different communities. The chapter will present some information about the history and social location of each *communita* and will highlight their best practices as well as challenges in responding to the needs of left-behind families of the victims of extrajudicial killings (EJK).

### **A Praxis Model: Our Lady of Lourdes Parish/Camarin**

As a sub parish of Our Lady of Fatima Parish, the community was first assigned to the sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (ICM).<sup>598</sup> Through them, a multi-purpose hall was constructed, which served as a chapel and a venue for pastoral ministry. At that time, the sisters facilitated the growth of community leaders and raised awareness and involvement in sociopolitical issues. When it became a parish in 1996 under the leadership of the Jesuits, they continued this vision alongside the formation of basic ecclesial communities. At one point in the community's history, they were challenged to act when the government planned to establish the area as a dumping site for Metro Manila. With the guidance of the missionaries, the community successfully lobbied and protested the plan, which resulted in the government deciding for another area. This spirit

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<sup>598</sup> Aside from the information from the website, majority of the data presented have been obtained from the interview conducted with the parish priest and a pastoral worker involved in the project. Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, <https://novalichesdiocese.org/parishes/ollp/> Diocese of Novaliches, The Official Website of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Novaliches, accessed July 30, 2019, <https://novalichesdiocese.org/parishes/inlpp/>.

of collective discernment, engagement in sociopolitical issues, as well as organized protests, are embedded in the culture of this community.<sup>599</sup> It comes as no surprise for the community to be the first to respond when the war on drug campaign exploded.

### **Communal Discernment and Collective Action**

Confronting traumatic events, such as the phenomenon of EJK, can be challenging. Groups can either “inflare the situation by escalating anxiety (through name-calling, rushing to judgment and blame, using us/them dichotomies, labeling dissenting views, or withholding or misrepresenting the facts)” or they could choose to “decrease anxiety and facilitate healing by opening channels of communication among all parties involved.”<sup>600</sup> The community took the courage to take a stand as a witness that listened to the stories of individuals, to the reality of drugs, and the government plan of action. Through a communal discernment process, the parish council together with the parish priest created two separate programs that responded to one reality.

The need for an urgent response to the war on drugs grew as the number of killings was happening within the parish and families themselves sought the help of the parish. Wives and mothers of drug addicts and drug personalities who confess to their involvement in drugs sought the advice of the parish lay leaders. The concern was taken up in the parish council meeting with the parish priest together with the lay leaders as they listened to one another’s views and perspectives regarding the issue. To do so, they listened to people’s stories and questions as well as the bigger picture with neighboring

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<sup>599</sup> Interview, Luciano Felloni, Camarin, March 28, 2019.

<sup>600</sup> Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, “Bearing the Unbearable: Trauma, Gospel and Pastoral Care,” *Theology Today* 68 no. 1 (April 2011): 23-24, doi:10.1177/0040573610394922.

parishes and other urban dioceses. They also initiated dialogue with government stakeholders to understand their perspective and the concrete plan of action at the local level. From here, they discovered that most of the government offices involved in the campaign did not have any concrete plans for the drug dependents who surrendered. While they agreed that they were one with the government in its desire to eradicate drug addiction, they were not in favor of the scheme of killing people.

After having understood the problem, they clarified and agreed on the principles and values that will inform their course of action. First, as a community, they give their full support to the government campaign against drugs. They see the wisdom behind the move to eradicate drugs since they see many families affected by this for generations. Second, they commit to protecting life. This draws the line between the government campaign and the church's stand. Confirmed by their Christian belief for the dignity and sanctity of life, they vowed to create a program that will guard their people's lives at all costs. Third, they also committed to being proactive in their participation to find solutions for the problem. This third principle hinges on the church being a "voice of dissent," yet creating various forms of resistance that may range from indifference to reactionary strategies of creating rituals or one-time activities for the victims.<sup>601</sup>

The process is reflective of a praxis (reflective action) model of contextual theology developed in part through the Latin American experience of basic ecclesial communities.<sup>602</sup> As a way of doing theology through knowledge derived from reflective

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<sup>601</sup> Adam Willis, "Church vs. State," VQR: A National Journal of Literature and Discussion. Vol. 95, 3 (Fall 2019), accessed October 24, 2019, <https://www.vqronline.org/reporting-articles/2019/06/church-vs-state>.

<sup>602</sup> The term praxis is rooted in Marxism and was popularized by Paulo Freire. Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2016), 71.

action, the praxis model is about discerning the meaning of action to find out what can lead to social transformation.”<sup>603</sup> In this way, the community leader or minister takes the role of a “midwife” that is, giving birth to a new praxis by facilitating the dialogue between life issues and tradition, by accompanying them towards a clearer articulation of their goals, and by organizing them towards collective action.<sup>604</sup>

The communal discernment produced two separate programs. First, they realized that the program will not be effective unless they reach out to the real victims of the war: the drug users. Working from the principles they committed to embodying, they developed a program for drug users solely relying on *kutob* or plain “intuition;” since no one among them was skilled in the area of drug rehabilitation.<sup>605</sup> They agreed that though the psychosocial intervention was important, it should also have a spiritual component. They also need provisions for livelihood as well as providing for the family’s daily needs and medical concerns. After underlining the basic components of the program, they designed the structure of their community-based rehabilitation program; the first one developed in the country as an immediate response to the war on drugs.<sup>606</sup>

For those who had to surrender, the parish needed to work with government officials and agencies. They first approached the *barangay* captain who responded positively to the idea. Since *barangay* captains were given the task to present a drug

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<sup>603</sup> Bevens, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 70-72.

<sup>604</sup> Bevens, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 75-76.

<sup>605</sup> The word used was *kutob*, which suggests a listening to the senses. Interview, Luciano Felloni, March 28, 2019.

<sup>606</sup> The parish drug rehabilitation program of Camarin was the first one in the country. Since its first batch the parish has opened its doors to people from other parishes. Success stories of drug dependents who attended the program have been published in many articles and new stories. See Krixia Subingsubing, “Caloocan drug rehab program gives former users new hope,” *Inquirer.net*, December 25, 2017, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/954956/calooacan-drug-rehab-program-gives-former-users-new-hope>.

watch list to the police, he felt ambivalent responding to the task. On the one hand, creating a list would put the people in danger of being killed. However, he also knew that he would be tagged as a protector if he did not comply with the task. Through the parish collaboration, he was assured that people will be protected and they will get the support they need.

To get mass support for the protection and safety of all people who were willing to surrender, the parish organized a mass surrender with all stakeholders in attendance - the bishop and the diocesan curia, major media outfits, the city government officials - mayor and vice mayor, the congressman, the barangay council. The interview conducted by a TV news station with the parish priest informed people especially parishioners about the said event. From this call for mass support, the parish community also received assurance from all the entities involved. The city government pledged assistance for the program by providing for the weekly drug test including a psychologist and a medical doctor. Though it was difficult at first to get the Philippine National Police and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency to work with them, the parish persisted as they knew that without their support, it will not succeed.

Attending to the need for a smooth turnover or surrender of the drug personalities to authorities, the parish was also able to convince the police that their BEC leaders should take the responsibility to facilitate the surrender. This proved to be successful in turning over the men who were on the drug watch list. However, it was also a new role that the BEC leaders and they needed to prepare for the task at hand. Zeny, one of the BEC leaders interviewed, shared how that though those days were frightening for them, their courage to fight for their neighbors fostered unity and developed the community

spirit among leaders and members needed to accomplish the task.<sup>607</sup> The BEC mothers took turns in picking up the drug personalities so they could attend the sessions. They also sought the help of other members of the community to protect them from possible harm while they were accompanying the men. Aware of the risks involved, a temporary shelter was established within the parish compound after facilitating the turnover of the men to the program. They also made sure that parishioners were aware of the program since, without any protection, anyone can be killed.<sup>608</sup>

The second program sought to respond to the needs of the growing number of families of victims. Since most of the victims were breadwinners and whose death orphaned many children who were left behind to a grandmother or a mother who is jobless and has no means to sustain the family, their various concerns needed attention. From immediate needs such as expenses to retrieve the body from the pseudo-funeral homes,<sup>609</sup> victims needed help for food, education for the children, psychosocial assistance to deal with trauma as well as legal assistance. As these needs were clarified, they also developed a program for the families.<sup>610</sup>

By responding to some of the root causes, the community recognized the power to frame and interpret the trauma as a social phenomenon. Studies on trauma have attested to the individual and communal impact of traumatic events and the vicarious traumatization that is experienced by people and groups ministering to traumatized

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<sup>607</sup> Interview, Zeny, Camarin, May 15, 2019.

<sup>608</sup> Interview, Luciano Felloni, Camarin, March 28, 2019.

<sup>609</sup> The economy of the drug war included funeral homes managed in coordination with police authorities that charged exorbitant fees to the families of victims which included the fees to recover the body, expenses for the coffin, the interment and funeral expenses.

<sup>610</sup> Interview, Luciano Felloni, Camarin, March 28, 2019.



populations. In this respect, an analysis of the “multiaxial models of suffering,” is helpful; one that looks at the multiple levels and the conflation of violence that exists in society.<sup>611</sup> The experience of poverty, for instance, and the lack of opportunities in urban poor communities have created a conflation with otherness that has become the defining narrative of the war on drugs.

### **The Parish as a Healing Community**

Though there was a group for left-behind families of victims of extrajudicial killings at the onset of the program, the parish council knew that the best pathway for healing and transformation is the parish; a home in which members, despite their stories of sin, belong.

To launch the two programs, the parish organized a Unity Walk for a drug free neighborhood and to raise awareness for a concerted effort of all members of the community. At first, the parish priest wasn’t agreeable to having this, but the lay leaders insisted, and he realized that it was a wise move. People came. The barangay officials, senior citizens, school alumni, faculty, and personnel from the government university and the various ministries of the parish together with the police, the recovering drug dependents and their families. The rally for a drug free neighborhood encouraged people’s participation and involvement in the program.

EJK members, as well as recovering drug users, were integrated into the parish life. They were invited to share their stories in the BEC meetings and participate in activities where their gifts and talents are utilized. They knew that it was the only way to

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<sup>611</sup> Paul Farmer, “On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below,” in *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, Vol. 3, no. 1 (Autumn 2009): 20.

remove the stigma of being branded as EJK families. Aside from being welcomed in the BEC, they were also invited to programs and ministries that connected with their needs like membership in the Handmaids of the Lord for the widows and mothers, participation in the Parish Renewal Experience (PREX), and involvement in liturgical ministries. Some of them became choir members or were tasked to decorate the church on special occasions. Since some of them were painters and construction workers, they were also hired to handle church repairs.

The parish sought to dialogue and to work in partnership with the government agencies involved in the war on drugs even if the government insisted on the separation between church and state. Their proactive stance allowed them to find effective solutions to the war on drugs as it also challenged the government plan of action. Without leaving behind the principles they are rooted in, and aware of the gifts and strengths they possess as a community, they also created alliances with those with resources that can help develop a community-based rehabilitation program.

### **Between Witnessing and Attending to Wounds that Remain**

The parish commemorates the death anniversary of all victims of extrajudicial killings during their parish anniversary on October 7. Pictures of victims of extrajudicial killings are displayed in the parish and a special prayer is offered for them throughout the day. Redeeming memories is essential in creating a culture of praxis in suffering.

Collective memory is not only important in commemorating the traumatic event but also

in creating a “counter-memory” against the “slipperiness of the individual memory;” and to combat the tendency towards collective forgetting or collective denial.<sup>612</sup>

The Filipino spirit of *damayan* or to bear with one another’s pain enfleashes this spirit of remaining.<sup>613</sup> Though one is called to *dama*, to feel with, the other root word *damay*, expresses that feeling and sensing with to transcend towards, to be one, physically in the pain and the struggle, but also in the process of healing and transformation. Many times, *damayan* is only expressed in the level of *pakikidama*, feeling with but *damayan* is a painful and long struggle that many cannot handle.

The parish community, however, sees patterns of denial and forgetting. After two years into the program, lay leaders observed that activities have normalized; that means, business as usual.<sup>614</sup> Though the drug recovery program continues, it is now handled by the diocese. Though their pioneering efforts have paved the way to a community-based drug rehabilitation program that tapped into the gifts and skills of the parish community, it has now developed into a full-blown program that does not only serve their parishioners but drug dependents from different parishes. The sessions are now handled by professionals and though some parish lay leaders are still involved, it is run separately from the parish. The support for EJK families is now centralized in the diocese which relies on sporadic sponsors or professional assistance.

The families of victims are supported but with the program handled directly by the diocese, assistance is only extended depending on the available resources provided by

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<sup>612</sup> Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University, 2004), 22.

<sup>613</sup> Estela Padilla, “BEC Spirituality,” *CBCP BEC Cyber Office*, accessed October 10, 2019, <http://cbcpbec.com/?s=bec+spirituality>.

<sup>614</sup> Interview, Zeny and Cecille, Camarin, May 15, 2019.

the diocese. Of the forty families who participated at the onset of the program, only twenty families are provided regular support not by the parish but by an NGO. Only a handful of the orphans are given a scholarship and educational assistance. The coordinators lament that though they could still ask to receive help from the parish for the needs of the families, it was not the same as before since funds have decreased through the years.<sup>615</sup> Nevertheless, lay leaders especially those involved in the BECs, extend help as much as they can.

Once a grandmother who was taking care of her grandchildren left behind by their parents who were killed, asked me for rice because they had nothing to eat. I went to the parish to ask for the usual rice subsidy given to indigents. There was none left at that time. But looking at the grandmother who had mouths to feed and who could barely make it on her own, I must give what I have. I feel to give even my last penny because for people like them, there is no one else they could run to. We cannot say no to them.<sup>616</sup>

At the time of the interview, the lay leaders have been meeting to put up a rice subsidy program for the families, but plans are still underway. They could not expect help from the social action ministries, and they feel they are the only ones who are aware of and involved with the issue.

They realize the need to create awareness by telling the story and documenting their efforts because “it will be our proof that it happened.”<sup>617</sup> Two years after being

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<sup>615</sup> When the two programs started, the parish community received support from various organizations and individuals. Assistance is now provided from the diocese and is limited to what is given by benefactors from time to time.

<sup>616</sup> Interview, Leslie, Caloocan City, May 15, 2019.

<sup>617</sup> Interview, Leslie, Caloocan City, May 15, 2019.

known as the parish that began a concrete program against the war on drugs, people seemed to have moved on and have forgotten. The parish has also failed to document the process especially the rituals of actions in which many people participated. They confess that those in charge hesitate to upload photos and document any program related to the victims of the war on drugs. When they were asked why, the team did not hesitate to say, “because we are pro-president.”<sup>618</sup> This also implies wounds that have not been addressed.

Prophetic pastoral care in the aftermath of trauma is not only impactful in assisting the victims and their families towards healing. It also works toward a communal reconstruction of meaning from the experience of trauma.<sup>619</sup> As a “sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink amid their journey,” the parish is a place for trauma survivors to take refuge.<sup>620</sup> However, as the experience of the community during trauma has shown, there are continuing challenges in communion and participation. It requires an understanding of trauma as a collective, communal experience; that one is never a mere spectator to suffering. Various kinds of trauma – cumulative (multiple, co-occurring, and accumulating), mass (natural calamities, war, ethnic conflicts), complex, chronic, and compounded (referring to posttraumatic stress disorder among refugees, veterans, and communities) exist in communities.<sup>621</sup>

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<sup>618</sup> Interview, Leslie, Caloocan City, May 15, 2019.

<sup>619</sup> Michelle Walsh, *Prophetic Pastoral Care in the Aftermath of Trauma: Forging a Constructive Practical Theology of Lived Religion from Organized Trauma Response Ministries* (Ph.D. Diss, Boston University, 2014), 62-194.

<sup>620</sup> Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 28.

<sup>621</sup> Gabriela Lopez-Zeron and Jose Ruben Parra-Cardona, “Elements of Change across Community-based Trauma Interventions,” *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 34, no. 3 (2015): 62.

Parish communities need to admit to themselves their complicity to the structural sins that have inflicted violence and trauma on people. Taking the poor and oppressed as “pathological victims,” who need to be accompanied to normalcy perpetrates their stigmatization.<sup>622</sup> The “safe reading of the tradition from their dangerous presence and dangerous memories” contributes to maintaining their position of “others” and does not enable the full embrace of the *kapwa* in the dangerous memories of today.

The tension between remaining in the peripheries where the passage between death and life is a daily event, or to acquire the proficiency and expertise needed to provide services, is a constant challenge for ministry. On the one hand, the church does not have the means to sustain professionals serving in the ministry. The spirit of volunteerism and the need to foster networking allows the Spirit to flow and recreate. However, for people of the Holy Saturday, what remains is a wound that requires holistic care. Aside from caring for their healing is attending to the communal impact suggested by these wounds. The silent screams that are not heard can eventually be morally injurious to the community; it consumes and morphs into other forms if not attended to. The web of the living dead will recreate perpetrators and victims unless there is a spirit of remaining; to examine beyond the marks and scars and to see through the wounds. These are resurrection wounds referred to in the posttraumatic reading of the resurrection narratives which are “wounds that begin to surface on the living after their encounters with the dead.”<sup>623</sup> But these wounds need a spirit of remaining for healing to truly take

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<sup>622</sup> R. Ruard Ganzevoort, “Scars and Stigmata: Trauma, Identity, and Theology,” *Practical Theology* 1, no.1 (2008): 30.

<sup>623</sup> Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds*, 12.

place. The story of the doubting Thomas explored through the lens of trauma, is not about Thomas' disbelief, but about his experience of trauma and about Jesus who has risen but with wounds to show. In Caravaggio's interpretation of the story, Thomas' finger touching the wounds of Jesus is painful to even look at.<sup>624</sup> Perhaps this is what it means to remain.

### **A Community Model: *Ina Ng Lupang Pangako* Parish**

This parish is in *Barangay* Payatas B, close to an open dumpsite and the La Mesa Dam, a water resource for Metro Manila.<sup>625</sup> Despite the hazardous living condition, thousands of city migrants reside in this place. Illegal dwellers from different parts of the metropolis were also forced to reside in this area even though it was not an official relocation site of the government. The first residents named the place *Lupang Pangako* (Promised Land) despite having no electricity or potable water ready for them. Soon after, the Catholic Church took notice and assigned the site to a religious congregation and purchased an area, which will then be the site of the parish and rectory. In 1991, the parish was turned over to the management of Vincentian Missionaries. Since then, the parish population has grown and has developed six satellite chapels to be able to reach out to its parishioners. A “dual community model” of parish ministry in which community-based approaches and center-based organizing are both used. Various rehabilitation programs have been offered for the different needs of the residents.

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<sup>624</sup> Rambo has explored Caravaggio's interpretation of the story of Thomas in her book *Resurrecting Wounds*.

<sup>625</sup> *Ina ng Lupang Pangako*, Diocese of Novaliches, accessed July 30, 2019, <https://novalichesdiocese.org/parishes/inlpp/>

Likewise, a social development foundation was also established to empower community residents to become self-reliant.

### **Listening to the Cry for Community**

Though sporadic killings in the neighborhood have been happening in the past, the pastoral team was confronted by the problem when deaths which began by July of 2016 rose to about 4-5 a week. When families of victims sought the help of the parish, they immediately provided funeral assistance, food, and other needs, which by the end of the year, reached a total of 20 families. In January of 2017, the parish organized a meeting with them to listen to their stories and to find out how to continually assist them. A team was organized composed of four missionaries including the parish priest and his assistant and two other brother priests who were already engaged in the parish on weekends – the dean of their school of theology and a trained psychologist.

In their initial meeting with the EJK families, they were surprised by what the families asked from them. It wasn't the need for food or livelihood that was foremost in their minds. The widows and mothers requested for a regular meeting, twice a month, where they can meet and receive support from one another. The meetings, which were held on Saturday mornings were initially unstructured but as they began to identify other concerns and needs and clarified the goals and objectives of the group, a structure eventually developed, and responsibilities were divided among the pastoral team members to handle. Three objectives were identified namely: to assist the families of victims of extrajudicial killings in their recovery by "providing psychosocial interventions and treatments that will respond to their economic needs, their quest for justice, and their desire to be healed from the trauma brought about by the tragic death of



their loved so that they may learn better ways of coping with the challenges of new life situations.”<sup>626</sup>

The regular biweekly Saturday meetings are key to the project’s continuance and group life. In the first months of the group, the meetings were more psychospiritual providing a space for the families to share their grief, their fears, and anxieties. Owing to their precarious situation, the women had trust issues they needed to overcome.<sup>627</sup> As this was a key aspect, the team provided for spaces where they could share their stories and express their feelings.

We just met and they were always painful meetings. We also didn’t know what we should be doing with the group. But we always started with sharing or with a mass where people will share. That simple. If one or two will share, the rest will not able to share anymore because we will just end up crying the whole time. It wasn’t easy for them to share their stories. But once they start sharing, they find it difficult to stop. Some, however, are just there quiet for months, staring blankly. That kind of open sharing went on for two months.<sup>628</sup>

Unlike other groups that rely on professional intervention programs to accompany its members, the community is rooted in the elements that build up a *communio – liturgia* (worship), *kerygma* (faith formation), *koinonia* (fellowship), and *diakonia* (service/mission). Developing organically from out of the experience of its members, the community is shaped according to the needs, gifts, and interests of its members.

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<sup>626</sup> SOW: Support for Orphans and Widows. The Saint Vincent School of Theology website, accessed July 30, 2019, <http://www.svst.edu.ph/project-sow.html>.

<sup>627</sup> Interview, Cindy, Cainta, January 10, 2019.

<sup>628</sup> Interview, Danny Pilario, Quezon City, February 13, 2019.

The key to the group's development is creating spaces for their stories. Retelling their story is a process of empowerment. It allows them to cry, to clarify, to own their past, and to find meaning for it in the present. It must be noted how stories of traumatic events disrupt the normal flow of stories having a beginning, a middle, and an ending. In the stories of victims and survivors of extrajudicial killings, there is no clear ending. The truth is never ascertained even from them. Especially for stories that were 'unwitnessed,' accounts are provided from "fragments of police and media reports, which may be exaggerated and distorted by vivid, private fantasy;" in other words, their stories don't register as real.<sup>629</sup> For instance, during interviews, some data about the incidence of death of their loved ones appear to have a common story line. Like many of them talk about the killers coming from members of another religion; that they are given that task to kill because their religion allows them to do it. It turns out that the peace and order officer assigned in the area who helps the police in the operations is a member of that religious group.

Stories of survivors include secondary stories – stories of remorse, of retaliation, and protection, which are told because they want to "make the dying unhappen."<sup>630</sup> A mother shares her story of remorse as she recalled how she failed to discipline her son - "If only I was more strict with him when he went out with his gangmates; I wish I was the one who died first."<sup>631</sup> A wife, who lost her husband expresses her anger to the perpetrators as she voiced out a desire to retaliate and take revenge - "They only wanted

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<sup>629</sup> E.K. Rynaerson and Fanny Correa, *To Violent Dying: A Guide to Restorative Retelling and Support* (Violent Bereavement Society, July 2008), 5, [http://www.vdbs.org/docs/ATVDENGLISH\\_JUN2013.doc](http://www.vdbs.org/docs/ATVDENGLISH_JUN2013.doc), 7.

<sup>630</sup> Rynaerson and Correa, *To Violent Dying*, 8.

<sup>631</sup> Interview, Gina, Tayuman, March 5, 2019.

to get their promotion that's why they killed my husband; I will get back at them.”<sup>632</sup>

Faced with the fear of being haunted by the killers, one also speaks of an incessant need to protect her loved ones – “My children can't leave the house now without me; I will not allow the same thing to happen to them.”<sup>633</sup>

Such secondary stories may manifest a “disordered imagination,” very similar to the accounts of stories the disciples of Emmaus were sharing as they moved away from Jerusalem.<sup>634</sup> A community-based approach to trauma processes these stories as life emerges before them as a community. Like the disciples at Emmaus, who were coming out of trauma and who failed to recognize Jesus at first, the survivors experience the grace of God's presence, walking and listening to them, teaching them, breaking bread with them and inspiring them to go back to the mainstream of life.

As the members grew in relationship with one another, the team also developed as a community. Aside from planning for the next activities, they divided other tasks among themselves. The Saturday meetings gradually developed a format. It would begin with breakfast followed by the celebration of the Eucharist. Then they have the separate sessions designed around a theme taken either from the Sunday Gospel, a special feast, or a felt need of the group. The meeting provided time for faith sharing and formation.

In their first meeting for the year, the mothers and widows shared attitudes, values, and aspirations that have changed in them in the past years as well as life concerns and personal issues they commit to fulfill for the new year. Each one

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<sup>632</sup> Interview, Elena, Bagong Silang, March 6, 2019.

<sup>633</sup> Interview, Anna, Bagong Silang, March 10, 2019.

<sup>634</sup> Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, 39.

<sup>634</sup> Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, 54.

shared openly. Some were emotional as they recalled what led them to the group; the very death of their sons or husbands. Some shared how the group has given them strength through the years since they know they can rely on each other, even if at times, there are disagreements among them. Others disclosed personal tendencies that have improved in them - of being temperamental at home, of not trusting others, of being judgmental. Two mothers also expressed that even if she still suffers from the stigma in the neighborhood because of their sons' and husbands' deaths, the group inspires them to continue as it sustains them to continually fight for their family's survival.<sup>635</sup>

The gathering culminates with lunch which is an opportunity for the members to bond and discuss other practical matters. Eventually, the sessions were also combined with business concerns especially for those who were involved in the livelihood project set up for them.<sup>636</sup>

In one of the gatherings, mothers who are taking part in the livelihood project asked for a short meeting to discuss the challenges that they are facing as a group. The members attended a two-week basic sewing class to prepare them for the job. Though it was difficult for them in the beginning, they gradually developed the skills to provide them a livelihood. After almost a year into the program, they feel

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<sup>635</sup> Fieldwork notes, Caloocan, March 2, 2019.

<sup>636</sup> The group was aware of the mothers' need for a regular source of income that they were supportive of providing them with initial capital for any small business or trade they wanted to engage in be it selling vegetables or setting up a small neighborhood store, many of which, did not prove successful. When the idea to develop a sewing shop as a livelihood project for the mothers came up, some were reluctant to engage in it because they were too old or not capable of learning a new skill. But some persevered. About five of them, at the time of the interview, were working daily and being paid the minimum wage. They create bags and other items sold wholesale to department stores and sold retail to interested individuals.

they are ready to manage the entire project with the help of a mother from the neighborhood who runs a sewing business herself and who volunteered to train them. She now assists the mothers to source for clients and to ensure the quality of their products. But they also clarified the role of the parish priest in their project and whether a dialogue might be facilitated between him and the mothers to iron out the growing tension between them.<sup>637</sup>

As cries are heard in the community, members learn to embrace each other's stories and forge a common story through their life together. During their Advent retreat, the families create their hope statement as a family articulating the new dreams and new stories they wish to embody and pursue together. Some dream of tangible things - a house they can call their own, a steady job, education for their children. But many others express a state of being that they want to fully experience – forgiveness, love, sharing, courage, trust. Individual stories, even of those that manifest wounds remaining, are accepted and embraced as part of their community journey. When one member talks and cries a lot during the time of sharing, the one beside her automatically extends her hand to pacify the person. They also build on stories shared by each one. When one person did not have a family member during the session, another family was quick to make him part of theirs. The community model reflects an anthropological model, one in which the role of the theologian or minister is that of a “reflector or thematizer,” who provides the “biblical and traditional background” so that members can understand their life stories and their community situation in a better way.<sup>638</sup>

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<sup>637</sup> Fieldwork notes, Caloocan, May 2019.

<sup>638</sup> Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 58.

## Ritualizing Trauma in the Sacred Space

The Eucharist created a common language for the members even if many of them were not practicing Catholics and some were non-Catholics. In the space of worship, they can share their stories and become witnesses and ‘testifiers’ to one another. Worship is shaped by trauma as the cry to God becomes a means to “give voice to previously unspeakable agony.”<sup>639</sup> As a reality “worthy of sustained lamentation and possible redress,” they could testify to their common history, which is no longer “hidden in a dark corner of the soul,” but “pulled into the light of day.”<sup>640</sup> As their stories are expressed in rituals through words, symbols, and images, testifying and witnessing becomes prayer.<sup>641</sup>

The early Christian communities, as a political body, had practices that reflect Christian beliefs and ethical stand. They were tactical communities; as their practices were the early Christians’ way not only to survive the prevailing oppression but also to live in the light of faith. Fraternal admonition, for instance, which was expressed in terms of practices of “binding and loosing (Matthew 18:18),” reflects “forgiveness and moral discernment.”<sup>642</sup> Practices of solidarity uplift the “universality of charisma,” and the equality of all.<sup>643</sup> They celebrated the Eucharist, seen as a meal, as an embodiment of their vision as a people, to experience liberation in Jesus. The practices and the very act of meeting together was a sign of resistance to the ruling powers.

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<sup>639</sup> Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, 54.

<sup>640</sup> Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, 54.

<sup>641</sup> Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, 54.

<sup>642</sup> John Howard Yoder, “Sacrament as Social Process,” in *An Eerdmans Reader in Contemporary Political Theology*, ed. William Cavanaugh and others (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 650.

<sup>643</sup> Yoder, “Sacrament as Social Process,” 645.

As the Christian story itself is rooted in a traumatic event, it is powerful to witness how the Eucharist can become a transforming space of encounter for the traumatized. For the disciples, Jesus' crucifixion was a major crisis that disrupted their lives and shattered their vision as a community. From the time Jesus was arrested and tried, until his death, many of them feared for their lives. It left them disillusioned, lost, and traumatized. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection and the experience of the early church redefine our present traumas. However, ritualizing trauma challenges our communal way of praying. Some scholars argue how the emphasis given to pre-crucifixion meals in theological scholarship and ecclesial practice indicate the "mode of denial" in the Christian tradition "both of Jesus' death and the difference it makes."<sup>644</sup> They suggest that since the traumatic event of Jesus' death was not faced and remained "unexamined in sacramental practice," that the narrative of the trauma embedded in the story ought to be interpreted and recovered as trauma to engage people's own stories and transform a society that is affected by trauma.<sup>645</sup> Using trauma theory as a lens acknowledges that "mourning, in the mode of lament," as well as the "claiming of resistance and honoring what one did to survive," is integral in sacramental remembrance.<sup>646</sup> Even the Sacrament of Baptism which has become a "symbol of tenderness and enjoyment in celebrating new life," is rooted in the experience of "drowning in the sea of chaos and darkness."<sup>647</sup>

Reinterpreting Sacraments through the lens of trauma may respond to the needs of

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<sup>644</sup> Christopher Grundy, "The Grace of Resilience: Eucharistic Origins, Trauma Theory, and Implications for Contemporary Practice," *Proceedings: North American Academy of Liturgy Annual Meeting* San Diego California January 5-8, 2006, ed. Joyce Ann Zimmerman (Notre Dame: North American Academy of Liturgy, 2006), 151.

<sup>645</sup> Grundy, "The Grace of Resilience," 153.

<sup>646</sup> Grundy, "The Grace of Resilience," 154-155.

<sup>647</sup> Ganzevoort, "Scars and Stigmata," 29.

survivors of trauma but also attend to the vicarious traumatization of the community. Various rituals and community liturgies have been developed to express the lament and mourning of survivors as well as the spirit of solidarity of communities to which they belong. There are artistic practices in the aftermath of trauma called “theopoetics of testimony and reimagining,” that can be underlined as they give voice to the pains and the yearnings of survivors.<sup>648</sup>

In the past years, there are many similar examples of groups that sequestered the ritual spaces to disturb and interrupt. The Stations of the Cross which presented photos of victims of extrajudicial killings, prepared by the Redemptorist Fathers welcomes mass goers during the *Simbang Gabi* masses amid the colorful decorations from Christmas around them. Painting of orphans, protest placards, and the yellow caution tape dividing people during a prayer rally, similarly express testimonies of witnesses. The “art of dissent,” likewise ritualizes the violence and allows people to enter the space, which is otherwise, a distant reality for many.<sup>649</sup>

### **Reconnecting and Reintegrating: Fruits and Challenges**

The project continues through the generous support of the Vincentian congregation, friends, family, and other groups both domestic and foreign. Social media connections have also enabled people from all walks of life to share their resources whenever they call for help. Other groups support through their expertise. For the legal documentation of their cases, they are assisted by a group of lawyers, who through their

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<sup>648</sup> Michelle Walsh, *Violent Trauma, Culture, and Power: An Interdisciplinary Exploration in Lived Religion* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 104.

<sup>649</sup> Amanda Lago, “The Art of Dissent in the Time of Duterte,” *Rappler*. July 3, 2018, [https://www.rappler.com/life-and-style/arts-and-culture/206120-subversive-art-duterte-administration-second-year.\\*](https://www.rappler.com/life-and-style/arts-and-culture/206120-subversive-art-duterte-administration-second-year.*)



legal expertise resulted in the first *Writ of Amparo* case against extrajudicial killings.<sup>650</sup>

Other groups come in occasionally to help facilitate sessions like capacity building, health, and wellness, as well as skills for possible job opportunities.

SOW is also a space to bridge the academe with the pastoral setting. Though many theologians in the Philippines speak out of their insertion in the struggles of people, SOW becomes a *locus* for theologizing. Many studies have been conducted from the stories of EJK orphans manifested through arts, play, music, and other forms of intervention.<sup>651</sup> But more than that, the mothers and widows and their reflections as everyday theologians and especially as theologians of trauma are heard not from the voice of professional theologians. They are re-membered in this way, as they participate in theological reflection with their stories of trauma and their embodied practices as a community.<sup>652</sup>

SOW also experiences a tension common in this experience of *communitas*. For the organizers, to remain as a community is meant to “keep the witnesses alive in the future.”<sup>653</sup> They live to tell the story and to keep the cry for justice alive. To maintain

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<sup>650</sup> The “*writ of amparo* “is a remedy available to any person whose right to life, liberty, and security is violated or threatened by an unlawful act or omission of a public official or employee, or of a private individual or entity.” Tetch Torres-Tupas,” Look: Court rules in favor of victims in first case vs Tokhang,” February 11, 2017, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/870502/look-court-rules-in-favor-of-victims-in-first-case-vs-tokhang> A.M No. 07-9-12-SC 25 September 2007 Republic of the Philippines Supreme Court. [https://www.lawphil.net/judjuris/juri2007/sep2007/am\\_07-9-12-sc\\_2007.html](https://www.lawphil.net/judjuris/juri2007/sep2007/am_07-9-12-sc_2007.html)[https://www.lawphil.net/judjuris/juri2007/sep2007/am\\_07-9-12-sc\\_2007.html](https://www.lawphil.net/judjuris/juri2007/sep2007/am_07-9-12-sc_2007.html)

<sup>651</sup> Many studies have been conducted on the impact of extrajudicial killings to orphans. See Ruel Parena, “Extrajudicial Killings in the Eye of the Children,” presented in the 2017 CEBU International Conference on Studies in Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities 17 (January 26-27, 2019). Also see Philrights, “Children and the so-called War on Drugs: Impact and Consequences,” accessed October 5, 2019, <https://www.philrights.org/children-and-the-so-called-war-on-drugs-impact-and-consequences/>

<sup>652</sup> Marie Gold Sorila and others, “Lived Experiences of EJK Victims/ Families: An Interpretative Phenomenological Study,” *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences* 4, Issue 2 (August 2018): 502-522.

<sup>653</sup> Interview, Danny Pilario, Quezon City, February 13, 2019.

this, membership within SOW is restricted to widows and mothers of victims and their orphaned children. Families who are left behind by parents arrested for drug-related activities have asked if they could be part of the group. But since no one has died in the family, they could not. Apart from the victims of the war on drugs, other parishioners also complain about the seemingly “unlimited funds” provided to this group while the rest of the community are also in need. While in some cases, the group has extended donations to other indigent families in the parish, the group remains as an exclusive community for those left behind by victims of extrajudicial killings.

While the sense of community among SOW members has deepened through the years, their reintegration into the bigger community is a continuing process. Though members have been involved in community celebrations where they are called to share their stories and where they are acknowledged as part of the community together with local public officials, members continue to feel the stigma of their presence in the neighborhood.<sup>654</sup> The trauma of EJK survivors mirrors the trauma of the entire community. As witnesses, they also have secondary stories that need reordering. Their lives mirror each other, and thus authentic healing happens when they come face to face and find healing together. Other non-church groups ministering to families realize the power that reaggregation brings both to the survivors and the entire community that they facilitate psychological first aids to victims together with their neighbors with the premise that trauma is a shared experience.<sup>655</sup> Some groups train survivors with the skills to conduct initial home visits to new victims and to facilitate documentation of their cases.

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<sup>654</sup> Fieldwork Observation, Payatas, January 19, 2019.

<sup>655</sup> Fieldwork Observation, Meeting of EJK Providers, February 26, 2019.

<sup>656</sup> The movement towards being people healed towards being advocates and prophets embodying hope through their own stories of woundedness can happen through a process of reaggregation; of going back to the community to share their new story.

### **A Synthetic/Developmental Model: *AJ Kalinga – Program Paghilom***

Program *Paghilom*, a program for families of victims of extrajudicial killings organized by the Philippine province of the Society of the Divine Word, was developed under Arnold Janssen (AJ) *KALINGA* which serves the needs of homeless and poor people.<sup>657</sup> *KALINGA* is an acronym corresponding to the basic services offered by the center: *KAin* (Eat), *Llgo* (Bathe), *Nang Ayos* (Wholeness). Hundreds of people avail of these services daily aside from the possibilities for non-formal education (Alternative Learning System) to help them complete basic education as well as basic spiritual formation and life skills. As the issue of extrajudicial killings was growing in Metro Manila, the team realized that many of AJ Kalinga beneficiaries were affected by the problem. Clarifying their vision to minister to the “last, least, and lost” they immediately extended their *KALINGA* services by creating a program to cater to the needs of families of victims.

### **Trauma Intervention in Stages**

Program *Paghilom* (Healing) was established to “recreate and empower the lives of the wounded and victims.”<sup>658</sup> It has five stages of interventions that address the different aspects of the post-traumatic scenario of victims.

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<sup>656</sup> Philrights, Focus Group Interview, February 6, 2019.

<sup>657</sup> Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center. <https://ajkalingacenter.wordpress.com/>

<sup>658</sup> AJ Kalinga, accessed March 4, 2020, <https://ajkalingacenter.wordpress.com/>.

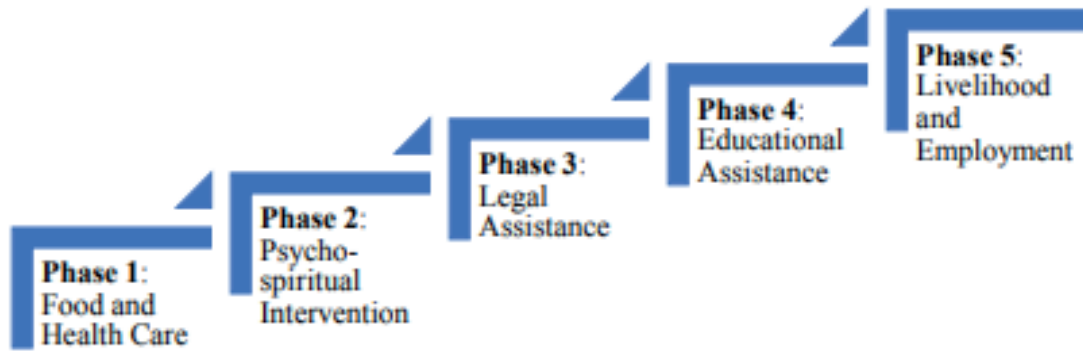


Figure 8. Paghilom Development Framework

In Phase 1, they extend all forms of assistance to members: food, medicine, clothing, and more. Whenever they attend the sessions, they are provided with a travel allowance that is enough to sustain the family for their meals for the coming days. It frees them from the burden of survival needs which often take priority over their need for healing.

For Phase 2, an initial assessment is done when a person decides to participate in the program. With the help of a psychological assessment test administered by trained psychologists, the widows, mothers, and children are provided with the appropriate program for them.

For Phase 3, a group of lawyers and their consultants, who are committed to providing free services to EJK survivors, assist *Paghilom* at this stage. The affidavit signing of some survivors and the creation of a network among church groups and other service providers of EJK families have made the filing of human rights case against the administration possible. Consequently, it also raised awareness of human rights and the need for legal education in this area of poor families and communities. Moreover, as

many of these families are undocumented, it also facilitated the creation of legal desks in communities to assist families in securing their birth and death certificates, land titles, etc.

The fourth phase is educational assistance. There are around 235 scholars among the orphans. Educational assistance is provided for allowance and a big percentage for the school fees. The scholarship is made possible through a partnership with Catholic institutions as well as through corporate and individual sponsors who have committed to assist. One of the orphans has already graduated from university. Wherever possible, the Alternative Learning System (ALS) is also provided to them.

The last phase, livelihood assistance, is handled in coordination with a religious institution, which takes the lead in establishing alliances with training centers and other organizations to equip them with skills for possible employment and source of livelihood. Examples of training provided are salon skills (manicure/pedicure foot spa) or soap making. They also provide capital to sell rice and other commodities.

Participants are expected to complete each phase before proceeding to the next phase. While many of them are assisted through the regular sessions, some are also referred for therapy or medication when there is a need.

The Program *Paghilom* continually evolves as the coordinators see the need to respond to other concerns of the families as many more groups and individuals commit to participating through their resources, their skills, and their time. Reflecting a “synthetic model” which believes that every situation has elements common with others and other

elements that are unique to the group, it is creative, dialectic, and imaginative.<sup>659</sup> Several groups have offered help in the different phases. For instance, the next batches will receive training in ANV or Active Non-Violence. After the program, participants are occasionally invited for gatherings or activities offered by different groups or by AJ Kalinga and the *Paghilom* team.<sup>660</sup>

### **Creating a Safe Space**

Trauma survivors continually suffer from symptoms of posttraumatic disorders (PTSD). They suffer from hyperarousal or persistent fear of impending danger, intrusion, or “the indelible imprint of the traumatic moment,” and constriction, which refers to the “numbing response of surrender.”<sup>661</sup> This stigma created on families of EJK victims compels them to transfer residence and to be constantly distrustful of people around them. Many of them refuse help because they no longer feel safe and secure of assistance extended even by institutions like the church.

Program *Paghilom* however, provides a place where the survivors are brought away from their community to be with people coming from different locations but have a common denominator among them. The safe physical space removes inhibitions and fears and allows the survivor to share their traumatic experience with companions. From being closed in on themselves, they begin to open to people who share their stories.

A safe space is a “holding environment” in which survivors can feel the basic nurturance they need to share their stories. Such a space highlights the survivors and the

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<sup>659</sup> Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 89-90.

<sup>660</sup> Euden Valdez, “Loved ones of deceased drug war victims are finding healing in hiking,” *Philstar Global*, July 19, 2019, <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2019/07/19/1935812/loved-ones-deceased-drug-war-victims-are-finding-healing-hiking>.

<sup>661</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 26.

community as both a witness and a testifier. First, they need to be able to tell their story. Second, “a third-party presence” a “witness” needs to be present to receive the story. Third, together they weave a new story which does not mean to leave the past behind but to retell the story that reestablishes their agency and fosters hope among them.<sup>662</sup> Many times, because of their situation, it is not easy for them to see the place as a safe space. The group invites people, to see for themselves and they can decide at their own pace when they wish to join.

I remember a boy who saw a police officer killing his father. He came here very distraught and staring blankly. He was very quiet and fearful. I told him, ‘would you like to have a look at what is happening inside?’ He said, ‘what is it?’ I said, ‘they can be your companions because you all share the same story.’ We did not give up inviting him to come. After a month, he decided to join. On the fourth Saturday, he volunteered to handle IDs and to do the roll call. Now, he continues to volunteer for other tasks even after he has completed the program.<sup>663</sup>

The safe space is not just a physical space but an environment of security and support that is needed to weave a new story. For some participants, it is already a big risk to attend the sessions because they are monitored by the police or by the killers themselves. For people like them, *Paghilom* also facilitates providing sanctuaries to those who need extra protection, especially for serious and strong cases.<sup>664</sup> Many of them have transferred

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<sup>662</sup> Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World* (Louisville: Westminster Knox, 2019), 32.

<sup>663</sup> Interview, Flavie Villanueva, Tayuman, February 21, 2019.

<sup>664</sup> At the time of the fieldwork and interviews, *Paghilom* has granted sanctuaries to five of its participants with the help of religious congregations. The Catholic Church has played this important role of providing asylums and sanctuaries to illegal immigrants, refugees, and victims of violence in different places torn by wars and continuing conflicts manifesting church teachings on human rights and dignity of

residence and at least five were provided sanctuaries by *Paghilom*. A mother who was one of the first ones to be granted a sanctuary now helps as a volunteer at the center and is also part of a group that produces rosaries.

I was so afraid when I first came to the *Paghilom* session. I felt the police were just waiting for me outside the building to arrest me. But since my family and I was able to stay in a convent away from our neighborhood, my children and I feel more secure now. Since I don't fear for our physical safety, I have the courage and confidence to work to secure my family's needs. When I am more financially capable, I will find a new place for us.<sup>665</sup>

Trained community counselors facilitate psycho-spiritual intervention and guide a group of participants for counseling and processing. Another group is assigned to handle the children by providing parallel sessions that are kid-friendly in which they make use of arts, music, and play therapy. During a session on grief which clearly showed the posttraumatic stress that the women are still going through, various approaches were employed to help them express and embody their feelings to find healing. A simple breathing exercise, for instance, led them to share their stresses during the past week and the pressures of life they are confronted with. Many of them could immediately connect their breath with their loved ones and the last moments they shared with them. Though

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life. These values were later reflected in state laws through the granting of political asylums. But in recent years, providing sanctuaries in response to victims of sociopolitical issues in society has been done in defiance of laws that restrict freedom and rights of victims. Linda Rabben, *Sanctuary and Asylum: A Social and Political History* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2016), 36-37. In the Philippines, the Association of Major Religious Superiors (AMRSP) has been helpful in aiding victims and survivors on this. However, when the national leadership filed sedition cases to some of its members, the religious congregations that were once willing to help, withdrew for fear of also being implicated.

<sup>665</sup> Interview, Irma, Tayuman, February 19, 2019.



they have lost their loved ones over a year or many months ago, they share their stories as if it only happened yesterday.<sup>666</sup> The use of songs and other forms of artistic expression enables them to share their story and express their feelings of grief, anger, and fear.<sup>667</sup> As they voice their feelings, they also name their experience, facilitating the process of ownership, which is crucial in the process of mourning and the movement towards a new life.<sup>668</sup>

Some sessions also provide opportunities for the children to express their emotions and listen to their mothers and grandmothers share. When the grief therapy session with mothers was extended, the children were invited to participate. They sat on the floor while their mothers and grandmothers remained seated around them. When

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<sup>666</sup> Fieldwork Notes, Tayuman, February 19, 2019. After the first question, another instruction was given; that is, to recall the past sessions on handling grief. Again, some of them shared and were in tears recalling what happened to their loved ones. Many of them lost a son are now taking care of their grandchildren. One shared how she lost four people in 2018 – two due to illness but the other two were nephews who were killed. One mother shared how both her daughter and son-in-law were killed. Another lady shares how her son was killed in their house and his body was dragged down and thrown into the van. One mother shared how her son died two times as his body came out of the coffin during his funeral.

<sup>667</sup> Fieldwork Observation, Tayuman, February 19, 2019. After reviewing the past sessions, the facilitator played two songs which was processed in line with the stages of grief. First song was “*Natutulog ba ang Diyos?*” (Is God sleeping?) which the kids and some of the adults could sing along with. When asked what word touched them – many of them mentioned – trust, be strong, hope, some shared “is God sleeping?” as they express how they need to hold on to these virtues to survive their ordeal. A second song was played “*Kahit isang Saglit*” (Even for a Moment), which speaks about a person’s longing for a loved one. Many of them shared how the word “embrace” struck them as they express their wish to have the chance to embrace and be embraced by their loved one who was killed.

<sup>668</sup> Fieldwork Notes, Tayuman, February 19, 2019. To sum up their reflections, they were asked, if their life was a television episode, what title would they give it. One shares that she would give the title “my good grandson” because his grandson was a very good boy and that he was loved by people around him. One shared *barkada* (gang) as she looks back at how her son lost respect for her and only followed his gangmates. One used the word *katuwang* (companion). Her husband has been a real companion in her life. Even when she had to do more work than him, she says, he was a good man who always supported her no matter what. She continues to speak to him when she is in her room. Once, she came home one day bringing bread for them to eat for breakfast. She only realized how it was a dream. He is gone forever. Another shared the word *saklay* (crutches). Her husband is the one who helped her walk through life’s difficulties. She fears how she can raise their three kids all by herself. But she is assured that she will find support along the way.

asked how they feel, three out of the eight children openly shared their feelings in between sobs. Emotions can be convoluted for trauma survivors as evidenced by one who expressed how she felt anger and fear at the same time towards the police who killed her father. “*Paglaki ko, ipaglalaban ko siya.*” (When I am big enough, I will defend him). When asked how strong her feelings of anger and fear are from a scale of 1-10, she remarks, “*Mas matindi pa po sa 10,*” (It is beyond 10). Another girl, who was also crying, chose the word “*yakap*” (embrace), as she expressed how her father would hug her every time he came home. Now that he is gone, she feels a longing to be embraced by him again.

For trauma survivors and those in the stage of bereavement and grief, facing the emotions of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, is necessary for them to reach the stage of acceptance. As much as it helps them to be given the chance to express their feelings in a safe space, being accompanied towards full acceptance of their plight is crucial. Such accompaniment may be more complex for trauma survivors like the families of war on drug victims, who are also faced with challenges of survival daily and of safety and protection in their neighborhood.

### **The Challenge to Testify to their Story**

From suffering the stigma caused by extrajudicial killings, survivors are transformed towards taking their story as their *stigmata* to become prophets for today. For *Paghilom*, there are two phases in this process – through a theater production showcasing their story, and through thorough documentation of their case for historical and litigation purposes.

A three-day theater workshop culminates with a theater production presented to an audience of students and guests. From the safe space provided by their community experience in *Paghilom*, the mothers, wives, and orphans of extrajudicial killings take the stage to voice their lament and hope for a better future.<sup>669</sup> This phase opens the traumatic event as a story shared not only among themselves. By taking the stage to proclaim their lament and hope, it becomes a memory shared by all.

As the play presents the historical and sociopolitical disorder of the country which is the root cause of the trauma they continue to experience, participants proclaim their pain and suffering, their many questions, and their hope for a better future through their bodies; taking their audience to their experience of being in the middle of death and life. The climax comes when each participant shares her story while holding a picture of their dead loved one. Though the story is pre-recorded to give the full account of their story, while it is being played, the women share from out of their hearts as they cry. The audience ceases to become mere spectators to the story. As they are enveloped by the stories of the horrible deaths, they become one with these women. This is concretized, after the play, when they are invited to give voice to their reflections. Many express their gratitude to the women for sharing their stories that they will not be able to hear otherwise and pledge their support and commitment to their fight for justice. Parallel stories are shared by the audience during the forum confirming how “trauma begets trauma.”

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<sup>669</sup> Fieldwork Observation, Quezon City, May 2019.

Such proclamation in the public sphere transforms the trauma into *stigmata*. Originally the term was a powerful symbol in ancient Greece, an identity marker for a person of ill repute like a “slave, traitor, or criminal.”<sup>670</sup> During the Christian era, the word became alluded to saints and martyrs who bore God’s presence on their bodies through wounds that are likened to that of Jesus Christ.<sup>671</sup> Interestingly, many of those who had *stigmata* were people coming from the margins and who suffered from trauma.<sup>672</sup> As they embody and proclaim their story, the EJK survivors affirm their *stigmata* as their identity, their weapon of resistance, and their vehicle towards possibilities for a new solidarity.<sup>673</sup>

But to listen is also to become a witness. Members of the audience expressed their gratitude to the survivors for sharing their stories. The response of the community is a step to restitution. In the public sphere, many voices refuse to listen to their stories. But through the play, they facilitate “recognition and restitution,” which is needed to “rebuild the survivor’s sense of order and justice,” as well as to facilitate collective action and commitment to the cause.<sup>674</sup>

The third phase is legal assistance in which participants are invited to disclose information about themselves and the circumstances around the death of their loved ones. Many survivors prefer not to have their cases documented for fear of retaliation. Because *Paghilom* does not force survivors to submit themselves for legal assistance immediately,

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<sup>670</sup> Ganzevoort, “Scars and Stigmata,” 22

<sup>671</sup> Throughout Christian history, holy men and women were known to suffer from *stigmata* that resemble the five wounds inflicted on Jesus during his passion and death on the cross.

<sup>672</sup> Ganzevoort, “Scars and Stigmata,” 22

<sup>673</sup> Ganzevoort, “Scars and Stigmata,” 29.

<sup>674</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 51.

by the time they reach the third phase, many of them feel ready and courageous to undergo the process and to sign the affidavit.

The program believes that this stage is significant. First, the sworn statement becomes the basis for the world to know that this happened in our history as a nation. By allowing their stories documented, their voice becomes part of history.<sup>675</sup> As many institutions have done, these documented cases become part of a database that will help in the study of the modus of the killings as well as in the fight for justice for the victims and their families.<sup>676</sup> Second, as they become part of history and as they sign the statement, it becomes legal and binding. Some of these cases have been filed with the International Criminal Court.<sup>677</sup> Third, when they swear upon it, their story becomes sacred.<sup>678</sup> As a *memoria passionis* of today, it will continue to bring meaning to the Christian community especially in its quest to re-member the ‘others’ in their midst.

### **Trauma and a Church in the Middle Territory**

A theology of remaining is suggested to define the experience of people who are traumatized and who “live in the suspended middle territory – between death and life.”<sup>679</sup> To be a witness to trauma is to “remain in the suffering that does not go away,” and to

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<sup>675</sup> Doing so, however, has been an ordeal because aside from the confusing reports from the police and drug enforcement agencies, the victims’ families usually prefer not to tell their story for fear of retaliation.

<sup>676</sup> Drug Archives, “Building a Dataset of Publicly Available Information on Killings,” accessed August 7<sup>Se</sup>, 2019. <https://drugarchive.ph/post/14-antidrug-dataset-public-info-killings>. See also Philrights group, “The Killing State,” accessed October 10, 2019, <http://www.philrights.org/the-killing-state-the-unrelenting-war-against-human-rights/>.

<sup>677</sup> Navallo, Mike, “ICC Receives Another Communication on Duterte’s Drug War,” *ABS-CBN News*, posted April 5, 2019, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/05/19/icc-receives-another-communication-on-dutertes-drug-war>.

<sup>678</sup> Interview, Flavie Villaeuva, Tayuman, February 21, 2019.

<sup>679</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 25.

“imagine and re-create life in the aftermath of the experience.”<sup>680</sup> The *communitas* enmesh an experience of a church informed by trauma. When asked when the group will end, no one gave a timeline. One mentioned that the groups will continue, “so that people will know their story for years to come.” Another mentions “until justice is served.” The story and best practices provide a picture of a church built in the middle territory; where suffering remains.

### **Rupture and Redressive Strategies**

The best practices of the three ministries for EJK families highlighted above respond to the three ruptures typically experienced by trauma survivors.<sup>681</sup> The first rupture is a “rupture of bodily integrity,” in which they don’t feel protected and thus a great need to feel secure. Witnessing the horrific death of their loved one, or being left behind by their sudden death, leave them physically unsafe and insecure. Through practices of communal discernment and action responsive to this immediate need, listening to their need to find comfort and support from a community, and creating a safe space for them, left-behind families can receive support to restore bodily integrity that is both physical and psychological.

The second rupture is a “rupture of time,” where the memory of the traumatic event keeps coming back affecting their daily life routine and patterns of relationships. Such rupture can also manifest in the loss of memory or psychological denial or forgetting. The process of remembering and creating one’s own story or narrative can be

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<sup>680</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 25-26.

<sup>681</sup> O’Donnell develops these three ruptures based on the earlier definitions of trauma and her personal analysis of experiences in trauma interventions. Karen O’Donnell, *Broken Bodies: The Eucharist, Mary, and the Body in Trauma Theology* (London: SCM, 2018), 6-7.

possible by building the parish as a healing community where they can reestablish themselves with and through the parish life and community, by the ritualizing of their grief as well as their hopes in the liturgical space, and by a step by step process of trauma intervention that does not force them but goes along with their process of healing.

The last rupture is the “rupture of cognition and language” which needs a reconnection or a reaggregation to the community. In this phase, the three ministries find different challenges – between witnessing and attending to wounds that remain, between growing as a community by themselves or with the bigger community around them, and between owning their story and taking the public sphere to testify to the truth. Redressive strategies in this stage need to find a new space, or an extended safe space, the immediate neighborhood or parish community, for instance, to share the journey with them. This also challenges the bigger community to embrace a church in the middle territory.

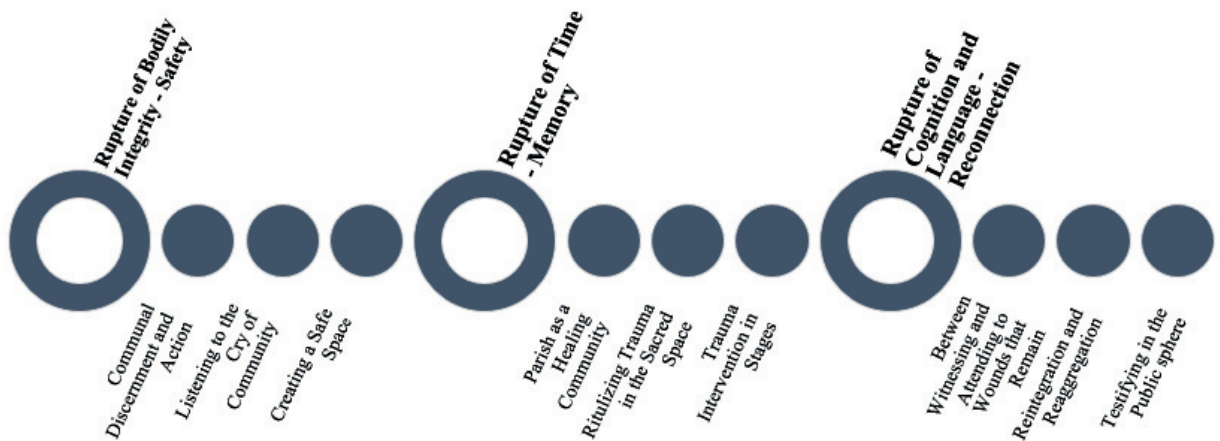


Figure 9. Redressive Action of Communitas

The web of relationships that has perpetrated and has been affected by violence, manifests the “mixed relationship between death and life” for trauma victims, in which something “new” can emerge.<sup>682</sup> Christians witness to Jesus in their lives by proclaiming and testifying to his story and by imitating his example of service and unconditional love for God and neighbor. But as the experience of the *communitas* has shown, such kind of witnessing is not enough for those who experience Holy Saturday and the middle territory between death and life.<sup>683</sup> How does one witness in the passage between death and life? The word territory is used to signify that one doesn’t leave this state fully. Holy Saturday becomes a crucial and transforming time in their lives, but it also remains as a continuing process. To witness between death and life can be likened to a “hinge linking the shattering and remaking, the undoing, and the regeneration” that practices of witnessing needs to embrace that which is incomprehensible and uncertain continuously.<sup>684</sup>

Witnessing at the hinge means being open to a new way of being church, which is not easy because our understanding of reality influences the way we engage with the world. For a church to be a witness in the middle territory is to embody *pakikipagkapwa*, the embrace of the other, and to embody virtues of the Spirit that listens, that dwells in the margins, and that recreates new images, metaphors, and experiences of church.

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<sup>682</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 32

<sup>683</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 39.

<sup>684</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 39.



## ***Communitas* as Field Hospitals**

These *communitas* can be likened to field hospitals that take in soldiers wounded during combat.<sup>685</sup> Field hospitals, known as ambulances, are small mobile units established near the battlefield to respond to the needs of soldiers since the large mobile hospitals could not attend to the surgical needs and immediate care of those on the front line. The field hospital conveys dreadful and horrific images of the war. Soldiers heavily wounded, bodies hit by multiple bullets, limbs that are torn; such graphic suffering in this place may be enough for witnesses to give in or give up. Yet doctors, surgeons, and nurses in field hospitals would fearlessly face their task of saving lives. Such a metaphor speaks powerfully about the church's role to minister to the sick and the infirmed.

The sick hold a privileged role in the Church and (in) the priestly heart of all the faithful...They are not to be cast aside. On the contrary, they are to be cared for, to be looked after. They are the objects of Christian concern...In the wounds of the sick and in the diseases that impede us from moving forward in life, Jesus' presence and His wounds, is always there...Jesus calls each of us to look after them, to support them, and to heal them.<sup>686</sup>

During wars, casualties number by the thousands in a short period that the wounded soldiers need immediate attention by both the medical personnel and the

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<sup>685</sup> The metaphor is suggested by Pope Francis in his speech during the commemoration of World War II.

<sup>686</sup> Devin Watkins, "Pope at Audience: Church a 'field hospital' that cares for sick," *Vatican News*, August 28, 2019, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-08/pope-francis-general-audience-church-cares-for-sick.html>.

military.<sup>687</sup> While the former is motivated to save lives and care for the wounded, the latter would be concerned with maintaining the troop's morale and manpower.<sup>688</sup>

Memoirs of field hospitals reveal practices that may not be according to medical standards but are done so to respond to the greater need to preserve life.<sup>689</sup> Ordinary doctors or medical students were given the rank of a surgeon in field hospitals. Assistant surgeons are brought side by side with comrades to apply first aid right on the battlefield. Supplies were transported through the trains and as wounded bodies had to be transported through ships, ships were also organized into wards.<sup>690</sup>

Medical service in the Philippines during the war against Japan shows how the mountainous regions in the North made it even more inevitable for field hospitals to be separated, sometimes leaving some medical stations with just one personnel. Photos attest to litter-bearers or attendants among the local people side by side with the infantry to help in carrying casualties on stretchers and in transporting bodies at night through difficult terrains.<sup>691</sup>

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<sup>687</sup> Jeffrey William Hunt, "Comrades and Ambulance Corps," <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/field-hospitals>.

<sup>688</sup> Jeffrey William Hunt, "Comrades and Ambulance Corps," <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/field-hospitals>

<sup>689</sup> "We operated in old blood-stained and often pus-stained coats.... We used un-disinfected instruments from un-disinfected plush-lined cases, and still worse, used marine sponges which had been used in prior pus cases and had been only washed in tap water. If a sponge or an instrument fell on the floor it was washed and squeezed in a basin of tap water and used as if it were clean. Our silk to tie blood vessels was un-disinfected... The silk with which we sewed up all wounds was un-disinfected. If there was any difficulty threading the needle, we moistened it with... bacteria-laden saliva, and rolled it between bacteria-infected fingers. We dressed wounds with clean but un-disinfected sheets, shirts, tablecloths, or other old soft linen rescued from the family ragbag. We had no sterilized gauze dressing, no gauze sponges.... We knew nothing about antiseptics and therefore used none." Jeffrey William Hunt, "Field Hospitals: An Overview," <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/field-hospitals>.

<sup>690</sup> Jeffrey William Hunt, "Comrades and Ambulance Corps,"

<sup>691</sup> Mary Ellen Condon-Rall and Albert Cowdrey, *The Medical Department: Medical Service in the War against Japan*, (Washington: Center of Military History United States Army, 1998), 366.

The building of BECs and mission stations in areas torn by poverty, death, and trauma as well as a family system as a way of witnessing concretizes this metaphor of the field hospital. It is a church in the peripheries; a church that witnesses to the passage between death and life. The experiences of *communitas* on the war on drugs suggest how a church in the middle territory – on the battlefield might be like. It also challenges mission stations, BECs, and families that are on the battlefield, on how to become truly church to one another. Analyzing the ecclesial responses to the EJK survivors, provide us glimpses of this form of witnessing. It suggests a way of being church. This image can depict a parish community; the upper room of today. It suggests a community up in arms for those wounded; even if they are hurt and in pain. It implies the courage to face the woundedness of one another and the patience to witness to the suffering that remains until healing and transformation are possible.

### ***Kapwa Tagapakinig: Church as Listening***

Ecclesial participation with the ‘others’ is best expressed through listening. It is what bridges *ecclesia docens* (a teaching church) and *ecclesia discens* (a learning church).<sup>692</sup> But listening is more than hearing.

Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart, which makes possible, that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur. Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply

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<sup>692</sup> “The *sensus fidei* prevents a rigid separation between an *Ecclesia docens* and an *Ecclesia discens*, since the flock likewise has an instinctive ability to discern the new ways that the Lord is revealing to the Church.” Francis, “Papal Address at the Ceremony commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops,” October 2015, [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20151017\\_50-anniversario-sinodo.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html).

bystanders. Only through such respectful and compassionate listening can we enter on the paths of true growth and awaken a yearning for the Christian ideal: the desire to respond fully to God's love and to bring to fruition what he has sown in our lives. But this always demands the patience of one who knows full well what Saint Thomas Aquinas tells us: that anyone can have grace and charity, and yet falter in the exercise of the virtues because of persistent "contrary inclinations." In other words, the organic unity of the virtues always and necessarily exists *in habitus*, even though forms of conditioning can hinder the operations of those virtuous habits.<sup>693</sup>

A church in the middle territory listens to the testimony of the victim like a "blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time."<sup>694</sup> The relation of the victim to the event of the trauma is determined by how much the listener, a "co-owner of the traumatic event," has done his/her part.<sup>695</sup>

The listener, therefore, has to be at the same time, a witness to the trauma witness, and a witness to himself. It is only in this way, through his simultaneous awareness of the continuous flow of those inner hazards both in the trauma witness and in himself, that he can become the enabler of the testimony – the one who triggers its initiation, as well as the guardian of its process and its momentum.<sup>696</sup>

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<sup>693</sup> Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 171.

<sup>694</sup> Dori Laub, "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening," in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, eds. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (New York: Routledge, 1992), 58.

<sup>695</sup> Laub, "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening," 58.

<sup>696</sup> Laub, "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening," 58.

For the testimonial process to take place, there needs to be a bonding, the intimate, and total presence of another – in the position of one who hears.

Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude. The witnesses are talking to somebody; to somebody, they have been waiting for a long time.<sup>697</sup>

In a solidarity mass organized for witnesses who have been charged with sedition by the government, the bishop celebrant, who is part of those accused, begins the celebration by reminding the congregation that it is not only their cause they were there for. The stories of the voiceless remain priority, he said. Before the celebration ended, he also called for the religious congregations that withdrew their assistance in providing sanctuaries to witnesses of extrajudicial killings. When one starts asking, “what about our safety?” he or she has ceased to listen. Failure to listen and failure to “give speech to silence,” ultimately “betrays suffering and ...ignores its power.”<sup>698</sup>

Being witnesses in the “in-between” calls us for a listening that does not blame or judge. It is feeling with the “pain of loss as well as the strength of survival.”<sup>699</sup> It is challenging us to go beyond ourselves to let the voice of suffering be heard. This suggests dispositions of compassion as a church.

Compassion does not blame the victim, and it does not condemn the perpetrator without some sense of how those who are at fault also embody the tragic nature of human embodied life. Compassion is not afraid to love others enough to hold

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<sup>697</sup> Dori Laub, “Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening,” 57-74.

<sup>698</sup> David Morris, “Voice, Genre, Moral Community,” in *Social Suffering* (London: University of California, 1997), 27.

<sup>699</sup> Marcia Mount Shoop, *Let the Bones Dance: Embodiment and the Body of Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 131.

them to its (own) standards, but it does not demonize. It suffers with, but that is not all. Not letting suffering have the last word means making space for what needs to be better. Compassion sits with loss and it hopes for better. It does not rush grief as a way to hurry through the pain. Compassion pushes toward a new quality of life in which we can live with loss honestly at the same time that it breaks through isolation and despair.<sup>700</sup>

Listening as a witness is listening to the silence, extending the virtue of *pakikiramdam* (shared inner perception) to stories that are not voiced out which brings one to the heart of the trauma. A witness does not take over the story by taking what one does in the process of listening as more essential than the story itself. A person witnesses the trauma witness and witnesses to oneself when there is a desire to understand oneself better through the other and when one is courageous to listen to their complicity to the creation of trauma. A witness is convinced that one becomes a better Christian not by acting as a savior but by accepting that one also bears marks of trauma and has participated in the process of othering.

At the onset of the killings in 2016, some priests and religious decided to organize themselves to be present at the death scene upon notification of their contacts in the area. While they found this very effective, they found the ministry too difficult as they needed to wait overnight. Such visits are very crucial in the process of listening when it is most needed. The offer of sanctuaries to people in need of protection, created space for religious congregations to be able to listen to people's stories. However, this was likewise

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<sup>700</sup> Shoop, *Let the Bones Dance*, 133.

stopped when some clerics and religious were charged with sedition. To be a listener to what remains can put one's life on the line.

### ***Kasama sa Puwang: Church as Margin-Dwelling***

A middle territory as suggested by the examples is where “human logic is suspended.”<sup>701</sup> Perhaps this inadequacy of logic can also be expressed when doctrines or prescribed church laws are temporarily held for the higher objective of “descending into hell.” It may be shown through pastoral care provided to people in the margin like the supply of condoms to sex workers or even of allowing unmarried couples to have their children baptized. Perhaps it is so when help is extended, and the Eucharist is offered even to non-Catholics or when one accepts when a young widow of a victim of extrajudicial killings marries again. The practice of Christianity tends to provide us with fixed answers; of certainties that many times imprison and become the cause of people's death. Between death and life, to remain is to accept a state of ambiguity.

*Communitas* have shared about the reality that grips them when ministering to survivors

She lost her husband through *tokhang* with whom she had three children. Soon after, she found a new husband and got pregnant. But he was killed for the same reason. Twice widowed and now with her fourth child, she comes to us for help. What are we to do? We cannot simply give up.<sup>702</sup>

She has not been attending the meetings and the mothers are telling us that it is because she went back to selling drugs. We had offered her a source of livelihood,

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<sup>701</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 76.

<sup>702</sup> Doris, telephone interview, July 20, 2019.

but it seems the easy money that the trade provides her is a constant temptation. But she comes for the monthly rice distribution.<sup>703</sup>

There are still about four or five of them who are still involved in the drug trade. It is complicated. They cannot simply drop out of the gang without compromising the lives of their loved ones. We do not know how far the entire family is involved too. They still live under one roof.<sup>704</sup>

To be a witness to what remains can be likened to “margin dwelling interpreters,” as opposed to being dialogical or exilic interpreters. Dialogical interpreters are those who witness from within mainstream communities; seeking renewal for the church through reconstructing Christian life from within. Exilic interpreters are those who witness from within marginal communities. Feminist theologians operate through a “hermeneutic of suspicion,” and in doing so, risk tradition to provide pathways to a “redefining and reconstructing a social-symbolic order.”<sup>705</sup>

Marginal interpreters are witnesses to what remains. They are “being both” at the site of the “in between.”<sup>706</sup> To be between death and life is to be in a state of “belonging and nonbelonging, faith and doubt, trust and suspicion, the written and unwritten, presence and absence” that may remain unresolved but “burst into life in the thin, interpretive edge that both joins and separates them.”<sup>707</sup>

Such sensing and empathizing called for from a church in the middle territory suggests a humility to understand things from reality and a greater humility to accept that

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<sup>703</sup> Interview, Cindy, Cainta, January 10, 2019.

<sup>704</sup> Interview, Nati, Taytay, December 1, 2019.

<sup>705</sup> Veiling, *Living in the Margins*, 105.

<sup>706</sup> Veiling, *Living in the Margins*, 136.

<sup>707</sup> Veiling, *Living in the Margins*, 136.



at this stage logic has no place. It is in this space of sensing and groping that the church can reinvent itself. To accompany people at this stage is to realize that their situation and God's grace are "mysteries which no one can fully know from without."<sup>708</sup>

The unwritten needs a chance to play in the margins of the text, to claim its share of interpretive practice. Listening to the unwritten enables the wisdom of repressed or disallowed voices the freedom to speak and the chance to be heard. This is especially necessary for the face of a metaphysics of presence that always attempts to cover up absence and difference in its quest for completeness and totality. Marginal hermeneutics operates at the very edge where meaning is most metaphorical and unresolved, most in play. It wants to try out new metaphors, new writings, new interpretations.<sup>709</sup>

The adventure of ambiguity does not only enable the church to re-member the lost, the least, and the last in the body of Christ. It makes it stand amid contradictions and allow a new face of the church to emerge.

### ***Saksi sa Dilim: Church as Witness to the Depths***

The Spirit transposes the middle territory as a "re-creative territory," which is best interpreted in its "witness to the depths."<sup>710</sup> Beyond the ethical terms that being a witness is connected with, it suggests "the capacity to imagine beyond an ending."<sup>711</sup> One finds this reflected in the cases by the way they see the ministry they are now committed to as

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<sup>708</sup> Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 172.

<sup>709</sup> Veiling, *Living in the Margins*, 138-139.

<sup>710</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 115.

<sup>711</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 115.

they acknowledge that there is no end to mourning. Whenever they are asked when help for the survivors stops, they often reply, “we don’t see an end to this.”

The Spirit as breath translated in Hebrew as *ruach* is feminine. This evokes the “imagery of childbirth,” of a God who “pants with creation to bring about something new.”<sup>712</sup> On the other hand, *pneuma*, which is the Spirit translated in Greek is masculine. It takes flesh in the person of Jesus who lived the Spirit by preaching about the kingdom, healing the sick, and even after his death, by gifting the Spirit to his disciples so that they can continue his mission.<sup>713</sup>

Recreating is both feminine and masculine. A church worker ministering to survivors in her parish laments the one-sided listening of many church groups. Responding to the immediate needs of food, health, and even therapeutic services may be essential but the deeper cry for justice and retribution is a challenging story to deal with.

Though it took some time for them, to realize their need to fight for their rights, our EJK mothers have stood up to the challenge. Through our collaboration with NGOs that are fighting for justice and human rights, our mothers and widows are educated in their basic human rights and could now share their testimonies to people. They know that there is a purpose for continually sharing their stories. Sadly, it is not the church that helps us in this aspect. While many of us could speak and preach about it, practices show that we are not ready for this fight.<sup>714</sup>

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<sup>712</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 117.

<sup>713</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 117.

<sup>714</sup> Telephone Interview, Doris, July 20, 2019.

A church that recreates itself is open to collaborative pursuits. It is through a spirit of interdependence and relationality that new meanings take place and new beginnings happen not only for the individual but for all.<sup>715</sup> It provides a birthing not only of new ideas but new ways of doing and being.

In the Filipino culture, the Spirit is a communal energy that is harnessed in the most trying times. The theology of remaining manifested in embracing survivors with all their wounds remaining enables the Spirit to recreate them anew; the image of the *ruach* and the *pneuma* together, which is the oneness and unity of *lakas* (power) and *ganda* (goodness, beauty).<sup>716</sup> Many experiences of BECs embody this Spirit especially amidst traumatic events and struggles of life.<sup>717</sup> It is the same Spirit that brought indigenous communities in the Philippines, facing the threat of geothermal energy that ironically destroys them despite the possibilities of progress and life, to fight together.

Cultural energy seems to be what people need to collectively endure pain as well as to begin a protest or even just to sustain their existence. It is partly what is shared when their sympathizers are around, and partly what they generate from their own moral and cultural resources when external allies have moved to more exciting sites. I suppose it could be associated with power – power being the capacity of amulets to embolden the bearer or serving as the moral force of a

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<sup>715</sup> Mount Shoop, *Let the Bones Dance*, 137.

<sup>716</sup> A Filipino creation story of Adam as *Malakas* (strong / power) and Eve as *Maganda* (beauty/goodness) confirms the Spirit as a harnessing of both the feminine and the masculine within us.

<sup>717</sup> Josemarie Delgado and others, *BECs in the Philippines: Dream or Reality* (Taytay: Bukal ng Tipan, 2004), 55-ff.

crowd drawn by an altruistic cause. But if cultural energy is related to power, it is more likely the power to will rather than the will to power.<sup>718</sup>

Such power provides the “moral, spiritual and creative resource to be or to remain or sometimes to become a people with self-confidence and self-affirmation.”<sup>719</sup> A church in the middle facilitates this posttraumatic process for EJK survivors, helping them acquire “cultural energy,” that equips them with a “collective agency” and a “collective capacity,” in the middle territory; between death to life.<sup>720</sup> It is in such a collective process of witnessing to the depths that the church participates with the “other” in their healing and transformation as well as in understanding the right dispositions to discern how their story is informing our way of being a church in the world.<sup>721</sup>

### **The Challenge of Re-Integration: *Pakikipagkapwa* as a Healing Praxis**

The Holy Saturday experience is ongoing in the Christian community. Like the virus that spreads in unparalleled ways, trauma as a wound that remains is a mark in every Christian community. It is a church in the middle territory, between death and life and unless it is recognized as such, it’s inherent power to transform the narrative of the “other” cannot be claimed and redeemed. It is indeed a place where a program of witnessing can be launched. It is the *locus* for critical reflection and empowerment; one in which a re-membering of the Filipino passion can take place through collective critical

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<sup>718</sup> Alejo, *Generating Energies in Mount Apo*, 7.

<sup>719</sup> Alejo, *Generating Energies in Mount Apo*, 7.

<sup>720</sup> Alejo, *Generating Energies in Mount Apo*. 252.

<sup>721</sup> Discerning the *sensus fidei*, or sense of the faithful requires disposition of listening and discernment that facilitates authentic dialogue between laity and the church, between faith and life, and between the church and the world. International Theological Commission, *Sensus Fidei* in the Life of the Church, no. 73

reflection. While new life is possible for the survivors at this stage, the bigger collectivity needs to share the new story they seek to embrace.

From the etymology of the word *ka-puwa*, collective consciousness is developed by being in the *puwang* or gap together. By embodying a new form of witnessing in the middle territory through virtues of “listening, margin-dwelling, and recreating,” in dialectical engagement with the “place” of suffering, the middle territory can harness their being “agents-subjects” with the capacity towards “social remembering, critical and social reasoning, and creative and social imagining.”<sup>722</sup>

### ***Kolektibong Pag-alaala at Pagsasariwa: Collective Social Re-membering***

As the examples of *communitas* have shown, it is their stories that brought them together. They choose to remember as a community; as a family. Collective remembering is storytelling in different phases. First, it is a truthful listening to one’s own story. Many times, it is not easy for people in the post-traumatic stage to remember. It takes courage to go back to the pain. Second, it is a truthful listening to one’s stories as told by others. Whether they share the same story or not, the stories of the other provide new understandings about one’s past. Third, it is a truthful listening to one’s stories as it relates to the bigger stories of society.

People belong to various social groups that have left marks on their bodies. Similarly, as experiences have shaped and wounded them, uncovering them reveals “political interests and social ideologies,” that may have caused their trauma and continually hinder their emancipation. One’s own story as a “site of historical conflict

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<sup>722</sup> Groome, *Shared Faith*, 104-106.

and oppression,” also have “sources of mysterious creative powers,” to transcend life obstacles.<sup>723</sup> Remembering unlocks bodies that are “formed and deformed” whose owners are affected by the “dominant gaze” and thus are locked in “restrictive scripts.”<sup>724</sup> By remembering and re-remembering, people can discover practical wisdom when they “uncover the historical influences” that have shaped them as well as the “social and historical genesis of what society” has done to them.<sup>725</sup>

When one is conscious of the middle territory and the need to listen as a way of witnessing, “redeeming memories” is a priority. The tension between attending to wounds that remain and professionalizing or institutionalizing the services may hinder this process. As a witness in the middle territory, social re-remembering entails not only recalling their stories of suffering as well as the stories of those who have died but also their stories of resilience and resistance to remain alive. Remembering also entails affirming their personal histories, as well as relationships that empower them.

### ***Kolektibong Pangarap: Collective Creative and Social Imagining***

When they understand their story with others – not those who have exercised “power of social controls,” but those who share their story and have formed them in their journey,<sup>726</sup> it is possible to tap into “incarnational imagination,” and facilitate the “spirit

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<sup>723</sup> Mayra Rivera. “Thinking Bodies.” in *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*, eds. Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Eduardo Mendieta (New York: Fordham, 2012), 219.

<sup>724</sup> Rivera, “Thinking Bodies,” 214-215.

<sup>725</sup> Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 104-105.

<sup>726</sup> Rivera, “Thinking Bodies,” 220.

found through the body.”<sup>727</sup> Instead of relying on “intellectual and reflective” information regarding existing problems, their own stories are “visceral and prereflective.”<sup>728</sup>

Collective healing is possible when people can creatively and socially imagine a different world. The result of remembering is the capacity to see beyond the middle territory so that the passage from death to life can be possible. Many communities that live on the margins of societies find themselves developing new strategies to handle ambiguous situations. By insisting that no one wins alone, these communities pursue strategies where healing, though a long or complicated, and tiring process, is a collective experience.

We also find out, for example, last year, that the husband was violent towards the wife and children because of addiction. The nephew of this man died from the war on drugs and because of fear his brother runs away to the province. Their house was like a drug den where you pay 10 pesos and you can consume inside their house. The wife runs away when we came to intervene. Because it was difficult, we had to find work for the wife outside this place and we looked after the four children who are our students. Then the father came, and we talked several times so that he could agree. “Do you want your wife and children to live with you?” He had to sign a statement together with us, a witness, and the *barangay* that if he repeats what he has done, we are the ones to bring him to jail. When he signed the agreement, he was able to reconcile with wife and children.

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<sup>727</sup> Rivera, “Thinking Bodies,” 221.

<sup>728</sup> Christopher Tirres, “Decolonizing Religion: Pragmatism and Latina/o Religious Experience.” in *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*, eds. Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Eduardo Mendieta (New York: Fordham, 2012), 231-237.

They continued their business of *sari-sari* (convenience) store in the market. So far, until now he was able to manage himself and is doing well. The daughter already graduated. With her salary and their savings, they were able to buy a tricycle which he now drives as their source of income.<sup>729</sup>

Through creative social imagination, communities can find new ways of responding to trauma together. The transforming power of *communitas* happens when people can creatively imagine a world beyond what they have.

### ***Kolektibong Pagsusuri: Collective Critical and Social Reasoning***

By exposing all stories in a safe space, a “bias towards alterity, diversity, and inclusivity,” enables praxis to become liberating and transformative.<sup>730</sup> When one can truthfully remember and creatively imagine a different world, the ability to reflect on the root causes of their situation and confront the forces that block their emancipation is possible. Critical reasoning asks the question “why” while conscious that one is also part of the problem and part of the solution.<sup>731</sup>

Non-ecclesial groups, however, seem able to bring EJK victims towards collective critical and social reasoning as they take victims and survivors as collaborators. For a human rights group, their goal to lead them to become human rights defenders is clear at the onset of reaching out to victims.

For us, the process is clear as we consider their constant participation in our activities as an indicator that they are gradually empowered to defend their own

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<sup>729</sup> Interview, Sr. Lydia, Bagong Silang, March 6, 2019.

<sup>730</sup> Elaine Graham, “Pastoral Theology as Transforming Practice,” in *Words made Flesh: Writings in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (London: SCM, 2009), 159-160.

<sup>731</sup> Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 105.



and other people's rights. We have human rights orientation, skills training on monitoring, and documentation capacity. We mobilize them for rallies and court hearings of victims. They are given the responsibility to reach out to victims within their vicinity and to speak to them. Since we work alongside them at every step, we can find out if they are developing in terms of skills and in their conviction to fight for human rights.<sup>732</sup>

Some groups take as their entry point the same model employed by church – through organizing communities of victims in the geographical location. For instance, a group chooses to organize women who are victims of all forms of violence.

To better respond to EJK families, we consulted a group of psychologists to help us modify our entry program for victims of trafficking, prostitution, and domestic violence. The result was a family psychological first-aid program. The sessions for the children were handled by the psychologists. After the initial program, the women underwent human rights training and through which they organized themselves as a group in the community.<sup>733</sup>

As EJK *communitas* have flourished through collaboration, critical and social reasoning also happens as new models of *communitas* are developed informed by trauma.

### **Holy Saturday and *Pakikipagka-puwang***

The experiences of EJK *communitas* both in their best practices and the challenges shed light on how the voiceless and those who suffer in society can re-engage in ecclesial life. The stage of liminality, the experience of an “open society,” of being a

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<sup>732</sup> Interview, Philrights, February 6, 2019.

<sup>733</sup> Fieldwork Observation, Meeting of EJK service providers, February 26, 2019.

*ka-puwang* like the EJK *communitas* also facilitates a church renewal of *pakikipagkapwa*. Collective consciousness is facilitated in which collective re-membering is done by giving priority to their stories, a collective creative and social imagining through collective healing that knows no time limit, and a collective critical and social reasoning that seeks to learn from and collaborate with other entities.

**CHAPTER SIX. PAKIKIPAGKAPWA NG IBANG TAO: EASTER SUNDAY  
AND THE OTHERS**

*Believing in the resurrection does not just mean assenting to a dogma and noting a historical fact. It means participating in this creative act of God's...Resurrection is not a consoling opium, soothing us with the promise of a better world in the hereafter. It is the energy for a rebirth of this life. The hope doesn't point to another world. It is focused on the redemption of this one.*

*Jurgen Moltmann*<sup>734</sup>

*Then the eyes of the blind shall see,  
and the ears of the deaf be opened;  
Then the lame shall leap like a stag  
and the mute tongue sing for joy*

*Isaiah 35:5-6*

The experience of the church in the middle territory, among those traumatized, informs how re-aggregation, re-membering can happen in the body of Christ. The reality, however, suggests that the post-traumatic stage is an everyday happening. The social body expected to bear witness to new life for those afflicted is itself traumatized. Handling the somatic memory expressed by fear, anxiety, shame as well as facilitating the process of healing and forgiveness suggest the tasks involved in the “afterwardness,”

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<sup>734</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *Jesus Christ for Today's World*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 81.

and the “ongoingness,” of trauma.<sup>735</sup> This chapter will lift the experience of individuals and a local community in their participation regarding the war on drugs together with practices that touch wounds and bring about new life.

### **Easter Sunday and Stories of Hope**

Easter Sunday, the day Jesus’ rose from the dead, is the most important celebration for Christians. It is on this day that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy for humankind. It is on this day that love crashed sin, hope transgressed suffering, life triumphed over death. An excerpt from St. John Chrysostom’s Easter sermon proclaims Easter as a day in which everyone enters the joy of the Lord.

*Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again,*

*For forgiveness has risen from the grave.*

*Let none fear death, for the death of our Savior has set us free.*

*He has destroyed it by enduring it.*

*He spoiled the power of hell when he descended thereto.*

*Isaiah foretold this when he cried,*

*'Death has been frustrated in meeting him below!'*

*It is frustrated, for it is destroyed.*

*It is frustrated, for it is annihilated.*

*It is frustrated, for now it is made captive.*

*For it grabbed a body and discovered God.*

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<sup>735</sup> Shelly Rambo, “Introduction,” in *Post-Traumatic Public Theology*, eds. Stephanie Arel and Shelly Rambo (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 8.

*It took earth and behold! It encountered Heaven.*

*It took what was visible, and was overcome by what was invisible.*

*O Death, where is your sting?*

*O Death, where is your victory?*

*Christ is risen, and the demons are cast down.*

*Christ is risen, and life is set free.*

*Christ is risen, and the tomb is emptied of the dead.*

*For Christ, having risen from the dead*

*is become the first-fruits for those who sleep.*

*to Him be glory and power forever and ever!*

*Amen. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*<sup>736</sup>

It is a day of new beginnings. Death has ended. New life is embraced. This triumph is depicted in a Filipino popular practice of the *Salubong* (Encounter) of the risen Jesus and *Mater Dolorosa*, the grieving Mary. There are two Jesus and Mary encounters captured in the rituals of the *Paschal Triduum*. While at Good Friday the weeping Mary meets Jesus who carries the cross, on Easter Sunday, Mary's mourning ends as she meets the Risen Jesus. The *Salubong* begins with two processions starting from different directions: with Mary are the women of the community following her statue and with Jesus are the men of the community. They begin the procession separately from opposite locations. When they finally reach the meeting point, a dramatic encounter happens. While the two images face each other, there is a moment of silence that brings back the

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<sup>736</sup> The Paschal homily preached by St. John Chrysostom in the fourth century is read during Easter morning by Orthodox Christians.

memory of the same encounter on Good Friday in which Jesus gazes at Mary from afar. But at this moment, an angel represented by a child comes down from the “heavens” through a harness, singing *Regina Coeli*, and lifts the veil of mourning covering Mary’s face.<sup>737</sup> When the veil is lifted, she sees the Risen Jesus dressed in a white garment and with hands outstretched towards her. The veil of mourning, which covered her eyes and kept her from witnessing life before her, is removed, and now she can see clearly.<sup>738</sup> This encounter reflects in many stories of wives, mothers, and grandmothers of victims of extrajudicial killings, who commit to carrying on by singlehandedly raising children and grandchildren against all odds.<sup>739</sup>

I have seven children. Two from my husband’s previous marriage and five, my own. When my husband was killed, some people suggested for me to return my stepchildren to their mother; anyway, they are not mine. A social worker also suggested that I send the little ones to the orphanage so they could take care of them better. These were all tempting options for me. But I decided to take care of all of them. Life is hard but we will survive together.<sup>740</sup>

A widow mirrors this experience as she shares her transformation from fear to courage, from isolation to solidarity. She has recognized her woundedness through her encounter

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<sup>737</sup> The Latin song translates “Queen of Heaven, rejoice, Alleluia. For He whom you did merit to bear, Alleluia. Has risen as he said, Alleluia. Pray for us to God, Alleluia. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, Alleluia. For the Lord has truly risen, Alleluia.”

<sup>738</sup> The *Salubong* as an “act of popular religion,” is staged in different versions by parish communities around the Philippines. As a religious drama, it mirrors the resurrection of Jesus and the parallel stories of hope, community, and the faith journey every Christian can relate with. See Rey de la Cruz, *Theodula of the Salubong: A Filipino Theological Dramatic Approach to Popular Religion*. Makati: Don Bosco, 2014.

<sup>739</sup> Such stories are reflected in the *communitas* explored in the earlier chapter. Also see Ma. Karen Solis Papellero, *We Will Live: Hope and Vision among Surviving Families of Extrajudicial Killings* (M.A. Thesis: SVST, August 2018).

<sup>740</sup> Interview, Irma, Quezon City, December 4, 2019.

of women who share her story and people who have listened to their cries and are committed to fighting for the justice they deserve. She speaks about encounters, many of them, through which she was given a new lease in life.

It felt good to meet the mothers in the group. When we could share our stories with tears in our eyes, it feels like a heavy burden has been taken off from us. But then, our encounters are also learning sessions where we understand the bigger context and why this happened to us. Through these encounters, we discover our basic rights and how we can fight for it. While we get over our mourning together, these experiences strengthen us. Outside our group, we also get to attend rallies and gatherings of different associations where our stories seem to matter. At first, I was afraid to be seen on camera. My family didn't know what happened and I was ashamed to be seen by them. But gradually, this fear disappeared when we filed our case with the ICC (International Criminal Court). The first time, we held a press conference, I was shocked. It wasn't what I expected. But when we were interviewed and there were many media people, I was able to talk about my husband's death in the hands of a police officer who is supposed to protect us. I am no longer afraid. I have become brave.<sup>741</sup>

When traumatic wounds become one's *stigmata*, one discovers the power to witness to the truth. From being a witness to one's own experience, there is strength to witness to other's testimonies. A shared witnessing becomes the seed of a new life.<sup>742</sup>

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<sup>741</sup> Interview, Joanna, Caloocan City, March 24, 2019.

<sup>742</sup> Dori Laub, "An Event without a Witness," in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, eds. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (New York: Routledge, 1992), 75.

Such encounters are also found by those who dare to become an “empathic witness” to “co-suffer” and become martyrs by not shrinking from people’s cries of pain, but by being in solidarity with them.<sup>743</sup> Through a “holy process of transforming mute pain into expressive suffering,” they realize the healing and renewal needed in the brokenness.<sup>744</sup>

A Catholic sister, who was assigned in one of the slums in Manila, faced the unending killings in her community, step by step.<sup>745</sup> While all the killings were going on in her community, she began creating a journal, writing about the stories and incidents of death but also fears and anxieties of people. As the journal help her to “maintain her sanity,” she thought that it will be the way for her to inform her sisters and the clergy about the truth. She visited families of victims and prayed with them at their wake services. In the past, she has already journeyed with them in their traumas especially with women who were raped and sexually abused. However, the killings caught her unprepared. As she immersed in the stories between death and life and saw the bigger picture, she realized how a collective fight for justice was the only way through it. The community needs to stand as a witness. They called for people’s participation and it was mostly women of the community who responded. They decided what is best to do given

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<sup>743</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, “Suffering,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* ed Bonnie Miller Mclemore (Oxford: Wiley, 2014), 30.

<sup>744</sup> Cooper-White, “Suffering,” 30.

<sup>745</sup> Since 2011, Sr. Juanita Dano of the Religious of the Good Shepherd, a licensed social worker, has been working for the community of Sta. Ana Manila. Aware about the effects of drugs in the neighborhood, Sr. Nenet was initially supportive of the war on drug campaign. But when the killings were taking place and after people who surrendered to be admitted for rehabilitation were still summarily killed, their stories became the foundation to their crusade as a community. See Religious of the Good Shepherd, “Amid the Philippine Anti-drug War, Sr. Nenet Dano Shepherds Drug Pushers, Drug Users,” accessed April 18, 2020, [http://rgs.gssweb.org/en/news/amid-philippine-anti-drug-war-sr-nenet-da%C3%B1o-shepherds-drug-users-pushers\\_](http://rgs.gssweb.org/en/news/amid-philippine-anti-drug-war-sr-nenet-da%C3%B1o-shepherds-drug-users-pushers_)



their situation. Through a law firm that provides services to the victims and their families, the community was given seminars on human rights and the legal implications of fighting for it. In between regular prayer meetings and involvement in the needs of one another, the women created tarpaulin posters containing the ten acts manifesting violation of human rights. The women posted them on the houses of residents and shared guidelines on how to use it whenever the local police would come to arrest a resident. The guidelines empowered them to protect their neighbors from illegal arrest by asking them if they complied with the basic rules written on the poster.

By standing firm as a “defender of life,” she remained faithful even to those who have strayed by allowing them to welcome change and new life.<sup>746</sup> It speaks about witnessing not only as an “act of fidelity toward the dead” but also as an act of rescuing those who have died from the “second death of being forgotten” by bringing back their memory in the daily life of the community.<sup>747</sup> It is extending oneself to “keep seeing” even when people could not see or pretend not to see the impact of suffering on them and society.<sup>748</sup> It is to decide whether to “split off from awareness (like some survivors of trauma themselves),” to remain in the suffering or, to remain silent and therefore participate in the sealing of the horrors of pain and death.<sup>749</sup>

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<sup>746</sup> Kimberley dela Cruz, “Nuns diary records Philippines’ deadly war on drugs,” *UCANEWS.com There for the Voiceless*, February 19, 2018, <https://www.ucanews.com/news/nuns-diary-records-philippines-deadly-war-on-drugs/81542>.

<sup>747</sup> Robert Schreiter, “A Practical Theology of Healing, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation,” In *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology Ethics, and Praxis*, eds. Robert Schreiter, Scott Appleby, and Gerard Powers (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010), 381.

<sup>748</sup> Cooper-White, “Suffering,” 30.

<sup>749</sup> Cooper-White, “Suffering,” 30.

There are two tasks of a witness. One is to lament and to “attest to loss and absence,”<sup>750</sup> and the other is to “imagine ways of resurrecting” in the aftermath.<sup>751</sup> While there is a need to “reaffirm the way of the cross” of suffering and trauma that is unending and to make their “memory public and shareable,” there is also the need to recreate a “shared narrative of the community that moves from loss to redemption.”<sup>752</sup>

### **Resurrection: Recognition and Misrecognition**

The Resurrection accounts, however, from the lens of trauma, portrays a community in an ongoing process of recognition and misrecognition.<sup>753</sup> Mary Magdalene, who was mourning at the sight of the empty tomb, did not immediately recognize Jesus when he appeared to her until she turned around and saw him (John 20:11-18). The disciples on the road to Emmaus took a long route to recognition (Luke 24:13-35). Jesus walked alongside them listening to their story but also sharing the Scriptures to them to help them understand. Yet, they only recognized him when he vanished from their sight after they broke bread with him.

There is a both/and character of Jesus’ return that trauma theorists argue for the need to highlight these “moments of misrecognition,” to witness to life.<sup>754</sup>

He is both returning and ascending. He is both spectral and carnal. He is both recognizable and unrecognizable to those whom he meets, and it is the process of coming to recognition, through the strangeness – and misrecognition – that makes

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<sup>750</sup> Schreiter, *A Practical Theology of Healing, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation*, 381.

<sup>751</sup> Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Afterlife of Trauma* (Waco: Baylor University, 2017), 8.

<sup>752</sup> Schreiter, “A Practical Theology of Healing, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation,” 381.

<sup>753</sup> Rambo, *Resurrecting Wound*, 9.

<sup>754</sup> Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds*, 11.

this narrative of resurrection both consonant to trauma's afterlife and open to a reinscription of it in Christian theology.<sup>755</sup>

Attesting to trauma and transfiguring it is a critical process to freedom. Trauma never leaves us. To share about trauma is to reopen fractures that still need healing. Traumatic events in our lives create “open-ended narrative spaces filled with fear, silence, and uncertainty.”<sup>756</sup> In various focus group interviews, the question about their personal experience of violence and extrajudicial killings in the community reveals this misrecognition and recognition. There are those who right away deny their personal experience of it. But when one dares to disclose one's personal story courageously, others begin to acknowledge experiences they have kept hidden, many of which were never revealed to the group.

***Pitik-Bulag: Failure to See***<sup>757</sup>

In other groups, people look down or glance at each other after the question is asked. One mother's response was a question, “Do we have to share?”<sup>758</sup> There is always a feeling of unease among them as if telling one another, “Should we?” Their silence and hesitation to speak up imply a misrecognition of the power to witness. Even when one recognizes the wounds, the sense of agency, of having the capacity to see beyond death and become a witness, remains impaired.<sup>759</sup> The fracture caused by trauma often leaves one blind to other wounds that surface and that continue to affect one's life.

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<sup>755</sup> Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds*, 9.

<sup>756</sup> Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, 92.

<sup>757</sup> A game of flip-blind.

<sup>758</sup> BEC Focus Group Interview, Caloocan City, March 16, 2019.

<sup>759</sup> Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, 93.

My brother, he got caught when he was with another friend who was suspected of being a drug courier. He is a little naughty, but I think he is just a victim of circumstance. We were able to get him out after a month. He is all right now. *Silence.* But I don't know how he is doing. *Giggles.* Maybe he is still naughty.<sup>760</sup> I regret to this day that I did not care for him when he was still alive. On the other hand, now that he is gone, I feel more relieved. I feel more at peace...To file a case? I asked my son to send me a sign if I should. But I do not hear him. People have told me that this person, this police officer, had to do with my son's death. But I don't want to be a witness; they'd see me, my face...I cannot take the risk for that.<sup>761</sup>

Such recognition and misrecognition can be witnessed in communities that are challenged by violence and poverty. In social action ministries, these wounds reappear in other forms. While it is easy to recognize wounds, many times, insidious trauma is more than what the ministry can handle.

Tuberculosis is the number one sickness here and that's because of addiction. I think in 2016-2017 most of our scholars' parents disappeared. They were afraid to be caught so families tried to hide as much as possible. Some of them run away with the kids and wife and did not return. I know that many though, have returned after a few months. We do not know if they continue with their business with drugs.<sup>762</sup>

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<sup>760</sup> Youth Focus Group Interview, Caloocan City, March 13, 2019.

<sup>761</sup> Teresita, Caloocan City, October 22, 2019.

<sup>762</sup> Interview, Lydia, Caloocan City, March 9, 2019.

When I arrived here in 2011, there was a rally for peace because many people died. Very frequently here it was trivialities between gangs and fraternities. Killing one another. *Tau Gamma* is very big here.<sup>763</sup> It is crazy because many of them are addicts or gangsters. People are afraid of them because they kill people they don't like or who are members of their rivals. I remember all this. It was October 14 of 2011. Since that day, I have had many experiences about addiction because alcohol and drugs are together. When we do home visits, we witness the endless fighting between wives and husbands. He or she is into drugs. They throw stones at each other or fight in the street. It is not new, what we have today. Violence, drugs, fighting, and death are all part of our past, of our present, and maybe of our future.<sup>764</sup>

The misrecognition or failure to see trauma is not only because it is repressed but because it is not experienced.<sup>765</sup> Individual trauma impacts people, long before the actual event and many times, even if the actual event is long forgotten. As the memory of trauma continues to manifest bodily to individuals, it is also the same for the social body that inherits a culture of violence.

The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is

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<sup>763</sup> *Tau Gamma* is a fraternity founded in government universities during the early 70s to counter the then existing fraternity culture that was only meant for the upper class. In their desire to reach even the uneducated youth, the fraternity also established chapters in urban poor communities. Fraternity values as well as rituals took a new shape in the urban poor context.

<sup>764</sup> Interview, Sr. Ali, Caloocan City, March 6, 2019.

<sup>765</sup> Margaret Odell, "Fragments of Traumatic Memory: Salme Zakar and Child Sacrifice in Ezekiel 16:15-22," in *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma*, eds. Elizabeth Boase and Christopher Frechette (Atlanta: SBL, 2016): 110-111.

experienced at all...For history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs, or to put it somewhat differently, that history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence...<sup>766</sup>

As it is with individual trauma, “denial, repression, and dissociation,” also manifests on the social body, as its “underground history,” rests in the unconscious.<sup>767</sup>

### **Resurrection Narratives**

The ongoing challenge of the cross suggested by resurrection narratives calls us to “weave a new kind of body;” one that is “less pure, pristine, and perfected,” compared to the resurrection image handed down by Tradition.<sup>768</sup>

It appears as an invitation to multilayered witness, involving senses beyond seeing, which in the tradition became the dominant sense to convey truth, faith, and knowledge of God. As the wounds of history return, reappearing in the present, Christian theology might offer a vision of resurrection that addresses these wounds, precisely because wounds return.<sup>769</sup>

When the disciples gathered in the Upper Room, where they met Jesus in the Last Supper, the “doors were locked...for fear of the Jews.”<sup>770</sup> But Jesus came as if passing

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<sup>766</sup> Caruth narrates the experience of Sigmund Freud when he wrote the book “Moses and Monotheism” that was about the history of the Jews. Though criticized for its authentic portrayal of history, it narrates the impact of trauma, not only to the Jews, whose departure from Egypt parallels their departure from their countries during the Nazi. Freud also narrates, how the writing of the different parts of the book, was also affected by his and his family’s departure from Austria. Candy Caruth, “Unclaimed Experience of Trauma and the Possibility of History,” *Yale French Studies: Literature and Ethical Question* 79, (1991): 187-188.

<sup>767</sup> Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 1.

<sup>768</sup> Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds*, 14.

<sup>769</sup> Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds*, 14.

<sup>770</sup> John 20:19a

through the walls, declaring to them “Peace be with you.”<sup>771</sup> Then, he “showed them his hands and his side.”<sup>772</sup> The disciples rejoiced at the sight of him but Jesus, as if not seeing this, repeated himself once again saying “Peace be with you” and declares that he is sending them just as the Father has sent him.<sup>773</sup> He also breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”<sup>774</sup> He then commissioned them and said, “whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”<sup>775</sup>

Thomas was not around when this happened. People in trauma go through stages of denial, of avoiding the pain and this could probably be the state of Thomas at that time. When he reappeared before the disciples, his traumatic state may have made him say, “unless I see the mark of the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”<sup>776</sup> A traumatized Thomas insists on being able to see the wound and touch to prove that Jesus is alive. This happened indeed, for, after a week, Jesus reappeared (again implying that he passed through the walls as the doors were locked) and did not only show him his hand and his sides. He told Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand, and put it on my side.”<sup>777</sup> Jesus rose from the dead with wounds. He declares peace but also confronts Thomas and the disciples by his wounds.

As the Gospel narrative suggests, Jesus returns with wounds before the disciples and invites Thomas to insert his finger onto his side; a re-membering of the suffering and

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<sup>771</sup> John 20:19b. This greeting echoes Joh 14:27, when Jesus, after promising to send the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete also mentions, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives, do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.”

<sup>772</sup> John 20:20a. In Luke’s account (24:39-40), Jesus invites them to look at his hands and feet as well as to touch them.

<sup>773</sup> John 20:21

<sup>774</sup> John 20:23

<sup>775</sup> John 20:23

<sup>776</sup> John 20:25

<sup>777</sup> John 20:27

trauma so that new life is possible not only for victims but for all. When wounds are faced and touched, it opens up possibilities for breaking the cycles of traumatic violence.”<sup>778</sup>

The original ending in Mark’s Gospel powerfully depicts what normally comes at the post-traumatic scenario in a community (Mark 16:1-8). It talks about three frightened women who left in a haste after visiting the tomb of Jesus and finding him gone. They had come to the tomb early in the morning to anoint Jesus. It was after the Sabbath and since they were all women, they had asked themselves, “who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?”<sup>779</sup> But they were surprised to find the stone already rolled back. A man in a white robe appears to them and tells them, “Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him. But go and tell his disciples and Peter, ‘ He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.”<sup>780</sup> They left filled with “trembling and bewilderment. They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”<sup>781</sup>

Silence is a typical response to the end of trauma. While a longer ending and a shorter ending are written to close the story, the fact that Mark ends the Gospel in this way, tells us how trauma leaves us remaining between death and life. Between disbelief and belief, between fear and courage, between hate and love. Like the women, we could sense what was going on, but sometimes, our fear takes over. Silence could also be a “deliberate act” out of learned helplessness from the past brought about by the “silence of

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<sup>778</sup> Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds*, 92.

<sup>779</sup> Mark 16:3

<sup>780</sup> Mark 16, 6-7

<sup>781</sup> Mark 16:8



perpetrators of the past crimes and bystanders who did nothing.”<sup>782</sup> But surely, if one simply attends to the encounter, of awakening the senses, just as Mary Magdalene turned around and finally saw Jesus, we could all exclaim, “I have seen the Lord!”<sup>783</sup>

### **Communities of Resistance and Hope**

Prophetic literature also speaks of the Israelites’ failure to see and hear God’s call for them in the different periods of their life as a community. Written during experiences of war and disaster, these prophetic writings are believed to be people’s interpretations of the events in the form of prose and poetry. Through the years, they have become survival literature for the Israelites, to help them find meaning and hope in their suffering. Trauma studies have influenced the interpretation of the prophetic literature, seen as meaning-making maps for the Israelite community under siege.<sup>784</sup>

Prophets were “spokesperson and intermediaries,” and they did not write what they have proclaimed. As it is from oral to written culture, prophetic literature is a translation and because it is not bound by geography, it can speak to generations and its power for meaning-making is endless. The oral and the written literature, however, remain distinct in their role.

Prophecy as oral communication is raw, iconoclastic, immediate, and exacting. It seeks to bring about fundamental changes in social arrangements, often before the collapse of long-standing cherished structures – political, religious, economic, and symbolic. Prophecy as written communication attends to the survivors. It takes

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<sup>782</sup> Robert Schreiter, “A Practical Theology of Healing, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation,” 379.

<sup>783</sup> John 20:18

<sup>784</sup> Louis Stulman and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, *You are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2010), 30. Also see A. Groenewald, “Trauma is suffering that Remains”. The Contribution of Trauma Studies to Prophetic Studies,” *Acta Theologica* 26 (2018): 88-102.

shape during and after the frightful events; all the while it engages in artful reinterpretation and reenactment.<sup>785</sup>

The extrajudicial killings have given birth to modern-day prophets, who by their courage to speak the truth are recreating prophetic literature today. They develop strategies of resistance from the structure they are part of.

### **Nightcrawlers and Artist for Dissent**

Among them are the nightcrawlers and the so-called artists for dissent. One can only see clearly when encounters happen in real-time; at the moment. The nightcrawlers are photojournalists assigned to cover news stories at night. Their responsibility created them as powerful witnesses by their long gaze at the evils of the war on drugs and the impact of these deaths in society.<sup>786</sup> Many of them confess to the difficulty of remaining neutral and unaffected by the sight of violence and grief, as they witness to how evil can stand on both sides.

I expected a dead body with packs of meth, a gun, blood, and gore—criteria that seem to be a template in most reports on the drug war. But a ravaged body of a seven-year-old girl—raped and killed beside a grave—turned up instead. Near the body was her grieving father, turned mute by pain and anguish. Police say the rapist was the father’s friend, a drunk, and an alleged drug addict. They say he is the very justification of the drug war that takes away thousands of lives and

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<sup>785</sup> Stulman and Kim, *You are my People*, 10.

<sup>786</sup> Several photojournalists interviewed express their conviction to do their work despite the threats. One says that he is first human before a journalist and thus to hear the cries of the oppressed and to let it be heard through their stories is his mission. Patricia Evangelist, “Photographer Ezra Acayan – I am Human first before I am a journalist,” *Rappler*, December 17, 2018, <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/videos-podcasts/199107-ezra-acayan-video-press-freedom-philippines-war-on-drugs>.

violates human rights. That night, I felt our months-long efforts to humanize and seek justice and sympathy for the victims of the killings were made useless. That night, evil won. Suddenly, the killings seemed reasonable. Suddenly, I was hoping someone would shoot this man dead—the way cops and vigilantes ruthlessly killed the others. Forget due process, forget a trial. I became exactly like the monsters I fought and hated. Until I realized you cannot use one crime to justify a thousand others...<sup>787</sup>

On the other hand, many also rediscover their passion and life's purpose as they too take the courage to witness

I don't dwell on the risks of my job. It's my obligation as a Filipino. I live here. These are my countrymen. Thousands of people are getting killed and what's sadder for me is how many Filipinos don't see anything wrong with it. There are other solutions to the drug problem. And I hope that when they see these images, they do something about it. I hope in some way my work can help end this dark period... This violence and impunity in the Philippines have moved from alleged drug users being killed on the streets, to activists, lawyers, and priests being gunned down at work. People are so numb that it's just normal... When I was covering other news stories before, sometimes four or five stories in a day, I would come home and my family would ask me, "what did you cover today?... Sometimes I wouldn't know how to respond because they have just become mere

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<sup>787</sup> The story is narrated by Dondi Tawatao, a photojournalist, assigned to cover the news at night and specifically to cover stories on the Duterte's drug War. Andrew Katz, "I am Seeing my Countrymen Die," *Time*, accessed February 1, 2020, <https://time.com/philippines-rodrigo-duterte-drug-war-local-photographers/>.

photos to me. But when this story came along, it brought me back to why I wanted to be a photojournalist in the first place. I know the names of these victims. I know their children. Every time I talk about my photos, I don't need a script. I know what happened to them.<sup>788</sup>

Although mediatized suffering has been critiqued to propagate distant suffering and the so-called “infotainment,” proliferated by more affluent countries towards developing countries, artists, and photojournalists are contemporary witnesses who can courageously speak of the deaths but also to the life remaining in violence through artistic expressions. As they publish the stories of victims through their articles, photos, multimedia, and other artistic expressions, they convey the cries and anger, the questions and ambiguity, and the hopes that remain in the darkness.<sup>789</sup>

Like prophetic literature that spoke about traumatic experiences of the Israelite community, they do not only display reality as it is, they also convey the unexpressed, the unspeakable.<sup>790</sup> By remembering their stories, victims are re-remembered. Like prophetic literature from ancient Israel, they expose the “deep ruptures,” of the war on drugs and by doing so, they break the denials as well as expose lies that the dominant voice successfully proclaims in the public sphere. In short, they tell the truth.

In social media as well as in academic and artistic spaces, some artists express their lament by exposing the pain and agony of victims and their families through their

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<sup>788</sup> Raffy Lerma, “Ethics through the Lens: Photographing the Drug War in the Philippines,” *Ethical Journalism Network*, accessed February 5, 2020, [https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/saving-the-news/philippines\\_](https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/saving-the-news/philippines_)

<sup>789</sup> Andrew Katz, “I am Seeing my Countrymen Die,”

<sup>790</sup> A. Groenewald, “Trauma is Suffering that Remains: The Contribution of Trauma Studies to Prophetic Studies,” *ACTA Theologica* 26 (2018): 95, <http://dx.doi.org/10.18820/23099089/actat.Sup26.5> ISSN 2309-9089.

“art of dissent.”<sup>791</sup> A video of a famous Filipino Christmas song was produced with a twist; a new version of the song that talks about the extrajudicial killings are held in placards in the video while images of the death and darkness of the war on drugs are presented.<sup>792</sup> To see is to experience the story itself through a photo or an art installation with a voice narrating the story.<sup>793</sup>

A blue single-seater armchair sits in the middle of a darkened room. It is surrounded by lamps hanging from the ceiling and rotating; another lamp hangs directly above it. The voice of a young girl named Christine, whose fleeting image is projected on a wall, tells the story of how her father knelt in front of the police before he was shot right in front of her. Before spectators can fully understand what was happening, they get up to realize that the chair they have been sitting on has a bullet hole in it. And just behind it, a bullet wrapped in clear plastic is pinned to the wall – the bullet that killed Christine’s father. “It’s happening, isn’t it?” one spectator tells Carlo Gabuco, the artist who made the installation, as she turns to see a wall covered with hundreds of photos of killings, mourning, and funerals from the country’s ‘war on drugs’.<sup>794</sup>

As generations read the prophetic literature from their context, their questions, issues, and interpretive lens, they engage in a kind of interactive art. This “reperformance

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<sup>791</sup> The Conversation, “How Filipino artists are responding to President Duterte and the ‘War on Drugs,’” accessed on February 4, 2020, <https://theconversation.com/how-filipino-artists-are-responding-to-president-duterte-and-the-war-on-drugs-84510>.

<sup>792</sup> RESBAK, “Christmas in Our Hearts,” *Facebook*, accessed February 4, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/artistsresbak/videos/664983860351129/?t=141>.

<sup>793</sup> Carlo Gabuco, “Less than Human,” accessed February 1, 2020, <http://www.carlogabuco.com/multimedia>.

<sup>794</sup> Jay Ramirez, “Meet the Artist changing gut reactions to the Philippines’ war on drugs,” *From Poverty to Power*, July 5, 2019, <https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/meet-the-artist-changing-gut-reactions-to-the-philippines-war-on-drugs/>.

and recontextualization” provides a “script of second chances” through a “liturgical window.”<sup>795</sup> The Stations of the Cross with photos of victims displayed at a shrine during the season of Advent disturbed and disrupted people’s gaze and drove home a point of a need to awaken the senses.<sup>796</sup> On the eve of Human Rights Day, the same shrine changed the INRI sign on the cross with the placard, “stop the killings,” to facilitate the touching of wounds. While it is attested to have a powerful impact on the transformation of pain and anger into the symbolic action of victims, it can also transform communities.<sup>797</sup>

Human rights organizations have sought the arts to awaken the people “down to the gut,” since they see how the traditional medium of communication used in lectures conveyed through abstract ideas and PowerPoint presentations do not affect change.<sup>798</sup> “Material theopoetics,” in the form of photos, murals, button pins, and interactive rituals become a “living testimony to the pact the living have with the dead.”<sup>799</sup> Like prophetic literature, they articulate a vision of hope (Jeremiah 29:11. Jeremiah 31:17) and transform both oppressors and the oppressed into witnesses.

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<sup>795</sup> Stulman and Kim, *You are my People*, 16.

<sup>796</sup> Newsbreak Voices, “Church of the Resistance,” *Rappler*, December 30, 2016, <https://www.rappler.com/.../156926-newsbreak-voices-church-resistance>.

<sup>797</sup> Walsh conducted her studies in two institutes that care for victims of traumatic violence and has witnessed to various strategies that these institutes employed in the healing process of individuals. She however, points out how power analysis is also important in understanding the impact of such strategies especially in transforming communities in the aftermath of violence. Michelle Walsh, “Taking Matter Seriously,” in *Post-Traumatic Public Theology*, eds. Stephanie Arel and Shelly Rambo (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016): 242.

<sup>798</sup> International human rights groups have begun funding “different type of activists,” like artists to help in the task of promoting human rights. Jay Ramirez, “Meet the Artist changing gut reactions to the Philippines’ war on drugs,” *From Poverty to Power*, July 5, 2019, <https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/meet-the-artist-changing-gut-reactions-to-the-philippines-war-on-drugs/>

<sup>799</sup> Walsh, “Taking Matter Seriously,” 243.

## Organic Intellectuals and New Forms of Solidarity

For some of them, beyond their truth-telling art, they are witnesses who act as a bridge for the church to connect with the victims and their families and to find ways to respond to their immediate needs.<sup>800</sup> New social movements that thrive amid the growing injustice in the country, are “ethics in praxis,” and by espousing an “ethics of refusal” to be dominated upon, make their stand against injustice raw and pure.<sup>801</sup> They are laypeople in their professional fields – artists, lawyers, psychologists, teachers, etc. or groups that share the same vision. They have affiliated themselves with dioceses affected by the killings and make it a point to inform the bishop or those in charge whenever they witness a death within their jurisdiction. Often, the parish priest of the victim is not aware of the killings because the deaths normally happen at night or especially in areas far from the parish center. Parish priests reason out that they may not know about the death because the families may not be Catholic or even if they were, they did not come to ask for a blessing.<sup>802</sup>

There was this journalist who happened to be a redemptorist brother who told me that he was interviewing a family and he asked about their religious affiliation and the wife said they were Catholics. The photojournalist asked, ‘who is your parish priest?’ to which they responded, ‘we don’t know.’ Then he asked, ‘what parish do you belong to?’ they said, “oh there is a church nearby.” They are not insiders

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<sup>800</sup> Many of the EJK groups have mentioned how photojournalists have helped them reach out to the victims and their families. Meetings organized by church to present facts and figures or to discuss programs related to the war on drugs, these journalists are invited not as media personnel but as collaborators. Fieldwork Observation, Manila, February 26, 2019.

<sup>801</sup> Felix Wilfred, *Margins: Site of Asian Theologies* (Delhi: Cambridge, 2008), 260-261.

<sup>802</sup> Interview, Pablo David, Caloocan City, January 13, 2019.

from the parish. He asked, ‘if you are a Catholic, why don’t you ask for a mass from the priest’ and he was shocked by the response. They said, “we don’t even have enough money to bury our dead family member, how much more to ask for a mass or a blessing?”<sup>803</sup>

Such disconnect becomes obvious in the most traumatic of times and acknowledging this misrecognition can be the first step for change to take place. Like prophets in the Old Testament, who contrary to earlier notions, were not fortune-tellers but change agents evoking an alternative consciousness to anticipate the vision of God’s reign, professionals who are involved with those who suffer facilitate a new way of understanding and engagement with the others through their unique perspective about their story.<sup>804</sup> By doing so, they critique the dominant consciousness but they also nurture and energize people towards imbibing an alternative way of thinking and being.<sup>805</sup>

Collaborative endeavors *ad intra* and *ad extra* are not new in the purview of ecclesial life. Similar interests or common pastoral directions bring ecclesial communities and groups to work together. The war on drugs, however, triggered new forms of solidarity and reinvigorated the gift of the laity in responding to unique concerns of extrajudicial victims and their families.

I am an optometrist by profession but since I have been involved in the parish, the war on drugs, pulled me to an entirely different direction, beyond my imagination. Before this, I was not involved in social action work. But then when I saw people

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<sup>803</sup> Interview, Pablo David, Caloocan City, January 13, 2019.

<sup>804</sup> Walter Brueggeman, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 13. ESCO Publishing: eBook Collection (EBSCOhost) Printed on 3/30/2016.

<sup>805</sup> Walter Brueggeman, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 14.



getting killed even among our parishioners, I began to study different perspectives on drug rehabilitation because I felt the church program was too spiritual and did not fully cater to their needs and interests. I struggled with the diocesan coordinator because they insisted that I follow the program. But I was convinced it wasn't enough. I went to as far as Mindanao and Indonesia to be exposed to different perspectives. We have had two years of successful graduates and I am happy that the priest coordinator became open to modify the program.

When I visit the homes of our graduates, it is heartwarming to see that their lives have changed.<sup>806</sup>

I was initially involved with the drug dependents but when the killings were increasing in number, I decided to form a small group of people from my parish community to directly accompany the widows, mothers, and children of victims. We underwent training on family pastoral counseling and grief counseling modules which were being given to families. I am happy that in my little way, we can be part of their process of healing towards a new life.<sup>807</sup>

Lawyers for human rights education, documentation of cases, as well as for litigation purposes, psychologists and psychiatrists in the development of community-based rehabilitation programs as well as in the assessment of drug surrenderees, and entrepreneurs and business people in providing basic skills for livelihood have been instrumental in accompanying EJK komunitas. Awareness raising and protest mobilization have also facilitated interfaith and ecumenical solidarities where people

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<sup>806</sup> Interview, Alvin, Makati, February 10, 2019.

<sup>807</sup> Interview, Joey, Makari, February 15, 2019.

come together for the common concern of fighting for justice for the victims. Such new solidarities are prophetic by being rooted and by the nurturing of gifts that are already present, their initiatives can energize the Christian community. They are not only organic intellectuals, with skills and knowledge to share; they present pathways for newness.<sup>808</sup>

### **Tactics from the Margins**

A high level of social capital is important in a community as it also surfaces the dynamics of resistance to power.<sup>809</sup> While redressive strategies are exercised by *communitas*, there are individuals in communities afflicted by violence who display tactics of survival and resistance.<sup>810</sup> Strategies are developed from a structure similar to those mentioned above but a tactic does not have a locus and so plays on space, in the in-between, through manipulation and by adjusting those spaces according to the desired need. Tactic as the “art of the weak,” is a “calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus.”<sup>811</sup>

The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus, it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to keep to itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection; it is a maneuver “within the enemy’s field of

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<sup>808</sup> Antonio Gramsci, “Intellectuals and Hegemony,” in *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings* ed. Charles Lambert. (USA: Westview Press, 1999), 259-261.

<sup>809</sup> David Hollenbach, “The African Challenge: Human Rights and Development,” in *The Global Face of Public Faith: Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Ethics* (Washington: Georgetown, 2003), 220.

<sup>810</sup> Katongole highlights tactical communities of resistance and hope in Africa. See Emmanuel Katongole, “Postmodern Illusions and the Challenges of African Theology,” in *An Eerdmans Reader in Contemporary Political Theology*, ed. William Cavanaugh and others (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).

<sup>811</sup> Michel de Certeau, *Practices of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 37.

vision,” and within enemy territory. It does not, therefore, have the option of planning general strategy ...It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow.<sup>812</sup>

Although other factors may be attributed to the growth of Christian and Islamic fundamentalist sects around the world, they are communities of resistance that seek to zealously live out their faith in response to the world together. Like military strategists that employ tactics to survive in unforeseen events at the battlefield, tactical communities of resistance are characterized by a “total rejection of the postmodern culture of death” by not withdrawing but by dealing with it critically and selectively.<sup>813</sup>

Tactics are practices of everyday life, the *lo cotidiano* referred to by *Latino/a* and *mujerista* theologians.<sup>814</sup> While *lo cotidiano* refers to reality – the story and the place where it takes place, it is also the way by which one deals with reality. The multiple electrical wirings on electric posts in urban poor communities, which always catches the attention of foreign visitors, is a powerful image of tactical practices of everyday life. While there is only one electric conductor for every home, because of many illegal dwellers or those who cannot pay for their utility bills, there are “jumpers,” or illegal connections made to make electricity possible for them. *Lo cotidiano* is a “problematized reality that one can find in it subversive and creative elements that enable questioning oppression and resisting it.”<sup>815</sup>

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<sup>812</sup> De Certeau, *Practices of Everyday Life*, 37.

<sup>813</sup> Katongole, “Postmodern Illusions and the Challenges of African Theology,” 520.

<sup>814</sup> Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, “*Mujerista* Discourse: A Platform for Latina’s Subjugated Knowledge,” In *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*, eds. Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Eduardo Mendieta (New York: Fordham, 2012), 48-49.

<sup>815</sup> Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, “*Mujerista* Discourse,” 49.

While the theory of tactics has been used to uplift forms of resistance to a dominant culture, tactics expose an absence.<sup>816</sup> Tactics fill a void or a gap. In the ongoing story of extrajudicial killings, tactical practices exemplified by individuals reveal people's conviction to face the unending cross of suffering and to live the vision of hope in the resurrection, together. Such practices mirror but also critique our ecclesial practices especially in the light of re-membering the *kapwa*. By activating *pakikiramdam*, a shared inner perception, they embody *pakikipagkapwa*, re-membering the *kapwa* in their midst.

Tactical practices displayed by these individuals and communities provide pathways for a church that witnesses to the ongoing nature of the cross. It characterizes an "embrace of the inscrutable darkness," and the humility to understand that "God works on both sides of the street."<sup>817</sup> When people are brought back to experience, they are awakened to their prophetic call and their imagination for a future of hope.

### **To Gaze: *Iba ang Tinitignan sa Tinititigan***

There is an idiom, one so often hears from people in the community, "*Iba ang tinitignan sa tinititigan*," to simply look is different from a gaze. A lay leader from the community takes this as his running refrain as he speaks about many instances of looking beyond what he sees.

Many times, situations thrust upon me the need to see beyond what was happening. I was sitting in front of my house when the police officers came looking for our neighbor. But the wife was already with them and she looked

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<sup>816</sup> Antonio Eduardo Alonso, "Listening for the Cry: Certeau Beyond Strategies and Tactics," *Modern Theology* 33, 3 (3 July 2017): 371, ISSN: 1468-0025.

<sup>817</sup> Walter Brueggeman, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 17. Printed on 3/30/2016, ESCO Publishing: eBook Collection (EBSCOhost).

helpless leading the police officers to their house. When I saw this, I knew if no one was with her, anything can happen. Either the husband gets killed on the spot or one of them takes the punishment. I stood up and walked with them to their house. I joined them inside the house as they surveyed the place in search of the husband. He was not there but the children and other family members were there. After that incident, they could talk about their family situation with me because I saw the need to help when the moment came.<sup>818</sup>

Though the reception of everyday realities is culturally conditioned, it also can act upon us.<sup>819</sup> While there is what is called “politics of things,” the “poetics of things,” argue how looking can bring about new meaning and stimulate associations to the person.<sup>820</sup>

As a youth leader, it always helps me to get to know our young people when I visit them at home. Once, I visited a youth member and spent some time with her at home. We were conversing about certain things, but I saw her ‘crying inside.’ She seemed withdrawn. The mother was around, so I asked if I could speak with her privately. At first, she didn’t want to tell me, but I was patient to wait for her time to speak. She confessed, “My mother pimps me to men whenever she is high on drugs.” Another girl her age also confessed that her mom who also uses drugs would prostitute herself in front of her and her other siblings. It pains me to see

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<sup>818</sup> Interview, Celso, Caloocan City, October 22, 2019.

<sup>819</sup> Sonia Waters, “Devotional Looking and the Possibilities of Free Associative Sight,” in *Sensing Sacred: Exploring Human Senses in Practical Theology and Pastoral Care*, ed. Jennifer Baldwin (New York: Lexington, 2016): 93.

<sup>820</sup> Waters, “Devotional Looking and the Possibilities of Free Associative Sight,” 93.

them in these situations but what I witnessed opened my eyes and my heart to what needs to be done.<sup>821</sup>

A gaze, a focused look, is an act of contemplation but it doesn't happen when one has no relation with the other. "Contemplation is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus; "I look at him and he looks at me." <sup>822</sup> To see the story of Jesus reinterpreted in the stories of suffering today is an act of contemplation.

Communion and contemplation cannot be separated; they go hand in hand. If I am truly to communicate with another person, I must know him. I must be able to be in silence close to him, to listen to him and look at him lovingly. True love and true friendship are always nourished by the reciprocity of looks, of intense, eloquent silences full of respect and veneration, so that the encounter may be lived profoundly and personally rather than superficially. And, unfortunately, if this dimension is lacking, sacramental communion itself may become a superficial gesture on our part.<sup>823</sup>

When one looks with love, silence is a tactic that opens windows for understanding and deeper solidarity with the other.

### **To Listen and To Hear: *Nakikinig sa Bulong*<sup>824</sup>**

There is a difference between listening and hearing. To listen is "active forward participation," and giving attention to the needs of the other while to hear connotes

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<sup>821</sup> Interview, Sandro, Caloocan City, October 22, 2019.

<sup>822</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2715, accessed April 18, 2020, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_INDEX.HTM](https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM)

<sup>823</sup> Benedict, "Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Holy Mass for the Solemnity of Corpus Christi," June 7, 2012, [http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2012/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20120607\\_corpus-domini.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20120607_corpus-domini.html).

<sup>824</sup> Tagalog phrase translates "listening to the whisper."

perceiving or receiving the other openly and patiently.<sup>825</sup> It is by “honoring alterity,” and the multiplicity of the “other” around us that tactical practices of embodied hearing and presence are possible.<sup>826</sup>

A hermeneutic of multiplicity takes seriously the presence and perspective of otherness that is highlighted through alterity. As we somatically attune to our body and the presence of others, we become increasingly aware of our internal multiplicity; and by acknowledging and internally caring for our multiplicity, we gain the lenses to respectfully attend to the multiplicity of persons in the community.<sup>827</sup>

The culture of *chismis* or neighborhood gossiping has been adopted as a positive way of reaching out to the families.<sup>828</sup> Information about the killings is learned from the grapevine from which some basic data can be obtained. Women involved in the BECs, out of a desire to help, will gather more information by speaking to the family members or relatives or friends discretely. Since they know how most families would be afraid to have their case documented, they try to find out other needs they might be of help with like employment, educational assistance, or food supply. Finding these as openings, they offer individual help or parish services and by doing so, relationship with the family is gradually established, even when their story of victimhood is left on the sideline for a

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<sup>825</sup> Jennifer Baldwin, “Akroatic, Embodied Hearing and Presence as Spiritual Practice,” in *Sensing Sacred: Exploring Human Senses in Practical Theology and Pastoral Care*, ed. Jennifer Baldwin (New York: Lexington, 2016): 76-77.

<sup>826</sup> Baldwin, “Akroatic, Embodied Hearing and Presence as Spiritual Practice,” 80.

<sup>827</sup> Jennifer Baldwin, “Akroatic, Embodied Hearing and Presence as Spiritual Practice,” 80.

<sup>828</sup> Interview, Danny, Caloocan City, March 4, 2019.

while. The connection takes them one step nearer to the process; to find healing and transformation together.

The real cries of people can only be heard from where they are. Pastoral workers assigned to care for the survivors of EJK, who are also residents of the community, embody this multiplicity that allows them to listen and hear the real cries of people.<sup>829</sup> Since help extended to families of victims can be sporadic and available only “while supplies last,” these women volunteers develop their tactics in assisting the needs of families.<sup>830</sup> They are the ones who could listen to the real cries of the mothers and orphans and they are also aware of the bigger issues attached to their present concerns. Aside from being the bridge for the families to receive support, they also give voice to their real concerns, questions, and longings. Being part of the same community, they know other victims may not be orphaned or widowed by the war on drugs but experience death daily. When supplies that are meant only for the victims are handed over to them, these coordinators creatively extend help to families whose fathers were also arrested and are in jail because of drugs. Though they are not included in the list of EJK families, they also know that they are victims who need to be assisted.

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<sup>829</sup> Every vicariate has an appointed coordinator to handle families of victims of the drug war. Many of them were involved in the BEC or the social action ministry of the parish. They are also trained by the diocese with skills on documentation, human rights, counseling, etc. They are also provided with psycho-spiritual support through regular meetings, retreats and spiritual direction.

<sup>830</sup> The program to assist families is handled from the diocesan curia and is sustained through individuals and groups that support their cause. The coordinators are informed when help (food assistance, scholarship or school allowance, training for livelihood, etc.) is provided and they are left to decide who will receive the support.



Wounds and their stories, however, are more intimately shared. To truly listen is to allow oneself to be exposed to the truth. A laywoman recalls her own experience of being up close and personal with a hitman who has killed many people.

He was the one who was found dead at the lakeside. I didn't know him before he came to our house. But I have to say that it was a divine moment to know him. I needed someone who could fix my electricity wiring at home and he was recommended by my *kumare* (female friend). But a neighbor warned me before that, "be careful because he is a hitman." When I heard that, I said, "Is that so? But why was he referred to me?" "But he is a good man," my friend said. When he came to fix our wirings, I felt it was an opportunity to get to know him. For a while, I thought it was risky for me and my husband to be alone with him in the house. But praying over it, I felt it was a moment to reach out to him. An instant mission that I have to say yes to. While he stayed to do what was required, I was with him assisting him but also taking time with him during mealtimes and snack break. I prepared food but also sat with him to share stories. At one point, he asked me, "I have something to tell you *Ate* (older sister). I feel I can trust you enough to share my story." Then he asked me, "Are you not afraid of me?" I replied, "Why should I be afraid of you?" "Because I was a hitman. I was working for this man." "Huh?" I replied. "Oh, *Ate* I think you are getting afraid now." But I told him, "I am embarrassed that you are telling me about this. Are you not afraid that I might inform the authorities about it?" "No. I don't fear that. I see how you are true to your words and how you are open to being of service to someone like me." I asked him, "I hope you don't mind me asking, but how many

have you killed?” “I can no longer count them through my fingers.” “But how can you do that? Were you never afraid?” “I could only do so when I am high on drugs.” “But you know *Ate*? I am a changed man since I became a grandfather.” We had a very good conversation and we became friends. At one point, he told me how he started to stop in front of the chapel to make the sign of the cross. After a month, I wanted to hire him again. He passed by to look at what was needed, and we agreed on what materials to buy. On the day he was supposed to come, there was no sight of him. Then after a few days, I learned from a neighbor that he was killed miles away from our community. Most of our neighbors were surprised because they knew him to be a good man. He had money to spare to kids who were starving in the neighborhood. When someone’s electricity got busted, he would willingly repair for free. In our community, he planted only the good. No one believed that he would do that. His daughter came to me one day, to talk about her father. While she shared about how good he was to her, I remember him and his stories.<sup>831</sup>

To hear the cry of the poor is to see through the multilayered character of their stories and its ongoingness. While this story brings out ethical questions and the other cries of justice, it also proves the power of “deep listening” that listens to the “voice of the inaudible” which is only possible when one is open to self-silencing.<sup>832</sup> It is listening to

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<sup>831</sup> Interview, Marita, Caloocan City, October 22, 2019.

<sup>832</sup> Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of the Epistemologies of the South* (Durham: Duke University, 2018), 175-178.

the “the sound of the unintelligible,” and the “silence of the oppressed,” which may not only come from imposed silence but as an embodiment of protest.<sup>833</sup>

### **Pakikipagkapwa ng Ibang Tao - Solidarity OF Others**

Fluidarity, from the world fluid (as opposed to solid) and solidarity (or unity), defines practices that engage the differences and the complexities of the “other.”<sup>834</sup> It is also called a “solidarity of the different,” solidarity of others since liberation is not possible without the others.<sup>835</sup> Such perspective reflects the Trinitarian love, Jesus’ preferential love for the others, and the Christian reality of our lived tension between history and mystery.<sup>836</sup> The stories of communities of resistance, artists and photojournalists, organic intellectuals, and new forms of solidarity, as well as tactics from the margin exemplify this awakening in the community. The differences they present in terms of their social location, cultural and political perspectives, and religious background provide a beautiful piece in the mosaic of life of the “others” and when it is brought out into the light, reengaged with, remembers and re-members the *memoria passionis*.

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<sup>833</sup> De Sousa Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire*, 175-178:

<sup>834</sup> It was Diane Nelson who first coined the concept which she defines as one that “renounces solid identifications while vigilantly investigating the investments and conditions of possibility for such identification effects. It painfully acknowledges that bodies and bodies politic are not cleanly demarcated entities in the world but instead are wounded; they suffer bleeding boundaries and are constantly threatened by fingers in the wound. Fluidarity is not about withdrawing from the complexities of this scene to nurse these ferocious aches. It is about trying to find a way to ethically articulate these relations: to articulate in the sense of writing and speaking about...in the sense of paying attention to those strange and transformative connections that make identities and in sense of constituting and being constituted by those very connections.” Diane Nelson, *Body Politics in Quincentennial Guatemala* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1999), 348-349.

<sup>835</sup> Anselm Kyongsuk Min, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World: A Postmodern Theology after Postmodernism* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 81-83.

<sup>836</sup> Min, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World*, 81-83.

Many times, stories of resistance from below and outside the ecclesial structure are hailed as inspirational and sacramental, often proclaimed in the pulpit or explored by theologians in their discourses. Yet, they are missed as informative resources for remembering the suffering bodies and transforming praxis in ecclesial life. Often, stories of resistance within local churches, lose their power when it is simply engaged as best practices. Aside from embodying “creative agency aimed at problem-solving,” their actions presuppose a “latent familiarity that increases as it becomes explicit.”<sup>837</sup> Providing new ways of interpreting the story, their practices take people closer to home, offer a common language, and contribute to the development of a new social imaginary.

The diagram displays the prophetic witnessing exemplified by the solidarity of others. There are two lines of distinctions that are indicated by their practices. First, is the importance of differentiating between strategies and tactics. Strategies are employed by communities that creatively respond to the stories of the suffering from the structure they are part of. Artists and professionals employ the power of their given expertise and location. Tactics are employed by those who are consumers or receivers of these strategies to respond to the everyday. Subverting strategies, it implies the power of the weak to recreate their structure and process.

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<sup>837</sup> Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire*, 100.



Figure 10. Strategies and Tactics of Resistance

Second, whether they are strategic or tactical practices, they are sensorial, and these fragments of images are necessary for developing a “communal consciousness,” towards “claiming space,” “processing pain,” and in creating a new “social imaginary,” important in transcending suffering.<sup>838</sup> By embodying *pakikipagkapwa* (neighborliness) through *pakikiramdam* (shared inner perception), these practices are capable of generating social power and birth a new social imagination as they provide an “alternative view of reality,” and even “critique existing ideologies,” that create apathy and indifference.<sup>839</sup> Through the solidarity of others, a new corporate *kapwa*, the body of Christ, can be imaged and experienced.

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<sup>838</sup> Pineda-Madrid, *Ciudad de Juarez*, 111.

<sup>839</sup> Pineda-Madrid, *Ciudad de Juarez*, 115-118.

### ***Pagbubuo ng Loob: Embodying Corporate/Collective Relational Interiority***

Filipino philosophy refers to the *loob* or inner self in three dimensions: *abot-malay* (ambit or reach of consciousness) and *abot-dama* (ambit or reach of feeling), and *abot-kaya* (ambit or reach of strength) or the “movement of one’s will to make it happen” as elements toward a *pagbubuo ng loob*, an integrated relational interiority.<sup>840</sup> It alludes to what epistemologies of the south refer to as the *corazonar*, the *corazonada* - the warming of reason, and “intimate sufficiencies” providing power for struggle and resistance.

*Corazonar* means to experience misfortune or unjust suffering of others as one’s own and to be willing to join in the struggle against it, even to the point of running risks. It means doing away with passivity and strengthening active nonconformity before injustice. *Corazonar* never means that emotions cause a loss of control. On the contrary, emotions are a vital energy impelling good reasons to move into reasoned action.<sup>841</sup>

Intimate sufficiencies refer to a “set of internal supplies to be found in collective memory,” or “a stock of meanings to be resorted to at critical moments for the construction of life strategies.”<sup>842</sup> More than simply a looking back to the past, it is a way of “releasing the power of our ways of thinking, doing, and naming with a view to carving, plowing, and finally clearing alternative paths,” that may recreate the narrative

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<sup>840</sup> Albert Alejo, “*Loob* as Relational Interiority: A Contribution to the Philosophy of the Human Person,” trans. Julia Riddle and Albert Alejo, *Social Transformations* 6, no. 1 (May 2018): 32.

<sup>841</sup> De Sousa Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire*, 100.

<sup>842</sup> De Sousa Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire*, 100.

and reshape ecclesial life and practices.<sup>843</sup> The *corazonar* as the thinking-feeling process may be the *abot-malay* and *abot-dama*, and the intimate sufficiencies, the *abot-kaya*.

When an individual embodies deep listening and deep seeing towards the “other,” it strengthens and makes whole one’s *loob* (*pagbubuo ng loob* – strengthening of the will/being).<sup>844</sup> The corporate *loob* of the body of Christ is also strengthened by stories of resistance and hope embodied by the solidarity of others. It is important in the reimagining of life after trauma, in recreating the narrative of the victimization of those who suffer in society, and in embodying hope in the resurrection as a church in the world.

### ***Pagkanaririto: Presencing as Meaning Making***

When the “solidarity of others,” is taken as meaning-making resources, their participation in history shapes ecclesial life. “Remembrance and hope are the conditions for experiencing history” but to witness history in the perspective of resurrection is to participate in its process.<sup>845</sup> To participate is to be present now; in real-time. It is to “know-with,” rather than to “know-about” those who suffer. Though it is body-to-body, physical presence is not enough.

*Corazonar* produces a zooming effect *through* which a remote and alien world becomes a close and familiar one. *Corazonar* is an expanded way of being-with, for it increases reciprocity and communion. It is the revitalizing process of a

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<sup>843</sup> The term comes from Santiago Arboleda, “Paisanajes, Colonias y Movilización Social Afrocolombiana en el Sur Occidente” in *Afrodendientes en las Américas Trayectorias Sociales e Identitarias*, edited by Claudia Mosquera, Mauricio Pardo, and Odile Hoffman, 399-420 (Bogota: Universidad de la Colombia ICAH/ID/ILSA). See de Sousa Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire*, 101.

<sup>844</sup> Alejo, “*Loob* as Relational Interiority,” 32.

<sup>845</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *Jesus Christ for Today’s World*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 79-80.

subjectivity that involves itself with others by selectively stressing whatever helps to strengthen sharing and being co-responsible.<sup>846</sup>

It is allowing oneself to be in the in-between with the other. By their presencing (presence + sensing) in the lives of victims and survivors, they embody prophetic witnessing and provide pathways towards the re-membering of the Filipino Passion in those “others.”<sup>847</sup>

Presencing also signifies the importance of place for the gathering of realities. While place connotes a geographical setting, it also exposes history, power relations, levels of relationships that may not be easily conveyed by a one-dimensional story. The solidarity of others who are presencing in the story of suffering reveals these other dimensions. As a place is produced by practices, it is constantly fluid and always in process.<sup>848</sup>

One of the reasons why the realities of the poor are not considered fully is because witnesses “exist in the everyday in a permanent presence that makes all attempts to escape it useless.”<sup>849</sup> Many BECs, despite their being organized in the neighborhood, tend to embody a permanent presence that is barricaded by church ideals and principles. It is a church transplanted in the neighborhood but not one that is nurtured by the wisdom and the subversive tactics of every day, the *lo cotidiano*. Presencing allows the

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<sup>846</sup> De Sousa Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire*, 99.

<sup>847</sup> The concept of presencing comes from Theory U, a method of action research from Otto Shramer. Presencing is part of a process of understanding and dealing with reality. See C. Otto Shramer, *The Essentials of Theory U: Core Principles and Applications* (Oakland: Berrett-Koehler, 2018). Shramer defines presencing as “the capacity to connect to the deepest sources of self – to go to the inner place of stillness where knowing comes to the surface.” See Theory U, <https://www.presencing.org/aboutus/theory-u>.

<sup>848</sup> Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 34-35.

<sup>849</sup> Isasi-Diaz, “Mujerista Discourse,” 55.



knowledge of the other to find space not only in the theological discourses listened to in the academe but in ecclesial practices, decision-making processes, structures, and programs.

***Paggising ng Pakikiramdam: Awakening of the Senses***

Bodily senses of speaking, touching, hearing, listening, and seeing are windows to encounter the stories of suffering. Bodily senses are always alluded to in the Scriptures when speaking about healing and new life (Ps 34:8; Prov 20:12, Matthew 8:3, Matthew 13:16, Matthew 24:1-51). The healing story of the man born blind speaks about different blindness that exists in people (John 9:1-41). A blind man is healed by Jesus, but his transformation was not accepted by others because of their blindness. In the book of Isaiah, “sensory and auditory imagery” are used to describe the Israelite’s relationship with Yahweh and the dawn of a new life for them.<sup>850</sup> After the oracles that spoke about the dark valleys of darkness that the Israelites experienced as a community (Isaiah 1-34), the Isaiah prophecy at the end of the first book visualizes a new Jerusalem.<sup>851</sup>

The initial call to “hear” which continues throughout the prophetic drama, reminds God’s people to discern God’s presence and perceive God’s action. Whereas the demoralizing experience of exile had created a world of eerie silence, the book of Isaiah breaks the silence and urges the people to recognize God’s presence and hear God’s word.<sup>852</sup>

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<sup>850</sup> Stulman and Kim, *You are my People*, 30.

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<sup>852</sup> Stulman and Kim, *You are my People*, 30.

The awakening of the senses prophesied in the ending of the first book of Isaiah, speaks about a healing story of individuals being transformed by God. But it also speaks about a community being awakened to a new way of looking, sensing, and living. It is about a community that witnesses by seeing beyond the trauma. By looking into and through the wounds. By hearing beyond the silence. By walking off the beaten paths. It is seeing, hearing, and sensing

[T]he collective in the individual, nature in society, the transcendent in the immanent, the past in the present, the future in the past, or vice versa, the past in the future. Or eyes that see the ancestors being present and participating in meetings; or see sounds, or see abundance where the researcher sees only scarcity or rubbish, or see the colors that only birds can see; and so on and so forth. Knowing-with requires that, in such circumstances, differences be turned into opportunities for intercultural intelligibility.<sup>853</sup>

The “solidarity of others” explored from strategies of resistance to tactics from the margin, from *ad intra* to *ad extra*, from insider to outsider perspective and back, may constitute new dimensions about the others that inform ecclesial life.

It is an awakening of the senses that facilitates listening to the “*sensus fidelium* in a diffuse sense.”<sup>854</sup> It is activating a “sense for the divine,” the “faith’s capacity for the discovery of revelation,” and the “active sense forever on the lookout for God.”<sup>855</sup> It is aesthetic *praxis*, that expands criteria from the logical to the embodied and that attends to

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<sup>853</sup> De Sousa Santos, *The End of the Colonial Empire*, 175.

<sup>854</sup> Ormond Rush, “The Church as a Hermeneutical Community and the Eschatological Function of the *Sensus Fidelium*,” in *Learning from All the Faithful*, eds. Bradford Hinze and Peter Phan (Eugene: Wipf and Stock), 150.

<sup>855</sup> Rush, *The Eyes of Faith*, 225.

encounters that happen through participation.<sup>856</sup> Engaging “affect and intellect,” it is “knowledge by empathy or connaturality, a knowledge of the heart.”

### **Easter Sunday in the Everyday**

The solidarity of others illumines Easter Sunday in the everyday. It strengthens corporate relational interiority, embodies presencing that recreates meaning, and awakens the senses. Like the gaze of Jesus to his mother Mary at Easter morn, their participation with those who suffer removes the veil from those who fail to recognize Jesus in them and renews the body of Christ in the world.

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<sup>856</sup> Edward Hahnenberg, “*Latinamente: A Dialogue with Orlando Espin,*” in *Learning from All the Faithful*, eds. Bradford Hinze and Peter Phan (Eugene: Wipf and Stock), 260.

## CHAPTER SEVEN. A SHARED HUMANITY: NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

As a practical theological research, the study responds to the crucial task of remembering the “others” and their stories of suffering to recreate the narrative of their subjugation in society and to renew Christian understanding of participation with the others. The vision of a church of the poor embodied in the building of basic ecclesial communities and participatory structures and methodologies manifest the Catholic Church’s commitment to shaping an ecclesial life from the perspective of the poor and oppressed. However, experience attests to how such structures and approaches are still limited in its capacity to fully attend to the others in ecclesial life. Despite the intentionality to engage with them and consider them as part of the many, the tension remains between attending to their concern as an exclusive group or as one that can inform and transform the bigger community.

The *memoria passionis* in the stories of those who suffer convey a multilayered and multidimensional performance. Dead bodies and suffering bodies may have a distinct and unique voice, but it also plays a role in the bigger story as well as substories imaged in practices, rituals, symbols, and relational patterns. As a social drama, their stories of suffering often go through stages of breach, crisis, redressive action, and reaggregation. As a wound that remains, the *memoria passionis*, is an ongoing phenomenon. More than leaving scars, it resurrects wounds that need attention as it reveals insidious trauma embedded in individuals and communities. As a transformative action, the stories of suffering also open narratives of disembodiment of the others and practices that reinscribe them in meaning-making and social change.

*Kapwa* theory, from indigenous Filipino psychology, provides a Filipino understanding of participation. *Kapwa*, loosely translated as the “other,” in Filipino, conveys the participatory nature of the Filipino psyche. Filipinos share their identity with the other; in fact, there is no I and you because *ka-puwa* means together at the gap and in the ‘in between.’ *Pakikipagkapwa* is about participation. Divine participation in history, Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection powerfully embodies *pakikipagkapwa*. As a theological methodology, *kapwa* theory and the *memoria passionis* modify the steps of the Circle Method, following four movements

1<sup>st</sup> Movement *Pakikipanuluyan* and *Pakikiisa* (Inserting and Identifying)

2<sup>nd</sup> Movement *Pagdama* and *Pagsusuri* (Sensing and Analyzing)

3<sup>rd</sup> Movement *Pag-uugnay-ugnay* and *Paghaharap-harap* (Correlating and Confronting)

4<sup>th</sup> Movement *Pagpapagaling* and *Pagpapatibay* (Healing and Strengthening)

Reentering the story of the war on drugs in this way brought out the spiral of signification of *ibang tao* (othering) reflected in the political sphere as well as in ecclesial practices. It critiques a praxis of suffering that tends to represent victims and survivors narrowly. Jesus’ life in the story of victims and survivors of the war on drugs as well as individuals and communities that journey with them towards healing and justice, provide new dimensions to a participatory church with and for the poor. Participation in the life of God, in the life of one another, and the life of the world is renewed with openness and hospitality to be transformed by the other. They are not recipients but agent-subjects, co-partners in the journey towards a new heaven and a new earth. To re-member involves

practices that reinstitute them and their stories in ecclesial life and in the church's mission to transform the world.

### **Praxis of Communion towards Reclaiming Dignity (Pagbabagong-Dangal)**

*Kapwa* as a shared identity defines a participatory church with the others through *pakikipagkapwa-ibang tao* (becoming one with the other); a praxis of communion that seeks to reclaim the dignity of the other. It asks the question, "who is the other?" Together cannot be presumed as a given. It is a work of remembering. Wider participation of people does not mean together. It involves the others and their stories theologically, prophetically, and practically.

A praxis of communion with the others attends to issues of asymmetry in pastoral spaces and practices. The stories of the men of Good Friday brought up this reality in a significant way. Paradigms of poverty alleviation and human development that focus more on the empowerment of women leave out the man unintentionally. Such paradigms are also reflected in pastoral ministries and the tendency towards feminized practices in Christian life further compounds the problem. While this study does not seek to oppose the truth of oppression of women in many parts of the world, the stories of violence around the world also attest to the absence-presence of the stories of men in the discourse. It is a truth that is accepted but not dealt with substantially.

Within the church structure, the hegemonic masculine in the image of male leadership in the church may look above it blinded by their social location. Their power to transform masculinities by expressing heroic hegemonic masculinity like Jesus, to subvert hegemonic masculinities that deprive those marginalized of their space, is only embodied by a few. That the church is not angry enough implies the absence of the type

of masculinity that gives voice to the call of the Gospel. On the other hand, an asymmetry in pastoral relations also surfaces with women, who are the ones more accompanied and empowered. As attested by stories of survivors, female leadership in the grassroots community and even within church structure is very strong.

A praxis of communion embodies shared leadership and a healthy partnership between men and women. As an indicator of a participatory church, it considers the dynamics of power relations, production relations, and cathexis or emotional energy in uplifting the needs of both masculine and feminine genders. A female pastoral worker was sharing about her husband wanting to become a lay minister in the parish. He has been asking her to get him involved in some activities so he could get to know people. When asked why he wants to be involved, she said, ‘according to him, he wants to be a better person.’ She was asked, “Then why don’t you invite him?” She said, “I don’t believe it will make him a better person. He is hopeless.” Reclaiming dignity may happen if the context of the family as embodied, as natural but also critical is taken as the *locus* by which the dynamics between men and women, men and men, and women and women can address trauma as well as the asymmetry in power and production at the very intimate and local level. Basic ecclesial communities that only have women as members may survive but it cannot thrive without the missing other. Though the participation of men has been a perennial concern in the building of basic ecclesial communities, without a praxis of communion that attends to the absent one, it will not be possible. While approaches of recruitment may be helpful, a praxis of communion challenges paradigms in faith formation, worship, and pastoral care that leaves the men out.

A praxis of communion is not reserved for those who suffer and are oppressed

and impoverished but also to those who have caused it and those who participate in a complicit and subordinated role. Such a praxis of communion rethinks the famous adage of a “preferential option for the poor,” because to opt for the poor, means to exclude the others and to exclude the other, means not being able to bring about the change needed for the poor to reclaim their dignity. To be a *kapwa* is to participate with, through, and in all. It may be the reason why Good Friday is so powerfully depicted in rituals: both perpetrators and the oppressed ones have a role. Everyone can identify themselves in the story. While ecclesial life cannot just be an everyday Good Friday, a consciousness that takes communion as the space of the church and not merely an approach opens itself to diversity and plurality, to both sinners and saints.

#### **Praxis of Reconciliation towards Refashioning Justice (*Katarungan*)**

*Kapwa* as *ka-puwa*, or being together at the gap, defines a participatory church with the others through a praxis of reconciliation that refashions justice. It courageously looks through the wounds of trauma to ask, ‘what wounds have remained? and ‘how have we participated in the shaping of trauma?’” The three *communitas* exemplified three different models of attending to trauma – praxis model, developmental model, and community model. While each model had its unique characteristics and displayed effective practices in responding to post-traumatic scenarios of survivors, all three groups suffer the tension between re-aggregating back to the big community or remaining as a separate group. Separate from the group they remain stigmatized by the community who are also traumatized in various ways. The new story needed for the emancipation of both calls for collective consciousness, a program of *pakikipagkapwa*, so that their stigmatization can be a *stigmata* – not only for victims but for all. The awareness of a



church in the middle territory – that listens, dwells in the margin, and that witnesses to the depths – can be born into life.

A praxis of reconciliation attends to the process of healing as an everyday reality. A praxis of reconciliation proclaims the Good News by engaging with the real story in real-time without disregarding its position in history. It looks at the needs of both the individual and the community. Wounds crossover from the individuals to the community and they continue to impact society if unattended. Reconciliation does not happen only when fact-finding commissions are established, and international courts are involved. The reality of Holy Saturday, of passage between death and life, is not an event but a territory people cannot fully escape from. People are constantly at the threshold; a state of ambiguity and chaos.

In the local community where the research was conducted, the parish church had a small pathway with plants and benches where people can sit. Even when there were no gatherings at the church, the pathway always had occupants. Couples talking to each other. A father resting after a heavy day's work before going home. A mother with her child. At times, there were crying companions and some shouting encounters too. There was no park in this congested neighborhood, but yes there was this pathway. Where people felt they can take a break before taking the next move. A praxis of reconciliation provides such a space. Where people can just tell their story. Even in silence. It could be in the liturgies. It could be in the way pastoral care is done. Especially for the so-called others who are disembodied.

A praxis of reconciliation attends to different kinds of wounds. Wounds that manifest in different ways. The *communitas*' attention to the wounds from their context

made them respond creatively and collaboratively. When one is aware that there are many wounds, the need for a systemic process comes out naturally. Since collaboration does not only happen *ad extra*, a praxis of reconciliation is also aware that unless the local community is involved, the wounds will never fully heal. Basic ecclesial communities that attend to wounds see through the process of healing together in the same manner that the Word of God is shared. When the *memoria passionis* in the everyday is reflected upon as a story where each one participates and as a story that shapes them individually and as a community, healing becomes a process of friendship and love.

A praxis of reconciliation with the others attends to retributive, rehabilitative, and restorative justice. Retributive justice focuses on the offense and attends to the need for those who have violated human rights to right the wrong they have committed. Since the state is the one that is expected to provide grounds for criminal liabilities, it is complicated when it is the state that has transgressed. Rehabilitative justice is for victims and those who did wrong to be given the chance to be treated and/or accompanied towards healing. Psychosocial intervention is provided to victims and survivors. But as the stories of survivors have attested, it is not only such intervention that is needed. Family rehabilitation at the post traumatic phase is complex and may take a lifetime. It is the reason why the *communitas* do not foresee a formal ending for the group because wounds remain. Poverty further compounds the problem. Restorative justice attends to the impact of the offense on all parties and it deals with the long-term process of healing for the bigger community, including perpetrators and victims, that have been affected by the trauma. Restorative justice involves tracing the map of trauma to recreate the

narrative that can restore the community to a state of wholeness and balance. The findings from this research confirm how these three elements of justice, even if attended to by some people and entities, do not directly connect with everyday affairs of ecclesial life.

A praxis of reconciliation is not only personal but social. Many times, reconciliation is experienced in church practices as a concern that the person has with God. Injustice and suffering in society is an affair seen from a distance; very often downplayed in rituals and worship spaces. The celebrations of the Sacrament of reconciliation are practiced as a personal ritual. When *examen* of conscience involves one's engagement in the restoration of justice, it becomes a community process. People can look at their involvement in structural injustice and how they have embodied social sins. As attested by the lived experience in the community of survivors and victims, when the truth of Holy Saturday and the event of Jesus' descent into hell are proclaimed and embodied in ecclesial life, being a *ka-puwang* becomes a lived experience of the body of Christ.

### **Praxis of Solidarity of Others towards Freedom (*Kalayaan*)**

A participatory church with the others embraces the *pakikipagkapwa ng ibang tao* or the "solidarity of others," as sapiential sources of divine revelation. It asks the questions, "what do the others proclaim, see and hear?" and "what do they tell us?" The community at large that continues to suffer from post-traumatic wounds affirm through their practices of participation these moments of recognition and misrecognition of the resurrection. By uplifting creative strategies and tactics borne out of solidarity with those who suffer, oral and written (or artistically conveyed) prophetic literature is evolving out

of artists and nightcrawlers who speak the truth through journalism and through different forms of arts, through organic intellectuals and new forms of solidarity that organize alliances with the church to respond to the needs of victims, and through tactics employed in the margins that manifest the power of the senses to bring about healing and transformation.

Like the prophetic literature that was created in the years of war and disaster, their stories are powerful tools to recreate the narrative of the “others” and empower a “community of others” in its prophetic role in society. Solidarity of ‘others’ facilitates a re-reading and true listening of people’s stories. Like Isaiah, who sensed that the people “listen carefully but do not understand and look intently but do not perceive (Is 6:9),” the solidarity of others surface blocks that hinder the ecclesial community from coming home to the truth that will set them free. People need to grow in their ability to discern (Hos 14:9; Is 44:18), reopening their eyes, ears, and hearts to the past.

A praxis of solidarity of others creates structures and employs processes that listen and integrate their voices in ecclesial life. Very often, though the church is aware of such initiatives and regards them collaborators or “helpers” in the pursuit of justice and freedom for the oppressed, they are soon forgotten after the last service is rendered. A gathering of various groups and service providers for victims and survivors on the war on drugs organized by an archdiocese seemed like the experience of Pentecost when the disciples gathered at the Upper Room behind locked doors. Out of around twenty groups that were present, about half belong to non-ecclesial groups – NGOs, non-profit foundations committed to providing services to victims – psychological first aid, medical services, scholarships, sanctuaries, etc. responding to the various needs of individuals and

families. There were new learning and insights for ministry as participants openly shared and listened to the programs and experiences with victims and survivors. Among the participants, was a priest who was assigned in the ministry. He sat quietly while the others took the time to share. At the end of the conversation, which was both painful and hope-filled, death-dealing, and yet life-giving, the priest raised a question that threw people off their feet. As if half-doubting their stories, he asked, “so are you actually telling me that the stories of extrajudicial killings are true?” Though he left a few minutes after his intervention, his question remained to hover in the conversations. One Catholic sister remarked, “was his question a joke, or an insult?” A praxis of solidarity of others takes the humble position of learning from the others. Like the Easter experiences of recognition and misrecognition by the disciples which were punctuated by meal encounters – at the Upper Room, on the road to Emmaus, and at the sea of Galilee, through the others, we are renewed by experiences of meeting the Risen Lord, when we allow ourselves to be taught and to be made to see – in a new way by “others.”

### **The Corporate *Kapwa*: Towards A Participatory Church**

The *kapwa* theory from the perspective of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* provides new dimensions that may not have been fully explored in Filipino practical and pastoral theologizing. Though many Filipino theologies are informed by *kapwa* and *loob*, it has not been fully engaged with from a psychological perspective and especially to enrich communal theologizing and participatory processes. While aware of the criticisms of essentialism and romanticism hurled against indigenous Filipino psychology, the author believes that just as the proponents and founder of SP promoted *kapwa* in the pursuit of decolonizing and liberating Filipinos, the vision of a participatory church through *kapwa*

could open pathways towards making it a truly Filipino church – one that embraces the others fully.

***Ibang Tao to Hindi Ibang Tao (Outsider to One of Us)***

A participatory church that is inclusive and all-embracing seeks to uncover practices that reflect colonial attitudes and that employ processes of othering. The spiral of signification of *ibang tao* explored in Chapter Three, retells the story of the war on drugs from the political sphere to the ecclesial space in which practices are shown to mirror processes of systematic othering and a narrow interpretation of stories of suffering. In local communities, social action ministries are oftentimes evaluated in terms of the number of its beneficiaries and how many kinds of services are rendered. Using metrics that evaluate how far ministries enable the “other” to become “one of us” is rarely considered in the actual implementation of programs.

Ecclesial language, symbols, and practices may nuance to a sense of exclusivity and partiality that adds to the spiral of signification of *ibang tao* (outsider). Though it is a process to move from *ibang tao* to *hindi ibang tao*, it is helpful to raise awareness and promote behaviors that help towards the re-remembering of “others” in ecclesial life. Just as the conviction for equality and communal living of early Christian communities shaped the Eucharist, a participatory church with the others needs to distinguish between professed beliefs and those espoused by practices, attitudes, and relational patterns of its members. Basic ecclesial communities, for instance, understand that its members include all who are part of its geographical location, and thus, its mission is shaped by the bigger concerns of their locality. However, members’ gaze becomes limited to those who are

with them regularly, tending towards practices that become routine and institutionalized and not shaped by the issues they are affected with.

### **Filipino Corporate Values and Behavior Patterns**

Building a participatory church with the others can bring about a more culture-based ecclesial life. The Filipino value structure formulated by Filipino psychology grounds Filipino personhood as relational and communal. Moreover, the different values and behavior patterns that take root from the *kapwa* clarifies how Filipinos relate and interact with reality. Though the research has utilized the *kapwa* paradigm as an epistemological and methodological framework as explained in Chapter Two and to nuance findings with certain values and behaviors, it is a rich resource that can still be further explored in developing a culture-based values framework in ecclesial practices. The social action ministries of the local community where the research was conducted already developed approaches that exemplify these values, but they also lament how difficult it is to be passed on to other people. Further, participatory processes and community-based interventions that are rooted in values of *kapwa* and *pakikipagkapwa* can be extended in tackling other issues affecting the community. A Filipino culture-based ecclesial life shapes practices that raise awareness about Filipino culture and history, that nuances these values in symbols, metaphors, and images embodied in the liturgy, formation processes, and community building, and that empowers communities in their lived experience as a Filipino church in a Filipino neighborhood.

### ***Kapwa* Perspective in Pastoral Care and Social Action**

*Kapwa* paradigms in counseling and post-disaster management can help accompany survivors towards healing and transformation and restore communities in the

aftermath of traumatic events. In grief and bereavement intervention sessions conducted to participants of EJK *communitas*, approaches were largely based on Western theories with terminologies that were difficult for widows and mothers of victims to fully comprehend. On the other hand, the community-based rehabilitation program developed by Filipino psychologists from which diocesan-based rehabilitation programs were established, were successfully implemented through the conduct of diocesan-wide understanding about drug prevention and treatment and through the training of community-based drug counselors. Such partnerships in the development of pastoral programs and skills building can further explore and utilize *kapwa* paradigms.

### **The Broken Body of Christ: Sensing the Sacred out of Fragments**

Body theology has nuanced the body as the very *locus* of divine revelation. The corporate body of Christ, however, is composed of multiple parts with various concerns and issues, questions, and convictions. While promoting a corporate *kapwa* in understanding a participatory church, this Filipino body of Christ as evidenced by our varied lived experiences is fragmented and broken, liquid and fluid, evolving and reshaping according to the equally chaotic context of a postmodern world.

In a session with BEC leaders from a diocese, to bring out the importance of a shared vision and mission, a team-building activity was facilitated whereby each group was asked to draw one part of the body. Each group was to brainstorm on ideas, plan the process, and execute their plan accordingly. After every group presented their masterpiece, they were invited to put together the different parts to form one body. Naturally, it was a distorted image that came out of their different pieces put together eliciting the importance of planning together for a common vision and direction.



However, one of the participants remarked, “But is it not truly the image we have of the body of Christ today?”

In chapters four to six, the stories of the suffering of victims and survivors including those who share their dream for healing and transformation embody different shapes, imperfect images of the church. Yet in all of them, we sense the sacred. We experience the divine amid the struggle. We hear the voice of God on the road with them. Part of one story, they weave different pieces of the tapestry, and without each one, it is not complete.

Just like the image of Jesus crucified, we begin by embracing the imperfect body of Christ from our fragmented lived experiences. As pieces of the puzzle fashioned by different artists, the body of Christ we portray, is a mosaic and dim image of what could still be. Yet the sacred can be sensed out of every piece, incomplete as it is. Perhaps a new way of theologizing is asked from such an image. If one can sense the sacred from fragments of life, can the experience of God be likewise fashioned in that way? Could various understandings of the sacred be lifted in our practices? Could there be a sense of freedom in our vision of a church from our vantage point in the future?

As the writing of this conclusion happened when the pandemic crisis took over the world and led it to its standstill, the same questions lurk in the minds of many. Can the church simply reset after this nightmare? How can tradition be lived after a thousand interpretations of that one story has been experienced in the homes? How can suffering, which is so diverse, and so personal, be the unifying factor upon which we can experience church?

The stories of the ‘others’ are also about us. We are implicated in the story and there are wounds we bear that we might not be even aware of. Our piece of the puzzle, though imperfect and fragmented from the whole, is where we begin. As this research began from the *Pieta* story of a fallen victim of extrajudicial killings, where we stand in the space of suffering is our starting point. The *memoria passionis* of Jesus illumined, made real, and challenged by the *Pieta* we gaze at today beckons us individually and as a church to be with, know with, and act with a *kapwa*. It is this way that we become Jesus who embodied *pakikipagkapwa*, becoming the other, until the point of death. It is in this way that our fragmented pieces put together can be the embodiment of shared humanity, and lived experience of a new heaven and a new earth.

## Appendix A

### Institutional Review Board Approval

16400 N.W. 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Miami, Florida 33054  
Proposal Approval Form  
St. Thomas University

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S) Bryan Froehle supervising Doctoral Candidate Jessica Joy Candelario

#### PROJECT TITLE

A Participatory Action Research on the Phenomenon of Extrajudicial Killings in the Philippines

in accordance with St. Thomas University policy and national guidelines governing the ethical use of human participants in research, the university Institutional Review Board certifies that the above stated project:

\_\_\_\_\_ being exempt from full review was peer reviewed by the IRB under the expedited review process and in its original form was

X  was revised according to suggestions made by the IRB to the investigators and was

\_\_\_\_\_ being subject to a full review by the IRB was

REVISION REQUESTED ON \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED ON 11/26/18

DISAPPROVED ON \_\_\_\_\_

Investigators may request continuation of a project using the IRB project submittal form and procedure.

Human Subjects are adequately informed of any risks:

*Gary Feinberg, Ph.D.*

Gary Feinberg, Ph.D.  
Chair, St. Thomas University IRB

/Date: 11/26/2018

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent

I am Jessica Joy V. Candelario, a lay worker from Bukal ng Tipan, presently completing my Ph.D. degree in Practical Theology from St. Thomas University. My dissertation topic is about the issue of extrajudicial killings which has affected many communities in our country, including yours. It is my hope that through your community and with your special participation in the sessions, we may find ways to respond to this problem as a parish.

I would like to seek your permission to use the proceedings of the sessions as data for my research. With your permission, I would like to do a video recording of the sessions for potential future thinking and writing on these topics for the church. If video recording is not acceptable, I would like to ask your permission for a research assistant to take notes. The notes and recording will be stored under lock and key and destroyed once the study has ended.

Your participation in this Participatory Action Research (PAR) is on voluntary basis. You have every right not to answer any question at any time. If at a certain point, you wish to withdraw from the engagement, you are free to do so. I will maintain the confidentiality of your name and the data from our sessions by ensuring that only I have access to this material knowing that some of my questions and your reflections could potentially involve a critique of people, government authorities as well as of the Roman Catholic Church. I will likewise use pseudonyms and alter information that could reveal your identity. I cannot guarantee however, that the other session participants will maintain confidentiality.

I plan to use this data in the writing of my dissertation which is a major requirement for my doctoral degree in Practical Theology. In addition, I may draw on this data to write other articles in the future.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at St. Thomas University. If you have questions about my research, please feel free to contact me at any time. My contact information is: phone: [REDACTED] and email: [jcandelario@stu.edu](mailto:jcandelario@stu.edu). My principal investigator is Dr. Bryan Froehle and his contact information is: phone: [REDACTED] and email address: [bfroehle@stu.edu](mailto:bfroehle@stu.edu)

I, (print your name) \_\_\_\_\_, am willing to allow Jessica Joy V. Candelario to video record our PAR sessions.

I, (print your name) \_\_\_\_\_, am willing to allow Jessica Joy V. Candelario to take hand-written notes of my PAR comments.

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information

Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Other phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Interview Protocol –EJK Families

Maraming salamat sa pagsang-ayon mong ma-interbyu. Nais kong marinig ang iyong kuwento. Naiintindihan ko na hindi madaling ibahagi ang isang masakit na karanasan kaya't magbahagi ka ng naaayon sa makakayanan mo. Ang iyong partisipasyon ay boluntaryo kaya ikaw ay malaya na tapusin ito kung nais mo.

*Thank you very much for accepting my request for an interview with you. I am here to listen to your story. I understand that it is not easy to share this painful experience. Please feel free to share to the extent that you are comfortable. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Thus, you have the right to withdraw at any time.*

Maari mo bang ipakilala ang iyong sarili. Ano ang relasyon mo sa namatay?  
Paano mo siya ilalarawan sa iyong buhay?

*Can you tell me about yourself. How are you related to the person?  
How will you describe him/her?*

#### I. Death and Suffering

- Maari mo bang ilahad kung paano siya namatay? Ano ang nangyari?
- Ano ang naramdaman mo noong mga panahong iyon?
- Ano ang pinakamahirap sa iyong harapin sa kanyang pagkamatay?
- Paano tinanggap ng pamilya mo ang kanyang pagkamatay? Sino ang pinaka-apektado? Bakit mo nasabi ito?
- *Can you share with me how this person died? What happened?*
- *How did you feel at that moment?*
- *What was most difficult for you to deal with at the time of death?*
- *How did your family take his death? Who was most affected? Why do you say so?*

#### II. Trauma and Recovery

- Sa paanong paraan mo naranasan ang seguridad mo at kaligtasan?
- Ano ang nakatulong sa panahon ng pagluluksa at pagdadalamhati?
- Sa paanong paraan mo naranasan ang Diyos sa lahat ng ito?
- Kung ikaw ang tatanungin, ano ang nais mong mangyari para sa iyo at sa iyong pamilya?
- *What makes you feel safe and secure at this time?*
- *What helps you to remember and mourn?*
- *Who are the people you feel disconnected with from this experience?*
- *What have you realized from this experience of death?*

### III. Participation of others

- Sino ang mga tao o grupo na nakibahagi sa iyo at sa iyong pamilya sa lahat ng ito?
- Sa paanong paraan sila nakibahagi sa iyo at sa iyong pamilya?
- Sa paanong paraan ba naging bahagi ang simbahan sa iyong karanasan?
- Sa paanong paraan ba naging bahagi ang iyong kapitbahayan?
- Sa anong paraan mo naranasan ang kanilang malasakit at pagdamay?
- Sa anong aspeto mo pang nais silang makibahagi sa iyong buhay sa ngayon?
  
- *Who are the people or groups who were with you to go through all these?*
- *How did they participate in your family's experience?*
- *In what way did the parish participate in your family's experience?*
- *In what way did your neighbors participate in your family's experience?*
- *How did you feel their presence and support?*
- *At this time, in what other ways would you wish them to participate in your life?*
  
- Sino ang mga tao o grupo na ramdam mo'y na layo o nawala ang koneksyon sa iyo at inyong pamilya dahil sa karanasang ito?
  
- *Who are the persons or groups of people you have been estranged from you and your family because of this experience?*

### IV. Participation with Others

- Sa paanong paraan naging daan ng iyong karanasan upang makibahagi ka sa iba?
- Sino ang mga tao o grupo ang masasabi mong mayroon kang naibabahagi o naiaambag?
  
- *In what way was your experience instrumental in helping you get involved and participate with others?*
- *Who or which groups of people have you involved yourself with?*

### V. Hopes and Dreams

- Kung may isa ka pang bagay na nais mangyari para sa iyo at sa iyong pamilya, ano ito?
- Sino ang gusto mong makilakbay sa iyo sa hangarin mong ito?
  
- *If there is still one thing you wish to happen for you and your family, what would it be?*
- *Who do you want to accompany you to accomplish this?*

Maraming salamat sa panahong binigay mo sa interbyung ito. Marami akong natutunan sa iyo at malaking tulong ang iniabot mo para magawa ang pag-aaral na ito.

*Thank you very much for sparing your time for this interview. I have learned many things and I am grateful for all the help you have extended.*

## Appendix D

### Interview Protocol – Experts and Pastoral Workers

The following preliminary interview protocol is for the individual, in-depth interviews of expert pastoral practitioners and church leaders to better understand the situation of extrajudicial killings as it relates to ecclesial life. While some of them have direct experience of the situation, people who come from various perspectives in pastoral ministry were also selected. The main purpose of the interviews is to seek their wisdom in how EJK or the stories of suffering bodies inform ecclesial life. It is subject to field testing and on-going review, consistent with a grounded theory approach. The succeeding interviews in the community, as well as the participatory action research sessions with a select group, will be based in part on questions such as these. Given the grounded theory commitments of action research, the focus group protocol will not be developed until the individual interviews have been completed. The protocol envisions a semi-structured interview and has five main parts. The goal is to make sure that certain topic areas are explored while keeping the interview conversation as open-ended and in-depth as possible. It is therefore expected that respondents will provide data on some of these topics, particularly subquestions, without being asked. Questions have been drafted to move from initial rapport-building questions that help put the respondent at ease, toward a sequencing of questions.

#### Introductory Script

*Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. As you know, I am interested in understanding the situation of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines as part of my doctoral dissertation. While many aspects can be explored regarding this issue, my interest is more on how the suffering body can renew our ecclesial self-understanding and our embodied practices. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, your real name will not be used. Should it become necessary to use your actual name, your consent will be obtained in advance. Your participation will be entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty or reprisal. To indicate that you are aware of these protections and have formally agreed to participate, I need to ask you to sign the Consent Form. One copy is for you and the other copy is for me.*

#### I. Opening

*My first question to ask you is how you see things today. The word “EJK” has many different meanings to people. Some people look at it as outright evil while others see this as a necessary “collateral damage” on the war against drugs.*

- How about you? How do you see the phenomenon of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines?



- How do you understand people who see things differently from the way you do? Where do you think are they coming from?

## **II. Experience**

*Now I understand that we respond differently according to our level of experience regarding the issue.*

Personal Experience:

- What personal experience do you have of victims or communities affected by this situation?
- How were you affected by this?

***If the person belongs to a community:***

- What is the experience of your community regarding this situation? How do people in your community feel about it?
- What other stories or issues are related to this situation?

***If the person has no direct experience:***

While I do not have any direct experience so far, I have been particularly affected by the graphic images of the killings exposed by TV and social media.

- In your case, was there any image or story that stood out for you? How were you affected by this story?
- What other issues and stories would be connected to this story?

## **III. Ecclesial Life**

*The church has responded in many ways through legal and paralegal support, providing sanctuaries, and through organized rehabilitation and therapeutic services to victims and their families.*

- What can you say about these programs and activities?
- In your opinion, is the church doing enough? If no, what do you think is it failing to see from this experience? Or in your opinion, what is missing or lacking in the church's response?

## **V. Final Words and Recommendations**

- As a theologian/pastoral agent, what would be your recommendation?
- As a person of faith, what is it calling you to do personally?

## Appendix E

### Focus Group Interview Protocol – Sectoral Groups

Maraming salamat sa pagtanggap mo ng paanyaya kong sa talakayan na ito. Nag-aaral kasi ako tungkol sa sitwasyon ng EJK sa Pilipinas. Interesado akong malaman kung paano ang mga kuwento ng partisipasyon ng iba't ibang indibidwal, kasama tayong lahat at ang mga kuwento ng komunidad sa sitwasyong ito ay humuhubog sa ating lahat. Gusto nating maguwentuhan tungkol sa sitwasyong ito. May mga tanong ako ngunti maging malaya tayo sa gusto nating sabihin at tanungin sa isa't isa.

*Thank you very much for accepting my request to conduct this focus group discussion. I am researching the situation of EJK in the Philippines. I am interested to find out how the stories of participation of individuals, including all of us, and communities related to this, is shaping all of us. This is a time to share our stories and opinions about the situation. I have prepared some questions, but we are free to share what we feel to share and ask each other.*

#### I. Opening

- Kapag naririnig ng mga tao ang salitang Tokhang, o EJK, ano ang kalimitan nilang sinasabi?
- Sa palagay ninyo, bakit kaya ganoon ang tingin nila?
- Ikaw, ano ang tingin mo dito?
  
- When people hear the word *Tokhang* or EJK, what first comes to their mind?
- Why is it their view?
- How about you, what is your opinion about it?

#### II. Experience

- Mayroon ba kayong kuwento ng tokhang na naaalala mula sa TV o personal na karanasan?
- Maari mo bang ikuwento ito?
- Paano ka naapektuhan nito?
- May kuwento ba sa buhay natin o sa inyong lugar ang may koneksyon sa kuwentong ito?
  
- Do you have a story about *Tokhang* that you remember from TV or personal experience?
- Could you share this experience with us?
- How are affected by it?
- Is there any story in your own life or in your community that connects with this story?

### **III. Sense of the Faithful**

- Ano kayang ipinapahiwatig sa atin ng kuwento at larawan ng EJK?
- Ano kayang maaring sinasabi ng larawang ito na hindi natin naririnig bilang sambayanan?
- Paano kaya mas mapapakinggan ang sinasabi ng sitwasyong ito?
- Sino ba ang mas naapektuhan sa sitwasyong ito?
  
- What do stories and photos of EJK tell us?
- What are these stories and photos telling us that people don't seem to hear now?
- How can we listen better to this situation?
- Who do you think is most affected by these stories?

### **IV. Conclusion**

- Kung may isang salita kang iuuwi mula sa ating kuwentuhan, ano kaya ito?
- If there is a word (or phrase) you will take home with you from this discussion, what would it be?

## Appendix F

### Focus Group Interview Protocol – BEC/Ministries

Maraming salamat sa pagtugon ninyo sa imbitasyong maging bahagi ng sesyon na ito. Ang focus group interview na ito ay layon na maintindihan ang partisipasyon ng nahihirapang mga katawang sa sitwasyon ng EJK at tokhang sa ating pagkaunawa bilang isang simbahan. Boluntaryo ang partisipasyon natin dito at malaya kayo kung hindi ninyo nais sumagot sa ilang mga tanong. Humihingi ako ng pahintulot sa iyo na i-record ang ating pag-uusap. Pangako ko ang impormasyong ibibigay ninyo ay mananatiling kombidensyal.

*Thank you very much for accepting my invitation to be part of this session. This focus group interview aims to find out about the participation of the Filipino suffering bodies in our ecclesial self-understanding. Your participation is purely voluntary and so you are free to respond to the extent that you feel comfortable. I would like to ask permission to record the interview. Rest assured that all information will be kept confidential.*

Maari ba po tayong magpakilala?

Ibigay ang iyong pangalan at sa isang salita, ano ang simbahan para sa iyo?

*Could you please introduce yourself?*

*Please mention your name and in one word, what is the church for you?*

#### **I. Participation**

Kayo ay magkakapitbahay at magkakapitbuhay. Gusto ko kayong tanungin tungkol sa karanasan ninyo ukol sa pakikibahagi at pakikilahok.

- Ano para sa iyo ang ibig sabihin ng pakikibahagi at pakikilahok?
- Anong mga pagkilos sa loob ng kapitbahayan ang nagsasaad ng pakikibahagi?
- Sa mga nabanggit natin, ano para sa iyo ang pinakamahalaga?

*You are neighbors to one another. I would like to ask about how you experience participation in this context.*

- *What does participation mean to you?*
- *What action or activities manifest participation?*
- *Among those mentioned, what is most important for you?*

#### **II. Participation of other groups in community life**

- Sa paanong paraan ninyo nararanasan ang pakikibahagi ng parokya sa komunidad na ito?
- Sa paanong paraan ninyo nakikita ang pakikibahagi ng barangay at LGU sa komunidad na ito?

- Anong iba pang grupo ang nakikita ninyong nakikibahagi sa inyong komunidad?
- *In what way do you experience parish participation in this neighborhood?*
- *In what way do you experience barangay and local government units in this neighborhood?*
- *What other groups participate or are engaged in this neighborhood?*

### **III. Participation in the suffering of the war on drugs**

Hindi lingid sa ating kaalaman ang sitwasyon ng tokhang at EJK sa iba't ibang kapitbahayan...

- Anong karanasan mo tungkol dito?
- Ano sa palagay ninyo ang opinyon o pakiramdam ng karamihan sa kapitbahayang ito ukol sa sitwasyon ng tokhang at ejk?
- Anong uri ng pakikibahagi ang ipinamalas ng kapitbahayang ito sa mga naapektuhan ng sitwasyong ito?
- Kung ikaw ang tatanungin, mayroon pa kayang maaring gawin ng komunidad sa aspetong ito?

*You are all aware of the situation of Tokhang and EJK in different neighborhoods....*

- *What is your experience regarding this situation?*
- *What is the prevailing feeling/opinion about this situation in this neighborhood?*
- *How did this neighborhood respond to this situation especially towards those affected?*
- *If you were asked what this neighborhood would still do, what would you say?*

### **IV. Participation of suffering bodies in church**

Ang mga tao at pamilyang apektado sa sitwasyong ay kabahagi rin ng ating buhay at sa buhay natin bilang komunidad...

- Ano kaya ang naibabahagi nila sa komunidad na ito?
- Sa paanong paraan kaya sila maaring makibahagi sa simbahan, barangay at lipunan?

*The affected individuals and families are also part of our life and part of our community...*

- *In what way are victims of the war on drugs participating in this neighborhood?*
- *In what way are their suffering bodies participating in our way of living as a community?*

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