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Mary, Chinese Ancestor Veneration, and the Communion of Saints

A Doctoral Dissertation in Sacred Theology with Specialization in Marian Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree Doctor of Sacred Theology

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Abbreviations Used

**ABM** - Asian Bishops Conferences, 1974


**BIRA** - Asian Bishops Institute of Interreligions

**CCC** - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994

**CCCT** - Chinese Bishops Conference of Taiwan

**DV** - *Dei Verbum*, Document of Vatican II, 1965

**EV** - *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI, 1974

**FABC** - Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, 1976

**GS** - *Gaudium et Spes*, Document of Vatican II, 1965


**MC** - *Marialis Cultus*, Pope Paul VI, 1974

**NA** - *Nostra Aetate*, Document of Vatican II, 1965

**PL** - *Patrologia Latina*

**PTOL** - Papal Teaching on Mary

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Chapter I

Introduction

Rationale and Methodology

Introduction

It is often said that Asia (especially Taiwan) does not yet have a Marian theology of its own because Mariology is influenced by the West: in image, symbol, content, and devotional practices. In Taiwan, Marian devotional practices are sometimes perceived as acts of worship. As a consequence, there is a misunderstanding among many people in Taiwan that Catholics are worshipers of Mary, while the Protestants are regarded as followers of Jesus. There is an urgent need to undo the perception that Mary is worshipped as the ‘Christian goddess’, so that the Catholics can continue to venerate Mary as the Mother of Jesus, a disciple, and a holy woman in the communion of saints and in the ancestor veneration. This dissertation attempts to understand Mary’s role in the Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints among the Taiwan’s Catholics. It is important that this be done using appropriate methodology developed in

1 The Church is a ‘communion of saints’: this expression refers first to the ‘holy things’ (sancta), above all the Eucharist, by which the unity of believers, who form one body in Christ, is both represented and brought about. (L.G3) The term communion of saints refers also to the communion of ‘holy persons’ (sancti) in Christ who died for all, so that each one does or suffers in and for Christ, who bears for all. Catechism of the Catholic Church, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Paulist Press, 1994, # 961.
Western countries and adapted by theologians from Asia.

Rationale

This dissertation seeks to investigate the concept of Chinese ancestor veneration, a popular cultural practice in Taiwan, and its relevance among the people in general and in particular. At the same time, to seek for a link where Mary in the communion of saints can contribute to Catholic Chinese ancestor veneration. The Christian (Catholic and Protestant) understanding of Mary in the communion of saints uncovers the richness in doctrine and devotion, but also, points out areas of argument. The qualitative research study of six case studies helps to discover some similarities and differences between the concept of ancestor veneration in Taiwan, the idea of communion of saints, and the role of Mary in these two realities. Finally, in the reconstruction process, the five dimensions of human relationships serve as the link to the following three realities: Chinese ancestor veneration, communion of saints and Mary, and therefore, suggest that Marian devotions in the communion of saints be included with Chinese ancestor veneration so that Mary the will be loved and known.

The motivating force for this study is found in the documents of Vatican II, especially in *Gaudium et Spes*, and emphasized by the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC) in the document, *Methodology: Asian Christian Theology, Doing Theology in*.

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2 Chinese people generally practice Chinese ancestor veneration. In this dissertation, I will only focus on and study ancestor veneration in Taiwan.
Asia Today. This study aims to promote the following messages.

“That the Church learned early in its history to express the Christian message in the concepts and languages of different peoples and tried to clarify it in the light of wisdom of their philosophy: it was an attempt to adapt the Gospel to the understanding of all people and the requirements of the learned, in so far as this could be done.”

This memory of our early Church history makes present in every country the possibility of expressing the message of Christ in understandable terms and of fostering vital contacts and exchanges between the Church and different cultures. Doing theology in Asia, like in other continents, is a pilgrimage, a faith experience. Many Asian people resonate with the experience of the apostles as they re-read Acts of the Apostles on the First Council of Jerusalem. “You know that, in the early days, God made a choice among you, (the Jews) that by mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel and believe. And God knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.” (Acts 15, 7-9)

Karl Rahner maintains that “the decision of the Council of Jerusalem, not to require circumcision of Gentles, had marked the end of the short period of Jewish Christianity and was followed by a new period of Church history, which is not an export of Jewish Christianity, but one which for all its relationship to the historical Jesus and the Old Testament...”

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Testament, grew on the soil of paganism." This assessment is still relevant in the Asian situations as well as in Taiwan because Asian theologians are living in a ‘Gentile context’, where Asian Christians live and Asian local theologies emerge. These above theological insights are the background of this dissertation. Moreover, this research work hopes to bring a better understanding in the area of theology of ancestor veneration, theology of the communion of saints, and Marian doctrine and devotion for Taiwan Catholics. It is one thing to accept a dogma: it is another to understand its anthropology and theology. Most Chinese Catholics thinks that Mary is not only a doctrine but a person to embrace with heart.

From 1970 to 2005, according to the numbers and titles of theses (both for Master and Doctorate degrees) submitted at the FuJen Catholic University, Faculty of Theology and the Department of Religious Sciences, only three researches worked on themes such as death, funerals and Chinese ancestor veneration, and focused mainly on liturgical rites. On the subject of Communion of saints and Chinese ancestor veneration, no entry was found. The three research works are as follow:


J.B. Vu Du Khana, “Research on the Ancient Chinese Rites of a Veneration to

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5 FuJen Catholic University Library Website http://lib.fju.edu.tw/collection/opac.htm, as of April 2005, there are 37 entries. To focus on the main three realities of this dissertation: Chinese ancestor veneration, the communion of saints and Mary, and not on liturgical rites, the researcher wanted only to mention the relevance of these three theses.
These three theses mainly desired to focus on funeral liturgical rites in general and not connecting Catholic ancestor practices and Mary in the communion of saints, as ways of 'inculturation'. Therefore, the thrust and novelty of our dissertation hoped to point out how Marian devotion can contribute to Chinese ancestor veneration. Complex as it may be (the theme of our research), with a principal method of: to see (critic), to judge (alternate sources), and to act (reconstruction), we shall combine other ways of doing theology, such as qualitative research and the category of relationship. Chinese cultural and religious traditions and texts will be some important alternate sources to consider, aside from the mainstream references to Church documents, writings and scriptural readings. With rich variables at hand, we will attempt to reconstruct and give some
suggestions of Mary in the communion of saints to Chinese ancestor veneration.

Methodology

This dissertation is grounded in the challenge by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) to do "theology together with the people's realities as resources, in so far as we discern in them God's presence, action, and work of the Spirit."6 This dissertation will use the method to study the Taiwan situation, which includes three elements: See, (critique, critic), judge (alternate sources), and act (reconstruction).

Description of the method

1. To See (Critique): The first stage of doing theology is an acknowledgement that 'faith seeking understanding' can work hand in hand with 'faith seeking liberation'. With the desire to be critically conscious of what it is to be a Christian, Asian theology engages primarily, in a critique and analysis of the obstacles that hinder in preaching the Gospel among people who perceive 'Christianity as Western and foreign' to Asia. By understanding people's experiences, situations and causes of these obstacles, then, alternative solutions can be liberating factors that foster faith.

Asian theology is not an exercise in translating the experiences of past

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generations into modern Asia, but rather an attempt to express the ineffable experience of living faith in Jesus Christ from the depths of Asian psyche. An Asian experience aims to integrate a genuine incarnation of the mystery of Christ in the flesh and blood to Asian People. This experience will lead to discernment, to a keen perception of where the Spirit points to ‘signs of the times’ and a sense of the sacred, God’s action and presence always and everywhere. Some main elements of an Asian method of theology similar to some Western methodologies are pluralism, contextualization and interpretation.

Pluralism generally refers to a situation in which a variety of viewpoints, explanations, or perspectives offered take account for the same reality. One essential characteristic of a human experience is that it is multidimensional.\(^7\)

This methodology is also based on the history and the cultural situation of Asia. Contextualization, in Asian theology, takes its resources from cultural, religious, economic and political factors, besides the Word of God in the Scriptures and Sacred Tradition.\(^8\)

Finally, interpretation is used in Asian hermeneutics by including texts of other Asian religious traditions and on how Christians interpret other traditions.

\(^7\) FABC Papers #96, p. 5.
\(^8\) FABC Papers #96, p.4.
Asian religious traditions use symbol, narrative, and myth to interpret their religious experiences, also hermeneutics from the scripture.\(^9\)

The first step of critique and analysis encourages Asians to see themselves with contemplative eyes in order to reconstruct the various cultures, symbols, values etc. that comprise the Asian reality. For example, through critical assessment, it becomes clear how an idealization of Mary may make Mary the 'Christian goddess' in Taiwan. It is by taking on the attributes of God instead of looking at her as an historical woman. Contemplative eyes sharpen the ability to see the world as an integral whole, rather than to see it only in one of its parts. To attain this purpose, it is necessary to gather materials as variables about titles and practices of Marian devotion in the context of the Catholic Church in general, and that of Taiwan in particular, in order to arrive at an integral Catholic understanding of Mary's place in the communion of saints. In so doing, we include opinions of different Mariologists; they assist us to attain an integrated view. However, their opinions do not necessarily reflect the researcher's point of view.\(^10\) But, in order to understand the Catholic Marian doctrine and devotion, their opinions are recorded in their original forms. In addition, the Mariology of Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) and Elizabeth A. Johnson (1941- ) on Mary will contribute in understanding the current theology about her place in the communion of saints.\(^11\)

\(^9\) FABC Papers #96, p.4.
\(^10\) Personal opinions of the researcher will be expressed in the footnotes and in the critics.
\(^11\) These assessments might not be the opinions of some Mariologists. However, it is deemed important
dissertation mainly focuses on Pope John Paul II’s Mariology, which has further
developed the Marian teaching of Vatican II’s documents. Moreover, we study the
work of Elizabeth A. Johnson who has contributed some significant feminist insights
regarding Mary. The Protestant viewpoints have enlarged the horizon of this
dissertation against exaggeration and narrow mindedness, as well as a continuing
ecumenical dialogue among Christians on Mary.

2. To Judge (Alternate sources) include insights into Asian cultures, beliefs
and religions. In some Asian traditional religions, they have other beings that
are above humankind but less than the Supreme Being. They may be called
spirits, and some experts on the traditional religions sometimes called them
‘gods’, or ‘deities’, with a small ‘d’ or ‘g’. Deceased adult relatives, i.e.,
ancestors, are also objects of belief. Cult or worship in traditional religions is
directed generally to the spirits and the ancestors, and sometimes to God. It
takes the form of prayers especially in the family, worship at shrines, and
communal sacrifices. Fear of evil spirits or ancestors motivates many acts of
worship. In many traditional societies such as Taiwan society, there is a strong

\[\text{\footnotesize that in the current Marian studies, one should include the Mariology of Pope John Paul II and Elizabeth A. Johnson because they have influence in the Western world as well as in Asia.}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 12 The main reason for choosing Pope John Paul II’s Mariology which is based on the Vatican II’s Marian teaching, more than other Popes, during his papacy, John Paul II has developed a Marian doctrine and devotion and has influenced today’s Catholicism. He is called Mary’s Pope addressed by many, among them is Antoine Nacheif” in the title of a book, Mary’s Pope, John Paul II, Mary and the Church Since Vatican II., Sheed and Ward, Wisconsin, 2000.}\]
sense of the sacred. Religion permeates life to such an extent that it is often
difficult to distinguish between strictly religious elements and cultural
customs.

The encounters between Christianity with other religions and western culture,
especially with modern science and technology, and urbanization have
affected the societies and their traditional religions. The religious influences
remain strong, particularly in moments of changes. The Catholic Church
respects the religions and cultures of peoples, and, in the encounter with them,
wishes to preserve everything that is noble, true, and good in their religions
and cultures. To the extent that traditional religions are better understood,

Christianity will be more suitably proclaimed. *(Redemptoris Missio, 52)*

An in depth study is necessary in order to discover those elements in Asian cultures,
religions, and traditions that can be adopted or adapted, and purified, and those which
must be rejected with constant attention to the danger of syncretism. Therefore, a
qualitative research method is used to study the six case studies and in depth interviews
on Chinese ancestor veneration, a cultural-religious practice, where the dead and the
living exist and is one in the cosmos. There is inter-relatedness in the life process in
humans and nature: from conception to birth to illness until death. There is also

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   #16.
interdependence between the living and the dead by imploring the ancestors to nurture
and protect the family clan while ritual ceremonies express the virtue of filial piety. To
these, the Church document *Gaudium et Spes* says “Evangelization does not destroy the
values but is incarnated in them; it consolidates and strengthens them.”

Asian contextualized realities are important resources for theology together with
Christian sources of Scriptures and Tradition, in so far as they embody and manifest the
presence and action of God and the Spirit in Asian culture. This is recognized through
discernment and interpretation. It is also necessary to be attentive to the negative reality
of evil and sin present in the contextual reality: those realities are not according to the
Gospel values and need to be redeemed. They are obstacles that hinder faith and need to
be liberated, as mentioned in the process of ‘faith seeking liberation’. This process calls
for a theological reflection in order to recognize, to assess, to judge and to reconstruct
an inter-religious conversation in Taiwan.

The different dimensions of the Church model of ‘communion’ will assist the search for
a deeper understanding of the communion of saints in the Church. The historical,
cultural, social and theological dimensions used as categories to build up a

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17 Traditionally, the use of contextualized realities meant that the context was the background source of
theology. This background includes the people, their culture, religion, history and struggles. This kind
of theology was concerned with ways of adapting and applying the message (Gospel and tradition) to
the people in their sociopolitical cultural situations. Today, it is important to understand ‘context’ in
18 In a dialogue, truth is not only an object that one defines, defends or even possesses but rather it is a
presence that recognizes the fruits of the Spirit: joy and peace in communion of persons. (Cf. Rm 8,16).
questionnaire for case studies. Through six case studies and additional in depth interviews, this research investigates concrete experiences in the Catholic Taiwan context, and also draws out ressemblances and differences between the Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints.

A qualitative research analysis verifies and analyzes the collected data. The assistance of some scholars and theologians using theological and pastoral reflection will enhance a better understanding of ancestor veneration. Judgment and decision are steps to verify the following two hypotheses of this research: the first hypothesis is that there is a relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints, and the second hypothesis is that Mary, the mother of Jesus has a place in the Chinese (Catholic) ancestor veneration and the communion of saints. The verification of these hypotheses brings about a more creative and a better integration of Chinese ancestor veneration of Mary in the communion of saints.

These two hypotheses will be verified in the findings obtained from a qualitative research analysis method. A qualitative research analysis method is a dynamic research process that is ultimately based on insight into reality. This research method applies the philosophical idea of E. Husserl (1889-1939) to social sciences. In 1913, he presented a philosophical program for the systematic investigation of the dynamism of consciousness and its objects. For him, experience is not limited to apprehension
The main difference between a qualitative study and a quantitative research is that a qualitative study wants to understand the meaning of people’s experiences while a quantitative research method aims to measure the experience through statistical data.\(^\text{19}\) Michael Q. Patton gives the following summary on the difference between a quantitative research and a qualitative study. "In a quantitative research, we witness the blossoming of a flower, the sweetening of a fruit, even its decay. But these are mere elements in the growth process of a plant. In a qualitative study, we seek to grasp the entire process starting from the excavation of the soil, the trimming and sowing of the plants until their ripening. We desire to take a look at every dimension of its growth process."\(^\text{20}\)

This qualitative research method is used in the dissertation. From the macro level of society (Ethnic groups and the Catholic Church) to micro society (Taiwan), the collected data includes six case studies of families and in depth interviews of six persons with 13 Protestant Pastors living in Taiwan. Investigation focuses more on the family’s ancestor veneration practices and their concept of the communion of saints and Mary. The analysis of the findings relies on five categories, which will be explained

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subsequently. This is a methodology created by integrating major concerns and objectives of a qualitative research study: the meaning of the experience of an individual as well as a family or a clan including the historical, socio-cultural, and current situation into a holistic approach.

3. **To act (Reconstruction)** is the creative process that moves into some practical suggestions for Marian doctrine and devotion in relation to Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints, for the pastoral work of evangelization in Taiwan. In the past two decades, theologians in Asia have worked to seek for a reconstruction in different fields of theology for Asians. Systematic and dogmatic theologies are two areas in need of a new understanding, especially in the field of Mariology. Due to this inter-relatedness, the subject of this dissertation: Chinese ancestor veneration, communion of saints and Mary, impels us to take seriously the consideration about the theological dimensions of human relationships which link/bridge these three realities and apply them to the Taiwan Catholic context. This link is expressed in the five dimensions of human relationships.

The five dimensions of human relationships are: transcendent, human (social), spiritual, biological, and material. 21 They are ‘enfleshed’ in Chinese religious, moral, ethics,

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social, and cultural ways of experience. In addition, human relationships in five dimensions serve as a backdrop for some practical suggestions, and hopefully aiming to ground some action plans regarding the integration between the Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints in Mary for Taiwan Catholicism.

In this reconstruction process, genuine inculturation efforts in Marian liturgical practices and devotion enable Asian people to find expressions of being a mature Asian Christian community. Some important realizations are already in place. In universities, as in parishes, some Marian devotional forms such as processions, images and symbols are significant efforts of inculturation, for example the liturgy during the Lunar New year. Other suggestions will be explored for the possibility of an integration of Mary in the communion of saints and in ancestor veneration using the category of relationship.

The elements of both a religion and a culture influenced by Christian doctrines can enrich catechesis and liturgy. Another related subject that preoccupies many Catholic Chinese is the question of the salvation of their non-baptized ancestors. Where are they? What are they doing?

To the question of salvation for non-Christians are new insights into God's mystery and God's ways of operating among the people affirm that God is the Lord of history. This means that God, who created the universe and humankind, is present and active in and through the Spirit in the whole of human history, leading all human beings to the
eschatological fulfillment of God’s reign. The salvific plan of God explains the presence of God’s saving grace in religions, cultures, movements, history of peoples, and their struggles. In turn, the deep motivation behind various cultural and religious means of veneration and devotion expresses a reality that human persons of all ages and in all cultures are seeking for a veritable salvation, and are ways on how God saves.²²

The dissertation will have seven chapters:

Chapter I : Introduction: Rationale and Methodology.

Chapter II : Chinese Ancestor Veneration.

Chapter III : Qualitative Research on Chinese Ancestor Veneration.

Chapter IV : Communion Ecclesiology and the Communion of Saints.

Chapter V : Mary’s place in the Communion of Saints.

Chapter VI : Chinese Ancestor Veneration, the Communion of Saints and Mary in the Category of Relationship: A Reconstruction.

Chapter VII: Recommendations, Assessment and Conclusion.

In conclusion, the discourse of the Acts of the Apostles continues to be written in Asia today. Asian theologians need to keep in mind and heart Peter’s question at the Council of Jerusalem “Now, therefore, why do you put God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?” (Acts

Asian Catholics appreciate the long religious tradition that the Church has given them. However it is still necessary to ask how that tradition will continue to be alive in Asia. How can the Asian Churches balance the 'neat-precise-clear' way of Western methods with the Asian search for meaning? Yet, if we believe that the Spirit is alive, as the first Christian community did believe, the flame of hope can transform our weakness into the capacity to dialogue with people and their lives. This vital force to listen and to understand how the Spirit is present in the peoples' realities, can hopefully bring about another Spring time in the Asian Christian world and its theology, and may become a kairos moment for the universal Church and the world at large.

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23 Aloysius Pieris, “Two Encounters in My Theological Journey” in Frontiers in Asian Christian Theology: Emerging Trends, ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993, p.145-146) says “Being baptized in the Jordan of Asian religions and on the cross of Asian poverty are necessary steps in becoming a local church of Asia and in constructing an inculturated theology. Through this double baptism the Church gives up the privilege of power and humbly and willingly enters into the ethos that is Asia.”
Chapter II

Chinese Ancestor Veneration

Introduction

Ancestral practices (祖先) have long been considered the bedrock of Chinese religion and remain one of the most significant elements of Chinese culture. For more than four hundred years, missionaries and Chinese Catholic believers debated the appropriate Chinese Catholic response to ancestral veneration practices. In recent decades and up to the present time, many Chinese regard following cultural traditions and customs as critical for maintaining identity and social status in society. While modernization has changed much of Taiwan’s cultural and social environment, some Church leaders and scholars recognize that ancestral practices remain a major obstacle that prevents Chinese people from accepting Christianity.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the meaning and significance of ancestor

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1 The two characters: ancestor (祖) and veneration (祭) are filled with meaning. Who are the ancestors in a family? It is a popular belief that they are deceased family members who are thought to be powerful living spirits who are concerned about the welfare of their descendants, and also capable of punitive actions, if displeased. Veneration is composed of rites, rituals; and usually, the underlying motivations of the ceremony. Ancestor veneration first, originated from Confucian ethics, it is an obligation of filial piety (孝), and secondly, from the Buddhist notion, that it is an opportunity to repay the kindness of the ancestors. Cf. Ellen Oxfeld, “When You Drink Water, Think of its Source”, Morality, Status, and Reinvention in Rural Chinese Funerals, The Journal of Asian Studies, 63: 4, (2004), p.987.

veneration among the general public and in particular among Taiwan Catholics. To what extent is this practice a roadblock or a bridge to the Catholic belief in the communion of saints? What is the relationship between the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints? Who are our ancestors? Where are they?

This chapter has three objectives. The first and the most obvious one, but not the least important, is the definition of terms: what is Chinese ancestor veneration and how does it differ from ancestor worship? Anyone who has spent some years in Taiwan can observe that the ancestor veneration practice is still very much alive in the culture and in the custom of the people. One can also discover differences between ancestor veneration and ancestor worship among different ethnic groups in Taiwan.

The second objective is to search for a deeper understanding and the practical aspects of Chinese ancestor veneration. Responses provided by a Catholic parish in Taipei City and another one in a mountain area are sources of information, and they offer answers to the above questions, which will be mentioned in the section that deals with the ancestor veneration practices in the Catholic Church. They supply first hand information on the current practices of ancestor veneration in the Catholic Church.3 Findings from interviews with ministry team members and from students

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3 Because of the Chinese Rites Controversy, "Ex quo singulari" in 1742, Benedict XIV issued a final Bull to the Catholic Church in China and prohibited the ancestor practices. In 1939, the
who are mainly non-Christian serve as valuable data in this study. They are alternate sources in adapting traditional ancestor veneration rite into a lively and meaningful liturgy.

The third objective is to examine the dynamics of the relationships between family ancestor veneration and the Catholic Church and to discover ways in which culture and religious belief adapt to the day-to-day life and over line. After summarizing some observations, this dissertation will present qualitative research on six case studies and in depth interviews in the next chapter. Therefore, the framework of chapter two is as follows:

1. **Definition of terms:** the description, the differentiation of Chinese ancestor veneration and ancestor worship, and the meaning of worship and veneration.

II. **Different relational dimensions of Chinese ancestor veneration in general.**

1. Historical dimension.

2. Socio-cultural dimension.

3. Theological-spiritual dimension.

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III. Some practices of ancestor veneration in Taiwan's public (secular) society and the Catholic Church.

1. Taiwan Society
2. Taiwan Catholic Church

IV. Summary and conclusion

I. Definition of Terms:

There is diversity in Taiwan culture regarding ancestor veneration. Details of practices differ considerably from one ethnic group to another. Therefore, I will only deal with general principles and practical application in regard to ancestor veneration in relation to theology, Mariology and missiology. Anthropology and sociology will also be taken into consideration for the purpose of this study.

In order that there will be a common understanding of the terms used in this chapter, this section will give a definition and a description of the following:

1. Who are the ancestors?

The category of ancestor (祖先) is only given to those influential people who have died and have made a significant contribution to the family. Not every deceased person is called ‘ancestor’. The generic term of ancestor in the Chinese

religious culture, a family religion, classifies ancestors into two types: first, ‘gods or deities’, they are the ‘good spirits’ who during their life on earth had done good things to the family or to others. Second, ghosts, those who are bad spirits and are restless spirits.4

2. Chinese ancestor worship

The practice of ancestor worship is also been termed as ‘ancestor cult’. It signifies a system of belief expressed through rituals in homage in rituals to deceased ancestors. Ancestor worship is also called ‘the cult to the dead’, which centers on death, the preservation of the corpse, and the ceremonies related to burial and post burial. The cult of the dead presupposes the on-going existence of the departed soul and continued interdependence between the living and the dead. The dead depend on the living to offer sacrifices of oblation, while the living depends on the dead for protection and blessings. Such a symbiotic relationship is regarded as providing mutual benefits. The reciprocal benefits of this relationship help the ancestor so that he/she will not fade into oblivion. The descendants in turn receive their ancestor’s aid in the form of spiritual influence brought to bear on their worldly well-being. Sacrifice is prepared primarily for two reasons: first, to prevent or remedy misfortune and secondly, to please the

4 David Jordan in Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors, University of California Press, 1972, described two types of ancestors. pp.31ff.
spirits so that blessings will be bestowed.\(^5\)

Ancestor worship has a strong religious connotation such as Buddhist or Daoist influences, and is usually in areas not so much influenced by Confucian ethics. In China and Taiwan, ancestor worship is found in rural fishing localities where animism dominates popular thinking. The deceased is an object of worship or fear, and the main goal of religious rites is to appease the ancestor spirit.\(^6\)

3. Chinese Ancestor veneration

Chinese ancestor veneration is found in places where Confucian ethics exerts a strong influence. The Confucian theory of ethics is based on three important concepts: li, ritual, yi, righteousness and ren, benevolence. It is in the second area, yi, which has an ethical-moral meaning. Based on reciprocity, a person does not only pursue his/her own self-interest but also does what is right and what is ethical and moral. For example, the living of yi is how one must mourn one's father and mother for three years after their death. Since for three years they took care of their child, so one must reciprocate by living in mourning for three years.\(^7\)

Filial piety, (孝) a Confucian concept, is practiced in sets of rites (li) and is generally associated with deceased ancestors. It is an expression of


remembrance\(^8\) rather than an act of worship and is found in societies of Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and China where strong emphasis is given to filial piety to ancestors, only second to that given to the emperor. There are three stages of filial piety according to Confucius' teaching: the first stage is for parents, when alive and should be served according to propriety. The second stage is when they are dead; they should be buried according to propriety. And, the third stage is that there should be sacrifices offered to them according to propriety.\(^9\)

Historical surveys show that in China the practice began by honoring heroes and emperors (1111-770 BC). Traditionally, Confucianism teaches that filial piety is the foundation of virtue and the root of civilization; it is therefore ethical rather than religious.\(^10\)

3. Worship and Veneration

The Chinese word, pei (bei) \(^11\) (拜) signifies worship, it can also have religious implications. The term 'zhi' (ji) (祭) means reverence, pay respect to, to visit, or to make obeisance to, which describes the phenomenon of ancestor veneration. Veneration is composed of rites and rituals and usually has underlying motivations of filial piety expressed in remembering, repaying the kindness of the

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\(^11\) In this dissertation, the Romanization of names and places is retained in its original form written
ancestors and asking for blessings.

The word “worship” is used in a religious sense to mean a relationship of dependence, gratitude, and adoration between the creature and the Creator or Supreme Being. If worship is used in a religious sense to designate the homage shown by the living to the spirit of the deceased person, then, worship represents the creature’s response to the spiritualized creature. This is often the case of divinizing ancestors to gods or deities called ancestor worship. This research will focus on ancestor veneration by elaborating three different dimensions: historical, socio-cultural and theological.12

II. Different Dimensions of Chinese Ancestor Veneration

1. The historical dimension:

Historical surveys show that in China, ancestor practices began by honoring heroes and emperors. Ancestor worship was added to ancestor veneration, probably in the Chou dynasty (1111-770 BC).13 This was basically to compensate for what children owe their parents, reflecting the Confucianism teaching on filial piety. The great teacher Confucius or K’ung Fu Tzu (Kang Fu

12 by the authors. However, the one in the bracket provides the latest Romanization from China.

13 In the next section, these three dimensions of ancestor veneration will be studied as a theory. Chapter III will give the experiential data to the three dimensions through the questionnaire.

According to Julia Ching the ancient Chinese believed in the continued existence of deceased ancestors; at death, the upper soul (魂) ascended to heaven, while the lower soul (魄) descended into the earth. Such belief was formulated only in the Chou dynasty, but it was implicit in the religious beliefs of the Shang dynasty, and in the Shang practices of divination and sacrifice. Cf. Julia Ching, Chinese Religions, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1993, p. 35.
Zi (孔夫子) (551-479 BC) incorporated many of his teachings into historical
texts dating from the first millennium BC. Among his well-known
writings are "Four Books and Five Classics". The "Four Books" includes: The
Great Learning (Shui Jing), The Doctrine of Mean (Zhong Yong), The Analects
(Lun Yu), and The Book of Piety (Xiao Jing). While the "Five Classics" are The
Book of Change (Yi Jing), The Book of Odes (Shi Jing), The Book of Rites (Li
Chi), The Book of History (Shu Jing) and Spring and Autumn Annals (Chun
Chiu).  

The meaning of the expression 'filial piety' is 'hsiao' (孝) in Chinese and
is represented by a character which is composed of the ideogram for 'old' with
'son' placed underneath. (孝敬) This picture symbolizes the obligation of the
child to respect and take care of the parents according to what is known as 'li'
(禮), or the socially acceptable behavior of individuals in all circumstances.

Filial piety (孝順) has five different expressions used among the Chinese: first,
supporting and caring for parents; second, reverence and obedience; third,
continuance of the ancestral line; fourth, glorification of the family name by
bringing honor to one's parents; and fifth, mourning and ancestral remembrance.

It is important to note that Confucian moral ethics does not elaborate a specific
notion of the other world. The emphasis is for one to live as a person of virtue, here on earth. This is considered to be a pragmatic view of life. There is no ‘hell’ in the Confucian tradition. Indeed, where every one goes after death remains obscure. Furthermore, Confucius did not enunciate the idea of caring for the dead so that one might expiate for his/her sins.\textsuperscript{15}

When Buddhism was introduced into China during the Han Dynasty under the Emperor Ming, (65-73 AD) the ancestor rite acquired a religious significance, especially in relation to the concepts of hell, heaven, transmigration of souls, and reincarnation.\textsuperscript{16} Buddhism added not only the concept that death rituals recompense parents, especially mothers, for their sacrifices in their children’s upbringing. There is the additional notion of a punitive underworld that has become embedded in the modern Chinese concept of after life. Daoism (道教) contributes the strong emphasis on summoning the soul of the deceased person and asking what they need in order to provide adequate offerings for them. Daoists believe that the dead continue to have needs in the after life. Hence, sacrifices offered by the living can transform and deliver the dead from sufferings.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} Confucian philosophy emphasizes on doing well here on earth at the present moment and to cultivate virtue and be a moral person rather than being preoccupied with the question of after
In summary, historically speaking, there has been a mixture of traditions in ancestor veneration: the Confucian notion of filial piety, the Buddhist ideas about salvation through reincarnation, and also, the Daoism concept of the fate of the dead, living spirits still in need of material goods.

2. The socio-cultural dimension.

The Asian family lineage that is a system of tracing the line from living members back to many generations of a common ancestor is an important element for an adequate sense of belonging. Ancestor veneration practice promotes solidarity among members of the family. The family, in the Asian context, particularly in Chinese culture, is the basic unit of society. When the family includes closed relatives, it is called extended family. It puts demands and expectation on family members. Traditionally, vertical lineage's solidarity was expressed when three to four generations resided under the same roof or in the same compound. Normally, the elders have more say than the younger ones regarding family affairs. In social gatherings, seniority gets priority. This vertical solidarity is extended even to the dead.18


18 For more than two decades, from an agricultural society to an industrialized society, Taiwan society has a social change: from an extended family to the nuclear family. This change could influence the future of the type and manner of ancestor veneration, in manner of rites and rituals that will be more a home type rather than a clan type.
continuity of the family existence by bearing sons not daughter. Having a second wife when the first one fails to bear a son is not only common, but also even desirable up to the present time. Horizontal solidarity is a kind of social security system. The extended family network ensures the welfare of its members. Everyone is expected to exercise loyalty for the honor of the clan. The elders even assume the financial responsibility of the extended family members, such as nieces and nephews. For most Chinese families, they believe that ancestors are present and have a definite social role in different seasonal festivals throughout the year. Most Chinese follow the traditional lunar calendar. The following six celebrations are the major events:\textsuperscript{19}

1) Lunar New Year (春節)

This event is the most important of the year and is usually held on the second moon (the 15\textsuperscript{th} of the month) after the winter solstice. The celebration lasts for a full month and offers a period of family reunions before spring begins. Various feasts honor important ancestors and deities. On New Year’s Eve at the family dinner, offerings are prepared for ancestors and the spirits. This major feast is a combination of two traditions: Confucianism stresses on filial piety and Daoistic belief insists on providing

\textsuperscript{19} Houston Smith, \textit{The World Religions, Distinctive Religious Traits of East Asian}, (Http://wrc.lingnet.org/eastdist.htm, p.1.)
material needs for the deceased members of the family. This feast honors various deities, ancestors, and restless spirits.

2) Lantern festival (元宵節)
Marking the end of the New Year’s celebration, lanterns are viewed and displayed. On the night of the Lantern Festival, people crowd into brightly lit streets to see the display of lanterns. Daoist tradition dictates that the lanterns symbolize light to guide the way for ancestors and the spirits in joining the family reunions. It is also said that this evening is good for a young woman to find a good husband.

3) Dragon Boat festival (端午節)
As the summer solstice comes, this event recalls Qui Yuban (屈原) or Ch’u Yuan (328-298 BC) a Chinese poet and statesman who drowned himself in the Tunsing Lake, China in protest of the corruption within the royal court. In this legend, he is considered to be a hero and a model to be venerated. Dragon boat competitions are held during this day to commemorate his self-sacrifice and to re-enact the search for Qui Yuban. Boats are decorated with dragonheads representing forces to produce rain. In addition, Daoistic tradition gives food wrapped in bamboo leaves, on this day, and as an offering and a sacrifice to Ch’un Yuan, the hero.
4) Ghost festival (中元節)

During this festival that occurs on the seventh month in the lunar calendar, called the month of the ghosts, sacrifices such as food and prayers are offered to the ghosts, evil spirits. These are harmful spirits that are restless because of violent or untimely deaths, ill placed burial sites, or those neglected by their descendants. It is believed that during this month, the gates of hell are opened and the free roaming ghosts (Ku) (Gui) receive offerings. Buddhists and Daoists believe that the soul of the restless spirit must be appeased through offerings of food and prayers. The ghost festival fulfills this function. Hell according to Daoist belief is a place or a fate of those who receive punishment.

5) Mid-Autumn festival (中秋節)

Focused on fullest moon of the year, this celebration originally centered on a popular legend of a deity known as Chang O. She came down and stayed on earth to find her lover. It is a popular Daoist belief that once a year during

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20 The term ghost (kuei or goei or gui) is associated to the soul, which separates from the body in death. If the soul (靈魂) is cared for by the descendants who provide offerings needed, it is at peace. But on the contrary, if it is not properly cared for and the dead person had a bad life, it can become dangerous and is called ghost or gui (鬼). However, there is also another category that is opposite to ghost, gui called (神) god, the good one. They are persons of good nature who can become gods. This is how the fate of ancestors is conceived. Cf. David Jordan, Gods, Ghost and Ancestors, University of California Press, 1972, pp. 31 ff.
the Autumn full moon, Chang O is allowed to go back to heaven. To celebrate the full harvest moon, people go to the countryside or stay at home and prepare sacrificial food, ‘moon cakes’ for the ancestors to enjoy with them.

6) Ancestral tomb sweeping day (清明節)

This is the second most important event that involves visiting ancestral tombs. Family members clean and conserve burial sites, and offer paper money or gifts to departed ancestors. It is a Daoist belief that the deceased persons still need material provisions. This event takes place in the third lunar month—106 days after the winter solstice, usually at the end of March or the beginning of April.

In summary, Confucian teaching of filial piety and Daoist belief on the fate of the ancestors has a great influence throughout East Asia, including China, Taiwan. Traditionally, every Chinese is Confucianist as to ethics and in public life, while Daoist in private life and hygiene (health-wise), and he/she is a Buddhist at time of death, with a healthy dash of shamanistic folk thrown in along the way.\(^{21}\) Hence, it is not easy to isolate one cultural practice to only one particular religion. The Chinese worldview sees little separation between religion and culture. To describe a

religion is to address broad issues of culture. The above description of a relationship between living family members and their deceased ancestors during seasonal festivities gives a vivid picture of Chinese socio-cultural life up to this day.

3. The theological and spiritual dimension

According to Daoism, there is an underlying concept of Yin (陰) and Yang (陽) forces which are expressed in nature. There are two sources of energy, and these energies are dialectically opposite casting away evil and at the same time seeking to attract the good. The symbol of ying and yang are proper to Daoism, where the two sources of energy regarding movements are about times, places, and activities that are associated with shamans, geomancers, and about ghosts of traditional culture.

Yin and yang forces are in a constant state of interplay within the universe. While possessing an inherent tension, they are also complementary. The following chart will demonstrate the interrelatedness of these two cosmic forces: yin and yang and their characteristics.22

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Yin originally means ‘shady, secret, dark, death, cold, moist, ghost, and grave.’ Yin points to the shaded mountainside, the south bank of a river. While, Yang in turn means ‘clear, bright, the sun, heat, light, north side of a mountain or the north bank of a river’. From their characteristics, a complete opposite system is elaborated. Yin represents everything about the world that is dark, hidden, passive, receptive, yielding, cool and soft. While Yang represents about everything in the world that is: illuminated, evident, active, aggressive, hard, and hot. The earth is the ultimate ‘yin’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yin 陰</th>
<th>Yang 陽</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark side of the mountain</td>
<td>Light side of the mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moist from dew, flowers, closed,</td>
<td>Sunlight in morning, warm, dry, opened up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans, death, dark, ghost, flesh</td>
<td>Gods, health, powerful things and remains of the dead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body / Grave</td>
<td>Spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghost</td>
<td>Ancestors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grave</td>
<td>Tablet/Shrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Awe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Honor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yin points to the shaded mountainside, the south bank of a river. While, Yang in turn means ‘clear, bright, the sun, heat, light, north side of a mountain or the north bank of a river’. From their characteristics, a complete opposite system is elaborated. Yin represents everything about the world that is dark, hidden, passive, receptive, yielding, cool and soft. While Yang represents about everything in the world that is: illuminated, evident, active, aggressive, hard, and hot. The earth is the ultimate ‘yin’
object. Heaven is the ultimate yang object. Following the general characteristics of Yin and Yang, Chinese families often seek a burial place for their deceased members. In daily living, most Chinese people believe the two basic Chinese concepts of energy and ways of life: Confucianism is identified as the yang aspect, Daoism with the Yin aspect, in order to achieve harmony.

Moreover, Chinese people are aware of the reality of the spiritual world. In popular religion, they believe that the deity (god) is a part of the natural world. For example, one must have permission to intrude into the territory of a deity in charge of a locality, e.g. god of the earth or any ancestor who had done good deeds during his/her lifetime and are venerated as gods or goddess. Religious rites are prepared to appease the deity, not only to keep it from intervening, but also to oblige it to bless the giver of the sacrifice. There is a give and take relationship between the divine and the human world.23

One clear example of the belief of an after-life in Daoism is for instance, the Chinese believe that present life activities continue beyond death. For this reason, one is careful not to offend any deity during the funeral proceedings. Many Chinese believe that after death, some undertake a journey filled with obstacles that can only be overcome by the pious provisions of the living. If this is not done, the dead will

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23 Tseng, Christianity and Ancestor Worship, p. 113-115.
remain on earth, causing harm to the living family members. The deceased may also need things like food or a vehicle. For the purpose of pleasing the dead, cars, houses, money made of paper are burned as well as food are offered.

One primary obligation of revering ancestors according to Confucian rites is to establish a ritual. For example, instead of preparing food before the photo of the deceased ancestors and bowing toward it, a family can share a meal on the memorial day and remember the loved one’s life and contribution to the family. The ancestor veneration also involves good manners, rites, and the cultivation of social and family virtues. On the wake of a deceased person, funeral rites and memorial ceremonies, honor is first given to the aged and wise persons, then to the elders living, and finally to the deceased person. Under the assumption that the afterworld is similar to our world with needs such as food, money, housing, and clothing, offerings are prepared at home shrines, either in the form of food or as paper objects, all with a likeness to real ones.

The reciprocal benefits of ancestor veneration are two fold: first, the ancestors will not be deprived of any needs in the afterworld; second, the descendants in turn receive their ancestor’s aid in the form of spiritual influences for their own well-being. Traditionally, it is a family’s desire to have a son to carry on the bloodline and to continue the responsibility of practicing ancestor veneration and...
remembrance.\textsuperscript{24} To illustrate two kinds of relationships: one with the Risen Lord and the other one with each other, this Chinese Last Supper with Jesus, done by an unknown painter in Beijing, Mainland China, 2000 is an artistic expression of the double dimensions. Perhaps the painter wants to show the closeness, (immanent dimension) and the mystery (transcendent dimension) of a communion with the Jesus sitting at a round table. (No boundary)

How do Christians respond to these ancestor practices? First of all, history has recorded that foreign missionaries taught the Christian responses to ancestral practices. There are two types of responses: first, the conservative one that considers the ancestor practice as superstitious and a form of idolatry. It is against the Ten Commandments, so they say. Chinese ancestor veneration creates a tension

\textsuperscript{24} W. Ma, \textit{Three Types}, pp. 202-205.
between the society and Christians or even in the conscience of the Christians. Second, the more tolerant type respects and tolerates cultural practices such as ancestor veneration. This theological consideration is based on the Confucian virtue of filial piety in a traditional Chinese culture and practice and not Daoism, which practices are acts of idolatry by worshipping an ancestor as god or a divinity. The Christian response seeks to offer an alternative that the power of the ancestor spirits as a fearful and cursing god is to be replaced by the concept of veneration for their ancestors as respect and gratitude.

Theologically, the Christian response is that Jesus Christ is the unique mediator and the center of human salvation. Jesus as the only savior is the grounding basis of Christian response. However, a simple negation of the existence of gods and spirits by those who are not accustomed to Confucian ancestor practice and a denial of the spiritual world of the people of Daoism, without offering an alternative, does not bring a solution to a dialogue between Christians and non-Christians.

The inter-religious dialogue about ancestor veneration and ancestor worship continues to be a hot topic among Protestants in Taiwan today. Historically, as early as during the Ming Dynasty, Christianity was torn between two mutually

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25 Gu Hao-Run reported in *Taiwan Church News* #2647, November 24, 2002, about a seminar on Taiwan Christians (Presbyterian) Discuss The Veneration Question, he says that “understanding the roles of ancestors is problematic in a system that is human centered and focused on obtaining blessings and avoiding calamity, which is wide spread and well established, but also have some limitations. From Christian theology, human beings are created and limited, but God is unlimited and singular. All Christians confess that there is no god but God.” p.1.
opposing orientations. On the one hand, Christianity was consciously trying to practice Confucianism, a rather rational doctrine without revelation or concept of a personalized God and without ideas about life after death and the retribution of good and evil, without priests or hierarchy. On the other hand, Chinese adhered on the concept of salvation and liturgical practices of Buddhism, Daoism, and other popular religions. The Catholic Church abolished the bull of 1747, known as the Chinese Rites Controversy, and in 1939 allowed Chinese Catholics to participate in ancestor veneration after some serious reflection on the relevance of Confucian practice: filial piety as an essential element in Chinese culture. Only when the practice of ancestor veneration is based on religious and spiritual motives, known as ancestor worship, then it remains a challenge for Christianity (both Catholics and Protestants) to present a religious and spiritual alternative for Chinese Christians.  

In the next section, we will concentrate on some practices of ancestor veneration in Taiwan’s society and the Catholic Church to show how this traditional practice is still in vigor and is integrated in the pastoral and evangelization work.

I. Some practices of Ancestor Veneration in Taiwan’s Society and in the Catholic Church

The traditional practices of ancestor veneration in Taiwan take different forms...

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26 W. Ma, *Three Types*, pp. 212-213, this Christian response comes from the Evangelical-Pentecostal Studies. However, I personally observe that it is also true to the Catholic Church.
depending on the ethnic groups, religious beliefs, specific occasions, location, and financial means of the families involved. However, there are some common elements of the ceremony such as: food, drinks, flowers, incense, candles, and ancestral tablets, prostration, and the burning of paper money.

By the year 2004, the population of Taiwan surpassed 23 million. With the exception of over 422,000 indigenous (aborigines) people, the population of Taiwan is composed almost entirely of Han Chinese (漢族). Early Han Chinese immigrants came from two ethnic groups: the Hakka, (客家) mostly from Guangdong (廣東) Province; and the Fukienese (Minnan) (福建 / 閩南) from China's coastal province of Fukien. These two groups comprise about 85 percent of the Han population, with the Fukienese outnumbering the Hakka by about three to one. The latest group of immigrants came from different regions in China. They landed in Taiwan with Chiang Kai-Shek and his army in 1949 and generally are referred to as 'mainlanders' and account for less than 15 percent of the Han population.

Interrmarriage between all four groups, indigenous people, Hakkas, Fukieneses (Minnan), and Mainlanders, is quite common, Thus, the distinguishing

27 The ancestral tablet is called in Chinese shen wei (神位) (seat of the spirit) or shen chu(( location of the spirit). It is a traditional belief that the spirit of the deceased has three souls and these souls reside in three places: in the grave, in the tablet and in the world of the deceased (depending on the belief). More descriptions of the ancestral tablet are given in the text.

28 All ethnic groups residing in Taiwan are considered to be Taiwanese. To avoid confusion, this research retains the names of the four ethnic groups: those who migrated from Fukien Province are called Minnan; those from Guangdong, the Hakka; those who arrived with Chiang Kai Shek in 1949 are the Mainlanders and the first peoples as Aborigines.
characteristics of these groups have become less specific with the passage of time. Nevertheless, each ethnic group has its own particularities that have enriched their ancestor practices.29

This section will describe the richness and variety of Taiwanese ancestor practices that have been gathered from two sources. First, from studies of Chinese culture provided by scholars in general. Secondly, from the oral responses given by a Catholic parish group whose members are mainly Minnan and another Catholic parish group composed of Atayal (賽雅族) aborigine group, and a mixed, Catholic and non-Catholic youth group at FuJen Catholic university. A critical analysis at the end of this section will reflect the theological and pastoral implications of ancestor veneration both in Catholic and non-Catholic modern Taiwan society.

1. Taiwan Society30:

The Hakka Group:

In the sixties, Myron Cohen suggested that the ancestor practices done by the families in the Hakka village of Yen-liao, in Pintung, Taiwan, were held either in the family room or in the compound’s central hall. If the families share the same ancestors, there is only one set of tablets; however, each family also has its own

30 It is a common term used by the people of Taiwan to call the Minnan group as Taiwanese, because they composed of the largest group in the whole population. To avoid the dispute that everyone who lives is a Taiwanese, this research uses Minnan to qualify those who are immigrants from Fukien Province, and the language they speak as Minnan or Amoy. (閩南語)
family shrine. There is a difference between a family shrine (altar) and an ancestral tablet. Ancestral tablets are one type of ritual object commonly seen in temples, shrines and on family altars. Usually, ancestral tablets are made of small pieces of wood that bear inscriptions honoring ancestors, gods, and other important figures. Ancestral tablets might vary in size and shape according to different parts of the country but are normally inscribed with the title and name of the deceased, dates of birth and death, and additional information such as place of burial and the name of the son (usually the eldest) who erected the tablet. Ancestral tablets are normally contained in a family shrine. A family shrine is also known as an altar. There are usually three parts in a shrine: the center part is reserved for the most important family ancestor; on the two sides are other family deceased members; occasionally, the wives' tablets are also included on both sides of the shrine. Nowadays, when descendants transfer their residences to other localities, the ancestral tablets remain in the common ancestral hall of the clan for greater accessibility. In time, when this hall is filled up with ancestral tablets, a new hall will be built. Each section of the hall would take the tablets of their most recently deceased ancestors. Each family has its own section in the clan hall of ancestry. When a family moves out to another locality before the death of the paterfamilias, the male elder may or may not continue to remain the head of his family unit. The
elders of the clan have to decide, choose, or confirm this leadership. In the event that the families divide into smaller units, each family may move out from the original building complex and begin a new ancestral hall. It is a traditional practice in the Hakka group to have a common ancestor ritual in the ancestor hall, for this reason it is of primary importance that the Hakka people place their ancestral tablets in a common ancestral hall. The Hakka group observes the traditional seasonal feasts by venerating their common ancestors as a clan. They come together at the ancestral hall at least twice a year: the Lunar New Year and the Tomb Sweeping Day.

The Minnan (Fukienese) group:

In 1966, David Jordan found out that in a village of mainly Minnan people in Bao-an, Tainan, the ancestral tablet is kept in one central room of the family house. The name of the ancestor is carved on the outside of the tablet, and it is not permitted to move the original ancestral tablet from its original place, since, it is a belief that such an action will disturb the spirits. However, if distance makes it difficult for the descendants to attend the common ancestor rites, it is acceptable to make a duplicate tablet to be kept at the family shrine/altar.

There are two kinds of ancestor practices among the Minnan group: one is directed

to a particular ancestor, i.e., on the anniversary of his death and the other is a general practice including all ancestors. It occurs on Tomb Sweeping Day and on certain events, like marriage. In the practice of ancestor veneration among the Minnan people, the rules are more flexible. It is not an obligation for Minnan people to perform the rites to the ancestor as a clan. Each family can venerate his ancestors at the family shrine.

The Aborigines: Atayal group in Hsinchu County:

Human beings began inhabiting Taiwan as far back as 12,000 to 15,000 years ago. Evidence suggests that the ancestors of today's aboriginal people came from Southern China and Austronesia. At present, there are thirteen aboriginal groups in Taiwan: Atayal, Saisiyat, Bunnan, Tsou (Northern Tsou and Southern Tsou), Paiwan, Rukai, Puyuma, Ami, Truku (Taroko), Kavalan, Thao, and Yami. Altogether, they comprise less than 2 percent of the entire population of Taiwan. Both the culture and lifestyle of the aborigines have continued to change as the descendants of Taiwan's earliest inhabitants adjust to the island's rapid modernization. Young people are leaving traditional occupations such as farming, hunting, and fishing for jobs in the cities. Aboriginal languages are still spoken in Taiwan, but the number of native speakers is dwindling rapidly. Younger

generations are usually not as fluent in their own ancestral languages as they speak Mandarin or Minnan / Amoy:

From the responses given by two catechists living in the mountain area, it is evident that the ancestral practices of the Atayal group are divided into two time periods: one before conversion to Catholicism and the other after receiving baptism from the Catholic Church in around 1959.\(^{34}\)

1) Before becoming Catholic

Ancestral veneration has always been part and parcel of the Atayal peoples’ life. Because most of them are farmers or hunters, they offer animals as offerings: a pig or a chicken or both. At the harvest season, the 15\(^{th}\) day of the eighth lunar month, on the eve of the Lunar New Year, a pig is slaughtered and offered to the ancestors. After the ceremony, the animal is divided and shared among the families. The chief of the tribe is the presider and the ceremony is a rite of unending dancing and singings in an open space. There are no written texts for the ceremony, nor are there any ancestral tablets. Most people express their prayers and petitions in songs, i.e. calling the names of their ancestors, men and women alike; naming their good and heroic deeds, their virtues and good behaviors. This is an active education,

\(^{34}\) Two Atayal catechists give their responses and shared their experiences. They reside and serve the Catholic Church in Hsinchu area.
where the young generation learns to follow their ancestors as models in virtues and
in deeds.

The main purposes of the ancestor worship, practiced by most of the aborigines are:
first, to give thanks for giving and nurturing life, and second, to seek their protection
especially against evil and curses. They believe that while on earth, a person should
respect the spirits. Death is something to be afraid of. The Atayal people believe in
ghosts and evil spirits who may harm those are on earth. They also believe that the
deceased are still with them and do not exist in another world or sphere.

2) After becoming Catholic

Those who were baptized into Catholic Church35 abandoned their former ways of
ceremonial rites and worship. They have adopted the liturgy and the rites performed
in the church.

Most Catholic Churches located in mountain areas have an ancestral tablet erected
at the entrance of the church. The names of the deceased persons in the parish are
written on it along with their photos. A day during the week is chosen by one family
for Mass to be offered for a deceased loved one. Each family usually offers and
attends this Eucharistic celebration to commemorate their deceased family
members.

35 There was a rapid influx of the aborigine tribal people in the decade between the years 1955 to
According to the catechists, some radical changes have taken place in the aborigines' faith after baptism. The most important change is what they believe about life and death. They are no longer afraid of death, knowing death is a gateway to eternal peace with God. However, they deplore that the Catholic Church has adapted the Buddhist way of venerating the ancestors by offering flowers, incense, wine, fruits, and the three bows, as a sign of high respect, instead of the one used by the aborigines. The Atayal people use animals as an offering. They even expressed their uneasiness of performing the ancestor rites inside the church. For them, the ceremony is usually held in open ground where nature is a part of the ritual.

The below photos are illustrations of how the Catholic Church has integrated the Atayal cultures into the Eucharistic celebration. For example, according to the Atayal group, the harvest festival is the most important feast. The Catholic communities in the mountain areas celebrate this feast with the Atayal Catholics in their natural habitat.

Information gathered from the catechist stationed in the mountain area of Hsinchu, October 2004.
1. Right: During the harvest festival, Catholic aboriginal practice includes the offering of the first fruits to God and to their ancestors.

2. Left: At the offertory, the first fruits are included as part of the Eucharist.

The Mainland group

Due to the Communist occupation in Mainland China, many immigrants came to Taiwan in 1949. The Marxist ideology of the Communist government was against Confucianism. This had weakened the nuclear family and the family ties. Hence, the practice of ancestor veneration became less and less visible in the family and in Mainland China society. Though ancestor veneration practice had been stripped of much of its structural support and the liberty to practice, in hiding, the Mainlanders who were mostly followers of Confucius had retained the reverence to their ancestors at home.

From 1955 to 1960, many sought spiritual refuge in the Catholic Church and became a large portion of the Taiwan Catholic population. They had received a warm welcome from the Catholic Church in Taiwan, where many former missionary priests and sisters had settled after expulsion from China. Due to the practical reason that these missionaries spoke Mandarin, they were able to facilitate communication and adaptation for them. The Mainlanders do not find any major difficulty to accept the ancestor veneration directives prescribed by the Catholic Church. On the contrary, a majority of them adhered to Confucian moral ethics.
welcome and practice ancestor veneration as an enculturation of Chinese culture in
the Catholic faith.38

As a summary to this section, a comparative table below shows some similarities
and differences in ancestor practices among the four ethnic groups in Taiwan. The
meaning of indicators such as: X = present; blank = absent, and minority = few
practicing and majority = many. In addition, here are some similarities and
differences:

37 The Catholic Church in Taiwan (ROC), Chinese Bishops Conference, July 10, 1988, pp. 7-8.
38 The Catholic Church in Taiwan, Republic of China, Growth and Decline in Membership,
Published by the Chinese Bishops Conference of Taiwan, July 10, 1988, P.7.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hakka group</th>
<th>Minnan group</th>
<th>Mainland group</th>
<th>Atayal group: before Baptism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Ancestor practices</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types: Ancestor worship</strong></td>
<td>X Minority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Objects: Deities, ghosts and gods</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Minority</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Symbols used: Ancestral tablet Family</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clan ancestral tablets</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ancestral shrine or altar</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Some families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Rites/rituals: Songs/dances</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written text</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Frequency in a family or clan</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Private and Flexible</td>
<td>Always as clan During seasonal feasts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Religious traditions</strong></td>
<td>Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism also traditional religion.</td>
<td>Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism</td>
<td>Majority are Confucianists</td>
<td>Traditional religion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similarities and differences:

1) The four ethnic groups of Taiwan practice either ancestor veneration or ancestor worship. The differences between ancestor veneration and ancestor worship are in the motivation of the peoples' belief: veneration fosters filial piety in Confucianism, and worship is rendered to god, deities and spirits in Daoism, Buddhism and traditional religions.

2) The majority of Chinese people have ancestral family tablets except for the Atayal group.

3) The Common ancestral hall exists only in Hakka and Minnan groups.

4) The clan spirit is strongly present among the Hakka and Atayal groups.

5) The family spirit present in all of the four ethnic groups, symbolized by the Family ancestral tablet or /and family shrine at home.

6) The rules of ancestral practice are significantly stronger for the Hakka group. Among the Minnan and Atayal groups, it is more flexible; even weak among the Mainlanders.

7) Before receiving Catholic baptism, the Atayal group believed in traditional religion. It is a religion that reflects the original socio-cultural environment. It shows great attention to the earth. There is a respect to life, and celebrate its important stages: birth, entrance into adulthood, marriage and death. There is a
strong sense of family and clan. Symbolism is important for interpreting the invisible world and the human being's relationship with it, for example, songs to remember the good deeds done by the deceased ancestor for the younger generation. There is love of ritual, especially in dance and songs.

8) The Catholic Church's directives on ancestor veneration have adopted the Confucian virtues of respect and filial piety to the ancestors and incorporated them into Catholic liturgy, such as a rite after the Eucharistic celebration during Chinese Lunar New Year and funerals.

9) Statistically speaking, the majority of the population in Taiwan is composed of Minnan and Hakka groups, but in the Catholic Church of Taiwan and in Christian denominations, the majority is Mainlanders and Aborigines. One observation can be made: Why do people of Confucianism or traditional religious background find 'home' in the Christian teachings more than the Buddhist and the Daoist? Perhaps some main reasons are: the similarity of the Gospel teaching and the religious cultural ethical value of filial piety of Confucianism. Also, the simplicity of these two groups searching for the God of the Aborigines and the fact of being in a minority, the Aborigines and Mainlanders needed to belong to a larger organization for identity and a sense of belonging.

10) Ancestor veneration practices play an important role in binding the
family members in solidarity and at the same time, be rooted themselves in the same Chinese cultural heritage. However, the ancestral practice is not always easy among Catholics and sometimes causes deep division in families. The issue of veneration of ancestors is still the most serious pastoral problem, whose impasse would be a true obstacle to work for evangelization.  

2. The Catholic Church in Taiwan

The above comparative study on the ancestral practices of four ethnic groups in Taiwan is a panoramic view. The distinctive characteristics of each ethnic group with its uniqueness and also its diversities provide a vivid, rich, plurality of data and also guide us in a deeper understanding of the relationship between the families and their ancestors. The next section will uncover more specific information on ancestor veneration with the Catholic Church such as the historical background of the so-called “Chinese Rites Controversy of 1715”, and two examples of actual ancestral practices, one in a Catholic parish in Taipei and one on the FuJen Catholic University Campus. At the same time, detailed descriptions about the objects used for ancestor rites in the parishes such as ancestral shrines / tablets, rites, and texts will assist us to familiarize with the inculturation process that the Catholic Church in Taiwan has undertaken.

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1) History

One of the religious debates in late 17th and 18th century Catholicism in China was focused on the issue of 'Chinese rites'. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) at that time was successful in penetrating China and serving at the Imperial Court of K’anghsi (1692). The Jesuits, had impressed the Chinese with their knowledge of astronomy and mechanics, and in fact, ran the Imperial Observatory. Other Jesuits worked as court painters. In turn, the Jesuits admired the Chinese Confucian elite’s philosophical way of thinking, and some of them even adapted to this lifestyle.

The primary goal of the Jesuits was to spread Catholicism, but they realized that the major problem was that the Chinese elite was attached to Confucianism, which provided the framework of both the state and family life. A major part of the Confucian practice involved veneration to the ancestors. The Jesuits tried to argue, in Rome, that these ‘Chinese rites’ were social, not religious ceremonies, and that converts to Christianity should be allowed to continue these practices. The Jesuits explained that Confucianism is a philosophy and not a religion. The debate was not, as some thought, about whether the liturgy could be in Chinese rather than in Latin.

The reason given by the Jesuits was not accepted by Rome and the European idea on Confucianism, because the rite did not conform to the model of western
religions. Pope Clement XI on March 19, 1715 in *Ex illa die* condemned the practice of ‘Chinese rite’ for ancestor veneration. Benedict XIV issued a final Bull in 1742. The following states the decisions, they are translated from Latin:

(1) “The West calls *Deus* (God) the creator of heaven, Earth and everything in the universe. Since the word *Deus* does not sound right in the Chinese language, the Westerners in China and Chinese converts to Catholicism have used the term ‘Heavenly Lord’ for many years. From now on such terms as ‘Heaven’ and ‘*Shang*’ should be ‘*ti*’ meaning the ‘Heavenly Lord’ should not be used: *Deus* addressed to Lord of Heaven, Earth and everything in the universe. The tablet that bears the Chinese words ‘Reverence for Heaven’ should not be allowed to hang inside the Catholic Church and should be immediately taken down if already there”.

(2) “The spring and autumn worship of Confucius, together with the worship of ancestors, is not allowed among the Catholic converts. It is not allowed even though the converts appear in the ritual as bystanders, because to be a bystander in this ritual is as pagan as to participate in it actively.”

(3) “Chinese officials and successful candidates in the metropolitan, provincial, or prefectural examinations, if they have been converted to Roman Catholicism, are not allowed to worship in Confucian temples on the first and the fifteen days of the

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month. The same prohibition is applicable to all Chinese Catholics who, as officials, have recently arrived at their posts or who, as students, have recently passed the metropolitan, provincial, or prefectural examinations."

(4) "No Chinese Catholics are allowed to worship ancestors in their family temples."

(5) "Whether at home, in the cemetery, or during the time of the funeral, a Chinese Catholic is not allowed to perform the ritual of ancestor worship. He is not allowed to do so even if he is in company with non-Christians. Such a ritual is heathen in nature regardless of the circumstances."

As the consequence of this prohibition, the K’angxi emperor was not happy with Pope Clement XI’s decree, and in 1721 banned Christian missions in China. In 1742 Pope Benedict IV in a Bull Ex quo singulari to the Catholic Church in China prohibited the ancestor practices. He condemned the Chinese ceremonies, and chose the expression Tienzu (God of Heaven) to be used exclusively to designate God. The missionaries to China had to take an oath not to discuss the Bull at anytime. It took some centuries, in 1939, until the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith with the approval of Pope Pius XII abolished the decree.\footnote{Paul Halsall, S.J., \textit{The Chinese Rites Controversy}, p.3. And Joan B. Butcher in an abstract of her book \textit{Remembrance, Emulation, Imagination: The Chinese and Chinese American Catholic Memorial Service} gives a historical overview of the Chinese Rites Controversy, University of} 

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) responded positively to the call to
recognize the native genius of each and every culture throughout the world as expressed through indigenous traditions so that, the universal Church learn from each of its cultural components. This response allowed Catholic participation in native traditions such as declared in *Plane Compertum Est* (1939) in reference to the ancestral rites in China. “Before the ancestral tablets which record only the name and the age of the deceased, Catholics are permitted to bow their heads and perform other gestures of respect.” (*Plane Compertum Est*, # 4) In addition, the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church (*Ad Gentes* #22) advised that native Catholics imbue their national treasures with the Christian message, while the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* #37), called for within the Catholic Church which clearly expresses the worldwide view of a particular people or culture.

The decrees of Vatican II mentioned above made it possible for Cardinal Yu Pin (Bin) to conduct the first ancestor veneration ceremony attended by members of the Catholic clergy on January 27, 1971, in Taipei. Many elements of a traditional ceremony like food, drink, candles, and incense, flowers, bowing and kind words were included in the rite. Two Chinese scholars, Archbishops Lokuang (羅光總主教) and Paul Cheng (成世光主教) wrote the guidelines for the Catholic rite for Pennsylvanian, 1994. Doctorate Dissertation, # 734. *Taiwan Bibliography Resources*, 2005: p.1.
ancestor veneration by integrating words which referred to the Christian concept of
God and the Catholic tradition of the Communion of saints, encouraging reverence
and remembrance in the Confucian tradition of filial piety. In order to accommodate
the needs of Chinese Catholic families, there are two kinds of Chinese Catholic
ancestor rites. One is a longer form usually used in the Church and another kind is a
shorter form used by the family. The following section will give in detailed the text
of Chinese Catholic ancestor veneration rite used in Taiwan.

2) Text:

The first formal liturgical Chinese ancestral text for memorial services, known as
Proposed Catholic Ancestor Memorial Liturgy for Church and Family Use was
issued by the Chinese Bishops Conference in Taipei, on December 29, 1974. (陳方
中編著, 《於斌樞機傳》, 台北 : 台灣商務印書館, 2001). The ancestor veneration
liturgical text is a combination of Catholic tradition and the one composed by
Cardinal Yu Pin. (于斌樞機). This liturgical text also has two forms of rites: one for
the Eucharistic celebration and the other one are for the family usage.

2.1 The ancestor veneration rite (long version) is used for the Chinese Lunar New
Year. The structure of the ancestor veneration is integrated in the Catholic
Eucharistic Celebration. The Eucharistic commemoration to the ancestors is divided into six-parts.\textsuperscript{43}

The preamble, a reminder, includes a statement of objectives, general principles, details regarding the style of the ancestor tablets and specifics for the church and rite. (See some examples in the next section.)

Part one: The presider of the Eucharistic celebration starts with the penitential celebration by blessing and asperging the congregation with holy water. Usually the presider is chosen from a prominent layperson or the parish priest, himself or the Superior of the Congregation where the parish is located. Upon receiving the holy water, a symbol of purification and a new life, the congregation is ready to listen to the Word of God, which refers to ancestors of the Old Testaments.

Part two: Scriptural readings are chosen either from the book of Exodus 12:1-5, 14 or other related ancestor themes. The responsorial hymn usually has the theme of praise for the wonder of creation, and it is often sung. A Gospel reading is chosen from Matthew 6:31-34 (Providential care of God) or the Beatitudes themes (Mt. 5:1-11) or other related theme of thanksgiving.

Part three: The offering of gifts include bread and wine for the consecration, and also rice, flowers, and fruits that are symbols of fruits from the labors of humanity.

\textsuperscript{43} Chinese New Year Eucharistic Celebration, The Ancestor Veneration Rite. Printed by the Holy Family Parish, Taipei, Taiwan, 1975. The Chinese text & photos are found in the appendices 4 and 5.
including what the ancestors had done to the communities.

Part four: Eucharistic prayer, consecration and the Communion. The Chinese text mentions our deceased ancestors in each Eucharistic prayer.

Part five: after the rite of the Communion, an elevated table with the ancestral shrine is moved to the central aisle of the Church. The preparation of the ancestral veneration rite begins with a roll call: the presider, with two other co-presiders (lay men). Solemnly, a hymn or a poem in honor of the ancestors is read while everyone stands. The sacrificial offerings of incense, flowers, fruits, and wine follow one after the other already prepared in the altar table or as a procession by the parishioners. Sometimes, scriptural texts accompany each offering. The presider bows once after each offering as a sign of respect to the ancestor. Usually, the reading from the book of Sirach 44:1-15 is proclaimed after the offering and followed by a moment of silence to help deepen the meaning of this reading. The prayers of intercession express the needs and prayers for world, Church, country, people and ancestors.

Part six: After the concluding prayers, the congregation sings a song of consecration or a hymn of confidence to God, such as ‘The Lord is my Shepherd’ (Ps.22). With the benediction received, the presider then turns to the ancestors in heaven with a bow, (inclination or a prosterning gesture) and the people on earth with a sign of the cross. The Eucharistic celebration ends with the greeting of peace.
2.2 A rite used for family ancestral veneration is a shorter version and is performed at home during the Lunar New Year, Sing Ming (Tomb Sweeping Day), All Saints Day, and All Souls. The structure of the family rite is simple. The presider is usually the elder in the family, the father or the eldest son; he stands in front of the ancestral altar facing the ancestral shrine with the ancestral tablet. Burning incense, flowers, fruits, and wine are the traditional offerings placed on a second middle table. One after the other, each offering is presented with a respectful bow to ancestors by the presider. The scriptural reading is usually taken from the Book of Sirach 44: 1-15 or another related theme. During a special family occasion, such as day when the deceased person entered heaven, the rite also includes a prayer of the faithful, usually expressing gratitude for the ancestors and their good deeds. The elder gives a short exhortation, recalling of the deeds of the ancestors. This family ancestor rite ends with three bows, most solemn to ancestors. After the family ancestor rite, the members sit around a festive meal and leave a place or two for the ancestors, believing that they are present.

3) Ancestral tablet and shrine

At the beginning of this chapter, a description of a family ancestral tablet in general, and a clan shrine is given. Here below are some illustrations to visualize the

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44 *Family Ancestor Veneration Rite, Guidelines*, from the Bishops Conference of Taiwan, Printed by The Liturgical Commission, 2002. The original Chinese is in the appendix 4.
locations of ancestral tablets and shrine, the objects used for rites, and the diversities
of accommodating the ancestral veneration into Catholic liturgical life.

3.1 The ancestral shrine and tablet at St. Francis Xavier Church are located in the
right side of the main altar. In the year 2000, Fr. F. Tosolini painted the background
of the ancestral shrine. He was inspired by a painting known as ‘The Crowning
Mary as Queen of Angels’, by Gianni Criveller, in the book Preaching Christ in Late
Ming China. (Ricci Institute Varieties Sinologue, New Series 86, 2000.) It is a
mixture of European and Chinese people witnessing the crowning of Mary,
including the emperors, the kings, the scholars and the people of all countries
praying that the Holy Mother be the patron and benevolent Mother of ten thousand
generations.

The origin of this ancestral shrine is the combination of Western painting and the
Chinese ancestral tablets in the lower part of the shrine. This illustrates theologically
that our ancestors are indeed with the Triune God and Mary, Queen of Angels. The
names of the deceased parishioners are written on two sides of the shrine. Flowers
on both sides are offerings given to the Trinity, Mary, Queen of Angels and our
ancestors.
3.2 Chinese ancestral tablet at the Sacred Heart Church, Taipei, Taiwan.

This photo shows a Catholic ancestral tablet taken at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Taipei City. There are three parts in this wooden tablet, and calligraphy writing using black ink is employed. On the right side is an invocation to Mother Mary to pray for the ancestors, while on the left side there is a prayer asking the angels to...
deliver the souls of the ancestors from pain and suffering. The middle section is reserved to the deceased relatives and friends of all parishioners in generic term.

At the bottom part of the ancestral tablet is the incense burner and on both sides are flowers.

3.3 An illustration of a simple ancestral veneration ceremony in front of the ancestral tablet, St. William Chapel, Xinchuang, Taipei, Taiwan.

This ancestral tablet is located in a shrine placed permanently at the far end of the main altar at St. William Chapel of the National Leprosy Rehabilitation Center in Taipei County, Taiwan.

This photo taken during the Chinese Lunar New Year 2004 shows how Catholic Churches in Taiwan practice ancestor veneration. It is presided over by the parish priest. Notice on the lower table in front of the shrine the offerings are flowers, fruits and wine.
In summary, the rite composed by Cardinal Yu Pin understands the ancestor veneration, as a tribute to the ancestors and a sign of veneration, respect, and a demonstration of filial piety. It is also a gathering of prayers for the Church suffering (those in purgatory) and the Church triumphant (those in heaven) within the Church tradition of the communion of saints. The Chinese rite written by Chinese scholars includes the Confucian tradition. This liturgy approved by the Bishops Conference in Taiwan highlights the following meaning and the significance of the ceremony. The objective and the general principles proclaim that filial piety serve a Christian purpose by bringing the people closer to God. It emphasizes the fourth commandment of God, “Thou shall honor they father and mother”, and also, encourage the Christians to pray for the deceased persons by offering mass intentions. Thus, the Catholic celebration of the ancestor rite connects the tradition of the communion of saints and shows how this Chinese custom is a way to obey the fourth commandment.

4. A Catholic Parish Church: Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Taipei City

The parish is located in the area of Wanhua, (萬華) where the majority of the population is a mixture of Mainlanders and Minnan. There are four Sunday Masses: three in Mandarin and one in Minnan. In the early 1950’s, after the Catholic Church approved of the practice of ancestor veneration, the parishioners simply burned
incense sticks before the ancestor tablet located on the right side of the altar. It was in late 1970’s, after the guidelines of Chinese rites for ancestor veneration were promulgated, that the parish performed a rite after the final blessing of each Eucharistic celebration during the Lunar Chinese New Year. Incense, flowers, fruits and wine were offered. Scripture readings taken from the book of Sirach (where reverence to ancestors is mentioned) and the prayers of intercession appropriated to the needs of the people are always a part of the rite. The whole congregation venerates their ancestors by bowing three times. During the month of November, the Catholics bring photos of their deceased loved ones. They are placed on the board for ancestors, located on the right side of the altar. At the beginning of every Sunday Eucharist, the presider, the parish priest, offers incense before the ancestral tablet with the photos of the deceased ancestors. The Congregation pays respect by bowing three times. This rite aims to honor, pray for, and remember the ancestors with love and gratitude.

According to the understanding of parishioners, the deceased ancestors are entrusted into God’s loving mercy and care. They are with God, singing praises and watching their family and loved ones. The parishioners also believe that the ancestors are members in the community of saints. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in the company of their ancestors listens to their intercessions. They believe that Mary has a special
place in the devotional life and in the heart of the people. They see a relationship
between the ancestors in the community of the living and Mary in the community of
saints, for Mary is a holy woman. Hymns to Mary are included in the ancestor
veneration rite. It is usually sung after the rite.

These photos taken from this parish at the occasion of Chinese New Year show the
colorful decoration, including the offerings and the incense burner.

1. 2. 3.

1) The altar in Wanhua Church decorated for the Chinese Lunar Year.
2) The side altar with offerings: flowers, fruit and ancestral tablet.
3) The ancestral tablet with incense burner.

5. FuJen Catholic University (Xinchuang, Taipei County)

According to an interview with a campus ministry team worker in November 2004,
FuJen Catholic University has adapted the ancestor veneration rite since 1972. The

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45 The data are from the parish team in Holy Rosary Church, Wanhua, Taiwan in October 2004.
former President of the University, Cardinal Yu Bin was the first presider. Yearly, instead of having a Eucharistic celebration at the beginning of the school year, the ancestor rite is performed to ask for blessings and benediction from Heaven and from their ancestors. The president of the University presides at the ceremony that is attended by more than 8,000 people including the faculty members, the student body, and the staff members. It is held yearly at the gymnasium (arena) of the University.

Basically, the liturgical texts of ancestor rites follow the one that has been given by the Bishops Conference of the Taiwan Region. Some adaptations are made depending on the needs of the people. For example in 1999, the students of aborigine groups and the faculty members sang a story of the struggles of their ancestors in Taiwan. In 2000, a well-known Catholic artist shared his experience of ancestor veneration as an act of filial piety, and in 2003, there was a dance performance to narrate a creation story based on one of the many Chinese folk, myth, cultural, and traditional stories.

Does the young student population find meaning in this type of ancestor ceremony? Based on the evaluations given after each ceremony, the campus ministry shared that the students felt a great satisfaction and expressed deep connectedness between their faith in the Creator, the Giver of Life (Heaven) and the deceased ancestors who gave birth, nurtured, and protected their earthly life. These lively and creative rites
help the students to experience the sense of rootedness in Chinese culture and convey gratitude for LIFE.46

IV. Summary

The above descriptive narration of different ethnic groups residing in Taiwan draws out a panoramic picture of various ancestor practices and the underlying motivations. They have some similarities and some diversity that characterize the uniqueness of each ethnic cultural and faith group. Moreover, the Catholic Church has adapted some guidelines for ancestor veneration to promote inculturation as an important part of their pastoral task. The experiences mentioned in this chapter are first hand information. These resources will assist this dissertation in its work. The next chapter will use a qualitative research method for six case studies and in depth interviews which will focus more on the following question: that “Is there a relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints?”

46 The majority of the students studying at FuJen Catholic University are not Christians. The many years of experience in ancestor veneration rites, from 1972 to 1995, demands an assessment. In 1995, a questionnaire was sent to some respondents. The ancestral rite is deemed suited for the school because of these reasons: a sense of rootedness and a belongingness to the source of LIFE: the Creator and their ancestors. There is also a sense that life is flowing down from Heaven to them. It is an important inculturated effort initiated by the FuJen Catholic University’s faculty and campus ministry team. This data was recorded from an interview with the campus ministry team in November 2004.
Chapter III

Qualitative Research on Chinese Ancestor Veneration

Introduction

The main content of this chapter analyzes information based on the results of six case studies (families) about the Chinese ancestor veneration in Taiwan, and additional information from a subsequent in-depth study. The data from a set of questionnaire were collected, studied and analyzed, using a qualitative analysis method. The goal of the six case studies and the additional in-depth study were as follows: first, to discover the meaning of ancestor veneration in the lives of people at present time. Second, to study their effect on the faith life of respondents, and to understand Mary’s place in the communion of saints. And lastly, to verify-as alternate resources-the materials on ancestor veneration stated in Chapter II.

I. Designing and implementation of the qualitative research project:

1. Outlining of the objectives

This research’s major concern was to find answers regarding ancestor veneration based on the question, ‘What is the present situation of ancestor veneration in Taiwan?’ Thus, the objectives in using qualitative research analysis were: first,
to understand the meaning of the experiences of the respondents as individual, and as family / clan. Second, to be acquainted to the life-style, daily activities, and also, preoccupations of the respondents similar or not to where their ancestors came from. Third, to draw out the holistic perspective of the experience of Chinese ancestor veneration in Taiwan according to three dimensions: historical, socio-cultural, theological and spiritual.

2. **Designing and Implementation:**

2.1 Designing of the questionnaire

A letter was written in Chinese and sent to each respondent to spell out the objectives and the importance of their collaboration in this research work. The researcher followed up with a phone call and a personal visit. The questionnaire referred to five areas of concerns. The first three areas dealt with the background of the respondents in order to understand the context of Chinese ancestor veneration. They corresponded to the historical dimension, the socio-cultural dimension and the theological-spiritual dimension. The last two areas of the questionnaire were the focal points of this study, first, the relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints, and second, the role of Mary in the Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints. This questionnaire was pre-tested by three persons whose precious suggestions
facilitated a more focused and more adapted questionnaire suited for Chinese speaking respondents in Taiwan.

2.2 Selection and background of the respondents

The first criterion for choosing the respondents was ethnic diversity reflecting different groups residing in different parts of the island. Secondly, since women are known to have more experience in ancestor veneration, they constituted the majority of the respondents. Even though women are not the presiders at ancestor veneration, they are the ones who prepare the offerings and rituals. Lastly, the respondents were chosen according to the ability to articulate their experiences and their willingness to collaborate in this research work. The respondents were all Catholics but their families are not. ¹ Their backgrounds are as follows:

a. Ethnic origin:

Among the respondents, one represented the Hakka family, two represented Minnan families, one represented a mixed marriage of Mainland Chinese origin, whose mother is Minnan (Fukienese) and the father is Hakka, one represented Mainland China, and one belonged to the Atayal aboriginal group.

¹ In Taiwan, it is a common phenomenon to see that there is only one member in the family who is a Catholic. The rest of the family members may have other religious affiliation or not at all.
b. Age, sex and civil status:

The respondents representing these different ethnic groups were between 30 to 65 of years of age. Two were in their sixties, two were in their fifties, one in her forties and one was in her thirties. The contact persons of these six families were female, except for one who was a male.  

As far as their civil status is concerned: One was a Catholic Religious Sister, three were married and mothers of several children, one was the father of the family and only one is single.

c. Residence:

The six respondents did not only represent different ethnic groups, they were also residing in different parts of Taiwan. Two families lived in Taipei city (台北市), in the north of Taiwan. One lived in Kaoshiung city (高雄市) in the south, one family resided in Taichung city (台中市) in the center of Taiwan and two families came from the Hsinchu (新竹) areas, in the south west of Taiwan.

d. Educational background and profession:

The majority of the respondents had a university degree (3), two had

\[2\] In Chinese family woman (mother and/or daughter in laws) is the one who prepares the ancestor offerings. Even though the presider of the ritual is almost always a man.
completed graduate studies and one had a doctoral degree. Their profession, past and present, is as follows: One is a high school teacher in Chinese History and Geography, one is member of campus ministry team at a university, one is a catechist for an Atayal group, one is a Mandarin language teacher, one is an executive secretary, and one is a professional Psychotherapist.

e. Religious affiliation:

Four respondents were baptized in the Catholic Church when they were adults (around 20 years old and older). Two came from Catholic families that had deep roots in the Minnan and Hakka cultures. In sum, all six were Catholics. The four converts' experience was an important factor in this research work because they were “living bridges” between two cultures: the Chinese culture and Christianity. By articulating their cultural and religious experiences, they brought important insights for a better understanding of the different dimensions of ancestor veneration in Taiwan.

3. Survey and immersion of the researcher.

To facilitate the survey and to better understand into the everyday world of the respondents, the researcher was in contact with the respondents through
telephone conversation, e-mail letter, and even by paying them several visits. During the conversations, sufficient time was allocated in order to be attentive to the experience of the respondents before they replied to the questionnaire. It was possible to move more deeply into the historical and current situation of the respondents and their families. The information obtained availed the researcher of the richness and the diversity of ancestor veneration. Moreover, family's ancestor tablets, ancestral books (family genealogy) and some home video tapes were also provided by the respondents' families.  

4. In depth interview with the respondents.

The survey (questionnaire) was followed by interviews. These in depth interviews with the respondents inspired empathy, interest, openness and support. With the answers to the questionnaire on hand, the researcher was able to enter into conversation with the respondents. Mandarin and Taiwanese were used in oral interviews when additional information was needed and proved valuable. All six respondents answered the questionnaire in written form.

II. Assembling the raw data

According to Michael Patton, the qualitative research method suggests a content analysis as a way to collect data and to analyze them. This includes the process of

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3 A description of an ancestral tablet is found in Chapter II of this research.
4 The written answers of the respondents to the questionnaire is found in appendice 4.
5 The answers of the respondents are collated and given in these pages. Their full original texts were
identifying, coding and categorizing the primary ideas of the data and analyzing the content of interviews and observations. There are three steps to a content analysis: first, to assemble the raw data by gathering all given information about the person/family. Secondly, to construct a case record. This is a condensation of the raw data organizing, classifying, and editing them according to themes or topics. Thirdly, from the gathered data, a theological and pastoral reflection and analysis are drawn.\(^6\) In the process of understanding the collected data, the question “what is its meaning?” is asked. Applying to the research theme, the question is “what is the meaning of ancestor veneration practice?” Or “how do we understand the meaning of ancestor veneration practice?” The answers given will depend on the data collected that will be provided in the next section.

In the section below are the collated answers of the respondents. They were the raw data that were translated into English by the researcher. The original answers in Chinese will be provided in our annexes. The responses were divided into five areas: the background of the respondents, the historical dimension, the socio-cultural dimension, the theological-spiritual dimension, the relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and Mary’s place in the communion of saints. There were also responses from an additional in depth study with 6 individuals and a group of 16

protestant pastors regarding the question of the relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and Mary's place in the communion of saints.

A. Background of the Respondents

1. Ethnic group and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic group from the respondents</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Atayal population(^8)</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Minnan</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Minnan</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Mixed: Mainlander and Hakka</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Hakka</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Mainlander (born in Mainland: Shandung Province)</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Religious affiliation:

1) Catholic, when he was five years old (1954).

2) Catholic, when she was five years old (1953).


4) Catholic on birth (1960).

5) Catholic, when she was 19 years old (1961).

\(^7\) For the reason of discretion, the names of the respondents are not mentioned. Instead, the researcher used numbers to identify them, e.g. 1) contains all the data of the first same respondent Cf. See appendix 4.

\(^8\) Population is used to qualify the ethnic group instead of tribe, in order to avoid a possible negative connotation.
6) Catholic, when she was 20 years old (1955).

B. Historical dimension

1. When did you and the members of your family, consciously begin to participate in the ancestor veneration?

Personal Participation

1) “Since I was five years old, I followed my parents.”

2) “Twenty years ago, the family started to practice ancestor veneration.”

3) “In my family we had this practice since my youth.”

4) “In 2001, when some members of our family went to China, Mei County, Guangdong Province.”

5) “Since I was young.”

6) “Twenty years ago in 1984.”

Participation of Your family/ group

1) “Ancestor veneration has always been a part of our family ceremony.”

2) “For our family, it was a joy when the Catholic Church lifted the ban to venerate ancestors. Especially for my father, it was good news and a great consolation.”

3) “Same as above.”
4) "Since 1970, during the Lunar New Year, we went to the temple for the veneration of our ancestors."

5) "Since I can remember."

6) "Twenty years ago in 1984."

2. In the past ten years have there been any changes in the practice of ancestor veneration in your family? If yes, describe the changes.

1) "Since my family and I became Catholics, we changed some practices for example, in rites and texts, according to our Atayal custom, animals are slaughtered and offered. But in the Catholic Church, we use flowers, incense, wine etc. The Atayal people dance and sing in a ceremonial gathering without using any text. The Catholics rites are basically prayers with written texts."

2) "When my father was still alive, the clan family came to our house and together we venerated our ancestors. We used to prepare offerings such as pork, chicken and fish. Now we simplify it by having flowers and fruits. But after his death, each family commemorates separately."

3) "On Tomb Sweeping day, we go to the cemetery and remember the past deeds of our ancestors. The ritual is more simple."

4) "In China, ancestor veneration took place in the ancestor hall.

In the past ten years, here in Taiwan, it is before our family ancestral altar that
the rite takes place.”

5) “The kind of offerings has changed from meat to fruits and flowers.”

6) “Sometimes, we choose a Biblical reading or sayings from our ancestors.”

3. In your practice of ancestor veneration, is there any commemoration of the ancestor good deeds or virtues? How do you commemorate them?

1) “We sing and tell the good deeds our ancestors did in the villages and for the people.”

2) “We praise them by orally retelling their good deeds, so that the young generation will remember them and will also receive God’s blessings.”

3) “We remember how our ancestors lived through struggles and poverty.”

4) “In Mainland China, special poems and prayers were composed and recited.”

5) “In an informal conversation, such as family dinner, we talk about them.”

6) “We used calligraphy to write their names and place them in front of the ancestral altar.”

4. If your family is Catholic, were there any changes in the Ancestor Veneration adapted to Catholic liturgy? For you and family members.

1) “For my family and me, the biggest changes occurred when we became Catholics and adopted the rites of the Church. I think that the Catholic Church is

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9 Respondent told the researcher that the family’s poems and prayers were kept in Mainland China. However, some Catholic families used the one suggested by the Taiwan Bishops Conference. Reference in appendix 3.
using some Buddhist rites such as the offerings rather than those of our aboriginal cultural rite.”

2) “Bowing three times before the ancestral tablet and using incense. Also we have a photo of the Holy Family and recite the ‘Our Father’, ‘Hail Mary’ and ‘Glory be’ in our veneration.”

3) “Our family is not Catholic, so there is no relationship with the Catholic Church.”

4) “My father is not a Catholic, so our ancestor rite does not have any relation with the Church liturgy.”

5) “During Lunar New Year, Tomb Sweeping Day and at their death anniversary we offer Holy Mass for them.”

6) “Our elders will say good things about our ancestors.”

For other family member(s)?^11

1) Same as above.

2) Same as above.

3) Same as above.

4) Same as above.

5) Same as above.

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^10 Refer to chapter II for ancestral altar and tablet.

^11 To respect the answer of the respondent, their response is kept as it is. Although, it can also be summarized “as the same answer applied to individual as well as family members.”
6) Same as above.

C. Socio-cultural dimension

1. Within one year, how often do you and your family perform ancestor veneration, prayer, or ritual? Yourself and family.

1) “Twice a year: Lunar New Year (usually in late January), and harvest time (August 15).”

2) “At least three times a year, including on the three major festivals: Lunar New Year, Tomb Sweeping Day and August Moon Festival. We also commemorate the birthday of my grandparents.”

3) “Every day of the year, in the evening, my father burns incense. Every month, on the second, the sixteenth and the third day of the Lunar New Year, \(^{12}\) we offer flowers and fruit first to the gods, then to the ancestors. For the ancestors, offerings include meat and fish. On the Tomb Sweeping day, we go to cemetery for veneration.”

4) “Once a year during the Chinese Lunar New Year, we burn incense before our grand parents’ tablet.”

5) “Three time a year on Lunar New Year, Tomb Sweeping day and their death

\(^{12}\) In most Chinese families, we follow ‘the lunar calendar’ instead of the Western one. The second and seventeenth of each month are dates reserved to venerate ancestors and worship deities. During Chinese Lunar New Year, the third day of the New Year is dedicated to the ancestors and deities.
anniversary. Even though not all members of the family are Christians, the ancestor veneration is performed as an activity of the clan.”

6) “Once a year, during the Lunar New Year.”

2. Do you have any kind of a Catholic liturgical celebration or particular ritual?

1) “During Lunar New Year, we use animals such as pig or chicken are offerings. During the harvest time, we use the first fruits of the harvest as offerings. The rite includes: offering of self and offering of produce, imploring for help and protection.” 13

2) “There is no particular written text.”

3) “There is an order in the ritual: first to worship the gods, then the ancestors and finally the guardians of the doors of the house (good spirits).” 14 During the major festivals: first to worship the god of the earth, then the queen of the earth and finally our ancestors.”

4) “None, we just remain in silence and in prayer.”

5) “None.”

6) “We burn incense and offer gifts.”

3. Who is the presider?

1) “The elder of the family or someone who is respected in the group.”

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13 See the illustration: a photo of this offering rite in chapter II.
14 In the Chinese context, the guardians are considered the angels or the saints.
2) "The head of the family, my father. After his death, my mother became the presider."

3) "The head of the family: father or eldest brother."

4) "My father is the presider."

5) "The elders: father or uncle."

6) "The elders: father or uncle."

4. How do you express the veneration of your ancestors? Please describe the concrete form of veneration i.e. an icon, a tablet or others.

1) "We do not have any written ancestral tablet nor icon, but we sing the names of our ancestors."

2) "Yes, we have a family ancestral tablet and an ancestral book."

3) "Yes, we have an ancestor tablet on my mother’s side and on my father’s side."

4) "Yes, the ancestral tablet of my grandparents."

5) "Yes, that of my grandparents and their photos in the genealogy –family tree."

6) "Yes, we have an ancestral tablet."

5. What motivations are behind these rituals and celebrations?

1) "To give thanks for their kind deeds and education given to us and also to ask for help." b. "To implore protection against evil spirits."

2) "To be in contact with our ancestral roots."
3) “To be in touch with ancestral roots and to remember the origin of our family tree.”

4) “To remember my grandparents.”

“To let my parents be at peace: they are assured that their children and grandchildren will continue observing filial piety. Daughters who are married do not have an obligation to continue to venerate her own family’s ancestor. But a daughter in law is expected to prepare the rite in the in law’s house. When I was in China, I do so to accompany my father.”

5) “To remember the deceased ancestors and to pray for them.”

6) “To be connected with our family roots. Not to forget where we come from. To ask our ancestors to be present and bless the young generation.”

6. In the practice of Ancestor Veneration what is the relationships with persons outside your family.

1) “Only within families.”

2) “Our family alone.”

3) “No, only our family.”

4) “Only our family.”

5) “Only the family.”

6) “Only the family.”
With other families? Society? (outside your own family)\textsuperscript{15}

1) “Yes, with the same family.”

2) “No.”

3) “No.”

4) “No.”

5) “No.”

6) “No.”

7. What is the place of women in the Ancestor Veneration? Wife? Mother? Daughters? Sisters?

1) “Men are the masters in our population, but if women have done good deeds, we sing their names and mention what they have done so that the next generation will remember and follow them as models.”

2) “Yes, yearly, we remember the birthday and the death anniversary of our grandmother.”

3) “None, for women when they are married and they belong to the family of their husbands and not to their family of origin. But in our ancestral tablet, we have included the names of all our grandmothers.”

4) “In recent years, the names of daughters and wives were written in our

\textsuperscript{15} To emphasize that ancestor veneration is practiced only in the family, the original answers of the respondents testify this fact.
5) “Yes, my grandmother and my mother, they are the ones who gave birth to us and they are our elders.”

6) “In the written ancestral book, there is no distinction of sex. In the genealogy (family tree), their names are written.”

D. Theological and Spiritual dimension

1. According to your understanding, what is life?

1) “Before baptism, life for me was how to live according to the plan of the spirits of our ancestors. Therefore, I respected the spirits of our ancestor very much.”

2) “Life is a gift given to us by God so that we can live happily.”

3) “Life is given to us daily, so we should live life and its goodness daily: not to focus on power, money and honor but on doing well deeds and practice virtues. In recent years my family members were converted to different religions, this changed their attitude towards life.”

4) “My family thinks that life is to propagate and to achieve success in works (ways to obtain financial support).”

5) “Life is a gift from God, a blessing, so that we should treasure and respect life.”

6) “From the Catholic point of view, life comes from God.”
2. According to you understanding, what is death?

1) “Before baptism, we believed that death is frightening. People can become ghosts and they can disturb but also help the living.”

2) “The time will come when the soul of a person is ready to meet God. He/she will have everlasting happiness in God’s love.”

3) “According to popular belief, when a person dies he/she goes to meet the god of life. If he/she did not commit great sins, he/she stays only a short period in hell for purification and then will be reincarnated. According to Buddhism, a person should strive to live a life of virtues so that he/she will be reincarnated in a better form of life. According to Catholic belief, a person first goes to purgatory then to heaven.”

4) “Our ancestors can go ‘home’ where they are together eternally.”

5) “It is a natural phase in life and we believe that death leads us to eternal life.”

6) “Death is going ‘home’.”

3. For you, where do you think your ancestors are now?

1) “Before becoming a Catholic, we (the Atayal group) believed that our ancestors were somewhere, they can become ghosts and disturb us but can also help us. Now, after baptism, we believe that they are at peace without worry and resting in God.”
2) “They are happily together, protecting and praying for us in heaven with God.”

3) “If they are not in purgatory, they should be in eternal peace in heaven.”

4) “In Heaven.”

5) “In Heaven.”

6) “Most members of my family are doctors and believe that our deceased ancestors are the ones protecting us and blessing us with good physical health. In this way, we are grateful and we treasure our life.”

What are they doing?

1) “Same as above. They are at peace and without worry resting in God.”

2) “Same as above.”

3) “I do not know.”

4) “Looking after their younger generation (children, grandchildren).”

5) “Enjoying blessedness and looking after us.”

6) “In another sphere that is different from us. They are enjoying eternal happiness.”

4. Describe the relationship between you, your family and your ancestors.

1) “They are protecting us and also judging us. For these reasons, ancestor veneration is important so that there will be continuing communication and
assistance."

2) "When they were with us, they brought us blessings. Now they have gone to
   Heaven and to eternal peace."

3) "Spiritually, they are with us because of their good deeds and virtues (the
   children and grandchildren benefited). If not, we should pray that their stay in
   purgatory will be short so that they can have eternal peace."

4) "Perpetuate family education, simple life style and autonomy."

   To foster and expand family spirit."

5) "Very close, especially with our parents and grandparents."

6) "Our ancestors are very close to us."

E. The relationship between Chinese Ancestor Veneration and Mary's Place in
   the Communion of Saints.

1. According to your own experiences, are there similarities or differences between
   Chinese Ancestor Veneration and the Communion of Saints?

   Similarities:

   1) "None, I would like to emphasize that I am an aborigine. My culture is
      different from that of the Han Chinese population. In my observation, I find
      that the Han-Chinese ancestor veneration has a narrow point of view and is
      subjective. Hopefully, what they (Han Chinese people) are doing is for the
good of many people."

2) "Yes, the same doctrine."

3) "None."

4) "Yes, there is a family, close family ties and belonging."

They are also our models."

5) "Ancestor veneration means to remember our ancestors and pray for them. At the same time, we know that they also remember and pray for us, there is a communion between us."

"Mary is with us, she is the mother of us all, as well as the mother of our ancestors, and she is with the saints. Our ancestors in faith include Mary. Mary is with us, as our ancestor veneration in faith and in human family. In this regard, our practice of ancestor veneration becomes enriched. Our prayers can be enriched with praise and thanksgiving and we really need Mary to intercede for us."

6) "I never thought of this doctrine, but now I have come to the awareness that Chinese ancestors veneration and the communion of saints have many similarities, especially from the spiritual point of view."

Differences:

1) "I belong to the aborigine population, I believe that the present Chinese
ancestor veneration is very different from our custom. To this, I feel very sorry and unhappy about this."

2) “No difference.”

3) “My family is not Catholic, so if life is not smooth, they would go and ask our ancestors or go to see the master of different Chinese religions for help, and then do the compensatory acts or offerings. We hope that our ancestors will be at peace.”

4) “None.”

5) “None.”

6) “None.”

2. How do you see the role of Mary in the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints?

1) “I see some relationship but at the moment, I feel I can’t do much for the work of inculturation. This is also the thinking of some people.”

2) “I deeply believe that our ancestors are saints, holy people.”

3) “Yes, for they can appear to us in dreams and let us know about their needs. If this is manifested, we say that our ancestor help us, the incense burns to protect us.”

4) “Yes, they will bless and look after the next generation. We can continue to be
in communion with them.”

5) “From the aspect of faith, our ancestors are in the communion of saints.”

6) “Yes, this is a very natural way of believing, very necessary.”

III. Additional in depth study

After assembling the data received from the six case studies, it was deemed important to do another in depth study for the questionnaire part V. E.2. The questions asked “According to your own experiences, are there some similarities and differences between Chinese ancestor veneration and the Communion of saints? And how do you see the role of Mary in your ancestors and the communion of saints?” There are two principal reasons for doing so. First, to have a wider and a deeper insight on our main subject: Mary’s place in the communion of saints and the Chinese ancestor veneration. Second, to listen to the Protestant points of view. Therefore, additional 19 persons were selected: six ordinary individuals (lay persons) and 13 Presbyterian pastors. These two groups were given only the part E i. of the questionnaire. In the next section, their answers were collated separately. They are as follows:

1. Background of the first six additional respondents\textsuperscript{16} that were chosen:

Ethnic group, gender and religious affiliation

\textsuperscript{16} For reason of discretion, the names of the respondents are not mentioned. Instead a letter of alphabet identifies them, e.g. ‘a’ contains the data of the same respondent.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Religious affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Atayal population</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Hakka</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Minnan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Oversea Chinese(Minnan)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Minnan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Minnan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Educational background and profession**

a. He is a college graduate and currently serving an aboriginal church as a catechist in Hsinchu County.

b. She has a college degree and teaches children catechism in a Taipei Parish.

c. She is a retired high school teacher from Kaoshiung City and currently pursuing a graduate degree.

d. She has obtained a graduate degree in spiritual counseling. She is a religious missionary and works in a Taipei Parish.

e. She is an executive secretary and has a M.A. degree from the school of Divinity.

f. She is a high school graduate. She is a volunteer worker and an elder (deaconess) in a Presbyterian Church near Taoyuan County.

**Understanding the answers to the questionnaire Part E. 1 and 2.**
According to your own experiences, are there similarities and differences between Chinese ancestor veneration and communion of saints? And how do you see the role of Mary in the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints?

a. “According to my Catholic belief, Mary, the saints and our ancestors are all in Heaven, so they are all living happily together.

However, for the aborigine population does not know Mary and our Catholic saints, so they do not believe that their ancestors are with them.”

b. “There is a deep relationship. Since the triumphant Church celebrates All Saints Day on the first of November, we commemorate Mary with the saints, including our ancestors. On November the second, the feast day of All Souls, the suffering Church prays for all souls specially those who are not yet in union with God.

Some Chinese people, like me, believe that Mary and the deceased holy believers are called saints. Our ancestors who are baptized, are considered ‘children of God’. God has a way to save those who are not baptized and Mary is the one leading them to God.”

c. “I believe that there is a difference in terms of culture and spiritual life.

Mary and the saints are believers, so I believe they are not separated from us but are together in God and with us. Culturally speaking, our ancestors are not Catholics, so for many, they do not know that they are in union with one another.”
d. "We pray to Mary for her intercession. We pray for our ancestors that they will be with God. For most people, Mary has a special place in the communion of saints, because she is certainly the most holy. So we pray to our ancestors that Mary will intercede for them, in order that they will soon be with God soon."

e. "My family was converted to Christianity long time ago, five generations in our family are Christians. In our Protestant belief, we do not practice ancestor veneration, especially in public, but in our family we remember our ancestors on their death anniversary and on Tomb Sweeping Day. There is no ancestral icon, no tablet nor texts. We follow the Christian liturgical rite."

"Regarding Mary in the communion of saints, we do not emphasize this belief. There is no veneration of saints, but we praise God for having chosen Mary as the Mother of Jesus. During Christmas time, we act out the Nativity scene and Mary has an important role in Jesus' historical life. Mary like other women in scriptures is remembered because of her faith."

f. "We are the second generation Christian (Protestant). We threw out and burned all ancestor tablets and related matters when we were baptized. Since then, we do not practice ancestor veneration. However, to commemorate the death anniversary of our ancestors, we have a private ceremony according to Protestant liturgy. We do not know much about Mary except that she is the
Mother of Jesus. There is no veneration of saints in our Church.”

2. Background of the 13 Protestant Pastors. 17

Ethnic group, gender, religious affiliation and profession

The 13 respondents were all male and were of Minnan group. They are Presbyterian pastors, residing in the southern part of Taiwan.

Only one gave a more specific data about himself: He is a candidate for graduate study in Theology and is presently the pastor of a Presbyterian Church in Yulin, Chiayi County, southern part of Taiwan, the rest wanted to remain anonymous.

Here are their answers to the questionnaire part E. 1 an 2. According to your experiences, what are some similarities and differences between Chinese ancestors veneration and the communion of saints? How do you see the role of Mary in the Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints? The 13 pastors answered the two questions. Here are the data collated and translated into English:

1) “I do not see any similarities between the Chinese ancestor veneration and Mary in the communion of saints. But I do believe that at the spiritual level, from one generation to another, the living and the dead are not separated. So I agree that there is a relationship between the Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints.”

17 A number classifies each respondent’s answer to the question e.g. (1) and etc. and his or her answers are translated to English and are kept in a file.
2) "I do not think that our deceased ancestors, as popular religion says, enter into the spiritual sphere. For me, we can commemorate our ancestors but not worship them because once, they are dead, they do not possess any more power, it is the same for Mary."

"Furthermore, I believe that deceased people cannot be saint or holy because, they are judged by God according to their sins. If there is communion among the deceased persons then should we also talk about a communion with the bad spirits? They are judged and condemned by God."

3) "I do not agree that Mary is in the communion of saints."

"But, I agree that the common belief in Taiwan is that the spirits of our deceased ancestors are in communion with the younger generation."

4) "I do not agree with the communion of saints nor do I see any similarities between Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints. Because most Chinese/Taiwanese believes that the deceased person can never be in communion with God. Mary is no exception, hence, she can never be the object of our prayer."

"When a person dies, he/she is judged according to God’s will, so, whether there is a communion or not is not that important to me."

5) "According to Chinese belief, a deceased person can become a holy person and
can be venerated. But from my experience, when they have sinned, they cannot enter into communion with others. However, saints can be commemorated for they are brothers and sisters in Christ.”

6) “I do not see any similarity between Chinese ancestor veneration and Mary in the Communion of saints because our deceased ancestors, when venerated, are made ‘saints’ but Mary as the mother of Jesus possesses special power and privileges.”

“Also, our ancestors and the saints are of a different category of being.”

7) “I believe that our ancestors are among the saints and that Mary is one of them. In reality Chinese ancestor veneration is a type of communion of saints. When we remember the good deeds and virtues of our deceased ancestors, we are doing the same when we commemorate a saint during his/her feast day.”

8) “There can never be communion between a deceased ancestor who is an ordinary person and Mary, who is with the saints.”

“I see that there is no relationship between the communion of saints and Chinese ancestor veneration because, we practice filial piety and remember our ancestors.”

9) “There is a similarity between the motivation of Chinese ancestor veneration, filial piety and Mary in the communion of saints. There is gratefulness, affection,
filial veneration.”

“Our ancestors and the saints are all human persons, if the saints can be in communion why not our ancestors?”

10) “I believe that Mary is in communion with our ancestors and the saints because she is mild and gracious and that can help unite us in the Church.

In God’s plan, our ancestors are those who are our elders. If they are separated from us, then how can our lives be integrated in God’s life (family).”

11) “I do not see any relationship, because the object of our prayer is only God and not any human person. I do not see any communion between our ancestors and the saints, because they are only human persons.”

12) “Although, our ancestors and the saints are deceased persons, we have a blood relationship with our ancestors but not with the saints. As it is written in the scriptures, those who are dead are sleeping until the coming of the Lord will awake them.”

13) “There is no relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and Mary in the communion of saints but I believe that our ancestors and the saints are both in Heaven enjoying a communion because they are our elders in faith.”

The data from the answers given by the respondents of the six case studies, additional six individuals and 13 protestant pastors were gathered and collated. The researcher
also allocated space for comments and suggestions at the end of the questionnaire.

The six case studies respondents gave the following. Some ideas were deemed significant and will be integrated in this research work.

Comments and suggestions:

1) “I grew up in the mountain village at time when there were many changes taking place, especially in terms of culture (Japanese, Chinese and Atayal). Hence, I can say, I do not totally know enough of each of them, even my own. I was baptized young, so I answered the questions according to my best knowledge about my people and what I think about ancestor veneration and communion of saints. My opinion is in accordance with my people and sometime according to my Catholic beliefs.”

2) “While answering the questionnaire, I felt very grateful to our ancestors for the gift of Catholic faith, which enables my family to praise and give thanks to God more. In this sense, I experience peace knowing that naturally, our ancestors sustained and spiritually nourished us. Moreover, the awareness made me aware that this precious gift should be passed on to the next generation.”

3) “They are many questions that need time to reflect and to answer. A phrase or two does not translate the full reality for the Chinese tradition has influenced ordinary people and it is a complex reality. There are different religious traditions:
Taoism and Buddhism that are not easy to analyze. I am a Catholic, so sometimes I have to be careful not to mix them up. My personal opinions convey mostly those of my family.”

4) “This occasion enables me to reflect on my own experiences in terms of ancestor veneration: when I went with my father to visit his hometown (China) in 1979, I realized that our family is big, for I met many relatives and elders. They gave me a deep sense of belonging of knowing where is my roots, that we are related and that their good deeds and virtues can become our models.”

“Accompanying my father to visit his hometown is a concrete means of expressing my filial piety. Although, my father is not a Catholic, he did experience the love of his daughters. There are three daughters in the family, no son. He is very much consoled, as we assure him of our obligation as children.”

5) “Because of this questionnaire, I feel deeply in touch with my ancestors: my parents and grandparents. At the same time, Mary becomes alive in my memory. I experienced the communion of my ancestors and saints that brought about faith, hope and love, how comforting this is!”

6) “This is my first time to answer this kind of questionnaire. I find this experience has enabled me to think, reflect and integrate the relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints,
which I had never thought of.”

In summary, much data was gathered for this qualitative research analysis. After collecting the initial data from the six case studies, additional six persons were chosen and 13 protestant pastors. Their answers were recorded. The respondents could reply either in Chinese or in English, but all answers were written in Chinese. So the data had to be retyped and translated into English. However, the original answered questionnaires were put away for safekeeping. We shall now proceed to the content analysis in order to categorize the data. The answers were classified according to three themes namely: 1) the historical and socio-cultural reality of Chinese ancestor veneration, 2) the understanding of life, death and ancestor and the different levels of relationships. Lastly, an analysis of these three themes provided sufficient material for understanding, for judging and above all, for a decision in regard to the two hypotheses of this dissertation.

IV. Content analysis

There is not only one way to go about organizing, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative data, Michael Q. Patton suggests that the analytical description is meant to be more suggestive rather than prescriptive. He advises that each qualitative analyst
shall find his/her own process. 18

A content analysis is the process of identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary materials. The overall strategy is to focus partially on the topic of the questionnaire: Chinese ancestor veneration and Mary’s place in the communion of saints. The data were organized according to sub-topics or sub-themes and classified into three main topics/themes: first, the historical and socio-cultural reality of the ancestor veneration of the respondents, second, the respondents’ concept of life, death and ancestors. The last theme is the relationship between the living family and ancestors; the relationship between the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints and the relationship between Mary, ancestor veneration and the communion of saints.

For the sake of clarity and flow of ideas, this section will cover the data collated in its entirety of the six case studies since, only the six case studies respondents had answered the whole questionnaires. However, in the section of question E, part 1 and 2. concerning the relationship between ancestor veneration and communion of saints, and Mary’s role in the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints, the additional in depth study responses will be integrated. The six case studies respondents’ suggestions and comments are precious experiences and will be included in the practical guidelines at the concluding chapter.

18 Michael Q. Patton, Qualitative Analysis, p 378.
1. Categorizing of the data materials

1.1 Theme one: the historical and socio-cultural reality of Chinese ancestor veneration of the respondents.

Ancestor veneration practice: According to the respondents, ancestor veneration is still being practiced today in Taiwan. Six persons out of six responded ‘yes’, as an individual and always with the family, clan or the same population. There is no relationship with persons outside the family, clan and population. There are some variations in the practices following their ethnic cultures.

Content and forms of ancestor veneration practice: Four respondents recorded how their families verbally commemorate the ancestor’s good deeds, and virtues, and their life struggle and poverty. Two other families have written calligraphy texts such as poems with ancestors’ sayings, and prayers. They are placed before the ancestral altar. The presider is evidently the male elder of the family. Only one says that after the death of the father, the mother presides at the home altar.

As far as the place of women is concerned, only one of them answers categorically that there is no place for women in the practice of ancestor veneration. Five others answer ‘yes’ with a different degree of intensity: one says, if women have done good deeds, we remember them during their anniversary of death, while one respondent admits that there has been a change in recent years, “the names of daughters and
wives (mothers) are written on ancestral tablets.” Only one family does not make any distinction in gender.

Changes in ancestor veneration: In recent decades some changes occurred in the practices mainly due to the conversion of the respondents to Catholicism. Two mentioned that the most important change is the adaptation of their offering rites to Catholic liturgy, two other respondents pointed out the change in the location of ancestor tablet. Since the death of the father, the family had placed the ancestor tablet from the ancestral hall to family altar. Another reason given to the change of the location of the ancestor tablet was due to the migration of the family. The family emigrated from China to Taiwan. Two respondents highlighted the change of the content: the aspect of remembrance was added by praising the good deeds of the ancestors and by using Scriptural reading in the rite.

As to the adaptation of the ancestor rite to Catholic liturgy, three definitely say there is ‘no adaptation’ because two families belong to aborigine population and practiced folk religion. Three respondents mentioned positive elements of change such as recitation of ‘Our Father’ ‘Hail Mary’ and ‘Glory Be’ and offering of the Holy Mass at their ancestor anniversary of death.

Symbols: ancestral tablets:

Five respondents have an ancestral tablet and photos to remember their ancestor.
Only one says that because most of the population does not use written symbol, they sing their names and the good deeds and virtues done. In addition, two families among the six have written their family genealogy.

Frequency of the ancestor veneration practices: almost all practice the ancestor rite at least once a year: at Lunar New Year. In addition to this occasion, four respondents mention two other days in a year: Tomb sweeping day and the anniversary of death. Only one says that, aside from these three important festivals, the ancestors are venerated every day.

Motivations for practicing the ancestor veneration:

The majority of the respondents (4) maintain the primary motivation for ancestor veneration is to be: in contact, in touch with the family’s origin and to have a sense of belonging to a bigger group, the ancestral root. Two respondents specified aspects of gratefulness and thanks. Another two highlighted remembrance and asking for protection against evil spirits, along with prayers for blessings on the younger generation are also strong motivations. Only one respondent said that her motivation is filial piety and that her father was consoled to know that even if all the children were girls, they would continue to perform the ancestor veneration. Here are the primary reasons underlying ancestor veneration namely, to repay what the ancestors had done for them, a sense of belonging, thanksgiving, respect, and request for
blessings and protection.

1.2 Theme two: the concepts of life, death and ancestors of the respondents.

The understanding of life and death:

Three respondents answered affirmatively that life comes from God. Life is a gift and a blessing. Therefore, we should respect life, treasure it and live its goodness daily (Catholic belief).

Two noticed their changes in attitude toward life, after their conversion to Catholicism. Before their conversion, life was to be lived according to the plan of the spirits. Only one said that life is to propagate and to achieve success in work.

Three respondents believed that death is a natural phase in life, it is going ‘home’, meeting God and eternally rested in God’s love (Catholic belief). One realized that his experience before baptism about death is frightening and that people can become ghosts and can disturb as well as help people. Another explained the different understanding of death according to different religious beliefs. In Folk (popular) religiosity, when a person dies he/she goes to meet the god of life. If he/she did not commit great sins, he/she stays only a short period in hell for purification before being reincarnated. In Buddhism, a person should strive to live a life of virtue so that he/she will not be reincarnated but enters into nirvana. This same respondent believed that as a Catholic, a deceased person goes to purgatory and then to Heaven.
Where are the ancestors and what are they doing?

Five respondents believed that their ancestors are in Heaven with God; resting in peace and happy together, protecting them and praying for them.

One stated that if they are not in purgatory, they are in Heaven.

Five said that the ancestors are at peace, without any worries (1), looking after the younger generation and protecting them (3), and enjoying eternal happiness (1).

Only one does not know what they are doing (1).

1.3 Theme three: different levels of relationships:

1.3.1 Relationship between your family and your ancestors:

All six respondents strongly saw the vital relationship between the family and the ancestors. One maintained the importance of ancestor veneration is to continue communication and receive their assistance. Three respondents qualified the relationship as bringing blessings, that they are spiritually close (1), close (1), and very close (1) with the deceased ancestors. Another respondent stated that, in the spirit of the ancestor, the family members perpetuate family education, simple life style and autonomy.

1.3.2 Relationship between ancestor veneration and the communion of saints:

Similarities:

Four responded yes that they are similarities such as in the concept of holiness of
persons. "The ancestors and the saints are our models" (1). Their exemplar characteristics are close family ties, and a sense of belonging (1). From the Catholic teaching, we know that our ancestors are saints, holy people, like the saints (1).

"Ancestor veneration means to remember our ancestors and pray for them. At the same time, we know that they also remember us and are praying for us, there is a communication between us (1)."

One respondent said that there is no relationship (1). Another respondent had never thought of the similarity between ancestor veneration and the communion of saints but she became aware of this doctrine, especially, from the spiritual point of view.

Differences:

Four respondents answered there is no difference. Two said that because of cultural and religious beliefs these two realities are different. As an example of a veneration of ancestor and not in the veneration of saints is, when life does not go so smoothly, some members of her family will go to the priests/masters of different religions and prepare supplementary offerings to their ancestors in order to request their assistance.

1.3.3 Relationship between Mary in ancestor veneration and in the communion of saints:

All six case studies respondents affirmed that there is a relationship between the ancestors and Mary in the communion of saints in different intensities. Only one
elaborated the role of Mary in the ancestor veneration as “the mother of our ancestors and model in faith” (1). I believe that our ancestors are saints, holy persons” (1). The mutual relationship is expressed in prayers and remembrance, by burning incense (1).

“Our ancestors are in the communion of saints” (1). “It is very natural way of believing, very necessary” (1). One respondent saw that there is a relationship but can not do much for the work of inculturation (1).

Beside the six case studies, 19 respondents of the in depth study answered these two questions. Among the 19 respondents were four Catholics and 15 respondents were from the Presbyterian Church, their data were grouped into the Catholic and Protestant points of view. In so doing, this research wants to move a step forward and to identify some difficulties and, at the same time, areas for an ecumenical dialogue.

Catholic viewpoint:

Five respondents agreed that there are similarities between the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints, and all of them elaborated Mary’s role in the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints. The responses are as follows:

“According to my Catholic belief, Mary, the saints and our ancestors are all in Heaven, so they are all living happily together. Mary and the deceased holy believers are called saints. Our deceased ancestors are called ‘children of God’. God has a way to save them and Mary is the one leading them to God (1).”
“There is a deep relationship between ancestors and Mary, in the communion of saints. Since, on November 1, the Triumphant Church celebrates All Saints Day, we commemorate Mary with all the saints, including our ancestors. On November 2, the feast of All Souls, the Suffering Church prays for all souls specially those who are not yet in union with God (1).”

“We pray to Mary for her intercession. We pray for our ancestors that they will be with God. For most people, Mary has a special place in the communion of saints because she is certainly the most holy. So we pray to our ancestors that Mary will intercede for them in order that they will soon be with God (1).”

“But for the aboriginal population does not know Mary and our Catholic saints, so they do not believe that their ancestors are with them. I believe that there is a difference in terms of culture and spiritual life. Mary and the saints are believers, so I believe that they are not separated from us but are together in God and with us. Culturally, our Chinese ancestors are not Catholics, so for many, they do not know that they are in union with one another (1).”

Protestant view point.

Among the 15 respondents, 10 answered that they do not see any similarity between ancestor veneration and the communion of saints. Only three respondents agreed and two believed there is some kind of a link.
Those who do not agree, ten gave reasons such as: the ancestors are all human persons, sinners, judged and condemned by God. They do not possess any power or ability to intercede for us. The saints can be venerated for they are brothers and sisters in Christ, excluding our ancestors who are not Christian. The saints and our ancestors cannot be in communion because they are not in the same category being.

Spiritually, three agreed that our ancestors and the saints are both in Heaven enjoying a communion; they are our elders in faith. “I agree with the common belief that the spirits of our deceased ancestor and the communion with the younger generation. In reality, Chinese ancestor veneration is a type of communion of saints. We remember the good deeds and virtues of our ancestors likewise we also commemorate/honor a saint during his/her feast day. They are our elders, they can not be separated from us, they help us integrate/belong to a family.”

To the question regarding the relationship of Mary in the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints, the respondents from the 13 Protestant pastors differed

Those who do not see any relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints also do not emphasize the place of Mary. (10)

The summarized reasons given are: because “we pray only to God and not to human persons. The saints are only human persons including Mary, they do not have any power. She is not the object of our prayer”. On the other hand, one respondent said
that “Mary is a saint, so she cannot be in communion with our ancestors. Mary possesses special power because she is the mother of Jesus.”

The responses of the other three affirmations are summarized as: that “Mary is a human person like our ancestors and the saints, so they can be in communion and not be separated from human life. Mary and the saints had performed good deeds and were virtuous persons. Mary is mild, gracious and can help unite the Church.”

2. Analysis of the three themes:

Chapter II dealt with the ancestor veneration at length, starting from the history of the Chinese Rites Controversy to the present time. From a study of the ancestor veneration practiced in general of different ethnic groups in Taiwan, the findings showed differences in ancestor rites, location of ancestor tablets and ancestral symbols. These differences were based on the cultural and religious traditions: Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism and traditional religions. Ancestor practices particularly in two Catholic parishes and one university campus demonstrated how adaptation had already been initiated in Taiwan.

In chapter III, through the qualitative analysis research the experiences of the respondents by way of written answers were collated and the convictions or not of the respondents regarding the relationship between the ancestor veneration and communion of saints and the role of Mary in the ancestor veneration and the
communion of saints were recorded. The next section will analyze the results of the
categorized data into three main themes and will bring about a judgment to the
decision of the two hypotheses of this dissertation.

Based on data collected from the socio-cultural and historical realities of Chinese
ancestor veneration, six respondents out of six replied affirmatively that Chinese
ancestor veneration could be considered as an important socio-cultural traditional
value. It has survived and has continued throughout many centuries in the history of
Chinese people. Depending on the ethnic population, the types and frequencies of
ancestor rites, symbols of ancestor veneration, the participation of women and
adaptation to Catholic liturgy varied.

From the six case studies respondents’ responses, five out of six said that the
veneration is practiced by the family or the clan and not by an individual. This family
or group structure is diminishing, and the importance of the family and clan as a
nuclear unit in modern Taiwan population is decreasing. How will the younger
generations conceive the veneration of ancestors in the future?\(^1\) The challenge they
are facing is how to maintain the family and clan spirit in modern Taiwan society. To
answer to this challenge, some changes are made regarding the flexibility of the
frequency in the ancestor practices and the location of the ancestor tablet from the

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\(^{1}\) "Taiwan family and its changes", please consult Thornton, Arland and Hui-Sheng Lin, Social
Changes and the Family in Taiwan, University of Chicago Press, 1994, Chapter two, p. 466.
ancestral hall to the home altar.

The influence of the Catholic Church in the practice of ancestor veneration is important according to the respondents (5 out of six). The only one who said 'no' gave the reason that she is the only Catholic in her family. A challenge is how far can the Catholic Church adapt to the demands of non-Christian? This is an area of inculturation that needs on-going study and research. A continual inter-religious dialogue between the Catholic Church and other religions is the appropriate milieu to discuss topics such as adaptation and meaning of objects and rites in the ancestor veneration.

There are some close similarities in the motivations of veneration: to be in contact with the family’s origins, to express filial piety, respect, gratitude, honor and remembrance and the request for blessings and protection from evil spirits. The dimension of a balanced and good relationship between the dead and the living is important. Theologically speaking, on one hand, some families followed Confucius’ teaching on filial piety in the ancestor practices, on the other hand, there are families who attempted to please the evil spirits and other deities in the invisible world by supplementing sacrifices and offerings. The discernment of motivation is important in order to determine if the rite is ancestor veneration or ancestor worship.

Relationship between the human person and the Transcendent is the key point to
show praise, gratitude, honor and respect with free will. Rather than controlling the ancestor, spirits or deities with fear, in the mediation of graces, blessings and for protection.

The concepts of life, death, and the where about of the ancestors are vividly articulated in the answers to the questions of D. 1, 2, 3 and 4. Five out of six regard life in terms of Catholic belief: God’s gift, a blessing and should be treasured and respected. One respondent is influenced by the Chinese culture’s definition of life ‘to propagate and to achieve success in works’. Death is also looked at from the Catholic point of view as a natural phase, a going ‘home’, to Heaven. However, there is a slight margin of doubt as to where their ancestors are: if not in Heaven, in purgatory and what they are doing. As far as the doctrinal foundation of hell, heaven and purgatory is concern, there is a need for more clarification to determine the influences of Buddhist, Daoist, Catholic or traditional religions’ concept of life after death. How does this relate to salvation? In the Catholic Church, we have seen that, in past centuries, there had been numerous conversions. Nevertheless, Chinese religious traditions were still influencing and shaping Chinese ancestor practices. The answers to the question of life and death were explicitly from the Catholic view point, but beneath some of the responses, implicitly, there is still the preoccupation about
the roles of their ancestors. Where are they? The Catholic Church teaching does not explicitly pay attention to the invisible world or the other world. However, in the Chinese culture, the invisible world is believed to be populated by spirits, deities and ancestors who are the inter-mediators between living human persons and God, the Transcendent. These inter-mediators are powerful and can control the ordinary life of the people. Some believe that the Transcendent God is far from them, so these intermediators are entrusted to care for the ordinary needs of the living persons. Therefore, the some Chinese will pray, offer

Regarding different levels of relationships between the family and the ancestors, all answers affirmed that they are close and spiritually close. With the focal questions of our dissertation on questions E.1 (The relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints) and 2 (Mary’s place in Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints), the answers from the respondents were quite general and rather vague, especially concerning the understanding of who can be identified as saint, holy people, and as their ancestor. Thus, the researcher is left with some questions as to the understanding of holiness in regards to the ancestors/saints or/ and holy persons and the communion of saints.

As to whether Mary has a place in the communion of saints and the ancestor veneration, only one affirmed positively. Other respondents did not reply directly nor did we get satisfactory answers that were well articulated. It is not clear as to the reasons behind. Although, we can try to seek for some reasons such as: that the respondents did not know how to answer this question or had never thought of this concept, or that the questionnaire did not well define on what is who Mary is in the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints.
Somehow, the additional in depth study opened up a horizon for the researcher to gather more data regarding the understanding between the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints and the role of Mary in the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints. These data collected helped us to see that Catholic points of view differ from that of the Protestants in the understanding of ancestor veneration, the communion of saints and Mary. Aside from strong negation on the relationship between the Chinese ancestor veneration and communion of saints, there was also a negative answer to Mary's role. The basic negation or the absence of Mary in the Protestantism was around the question of Mary's role of mediation. However, few Protestants affirmation statements give hope to an on-going invitation for an Ecumenical dialogue.

V. Conclusion: Verification of the two hypotheses:

The above analysis enables a judgement to be made: that there is a relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints. The reality of the practice stands parallel to and can even be said integrated into the Catholic way of veneration of saints/holy persons. It is still alive in modern Chinese Catholic families continue to perform rites and rituals to their ancestors. To this, the first hypothesis that is there is a relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and the sacrifices and even supplement them with gifts to please them.
The communion of saints is proven true and relevant. However, most of the answers are vague and general, there are also some hesitations regarding the second hypothesis on whether Mary's has a place in the ancestor veneration and communion of saints among the Taiwan's Catholics and Protestants. The denial or simply lack of knowledge from the respondents proves that there is a partial nuance to the approval of the second hypothesis. Therefore, these findings challenge a continuing effort in terms of an ecumenical dialogue and inter-religious conversation. Lastly, taking a closer examination, some sociologists might criticize the validity of these pseudo-sociological studies. However, the main purpose of this venture was to obtain a reality check on whether or not Chinese ancestor veneration as a cultural practice dated many centuries ago is still very active among Chinese families, including Catholics. And, the results revealed that it is very much so. The next chapter will be dealt with the concept of communion, first as a Church model and then, in the communion of saints.
Chapter IV

Communion Ecclesiology and the Communion of Saints

Introduction:

The Apostles' Creed, professed by the Catholic world contains fundamental beliefs which are important for a mature Christian living faith. This chapter mainly focuses on the article of 'the communion of saints' and its relatedness to the Church, understood as communion ecclesiology. The phrase "I believe in the communion of saints" is placed between "the holy Catholic Church" and "the resurrection of the body", what is the meaning of this insertion? This expression of faith may be according to the legend originated in the time of the apostles. One can ask if it is still significant to our contemporary Catholic world. How can its meaning be renewed? These are the questions that this chapter will attempt to clarify in order to understand the relevant place of the communion of saints in our Christian life and communion within the Church. Moreover, a chapter will deal on some Church documents regarding salvation for non-Christian religions. To conclude this chapter, the

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1 The phrase 'communion of saints' is found in the Apostles' Creed only and not in the Nicean Creed.
researcher offers some reflections which are signs of hope as well as challenges to the complex reality of a study such as the communion of saints and ancestor veneration.

This chapter is divided into three parts: communion-ecclesiology, the communion of saints, and some Church documents regarding salvation for non-Christian religions.

The framework is as follows:

I. Communion Ecclesiology

1. Church as communion: communion ecclesiology;

2. Five basic dimensions of communion ecclesiology:

3. Application of communion-ecclesiology in the local church of Taiwan.

II. Communion of Saints

1. Scriptural Foundation

2. History of the communion of saints
   1) Before Vatican II
   2) Vatican II and since
III Church documents regarding salvation for non-Christians religions

1. Some Church documents:

   1) *Ecclesiam Suam*, October 1963
   2) *Lumen Gentium*, 1965
   4) *Ad Gentes*, 1965
   5) *Nostra Aetate*, 1965
   6) *Dominus Jesus*, 2000

2. Reception of church documents by the Asian churches (Ecclesia in Asia, 1999).

3. FABC’s mission and theological thrust on salvation for non-Christians

   1) Introduction


      1) FABC’s foundation, context, and mission

      2) FABC’s theological thrust

   3) Reflection and conclusion

IV. General Conclusion

I. Communion Ecclesiology

Introduction

From the Catholic perspective, the meaning of communion in relation to the Church is
connected with one of the models suggested in 1965 by Vatican II.\(^3\) It is the communion ecclesiology that was developed as one of the central and fundamental ideas of the council’s documents. After the Vatican II, different theologians have expanded this model into different dimensions. Some important elements of the communion from *Lumen Gentium* follow.

1. Church as a communion ecclesiology:

1) Important elements of communion ecclesiology in *Lumen Gentium*, 1965

According to the well-known American ecclesiologist, Rev. Joseph A. Komonchak,\(^4\)

"Vatican II did not offer a simple definition of the Church, the sort of thing one might have expected from the title of the first draft *De Ecclesia* whose first chapter was entitled ‘The Nature of the Church’. *Lumen Gentium*, the first chapter of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church’ is ‘The Mystery of the Church‘. It is a more meditative approach. A summary of his presentation follows:

First, there is a brief summary of the history of salvation grounded in the Trinitarian foundation on which the Church bases her center, (LG #2-3). By citing how God had chosen Abel, and how the last of the elect are gathered together with the Father in the universal church. Hence, the universal church is seen to be a people brought into unity

\(^3\) *Lumen Gentium* presents other models such as the Mystical Body of Christ, People of God, and Pilgrim Church. However, to the particular interest of this thesis, we shall only focus and develop the aspect of the communion-model. To have a deeper understanding on the history of the church teaching on the ecclesial-communion model, see the CDF document, *The Extra-Ordinary Synod of 1985, 25 Years* after Vatican II, Origins #15 (December 19, 1985).

of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit' (LG #4). Biblical images of the Church in relationship with the kingdom are shown in article 6, that of a sheepfold (Jn.10: 1-10; Is.40: 11; Ex.34: 11ff; 1 Pet.5: 4; Jn.10: 11-16); The Tillage of God (1 Cor.3; 9, Mt.21: 33-43; Is.5: 1f.Jn.15: 1-5); the Building of God (1Cor.3: 9,11; Mt. 21:42; 1Pet.2: 5; Apoc.21: 1f.); and Jerusalem which is above and our mother (Gal.4: 26;Apoc. 19:7; 2:17; 19:17; 21:2; Eph.5: 26, 29). Special attention is given to the Body of Christ (LG #7). This chapter ends with an insistence that the church is at once a Holy Communion of faith, hope, and charity (8) '. The one mediator, Christ, established and ever sustained here on earth His holy Church, the community of faith, hope, and charity, as a visible organization through which He communicates truth and grace to all men/women’ (LG # 8).

The second chapter is entitled "The People of God "(LG # 8), and stresses unity among all people towards communion: unity with the Triune God and among people. This is a key to the ecclesiology of the Council'. Established by Christ as a communion of life, love, and truth, the church is taken up by him also as the instrument for salvation of all as the light of the world and the salt of the earth, (Cf. Mt .5:13-16) it is sent forth into the whole world.’ (LG# 9). All the faithful, scattered throughout the world are in communion with each other in the Holy Spirit. (LG #9), holding a rightful place in the communion of the church that should be a communion
between the universal church and the particular churches. Finally, there is a bond of
closeness in communion whereby members share spiritual riches, apostolic works,
and temporal resources (LG # 9).

These two chapters concentrate on the essential theological description of the Church
in models such as: People of God and the Pilgrim Church. The Trinitarian life and the
Mystical Body of Christ as one mediator in the holy communion of faith, hope, and
love, in the communion with each other in the Holy Spirit, in the communion of the
universal church with particular churches are strongly emphasized. Finally, there is a
bond of spiritual riches, apostolic workers, and the sharing of temporary resources. In
this chapter, two images stand out: the Mystical body of Christ and the People of God.
Other chapters detail the differences of the members of the church: the clergy
(Chapter III), the laity (Chapter IV), and religious (Chapter VI), their common call to
holiness (Chapter V), their union with the saints in heaven, and their final
eschatological destiny (Chapter VII), of which the Blessed Virgin Mary is the model
(Chapter VIII).


One can say that Lumen Gentium also suggests a new model for the Church:
communion. For Catholics, the meaning of communion ecclesiology is connected
with Vatican II. But, it was twenty years after the Council during the Extraordinary
Synod of 1985, that the church discussed the progress of the implementation of the model ‘communion’. In the final report of that Synod, the bishops decided to present communion ecclesiology as the key to a proper understanding of the Vatican II documents instead of the ‘People of God’. Hence, ‘communion’ became the central and fundamental idea of the Council’s documents. However, this claim also implies that Catholic theologians cannot interpret either Vatican II or communion ecclesiology apart from each other. The 1985 Synod of Bishops invited all parties in the Church to a fuller reading of the entire texts. The bishops included even themselves in this call toward a higher vision:

“We are probably not immune from all responsibility for the fact that especially the young churches criticize the church as a pure institution. Have we not perhaps favored this opinion in them by speaking too much of a renewal of the church’s external structures and too little of God and of Christ? From time to time there has been also a lack of the discernment of spirits, with the failure to correctly distinguish between a legitimate openness of the Council to the world and the acceptance of a secularized world’s mentality and order of values”. (Cf. Extraordinary Synod of 1985, The Final Report 1.1.4)

3) Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on some aspects of the Church understood as communion, 1992.

The goal of this document is a follow-up of the Final Report of the Extra Ordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985. “Bearing in mind the doctrinal, pastoral, and ecumenical importance of the different aspects regarding the Church understood as communion, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has considered it opportune, by means

of this Letter to recall briefly and clearly, where necessary, some of the fundamental elements that are to be considered already settled also by those who undertake the hoped for theological investigation.  

This Letter has five aspects aiming to integrate the concept of communion with the concepts of People of God and Mystical Body of Christ (two church models presented in the *Lumen Gentium*), and the Letter also gives the importance to the relationship between the Church as communion and the Church as sacrament. The five main aspects are: The Church, a Mystery of Communion; Universal Church and Particular Church; Communion of the Churches, Eucharist and Episcopate; Unity and Diversity in Ecclesial Communion, and Ecclesial Communion and Ecumenism.

This section wants to focus only on the relationship between the communion ecclesiology and the communion of saints. In the first aspect, on the Church as mystery of communion (#3 to #6), some essential ideas of the visible and the invisible elements of communion are interesting and valuable to understand the relationship between the communion ecclesiology (a model) and the communion of saints (a group). The ideas mentioned are:

1) “If the concept of communion, which is not univocal one, is to serve as a key to ecclesiology, it has to be understood within the teaching of the Bible and the

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patristic tradition in which communion always involves a double dimension: the vertical (communion with God) and the horizontal (communion among men). As a result, the concept of communion should be such as to express both the sacramental nature of the Church while ‘we are away from the Lord, and also the particular unity makes the faithful into members of one and the same body, the Mystical Body of Christ.” (# 3)

2) In the Church on earth, there is an intimate relationship between the invisible communion, which is the communion of each human being with the Triune God, and with the others who are fellow sharers in the divine nature (Eph.4: 4-5). The visible communion in the teaching of the apostles, the sacraments, and in the hierarchical order. The link between the invisible and the visible elements of communion constitutes the Church as the sacrament of salvation. (# 4)

(3) “The Church is a communion of saints, to use a traditional expression that is found in the Latin versions of the Apostles’ Creed from the end of the fourth century. The common visible sharing in the goods of salvation (the holy things), especially the Eucharist, is the source of the invisible communion among the sharers (the saints). This communion brings with it a spiritual solidarity among the members of the Church, in ‘one mind and one heart’ and tends towards ‘union in prayers’. (#6,a) “The invisible elements exist not only among the
members of the pilgrim Church but also between these and all who, having passed from this world in the grace of the Lord, belong to the heavenly Church or will be incorporated into her after having been fully purified.” (6.b.) This means, among other things, that there is a mutual relationship between the pilgrim Church on earth, and the heavenly Church in the historical-redemption mission. Hence, the ecclesiological importance is not only of Christ’s intercession on behalf of the members but also of that of the saints, and in an eminent fashion, of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Devotion to the saints, which is such a strong feature of the piety of the Christian people, can thus be seen to correspond in its very essence to the profound reality of the church as a mystery of a communion.” (6.b.)

With these above ideas as a backdrop, we shall proceed to understand the development of the theology of communion ecclesiology by summarizing the five dimensions of relationships of communion ecclesiology in Dennis Doyle’s book Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions (2000).

2. Five basic dimensions of communion ecclesiology:

The renewal of the Church did not come to an end with the close of the Vatican Council II. At present, close to more than 40 years later, much has happened, both in the world and in the church. Denis Doyle in Communion Ecclesiology, Vision and
Versions explores communion ecclesiology as a form of theology expresses in
dialogue with modernity. In carving out an historical tradition which includes a
Protestant version of communion ecclesiology, he cited Friedrich Schleiermacher, as
the original Protestant voice on this subject and acknowledged Johann Adam Mohler
(1796-1838) as the original Catholic voice.

Various theologians have studied the tensions in Catholic Church thought regarding
communion ecclesiology before, during, and after Vatican II. According to Doyle’s
analysis, tensions exist in different interpretations on the nature of the church, e.g. the
church is historical-pneumatological-organic and is mystical Christological-aesthetical.

Doyle also comments that the document from the Congregation of the Doctrine of
Faith (CDF), Extraordinary Synod of 1985, Final Report, emphasizes the priority of
the Church universal and the importance of certain visible church structures.

Doyle finds Henri de Lubac a theologian of remarkable balance whose work not only
spans the Hans Urs Balthasar- Karl Rahner tension but also anticipates some elements
of liberation theology of Leonardo Boff. Doyle argues that liberation theology stands
as a corrective to both H.U.Baltasar and K.Rahner. He also assesses on the
contribution of Elizabeth Johnson and Hans Kung. He criticizes Elizabeth Johnson,
a feminist theologian, as an overlap with liberation theology while focuses on social

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p.8

8 D. Doyle, Communion Ecclesiology, p. 19
and gender transformation but stresses other dimensions of Christianity such as relationality and popular religion. Hans Kung provides an important voice that serves and keeps alive certain key elements of the reforming thrust of Vatican II. In all of these theologians who contributed on communion ecclesiology before, during, and after Vatican II, they have its limitations, which if made rigid, can lead to theological exclusivity and marginalization.⁹

Denis Doyle’s five dimensions of relationship of communion are also five touchstones for the vision of the Church that emerges from a generous, inclusive, and integrative reading and application of the documents of Vatican II. There are five dimensions of relationship in communion ecclesiology: namely: divine, mystical, sacramental, historical, and social dimensions. These five dimensions of the Church expressed in the Council documents have a parentage with the vision of the Church proclaimed by Vatican II. The first dimension: divine is an invitation to share in the divine life and love of the three persons in One God. The second dimension: mystical is the Body of Christ and the Communion of saints. The mystical dimension of the Church taken from Balthasar is the typological readings of scripture representatives of what the Church is in Mary, John, Peter, Paul, and many other figures. The Church is not simply a mundane reality it includes dimensions that transcend place and time. As

⁹ Dennis Doyle, pp. 20 ff.
members of the Church, we who are still in this life are connected with those who
have gone before us in death through God’s grace. This dimension according to Doyle
has ecumenical implications because of its attention to scripture and because of its use
of image that can include Christians of various denominations. The third dimension:
sacramental is communities of Christians who love each other, existing
simultaneously as local churches and as embodiments of the universal Church. The
fourth dimension is historical, the Pilgrim People of God on its journey through
history. The fifth dimension is social, the understanding of the Church the leaven in
the world with commitment to justice and to global relationality. 10

In summary, the researcher wants to offer a critical assessment on this section by
identifying some similarities as well as tensions of relationship in different
dimensions within the ecclesial communion and the communion of saints. They are as
follows:

Similarities:

1) The three documents of the Church, Lumen Gentium, Twenty years after Vatican
II and the Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the
Church understood as Communion, expressed the foundation of Church
believers in sharing the divine life and love of the Trinity. This is the ultimate

10 Dennis Doyle, Communion Ecclesiology, pp.175-177.
source of all communal relationship, the link between the invisible elements and the visible elements of communion in the Church.

2) The communion of saints is applied in the two Church models: the Mystical Body of Christ and People of God. Both are communion ecclesiology which show the interrelationship between the divine and the human dimensions.

3) As people of God, the church throughout her history, is a community of faith, love, and hope not alone but accompanied in memory and in its historical presence of the people in the past, the saints, and Mary. There is a communion between the living and those who have died.

Tensions:

1) The image of the Mystical body is more contemplative, while the image of the People of God are more pastoral and action oriented. However, any insistence of one image can be harmful to the total reality of the Church in theory and praxis.

2) The framework of inclusion and exclusion raises the question of who belongs to the circle of the church, in the communion of saints. Is it reserved only for the

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11 On the occasion of the 40th year since the promulgation by Pope Paul VI of Vatican II’s dogmatic constitution, Lumen Gentium [Nov. 21, 1964-2004], there was an interview from Zenith [Vatican, Rome official Website] with Peter Gumpel, S.J., an assistant to Paul Molinari, S.J, who collaborated day after day in the drafting of the document. Peter Gumpel, when asked about “Of what importance was Lumen Gentium, in Vatican II and what issues does it address?” He replied: ”Lumen Gentium is a dogmatic constitution of the highest level of the ordinary Magisterium and of the council, although in the end it added no new dogmatic definition. After each chapter was discussed, especially the two first chapters, presenting the nature of the church from an eschatological perspective and also from the pilgrim People of God, the problem was that Pope Pius XII had prepared and planned to emphasize the aspect of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. There is no affirmation that is more valid than that of the Church in eschatological planning towards Heaven argued by some. Cf. Zenith Org. Rome, Nov.3, 2003, Interview with Peter Gumpel, S.J.”
believers? What about our ancestors, who do not belong to the same faith, for example those in the Old Testaments, what answer can Catholic Church offer?

3) In actuality, in the communion ecclesiology and the communion of saints, both speak about holiness. Who are the holy persons? Are they those who have been canonized as saints by the Church?

4) There is a tension between the nature of the Church as communion and the structure of the church as highly clerical. What is the relationship between the universal Church and the local churches? Is the communion model a solution to this tension or a problem to a solution?

There is no immediate solution to any of these tensions especially with questions addressed by the non-Christians. However, this brief study demonstrates an important

Since the Reformation, Protestant churches, as a whole, have difficulty in accepting the veneration of saints, for the reason that it is detracting from the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. As part of the Counter Reformation in the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Sixtus V established the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1588, as the agency for canonization. During Vatican II in 1964 [LG.50], the Dogmatic Constitution on Liturgy, 1963 No.8, discussed the topic on "the saints". Recalling them in worship, Catholics affirm their belief in the salvific plan of Christ and in the belief that the Church is more than the entity. It is also a large reality called 'communion of saints'. Cf. Anne Glifford, Introducing Feminist Theology. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 2001, pp.200-201.

In an interview with Fr. Gumpel on the question of collegiality of bishops and the pontiff during the Vatican II council held in 1964, he recalled, "This was the most intense discussion that took place [Lumen Gentium, Chapter III]. The formula is clear 'with and under Peter' cum et sub Petro'. But the formulas initially presented were not sufficiently clear, to the point that 18 Cardinals and general superiors of several religious congregations wrote to Pope Paul VI that the ambiguity would be avoided. The Pontiff then added a "Nota Previa" which, while taking into account the council's discussion, confirmed the magisterial teachings on the matter. Cf. Interview with P. Gumpel, November 3, 2004, Zenith Vatican Org. p. 15-16.

Some theologians made an observation that there is a radical shift of Church model after Vatican II: from 'the People of God' to 'communion'. One of the major reasons of this change could be that the structure, the understanding of collegiality in the church is challenged." When collegiality is not understood properly, it could signal ambiguity" as stated by Peter Gumpel. Perhaps in order to avoid facing the ambiguity of collegiality between local churches and universal church, communion ecclesiology was emphasized.
awareness that more than ever there is a great urgency to seek for some guidelines which the Catholic church can offer. This topic shall be dealt with later. In the next section we shall demonstrate an application of the communion ecclesiology model for the local church of Taiwan. In order to discover an expression of communion from the local culture, in the case of Taiwan, parish as a community of faith, hope, and love enables the local church to be really universal. There is the challenge of making mission a service of the whole saving purpose of God (salvation), an integral informing part of ecclesiology. The local church in Taiwan is an example of how communion-ecclesial can take a pastoral turn in the work of evangelization.

3. Application of Communion Ecclesiology to the Local Church in Taiwan:

The theme of the letter *Communion in the Parish and Evangelization*¹⁴ is in a pastoral letter written by the Taiwan Regional Bishops Conference on February 4, 1992, presented a follow up program to the Bishops Plenary Assembly held in 1990. To prepare for the Jubilee year of 2000, which many hope would be the beginning of a new era of Christianity. The concept of communion concentrated on parishes and the work of evangelization. There was a strong affirmation of the importance of a parish as a basic organization, a fundamental unit, which is responsible for the work of evangelization. This pastoral letter aimed to bring about the potential of the parish as

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¹⁴ Pastoral Letter of the Chinese Bishops Conference of Taiwan on the Communion in the Parish and Evangelization, CBC Taiwan Publication. (February 4, 1992).
a body of communion of faith, in love, for the parish apostolate and for evangelization.

The four elements of a parish follow:

1) The Parish as a Body of Communion of faith

The early Christians’ way of a community model was what a parish should be. The Christians were formed in a certain locality as a communion of faith, as in the Acts of the Apostles, ‘they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers. And all who believed were together.’ (Acts 2:42-44)

This document instructs us that it is necessary that the faithful of the parish have a correct and systematic knowledge of faith. For example, different types of doctrinal instructions that will meet different needs should be organized in the parish, such as Sunday catechism for children and youth, summer camp activities, etc. At the same time, encouragement should be given to each parish to create small communities of faith in order to increase knowledge of the faith, to foster sharing of the faith experience, to practice the life of faith, to divide tasks, and to cooperate together in pastoral work and the work of evangelization. (p.5)

In recent years, efforts were made in many diocese and parishes to organize various types of large-scale gatherings (symposium on evangelization rallies...
or assemblies), for the proclamation of the faith, but these activities attract only a few new members into the Catholic Church. At the parish level, there is a need to appoint people to instruct, train, and be involved in faith education. By providing personal contact to the catechumens after they have attended large festive activities, the catechumens and the new Christians can share their experiences and find deeper motivation in belonging to the community of faith.  

2) Parish as a Body of Communion of Love

Two scriptural texts serve as the basis for the interdependent relationship in a parish. The first one is taken from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians 5:4-6. "There is one Body and one Spirit just as you were called to one hope, that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, through all and in all." The second scriptural passage is from the Acts of the Apostles, 2:44-47, "All who believed were together and had all things in common."

These texts give importance to the Eucharistic celebration by emphasizing that one source of God's love is the Sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharistic celebration. Jesus willingly offers himself as a victim in love to the Father.

15 Pastoral Letter, p.6.
and to humankind. Each time the Christian faithful come to Church, they should experience love such as the feeling of coming home to one’s family and the joy of being a sister and a brother. By witnessing Jesus’ love non-Christians will be attracted to join the Church, just as the first Christians were drawn to the Church of their times.¹⁶

3) The Parish as a communion for a Pastoral Apostolate

The parish is the center that nurtures the faith life of Christians. It is also the center where the faithful can participate in pastoral planning and different activities. The physical environment of a parish is important for example, its cleanliness and its beauty. Above all there should be collaboration between the pastor and the parish council and at the same time, consultation for decision-making, so that the parishioners can participate actively in parish life.¹⁷

Joint projects on a larger scale between dioceses or deaneries are encouraged, for example, the experience of the Island Pilgrimage of Our Lady of Wanchin, in 1996. Small and large parishes cooperated and made the event a praiseworthy activity of the local church in Taiwan. Lastly, implementing activities, which come from the Taiwan Regional Bishops

¹⁶ Pastoral Letter, p.9
¹⁷ Pastoral Letter, p.10
Conference and those of the Universal Church, are also means of communion in parish apostolate.18

4) The Parish as a Body of Communion for Evangelization

It is urgent that Christians take an active role in the task of evangelization. Christians through their baptism are called to participate in the mission of Christ. Each Christian is an evangelizer who needs formation, education, and nurturing in their faith, to deepen their knowledge of the Gospel teaching and their prayer life. The Church must also use every occasion to contact people outside the church and bring them to the knowledge of God.19

There is a desire that the parish structures become a community of active faith, mutual love, and assistance, zealously promoting pastoral and evangelizing communion’. (p.18) In recent years, the Taiwan Regional Bishops Conference elaborated an animation program called New Century. New Evangelization20 whose activities are based on the concept of communion in the family and the parish.21

18 Pastoral Letter, p.11
19 Pastoral Letter, p.14
21 For more information read the Evangelization Program issued by Taiwan Regional Conference of Bishops for the new millennium, CBCT, Taiwan Publication, 2000 and look into the website www.catholic.org.tw., articles related to the New Evangelization program in Taiwan.
II. The Communion of Saints. (諸神相通 )

The communion of saints is a Christian reality that speaks of profound relationships: first, to the Triune God, its foundation. Secondly, it points to an ongoing connection between the living and the dead. These different relationships originated from the life of the Triune God and are poured out as grace. Hence, there are two lines of relationship: one with the Triune God, and the other with human beings that extends to the cosmic family. The task is to bring these two lines into a circle of communion with the Triune God as the center. Since the communion of saints is basically a form of unity in relationships, it presents some challenges as well as a call to rethink communion theology in today’s world.

1. Scriptural Foundations

Part one will look at the scriptural foundation of the communion of saints. It will give a lengthy account on the evolution of the doctrine of the communion of saints and trace the peak point of the doctrine (before Vatican II) and almost a silence after Vatican II. An exploration of the theological and pastoral dimensions of the communion of saints from the teachings of Church documents since Vatican II (1961-1965) and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994).

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22 The former Chinese translation of the communion of saints is interpenetration or intercommunication of saints. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the translation is changed to communion of saints. But personally, I think the former translation has a deeper meaning of relationships.

23 The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994, in the section of the Profession of Faith, section two, paragraph 5: 946-948, gives the essential definition of the communion of saints.
Although 'the communion of saints' does not appear in its exact literal form either in
the Scripture or in the writings of the first three centuries, the idea is present in
Johannine and Pauline literature. Lamirande writes,

"In both Johannine and Pauline literature the idea involves a series of personal
relationships. For St. John, relationship between persons seems primary, whereas
for St. Paul that of participation in some object is in the foreground, though in
some cases, as that of participation in Christ, it necessarily attracts the
contemporary idea of personal relationship." 24

Furthermore, Lamirande explored the meaning of 'saints' in relation to Scriptures. In
Latin, sanctorum is either neuter or masculine. If neuter, it means 'holy things', more
directly with the sacraments, and the 'communion of saints' means participation in the
sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. But if used in the masculine sense, then it
relates to persons and the 'communion of saints'. In Scripture, St. Paul denotes it to
every Christian who is already considered sanctified through his/her supernatural
calling and his/her incorporation into Christ by baptism (2 Cor.9, 13; Heb.13.16). 25

In Greek the word 'koinonia' is commonly used by secular writers to denotes
relationship between persons. In the New Testament, there is a variety of meaning, the
participation of a number of people in the same reality, expressed in the inner being of
a believer in the reality of a communion with God (I Jn.1; 3 and 6), and as fraternity (I

25 E. Lamirande, p. 21.
Jn.1.7). The Gospel rendered the same thought by the verbs of ‘dwelling in ’, to be in’ (Jn.14: 20, 23; 14,4-10; 17.21).26

The purpose of communion (unity) in Christ is the communion with the Father. Both St. John and St. Paul spoke about the communion with the Father as the goal that is a movement of grace that delivers us from ourselves and leads us to God, the Father.

“What is this fellowship of ours? Fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn.1, 3). St Paul likewise tells us that God called us ‘into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord” (I Cor. 1.9).27

Moreover, Lamirande gave us what is the Christian mystical identity. The personalities remain intact but the total Christ is formed on a different level. In St Paul to the Galatians, he says “You are all one person in Jesus Christ”. (Gal.3.28). And the allegories of the ‘Vine’, (Jn 15) and the’ Mystical Body of Christ’ (1 Cor. 6:15; 10:17; 12:27; Rom. 12:5) give vivid illustrations of the intimate relationship between the believer and Jesus.28

Joseph Fitzmyer, a biblical scholar, comments that:

“Under the rubric of ‘communion of saints’ we are not to think merely of the mass of deceased Christians such as the 144,000 followers of the Lamb (Rev.14.4) in their corporate, spotless existence before the heavenly throne, but much more concretely of the solidarity that Jews or Christians still in earthly life have with those who have passed on and are regarded as enjoying their eternal

26 E. Lamirande, p.22.
27 E. Lamirande, p. 60
28 E. Lamirande, pp. 65-66
He explained that the sense of solidarity is also depicted in the Epistle to the Hebrews as St Paul refers to nineteen persons of faith, along with the unnamed persecuted ones, as ‘a cloud of witnesses’ that surrounds us still in the earthly life (Heb.11: 35-38). According to Fitzmyer, here the famous persons of faith of bygone times are presented not merely as witnesses of what real faith is, but also as a compact throng of believers, whose company living Christians are already called to share.  

Fitzmyer also refers to St. Paul’s epistles’ 1Cor, 15:23 on solidarity; Heb.11: 35-38, the expression of unnamed persecuted ones as ‘a cloud of witnesses’; Heb.12: 1-2, ‘looking to Jesus the leader and the one who perfects all faith’; and associated the Christians on earth with the saints in Eph.2: 19-21, ‘You are, therefore, no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens of the saints and members of God’s household, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the capstone, in whom the whole structure is fitted together and grows into a holy temple of the Lord’.  

Fitzmyer asked the question “who belongs to the communion of saints?” Is it designated merely the Jewish and Gentile members of the Church on earth, or the holy Christians who have passed on? He replied that the first sense is possible but given the reference to Jesus Christ as the capstone and his title as Lord, resurrected, it may suggest a second sense. Thus, this passage would support the idea of a communion of saints that refers to the solidarity of earthly Christians ‘with those

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29 J. Fitzmyer, “Biblical Data on the Veneration, Intercession and Invocation of the Holy People”, section on Communion of Saints from The One Mediator, the Saints and Mary, Ausburg, Minneapolis 1992, p.142.
already with the Lord’. To such passages, we can also connect the Pauline teaching of the Church as the Body of Christ and the solidarity that the image implies ecclesia triumphans. Eph.1: 20-23, refers to the Risen Christ seated at God’s right hand in the heavenly places with all things under his feet and made head over all things for the Church, which is His body.33

2. History of the communion of saints:

1) Before Vatican II

The insertion of the phrase ‘communion of saints’ into the Apostles’ Creed can be traced back to the end of the fourth century.34 A common belief traces this insertion to the time when the Church fought against Donatism (ca 355), a movement that claimed to be the only church of saints, the authentic church of the martyrs, a church of the pure.35

A short account of the insertion of the article ‘communion of saints’ into the Creed provides us reasons to look at the theology of the creed as Trinitarian in its meaning. Its initial article is on the Father, the main section is devoted to the mystery of Christ, the second Person of the Trinity. In the concluding part, after mentioning the Holy Spirit, there are several phrases concretely relating to the economy of salvation: “I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of

33 Fitzmyer, "Biblical Data", p.143.
34 E. Lamirande, What is communion of Saints, p. 20
35 E. Lamirande, p.19
saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.”

Its precise location of the communion of saints in the creed indicates the importance of a deep abiding relationship of the Spirit and the interconnectedness of the Holy Church and the communion of saints.

The earliest understanding of the expression of “the communion of saints” highlighted as Eucharistic communion. According to Lamirande, “we meet for the first time the expression ‘eucharistic communion’ in a rescript of Emperors Gratian, Valentinian and Theodosius in 388.” (Cod.Theod.16, 5,14) It was rather rare for the Greeks to use the term ‘communion of saints’; they preferred the term ‘communion with the saints.’ Writers such as Basil the Great of Caesarea (330-379) used ‘communion of saints’ in the most comprehensive way, including the ‘saints’, the holy things, and especially the Eucharistic elements.36

Among the Latins, the phrase communio sanctorum is rarely found before the end of the fourth century, and its meaning is less settled. The term is used, for example, to denote the Eucharist. St Augustine quoted a decree of the Synod of Carbarsussi in Africa (393) which seemed that ‘communion of saints’ must be taken as meaning ‘the Eucharistic celebration’ (Ennarr.in ps.36, 2.20). During this period in Africa, the sacraments were simply called ‘the holy things’ (sancta)

36 E.Lamirande, p.23
The Council of Vienne (394) and of Nimes (396) also retained the expression 'communion of saints' in a context in which it is difficult to see anything except the Eucharist.

Nicetas of Remesiana (+ 414) defined the Church as the 'assembly', the 'community' of saints' including the righteous of all ages and even the angels.37 Dom Germain Morin who brought out clearly the idea of Nicetas of Remesiana, saying that 'he implied a personal relationship presupposed by the communion of saints.' Faustus of Riez (+ 495) spoke about the meaning of the community of saints as a 'blessed cult to the saints for God's glory, and also 'the cultus of the relics of a saint.' These two interpretations implied, on one hand the personal meaning of the communion of saints that is a relationship between the members of the Catholic Church, and on the other hand, a 'holy thing'. As synthesis, the expression 'communion of saints' had two interpretations: one referring to objects, 'the holy things', especially the Eucharistic celebration, and another one, referring to people.

37 Nicetas de Remesiana wrote De Symbolo. "Il est interesse particulierement l'histoire des formulation diverse du Credo baptismal. Il definit l'Eglise comme 'sanctorium omnium congregatio';Elle comprend ceux qui dans le temps, depuis les patraiches, 'una fide et una conversatione sanctificati, uno spiritu signati, unum corpus effecti sunt, cuius corporis Christus esse prohibetur; elle englobe encore les anges et les puissances celestes. (Ergo in hac una ecclesia credis te communionem consecuturum esse sanctorum:); Nicetas est un des premiers temoins de l'explication en ce sens de l'article sur L'Eglise, et aussi de la formule (et vitam aeternam.) A. E. Burn, Niceta of Remesiana, His Life and Works, Cambridge, 1905, p.38; Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Tome XI, Beauchesne, Paris, 1982, pp 215-216
Later on, theologians such as Alexander of Hales (1186-1245), St. Albert the Great (1193-1280), and St. Bonaventure (1221-1274), did not spend much time on the topic of the communion of saints, but they made useful contributions in distinguishing a number of factors capable of being used in the formation of a theological synthesis of the question. Alexander of Hales proposed two connected ideas about the communion of saints\textsuperscript{39}: first, a share in the sacraments through which forgiveness of sins originated, but with reference to the unity of the Church. Secondly, he taught that whoever takes part in Christ enters also into relationship with all the members of His body. (Hales, \textit{Summa Theol.} II.1 a. inq. 2. tract 2) St. Albert the Great retained the sacramental interpretation, \textit{(De sacr. missae} 3,8) but he then takes a new direction towards the idea of the sharing of the good things of the Church in common. He believes that through the Holy Spirit, one shares good things of the Church, which also established a genuine communion among them. (In \textit{Sent.} III, d.24, a.6) He saw the gifts of the Holy Spirit passed through Christ and His most eminent members, Mary, the apostles, and the martyrs, so as to reach the other members and become common to all. (\textit{De sacr. missae}, 2,9). By this time, a synthesis was affected between the two main ideas about the

\textsuperscript{39} E. Lamirande, p. 27-28.
Communion of saints: a share in the same ‘holy things’ and a communion of persons.

In 1273, St. Thomas Aquinas (225-1274) set the question in a broad context, dealing first of all with the communion that exists between Christ and his members, and then with the communion as the participation of good things (sacraments). Thus, St. Thomas’ theology of the communion of saints integrates both the participation in the good things between persons and the reception of the sacraments effects union with the church, and that makes a believer a member of the saints. This synthesis was eventually adopted in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, which made the decision hurriedly in its last two days.\(^4\) The Catechism of the Council of Trent contained one of the most developed accounts of the communion of saints. The Catechism was not in reality composed by the Council whose name it bears. But, it is authorized because the Fathers of Trent ordered it to be produced, and because it reflects the mind of the theologians of the period. It was published by Pope Pius V in 1566 and was again approved by Clement XIII in 1761. The official text is as follows:

\(^4\) Carl J. Peter in his article on The Communion of Saints in the Final days of the Council of Trent, p.225, relates that in the last period of the Council, the dogmatic teaching and reform decree were approved between Dec.3rd to 4th in 1563.
“In the first place therefore the faithful must be taught that this article is a kind of explanation of the preceding article on the holy Catholic Church. For the unity which governs the church ensures that what it has received becomes the property of all. The benefits of all the sacraments belong to all believers. These sacraments are sacred ligatures uniting the faithful and binding them to Jesus Christ. Baptism stands out: it is like a door through which they come into the Church. Communion of saints, then signifies community of sacraments, at least this is what the Fathers of Nicea meant when they said: I confess one baptism. After the baptism comes the Eucharist and other sacraments.”

The theology of the Catechism is in line with St. Thomas but was not maintained by subsequent exponents. Reciprocal communion in good works and merit was the principal concern, and the synthesis whose main lines had been marked out was compromised as a result.

During the Counter Reformation period, St Peter Canisius (+1597) and St. Robert Bellarmine (+1621) put more emphasis on the communion between persons rather than the common sharing in the same sacred realities. Canisius, in his book on Christian doctrine, chapter one, puts forward an explanation that became widely adopted: “The communion of saints consists in the reciprocal application of believer’s merits, because (1) Christians on earth can help each other with their prayers; (2) the saints in heaven can intercede for us with God as we shall see elsewhere, and (3) through our prayers and good works we can relieve the souls in Purgatory.”

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41 Lamirande, What is the communion of saints? Chapter III, pp51-52.
Bellarmine in his 'Explanation of Apostles’ Creed' connects the articles on the communion of saints with the authority of the Church and the primacy of the bishop of Rome. “The apostolic head of the visible Church which is in communion, as regards its good things, with all members united with it: and in communion of intercession with the Church in purgatory, while also the Church triumphant communicates its prayers and merit to the Church on earth.” In this way, the doctrine of the communion of saints developed differently. During the Protestant controversy the emphasis came to be laid more on the communion of persons than one common share in the same sacred realities. The communion of saints was presented in a much more coherent structure within the mystery of grace as a result of the narrow vision of the church with reference to the communion of saints as a common sharing of goods, to bring to the fore the relations of inward and spiritual order which it presupposes.

Lamirande comments “whereas the institutional aspect of the church was everywhere emphasized, when speaking of the communion of saints, participation in the same sacraments was forgotten. We may say that the personalized or ethical aspect took precedence over the objective or
mystical.\textsuperscript{42} Hence, we may say that in general, the personalist or ethical aspect took precedence over the objective or mystical. The Renaissance was in the air\textsuperscript{4}.

During the Enlightenment and the Romantic period in Germany, the emphasis was still further on the moralizing ideas which we found in the representatives of the counter-reformation. That is to say, St. Robert Bellarmine's visible church is in the foreground. The communion of saints during this time served as a stimulus for the idea of prayers for the dead, the cults of the saints and intercessions. In reaction against these tendencies, the theology of the Romantic period tried to re-establish the divine and the communal aspect of the Christian mystery, as against its human and individualistic aspect. The inner meaning of the doctrine of the communion of saints was thus regained through the founder of the Tubingen School in 1882. To mention a few theologians such as J.S. Drey, J.M. Sailer, and J.B. Hirscher who were the precursors of Mohler. He saw that the communion of saints was primarily about 'holy things', and where the communion of persons originated.

In France, the Catechetical Instruction at St. Sulpice (1809) highlighted the

\textsuperscript{42} E. Lamirande,\textit{ What is communion of Saints?}, Conclusion, p. 31, pp142-143.
importance of 'holiness' in the communion of saints, as a way of living out a mature Christian life.

The statement on the communion of saints is as follows:

"We understand by communion of saints that union which exists between all the members of the Church whom we call holy (saints) because they have been sanctified by baptism, retain its grace or, having lost it, have now regained it through penance, and because they are always being called to holiness. This is the reason why St. Paul, when he spoke or wrote to his contemporary believers, always named them saints. By saints then we understand the Church triumphant, militant and suffering."^{43}

In the centuries that followed, the idea of the communion of saints stressed the relations between the Church militant, the saints in heaven, and the bond with those who are in purgatory, often leaving in the background the bonds, which unite together the believers on earth. (Counter-Reformation period: Canisius' Christian Doctrine). Vatican II's document (1965) on Lumen Gentium and Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) will lead us to a contemporary understanding of the doctrine and the place of the communion of saints in the Church.

2.2 Vatican II and since:

2.2.1 Lumen Gentium (1965).

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^{43} E. Lamirande, Eugene de Mazenod, Catechiste, in Etudes Oblates (Ottawa 1957) XVI, pp.20-36.
This section will follow the concept of communion of saints emphasizing on the triple inter-relatedness: first, the communion of persons, secondly, the communion of goods (holy things) and, lastly, the communion between those who are living and those who are dead. The Vatican II Church Documents will open the way to show us how the triple relationships are applied to the communion of saints in the ecclesiological perspective.

1) The Communion of persons

There are two ecclesiological models that *Lumen Gentium*,\(^{44}\) the Document on the Church puts to the front to express the communion between the believers in the Church and in the Triune God: The Mystical Body of Christ (LG # 7) and the People of God (LG #8). Biblical references imbued these two imageries, such as a Sheepfold (Jn.10); and the Building of God (Mt. 21:24). Although ‘the communion of saints’ is not mentioned explicitly, it is alluded implicitly in these two imageries as the communion of (believers) persons. “All faithful scattered throughout the world are in communion with each other in the Holy Spirit” (LG # 9).

The first two chapters of *Lumen Gentium* concentrate in the essential theological and scriptural description of the Church in models of ‘the people

of God' and 'the Pilgrim Church,' Significantly, the Triune life and the
Mystical Body of Christ as one mediator is the source of the communion of
believers and also between the local and the universal Church. Other chapters
that deal with specific groups in the Church such as the Clergy (Chapter III),
the Laity (Chapter IV), and the Religious (Chapter V) are seen as responding
to common call to holiness, in their union with the saints in heaven, and their
final eschatology destiny (Chapter VII) of which Blessed Virgin Mary is the
model. (Chapter VIII)

2) The Communion of goods

In the "partaking of the Body of Christ of the Eucharistic Bread, we (the
believers) are taken up into communion with Him and with one another" (I
Cor.10: 17; I Cor.12: 27; Rm.12: 5.) Also in the building up of the Body of
Christ (I Cor.12: 12), through the Holy Spirit, different gifts are distributed
for the welfare of the Church (I Cor. 12:11). Among these gifts stands out
grace given to the apostles. To their authority, the Spirit Himself subjected
even those who were endowed with Charisma (I Cor.14). Giving the Body
unity through Himself and through His power and through the internal
cohesion of its members. This same Spirit produces and urges love among
members." (LG.7). These references draw the bond of closeness in the
communion whereby the members in the Triune God share spiritual gifts (Charisma), graces needed for apostolic works, and spiritual nourishments (sacraments, especially, the Eucharist).

3) Communion between the living and the dead

In *Lumen Gentium*, it is clearly defined that the interrelationship between those who have passed away and the living in two dimensions: first in the communion of the Mystical Body of Christ, and second, in the liturgy and prayers, the remembering of our ancestors in race and in faith. It is deemed interesting to quote two numbers (LG #50 and #51) in order to comprehend the Church's teaching of communal relationship between the living and the dead and make some observations to the theme of our research, the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints.

The Church in the document of *Lumen Gentium* affirmed that:

"In full consciousness of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honored with great respect the memory of the dead; and because it is holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins. She (the church) offered her suffrages for them. The church has always believed that the apostles and Christ's martyrs, who gave the supreme witness of faith and charity by shedding their blood, are closely united with us in Christ; she always venerated them, together with the Blessed Virgin Mary and the holy angels, with a special love, and asked piously for the help of their intercession. Soon there were added to those others who are chosen to imitate more closely, virginity and poverty. Of Christ, still others whom the outstanding practice of the Christian virtues and the wonderful graces of God recommended to the pious

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devotion and imitation of the faithful.” (LG 50)

“This sacred council accepts loyally the venerable faith of our ancestors in the living communion which exists between us and our brothers/sisters who are in the glory of heaven or yet being purified after their death. And it proposes again the decrees of the Second Council of Nicea (787), of the Council of Florence, and of The Council of Trent (1545). At the same time, in keeping with its pastoral preoccupations, this council urges all concerned to remove or correct any abuses, excesses or defects, which may have crept in here or there and so restore all things all that Christ and God be more fully praised. Let us teach the faithful, therefore, that the authentic cult for saints does not consist so. Let us teach the faithful, therefore, that the authentic cult for saints does not consist so much in a multiplicity of external acts, but rather in a more intense practice of our love (charity). Where by our own greater good and that of the church, we seek from the saints ‘example in their way of life, fellowship in their communion, and the help of their intercession.’ On the other hand, let the faithful be taught that our communion is with those in heaven. It is understood in the full light of faith, in no way diminishes the worship of adoration given to God the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit; on the contrary, it greatly enriches it.” (LG 51)

In summary, Church documents affirm that the Church is a Church in communion because the Church draws her life from the Triune God, whose relation is communion and Christian believers are in communion in the mystical body of Christ. There are two dimensions of the Church and the communion of saints that come together in a single mysterious reality: the divine and the human. Divine because their foundation is in the Trinity. They are human as a community of persons because it enables their abilities to respond to life with faith, hope, and charity. The communion is realized in the People of God still in the pilgrimage in history. The Church that neglects its human dimension, and historically shaped elements, will fall short of the proper theological meaning of the word mystery: that is the intimate communal relationship
with the Triune God and sharing on the grace that is poured out from this communion.

One pastoral question concerns the veneration of saints as a devotional practice, although, *Lumen Gentium* teaches implicitly on the communion of saints, yet it failed to address the subjective side of this devotion.\(^\text{46}\) It is not obvious today why or how such veneration is possible. The decline of the veneration of saints is in our time, it has dwindled in today's world, as if 'the world has lost the capacity to do so even among those who would sincerely like to do so'.\(^\text{47}\)

2.2.2 The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994)

In 1568, the Catechism of the Council of Trent emphasized the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas' understanding, that the communion of saints is a participation in Christ's life, and later stressed 'reciprocal communion of good works and merit'.\(^\text{48}\)

After more than 400 years, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) revised a more comprehensive understanding of the communion of saints by inserting 14 articles (#946 to #962) in Part one, the Profession of Faith, and divide the articles into two sections namely: section One: The meaning of the Communion of saints, (# 946

\(^\text{46}\) Karl Rahner explains that the old distinction between *du/a* and *laitra* fails to show the unity of these two on the subjective level. He says that the unity of love of God and neighbor provides the key to answering this question. CF. *Theological Investigations, Further Theology of Spiritual Life 2*, # 8.01.1, Translated by David Burke, 1971.

\(^\text{47}\) Karl Rahner in *Theological Investigations*, VIII. Further Theology of the Spiritual Life 2, #8.01.1, stated this problem and furthermore gave the most important reason according to him, of this dwelling as 'the experience of the silent of God in our time, perhaps it is because our own dead seem so removed. They seem to disappear along with the holy men and women of past ages into God, so incomprehensible, remote, and silent. While before, we used to think of them as still living among us. 'This raises the problem of how the veneration of saints is reconcilable with the adoration of God. Further serious questions surround the intercession of saints as well as the honor due them.

\(^\text{48}\) E. Lamirande, *What is Communion of Saints?* pp. 83 and 104.
to # 948) and Communion in spiritual goods (# 949 to #953) and section two, Communion of the Church and Heaven and Earth (# 954 to #959). As a conclusion, in a summarized form, #960 to #962 recapitulated some main ideas.

1) Communion of persons in the Church and in Christ.

In a synthesis form, the first section, paragraph 5, ascertained:

“The communion of saints is the Church. (#946) Since all faithful from one body, the good of each is communicated to the others and that the Church is governed by one and the same Spirit, all the goods she has received necessarily become a common fund.” (# 947)

In # 948, it retains that the term of the communion of saints has two closely linked meanings: communion “in the holy things (sancta) and among holy persons (sancti)”. Moreover, the Church stresses “the fact that all those united to Christ are also united to one another. We participate in the treasury of riches with Christ with whom Christ has endowed His Church, communion of Spiritual Goods called (Sancta).”

From # 949 to # 953, the different types of spiritual goods are enumerated as the communion in spiritual goods.

2) The communion in Spiritual Goods

(1) Communion in the faith: What we believe is the faith of the Church,

received from the apostles and their successors. Faith is a 'pearl of great

49 The Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 949 - # 953. As an observation, by naming of the different types of Spiritual Goods, the Church expands the concept of 'holy things', which was emphasized previously only to the sacraments, other Spiritual nourishments are mentioned. In parallel with Lumen Gentium, the communion of spiritual goods has a special part in the catechism and more than the communion of persons.
price.’ (Cf. Mt. 13:45-46) that we share with one another.

(2) Communion of the sacraments: The merits of Christ’s saving work are communicated to members of His body through the sacraments, beginning with the waters of Baptism and culminating in the Eucharist, which signifies and brings about unity in Christ.

(3) Communion of charisma: The Holy Spirit distributes special graces to all the faithful for the building up of the church.

(4) Communion of worldly goods: Christian should be ready and eager to come to the aid of those in need, recognizing that the goods of the earth are intended for the entire human family.

(5) Communion in charity: Since we are really united with our brothers and sisters in Christ, the least of our acts done in charity strengthen our communion, just as every sin harms the communion. “If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.”

3) The Communion of the Church of Heaven and on Earth

In six articles, the Catechism of the Church wants to emphasize that the communion exists in the three stages of the Church. First, those who are pilgrims on earth; second, they are those who have died and are still being purified, and thirdly, those who are in glory, contemplating ‘in full light, God Himself triune and one’. (# 954) These articles
took their main sources from *Lumen Gentium* #49, #50 and #51, as seen previously.

However, articles 3955 to #959 bring out the importance of prayers as a sharing of spiritual goods such as intercessory prayers of saints, prayer for the dead and prayer to one another. The communion of saints (#957) and (#959) remain us that it is ‘a Christians communion among our fellow pilgrims.’ (#957) And that ‘all of us who are sons of God and form one family in Christ.’ (#959) In addition, article (#1022) mentioned the final judgment:

> “Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the Very moment particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either immediate entrance into the blessedness of heaven through purification, purgatory or immediate and everlasting damnation, and hell.”

The following articles summarized the important ideas of the communion of saints in triple relationships: communion of persons, communion of spiritual goods and communion with those who have died.  

#960: The Church is a “communion of saints”: this expression refers first the holy things (*sancta*), above all the Eucharist, by which the unity of believers, who form one body of Christ, is both represented and brought about. (LG #3).

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50 Luis Gutheinz, S.J., in his book *Christian Anthropology-Man, [Heaven-Earth-Man serie], Kuangchi Press*, 1996, Chapter five, Part two defines “death as a transformation and a separation from time and space of life on earth, a person undergoes changes in five dimensions. Material and biological changes in space and its functions, which is before the transcendent shift in relationship with God takes place (face to face). The emphasis is not on the separation of body and soul.” pp. 331ff. On purgatory, he describes that “when a person dies, he/she faces God and changes take place. When he/she is not totally integrated in the relationship with God. There is a process of purification, experience of integration and hope to journey into a fulfillment. Hell is mainly created by the person himself/herself if the act is against the existence [life] itself. If a human person refuses the love relationship with God and creates interior confusion and pain in his/her being, this is hell.” pp.311ff. The researcher translated these texts from Chinese to into English.

# 961: The term “communion of saints” refers also to the communion of holy persons (sancti) in Christ’ who died for all’, so that what each one does so suffer in and for Christ bears fruit for all.

# 962: We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church and we believe that in this communion, the merciful love of God and his saints is always (attentive) to our prayers.

#1055 By virtue of the ‘communion of saints’ the church commends the dead to God’s mercy and offers them prayers, especially the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, on their behalf.

To conclude the study of the communion of saints in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, a chart illustrates the interrelationship of church members:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Communion of Saints</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church Triumphant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saints in heaven</td>
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<td>help</td>
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<td>members on the earth</td>
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<td>and</td>
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<td>those in purgatory</td>
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Summary: At this point, it will be helpful to make some observations on the meaning of the communion of saints in Church documents and the challenges given to the contemporary world. The Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints as seen in the Church documents, *Lumen Gentium and Catechism of the Catholic Church* is only for the members of the Church, those who are baptized, graced by God, and redeemed in Christ through the Holy Spirit. What is the current theological explanation of heaven, hell, limbo, and purgatory?\(^{52}\) Are these deceased persons in communion or not with the Christ, if not with the Church? Where are our ancestors who are not baptized? What are the differences between ancestor veneration and the communion of saints? What and how can the Catholic offer to these existential questions? These basic human existential questions are in many hearts and minds. Part three will uncover some salient points in the Church documents since Vatican II and present some responses from the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences. Some reflections will conclude this chapter and pathways to continue our research on the place of Mary in the communion of saints and ancestor veneration.

III. Church documents regarding salvation for non-Christians.

Let me start this section relating a noble gesture that Pope John Paul II had done on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the arrival in Beijing (1582-1982) of the great missionary and scientist Mateo Ricci, S.J., (known as Li Madou to the Chinese); where Pope John Paul II gave a message called 'His merit lay above all in the Realm of Inculturation.' Rome, October 25, 2001.53 Some extracts from the message of John Paul II are still relevant today, and they deserve some considerations in our research regarding salvation for Chinese non-Christian ancestors. Two reasons are: the object of Matteo Ricci’s friendship was with the Chinese people, and it was during Matteo Ricci’s time that the so-called Chinese Rites of Controversy occurred. By focusing Matteo Ricci’s main contributions to Chinese people and to the Catholic Church, we enter into the raison d’etre of this section. What can the Catholic Church offer to the Catholic Chinese regarding the question of their non-Christian ancestors?

The theme “Encounters and Dialogues” was chosen to commemorate the 400th arrival of Matteo Ricci in Beijing with reference to the cultural exchange between China and the West at the end of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1643) and the beginning of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), and attention of the meeting was directed to the singular work of Matteo Ricci in China, Treatise on Friendship, Nanking 1595, where Ricci talked

about his friendship with the Chinese people including the cultural Chinese Rites of ancestors.

In his letter, John Paul II praised Matteo Ricci by answering the question, “What can Matteo Ricci offer to the Chinese nation and to the Catholic Church, to both of which he fell ever deeply bound and by which he was and is sincerely valued and loved? According to John Paul II, one aspect that makes Matteo Ricci’s work in China original and enduringly relevant is the deep empathy which he cultivated first from the history, culture and tradition of the Chinese people. (Treaties on Friendship, 1595)

``From his first contact with the Chinese Fr. Ricci based his entire scientific and apostolic methodology upon two pillars, to which he remained faithful until his death, despite many difficulties, and misunderstandings, both internal and external, First, Chinese neophytes in embracing Christianity, did not in any way have to renounce loyalty to his country; second, the Christian revelation of the mystery of God in no way has destroyed but in fact enriched and complemented everything beautiful, good, just, and holy, in what it had been produced and handed down by the ancient Chinese tradition.”

John Paul II continued his letter by acknowledging that China and the Catholic Church “are certainly different but not in opposition to one another.” (p.2) He called these two entities “ the most ancient institutions in existence and operating on the world scene, both, though in different domains-one in the political and social, the other in the religious and spiritual—encompass more than a thousand million sons and daughters…” (p.2)

54 John Paul II,” His Merit lays” p. 2
John Paul II’s gesture of repentance and sorrow by asking forgiveness for the

“unfortunate fact that the members of the Church in China was not always without error, the bitter fruit of their personal limitations and the limits of their action nor were the theological disputes which caused bad feelings and created difficulties to preach the Gospel. The Church should not be afraid of historical truth, and she is ready, with deeply felt-pain, to admit the responsibility of her children. This is also true with regard to her relationship, past and present, with the Chinese people. Historical truth must be sought serenely, with impartiality and in its entirety.” (p.3)

Lastly, Pope John Paul II commissioned an important task to be undertaken by scholars who are particularly well versed in Chinese realities, can also contribute. To this mandate, we shall continue to search for ways of bringing the Gospel to Asian people in general and the Chinese in particular. Through Church documents some ‘signs of hope’ and ‘challenges’ about salvation for Chinese non-Christians will be drawn. Secondly, focusing on FABC’s responses, we shall promote a deeper dialogue with our Chinese non-Christian brothers and sisters in Taiwan and in Asia.

1. Some Church documents:

1) *Ecclesiam Suam*, October 1963

During the papacy of Pope Paul VI, French theology on reality and salvation as a dialogical process was one of the main agenda of discussion. With the intention to foster the concept of dialogue, in 1963, Pope Paul VI wrote the encyclical letter of *Ecclesiam Suam*. He started the document by recalling the dialogical process of salvation, between God and humanity.
"The fatherly and holy conversation between God and man, interrupted by original sin, had been marvelously resumed in the course of history. The history of salvation narrates exactly this long and changing dialogue which begins with God and brings man a many splendored conversation. It is in this conversation of Christ among man that God allows us to understand something of himself, the mystery of His life, unique in its essence, Trinitarian in its persons; and He tells us finally how He wishes to be known: He is Love; how he wishes to be honored and served by us; Love is our supreme commandment. The dialogue thus takes on full meaning and offers ground for confidence. The child (humanity) is invited to do it; the mystics finds a full outlet in it." (# 44 ff)

The document continues to spell out what are the main characteristics of the dialogue of salvation. It is “that the Triune God has offered to us and established with us, if we are to understand the relationship which we in the Church should strive to establish and to foster with the human race.” (#71) The dialogue of salvation was opened spontaneously on the initiative of God: ‘He loved us first.’ (#45) The dialogue of salvation began with charity, with the divine goodness: ‘God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son.’ (#46) The dialogue of salvation is not proportioned to the merits of those toward whom it was directed, or to the results which would achieve or fail to achieve: ‘those who are healthy need no physician.’ (# 47) The dialogue of salvation did not physically force anyone to accept it; it was a tremendous appeal of love … (#50) The dialogue of salvation was made accessible to all; it is destined for all without distinction…. universal, all embracing and capable of including all, excepting only one who would either absolutely reject it or insincerely pretend to accept it. (#51) The dialogue of salvation normally experienced a gradual development, successive advances, and humble beginnings before the complete success. (# 52)

2) Lumen Gentium 1965

Previously, we had studied this document in relation to the topic of communion ecclesiology. Lumen Gentium also mentioned some important guidelines on
salvation to non-Christians. In number six, a narration began with how in the Hebrew Scriptures, God called the chosen people. He fulfilled His promise in the New Testament by sending His only Son, Jesus ‘born according to the flesh.’ God’s plan of salvation is not far distance from those who ‘in the shadows and images seek the unknown God’, those who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of their conscience, or to live a good life. (#16) Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel, the seed of revelation.

3) *Gaudium et Spes* 1965

“There are many ties between the message of salvation and human culture. For God, revealing Himself to His people to the extent of a full manifestation of Himself in His Incarnate Son, has spoken according to the culture proper to each epoch.” (#58)

But at the same time, “the Church, sent to all peoples of every time and place, is not bound exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, any particular way of life, or any customary way of life, recent or ancient. Faithful to her own tradition and at the same time conscious of her universal mission, she can enter into communion with the various civilizations, to their enrichment and the enrichment of the Church herself.” (#58) “The Gospel of Christ constantly renews the life and culture of fallen man, it combats and removes the errors and evils resulting from the permanent allurement of sin. It never ceases to purify and elevate the morality of peoples. By riches from above, it strengthens, perfects, and restores them in Christ.” (#6& #7)
4) *Ad Gentes* 1965

To continue on the same ideas on the functions of the Gospel of Christ, this document gives more specifications on the missionary activities of the Church:

"whatever is good is found to be sown in the hearts and minds of men, or in the rites and cultures peculiar to various peoples, not only is not lost, but is healed, uplifted, and perfected for the glory of God." (#24). Thus, "the missionary activity tends onward eschatological fullness." (#25) For by it, the people of God is increased to that measure and time which the Father has fixed in His power. (Acts 1:17) To this people it was said in prophecy: "Enlarge the space for your tent, and spread out your tent cloths unsparingly." (Is.54: 2).

By missionary activity, the mystical body grows to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph.4: 13); the spiritual temple, where God is adored in spirit and in truth (Jn.4: 23), grows and is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ, Jesus Himself being the supreme corner stone (Eph. 2:20).

5. *Nostra Aetate* 1965

This document from the perspective of Church history is said to be "the first time an Ecumenical Council has expressed such an approach to the other great faiths
of the world.” Explicitly this document has some sections that deal with the question of salvation for non-Christian religions.

“In our day, when people are drawing more closely together and the bonds of friendship between different peoples are being strengthened, the church examines more carefully the relations with non-Christian religions.” (#11) “Humanity forms but one community. This is so because all stem from one stock which God created to people the entire earth and also because all share a common destiny, namely God; His providence, evident goodness, and saving designs extend to all humankind (Cf. Wisdom 8:1; Acts 14:17; Rom 2:6-7; I Tim 2:4) against the day when the elect are gathered together in the holy city which is illumined by the glory of God, and in whose splendor all peoples will walk. (Apoc 21:23 ff)”

Furthermore, Nostra Aetate empathized with some basic existential questions raised by human beings. “What is humanity? What is the beginning and the purpose of life? What is upright behavior, and what is sinful? Where does suffering originate, and what end does it serve? How can genuine happiness be found? What is death? What is judgment? What reward follows death? And finally, what is the ultimate mystery, beyond human explanation, which embraces our entire existence, from which we take our origin and towards which we tend? “(#1.b)

Nostra Aetate recognizes that

“there is found among different peoples a certain awareness of a hidden power, which lies behind the course of nature and the events of human life. At times, there is present even a recognition of a supreme being, or still more a father. The awareness and recognition result in a way of life that is imbued with deep religious sense. The religions which are found in more advanced civilizations, endeavor by a way of well-defined concepts and exact language to answer these questions. They seek to be released from the trials of the present life by ascetical practices, profound meditation and recourse to God in confidence

and love. Buddhism in its various forms testifies to the essentials inadequacy of this changing world. It proposes a way of life by which people can, with confidence and trust, attain a state of perfect liberation and reach supreme illumination the through their own efforts or with divine help other religions (such as Confucianism and Daoism) which are found throughout the world attempt in different ways to overcome the restlessness of people’s hearts by outlining a program of life covering doctrine, moral precepts, and sacred rites.” (#2)

The Catholic Church “rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. It has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways form its own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women. Yet, it proclaims and is duty bound to proclaim without fail, Christ who is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6). In Him, in whom God reconciled all things to himself (II Cor 8-19), people find the fullness of their religious life. The Church, therefore urges its sons and daughters to enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions. Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, acknowledge, preserve, and encourage the spiritual and moral truths among the non-Christians; together with their social life and culture.” (#2)

6) Dominus Jesus, 2000

While taking into account what the Vatican II documents’ declared on the relation of the Church to the non-Christians, (see above references) and considering the values of these religions witness to and offer humanity, with an open and positive approach, this documents gives some points of caution, such as that the ‘practice of inter-religious dialogue certainly does not replace, but rather accompanies the mission ad gentes, directed toward that “mystery of unity, from which it follows that all men and women who are saved share, though differently, in the same mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ through his spirit.”(#5)
The Church’s constant missionary proclamation is endangered today by relativistic theories. By definition, relativistic theories seek to justify religious pluralism, not only *de facto* but also *de iure* (principle). As a consequence, it is held that certain truths have been superseded, for example, the definitive and complete character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the nature of Christian faith as compared with that of belief in other religions, the inspired nature of the books of Sacred Scripture, the personal unity between the Eternal Word and Jesus of Nazareth, the unity of the economy of the Incarnate Word and the Holy Spirit, the unicity and universality of Jesus Christ, the universal salvific mediation of the Church, while recognizing the distinction of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Christ, and the subsistence of the one Church in the Catholic Church. In brief, this document gives an important distinction between elements of salvation and the fullness of salvation in Catholic Church’s teaching ‘unicity and uniqueness of Salvation in Jesus Christ’.

2. Reception of Church Documents by Asian Churches: *Ecclesia in Asia* 1999

Some theologians considered that Vatican II is the starting point of a renewal which is an on-going process, characterized by growth and development. Life in general and that of the Church did not stop with Vatican II. Pope John Paul II set out a program for the Church to welcome the third millennium of Christianity, through

56 Edmund Chia is one among Asian theologians who commented on the Vatican II’s documents in *FABC Paper # 92 a. at the Seventh Plenary Assembly: Workshop Discussion Guide,"* Interreligious Dialogue in Pursuit of Fullness of Life in Asia”, Samphran, Thailand, January 3-12, 2000, p. 4
an Apostolic Letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveiente*. The program was centered on the challenges of the new evangelization and to plan for holding continental synods so that Bishops could address the question of evangelization according to the particular situation and needs of each continent. John Paul II saw that “the issue of the encounter of Christianity with ancient local cultures and religions is a pressing one. This is a great challenge for evangelization, since religious systems such as Buddhism or Hinduism have a clearly soteriological character. It is indeed a mystery why the Savior of the world, born in Asia, has until now remained largely unknown to the people of Asia continent.”57 The theme chosen for a Special Assembly of Asia of the Synod of Bishops was ‘Jesus Christ the Savior and his Mission of Love and Service’ in 1998. In November 1999 the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* of John Paul II was published. This document includes seven chapters, they contain the following titles: Chapter I: The Asian Context; Chapter II: Jesus the Savior: A Gift to Asia; Chapter III: The Holy Spirit: Lord and Giver of Life; Chapter IV: Jesus the Savior: Proclaiming the Gift: Chapter V: Communion and Dialogue For Mission; Chapter VI: The Service of Human Promotion Chapter VII: Witnesses of the Gospel.

As a reception on the topics related to salvation for non-Christians, this document says:

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"Risen from the dead, Jesus Christ is present to all and to the whole of creation in a new and mysterious way. In him, authentic values of all religious and cultural traditions, such as mercy and submission to the Will of God, compassion and rectitude, non-violence and righteousness, filial piety and harmony with creation find their fullness and realization. From the first moment of time to its end, Jesus is the one Universal Mediator, even for those who do not explicitly profess faith in him as the Savior, salvation comes as a grace from Jesus Christ through the communication of the Holy Spirit." (Chapter II, #14 a)

In addition to this statement, *Ecclesia in Asia* professes the uniqueness and universality of salvation in Jesus as ‘true man and true God and is the one Savior because He alone the Son accomplished the Father’s universal plan of Salvation.

As a definite manifestation of the mystery of Father’s love for all, Jesus is indeed, the only Savior and “it is precisely this uniqueness of Christ which gives him an absolute and universal significance, whereby, while belonging to history, he remains history’s centre and goal.” (Cf. #14 b.).

Contemplating Jesus in his human nature, the people of Asia find their deepest questions answered, their hopes fulfilled, their dignity uplifted and their despair conquered. Jesus is the Good News for men and women of every time and place in their search for the meaning of existence and for the truth of their own humanity. (Cf #14 c)

3. FABC’s Foundation, Mission and Theological Thrust

After Vatican II, the Church in Asia moved on and established a forum known as the Federation of the Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC). This section will
introduce this institute and its mission. With thirty years of existence (1993-2205) FABC has its ecclesial authority and confidence from the people of Asia and in particular the local churches in Asia.

1) FABC’s Foundation and mission:

Foundation:

The institution of the FABC started with the Second Vatican Council. It was during this period (1963-65) that many Asian bishops were meeting one another for the first time, the Asian bishops realized that they had more contact with bishops from Europe than those from Asia. In the midst of staying together and sharing mutual concerns, the Asian bishops began to talk about the need for a structure which would enable them to have more interactions amongst bishops across Asia. Thus, at its foundation at the Asian Bishops’ Meeting (ABM) with the visit of Pope Paul VI in Manila, Philippines (1970), the Asian bishops acknowledged that Asia is a ‘continent of ancient and diverse cultures, religious, histories, and traditions, as well as region of material poverty’

In November 1972, the name was changed from ABM (Asian Bishops Meeting) to FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops Conference) and at the same time its proposed structures and draft Statutes were approved. The
The statutes of the FABC state that it is a 'voluntary association of episcopate conferences in South, Southeast, East and Central East Asia.'

The highest authority of the FABC is the general assemblies. The general orientations and foundational theological positions are presented in documents and later on elaborated and systematized. The Office of the Theological Concern is in charge to study specific theological issues and present them at the general assemblies. After a period of discussion, they are voted upon and thus, become FABC statements. Through seminars, consultations, and the like, the animation, information, and elaboration of these statements are the tasks of the various FABC offices. Among these statements, we shall give priority to those whose topics are about salvation for the non-Christians and deal with them as follows: God's Kingdom:

Goal of Evangelization

Mission:

The 2000 Plenary Assembly had, as its theme 'A Renewed Church in Asia: a Mission of Love and Service.' Deliberately held in the year of the jubilee, it is also followed by the presentation of the November 1999 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Asia. Hence, during the seventh Plenary Assembly FABC studied many concerns raised by this document.
Synthesizing in a statement, FABC Vll, part 111 had this to say: “for thirty years, as we have tried to reformulate our Christian identity in Asia, we have addressed different issues, one after the other: evangelization, inculturation, dialogue, the Asianness of the Church, justice, the option for the poor, etc. Today, after three decades, we no longer speak of such distinct issues. We are addressing present needs that are massive and increasingly complex. These issues are not separate topics to be discussed, but aspects of an integrated approach to our Mission of Love and Service. We need to act ‘integrally’. As we face the needs of the 21st century, we do so with Asian hearts, in solidarity with the poor and the marginalized, in union with all Christian brothers and sisters, and by joining hands with all men and women of Asia of many different faiths. Inculturation, dialogue, justice and the option for the poor are aspects of whatever we do. (FABC VII, part III)

By acting integrally, FABC V, General Assembly held in Bandung put into perspective the FABC approach to mission and evangelization in Asia. It synthesized all the previous concerns and issues and called for a totally “new way of being a Church”. Effectively, it signaled an end to a reductionistic and compartmentalized approach to mission and evangelization. By reductionistic approach, mission is understood from one or two perspectives, usually proclamation, or the mission ad gentes. Such an approach explicitly aims at bringing others to conversion to Christ and baptism into
the Church. While a compartmentalized approach has different programs, departments and offices engaging in different activities, and some of which may actually contradict or nullify the activities of another department. For example, the Office of Evangelization, might, in view of the need to generate enthusiasm for missionary activities, depreciate the need for interreligious dialogue. Whereas, an integral approach suggests the need that every component of evangelization (community, proclamation, service, witness, dialogue, and etc) is addressed simultaneously, and be regarded as complementary and mutually inclusive, rather than contradictory or mutually exclusive.58

2) FABC's Theological Thrust59:

(1) Contextualized Theology:

FABC begins most of its programs by looking at the contextual realities in view of discerning the Church's mission. It is also the very way the FABC engages in most of its theologizing efforts. The context is examined in view of postulating an appropriate theological response to the pastoral issues confronting the Church in Asia. This is but the contextualized approach to doing theology.

59 Cf. Edmund Chia gave a summary on the FABC Theological Thrust for the past 30 Years. In this research, we only include topics regarding salvation for non-Christians. For more information read Thirty Years of FABC: History, Foundation, Context and Theology, Published by FABC paper # 106, Hong Kong, (2003).
Here is an example where the First FABC Plenary Assembly Statement recognizes the context of Asia:

“that great religious tradition in Asia are significant and positive elements in the economy of God’s design and salvation. They recognize and respect profound spiritual and ethical meanings and values. Over many centuries they have been the treasury of the religious experiences of our ancestors, from which our contemporaries do not cease to draw light and strength. They have been and continue to be the authentic expression of the noblest longings of their hearts, and the whole of their contemplation and prayer. They have helped to give the histories and cultures of our nations.” (FABC I, art.14)

(2) The Spirit is at Work

Elsewhere, the FABC has affirmed that “it is an inescapable truth that God’s Spirit is to work in all religious traditions’ (Asian Bishops Institute of Inter-religious Dialogue, BIRA IV, art.7), because:’ It has been recognized since the time of the apostolic Church, and stated clearly again by the Second Vatican Council, that the Spirit of Christ is active outside the bounds of the visible Church. God’s saving grace is not limited to members of the Church but is offered to every person. His grace may lead some to accept baptism and enter the Church, but it can not be presumed that this must always be the case. His ways are mysterious and unfathomable, and no one can dictate the direction of His grace.” (BIRA 11.art.12)

(3) God’s Kingdom: Goal of Evangelization

A renewed sense of mission of FABC always takes the realities of Asia as
the point of departure. Therefore, two major experiences are the chief concerns: the religious and cultural plurality of the Asian people and the prevalence of massive poverty. FABC 1988 all Asian Conference on Evangelization posits that “the ultimate goal of evangelization is the ushering in and establishment of God’s Kingdom, namely God’s rule in the hearts and minds of our people. (FABC IV, 1988, art.5)

How exactly does the FABC understand of the Kingdom of God?

“Wherever men and women open themselves to the transcendent divine mystery which impinges upon them to go out of themselves in love and service of fellow humans, there the reign of God is at work.” (FABC V, art.29) Such a statement clearly discloses that the reign of God is the preoccupation of not only the Christians, but also of all peoples concerned about their relationship with the transcendent God as well as fellow human beings. The purpose of the Church’s proclaiming the message of Christ, which is the central mission, is to call all men and women to the values of the Kingdom of God. (FABC V, art.13) The orientation and focus on God and God’s kingdom is the paramount in the FABC’s theology of Christ.” (FABC V, art.10) It follows then that the Kingdom is a ‘universal reality, extending beyond the boundaries of the Church. (FABCV,art.30)
(4) Jesus Christ: Way to the Kingdom

While insisting on the universality of the Kingdom of God and its accessibility beyond the confines of the Church, the Asian bishops have also been insisting on the primacy of Christ and the Gospel to the Christian faith. "Christ alone, we believe, is for every man "the Way, the Truth and the Life, (Jn.14: 6). He who enlightens every man /woman who comes into the world (Jn1: 9). As far as the Asian bishops are concerned the centrality of Christ to Christian faith is beyond any doubt, even in multi-religious Asia. In 1999 Theological Consultation (TAC) expressed that: Jesus Christ, the Son of God made Man, is at the center of our Christian faith." (TAC art. 28) In an interreligious dialogue meeting (BIRA II, art.10), the Bishops prayed "God has spoken and continues to speak to humankind inviting them to actualized the Kingdom. This is God's Word, the eternal message, which God gives to all peoples at all, times. It was the Word made 'incarnate in Jesus, who announced the good news of God's reign in the world. And in this context, FABC I refers to Christ not only as the Christ of Christians but as 'Christ of the peoples of Asia' (FABC I, art.45) 60

Reflection and conclusion

60 Edmund Chia, Thirty Years of FABC, # 3.2.3 p.15.
Karl Rahner, after Vatican II, responded with many interviews. One of them was an interpretation on Vatican Council II where he said that the Church “appeared for the first time as world Church in a fully official way” the third historical moment “of the Church.” Karl Rahner showed how the Church has emerged as a world Church in three distinct periods of history. The first period is a period of Jewish Christianity centered in Jerusalem, the second period is a period of the Church in the Hellenistic, and then the European culture; the third period is what Rahner calls “the period in which the sphere of the Church’s life is in fact the entire world. Within these distinct periods, of Church history the Church is now making transition from the Christianity of Europe to a fully world religion and that this transition had occurred only once before when the Church made a transition from a Jewish Christianity to a Gentile Christianity. The documents of the Church, On the Missions (Ad Gentes) and On the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes) proclaim a universal and effective salvific will of God, which is limited only by the evil decision of human conscience and nothing else. This idea is important because it allows for a salvific revelation—faith even beyond the Christian revelatory word.

In the same Spirit that had inspired Vatican II, after a lengthy study on the Church documents regarding salvation for non-Christians, the researcher will offer some

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reflection: signs of hope, and some challenges.

1. From the study of the four documents: *Lumen Gentium, Gaudium et Spes, Ad Gentes* and *Nostra Aetate*, it was remarkable to see a great respect in the manner of dealing about salvation for non-Christian religions compared with the attitude that the statement of 'no salvation outside the Church.' There was also a change in the attitude of the Church compared to those of past missionaries who had adopted the attitude that non-Christians religions were simply the work of 'Satan', so the main missionary activities was to convert their doctrines as errors to the knowledge of truth (as in the case of the Chinese Rites Controversy). Moreover, the Church documents mentioned the possibility or impossibility of salvation for non-Christians but, *Nostra Aetate* explicitly is a declaration about other religions.

2. In the development of Church documents, *Lumen Gentium* spoke about salvation in relation with the Church and the Gospel: for those 'those who have not yet received the gospel are related in various ways to the People of God.' (LG#16) The Church affirmed that 'those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by

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grace, through the dictates of conscience, and whatever good and truth
found in them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation.

Furthermore, *Lumen Gentium* text goes on saying ‘that whatever lies in
the hearts and minds of the people and in the religious practices and
cultures is not only saved from destruction but also is healed, ennobled,
and perfected to the glory of God.’ Hence, in reading the texts of *Lumen
Gentium* regarding the Church’s view about other religions, one might
find them rather cautious and with sentiment of respect (LG. #16-17),

*Nostra Aetate* definitely expressed the same reality rather consciously
(NA # 2).

3. Regarding the inter-religious dialogue mandated by the Church, there can
be two main attitudes. First, if the Church perceives the other religions as
demoniac and in error or false, hers would be an attitude which seeks to
conquer, dominate, and replace. Second, if the Church perceives the other
religions as true, partially or without the fullness of that Truth, then hers
would be an attitude which seeks to heal, fulfill, enlighten, purify, and
ennoble.

4. After thirty years of history, FABC’s orientation moved Christocentric to
theocentric or as reign-kingdom centered. Reign–Kingdom of God is
also the response of FABC to the questions posed on human existence.

"The Asian Churches explained that all religions are destined to be visible signs of the presence of the Reign of God. One may ask a question, does the shift of the Reign-kingdom centered from that of the Church-centered entails a change in theological concept of salvation? That is to say, from the preoccupation that the church is a necessary factor for salvation to include the concept that non-Christian religions also bring about salvation to the people on earth?"63

As a conclusion, the researcher found that salvation for non-Christian religions in Catholic teaching remains an open-ended question, which needs more serious thinking, dialogue, and discernment in the Spirit. The sign of hope is in the recognition that non-Christian religions have elements of salvation in Jesus Christ. At last, the Catholic Church at Vatican II and since, especially in Asia, Taiwan included, is talking and dealing about salvation of non-Christians with much respect and in a positive manner.

IV. General Conclusion

In this chapter, we had studied the close relationship between the communion-ecclesiology (as a Church model) and communion of saints (as a group)

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63 Edmund Chia, Thirty Years of FABC, #3. p.18
and realized that Church documents had a commonality that is when they spoke about
the communion of saints they referred to the communion of persons (baptized) and
the communion of goods. We then ask what can the Church offer to other religions?
We had recourse to Church documents and Asian theologians for clarification and
found some positive opinions regarding salvation for non-Christian religions, such as
elements of salvation and the theology of Reign-kingdom, while the Church asserts
the unicity and uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the One Savior of the world.

Finally, it was observed that the theoretical silence of theology on the communion of
saints since Vatican II, may have caused the decrease in the devotion to the saints. 64

Still, the Church keeps the memory of the saints in the communion of persons and
sharing of good things. The prayer said on All Saints Day summarizes the theology of
the communion of saint in a nutshell.

Almighty God, You have knit together your elect into one communion and
fellowship in the mystical body of your Son, Christ, our Lord. Give us grace so
to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living. That we may come
to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and

64 Theoretically, the lack of an integrated approach is noted with regret by Paul Molinari, Saints, Their
Place in the Church, trans. by Dominic Maruca (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965),
8,32-35,232,n.173, R. Laurentin analyzes the devotion of saints as ‘no longer universal even
declining in Western region’. In La Vierge au Concile (Paris: Lethielleux, 1965) 21-22. Elizabeth
Johnson in her book Friends of God and Prophets: A Feminist Theological Reading of the
Communion of Saints ‘Novale, Ottawa, (1998), Chapter I named the communion of saints as a
‘Sleeping Symbol’. She says “in almost interesting twist of history, this theoretical silence of
traditional theology is now marked by an absence of traditional, existentially felt devotion to saints
in advanced industrialized culture, a situation that also shapes our quest” Laurence Cunningham puts
this absence in an interrogation “How is it, he goes on to wonder, we have come to ignore the saints
just when renewed interest in spirituality and the role of story theology is on the rise?” The Meaning
reigns, one god, in glory everlasting. (Collect for all Saints, BCP, 1979)

One field of study that remain to challenge this research is the role of Mary among the saints in cross-culture perspective that is to find some resemblances between Christianity’s holy persons (saints) and ancestors in other Chinese religions. The next chapter will elaborate on the study of Mary, a saint most venerated, in the communion of saints, in order to discover some criteria that will serve to link Mary in the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints.
Chapter V

Mary's Place in the Communion of Saints

Introduction

The previous chapter on communion-ecclesiology and the communion of saints showed the category of communion that links these two concepts. The teaching of the Church documents indicated that in the communion of saints, there is a communion among the members of the Church and a sharing of goods. Likewise, the living members of the Church also enter into a communion with the deceased members. A deeper study on some Church documents on salvation for non-Christians pointed out some positive elements for a dialogue. Subsequently, responses from the Asian Churches and in particular, the Federation of the Asian Bishops Conferences helped us to understand better what the Catholic Church can offer to Asian people. The Catholic Church proclaimed where seeds of the Gospel are founded, Jesus Christ is present and waiting to be in full communion.

In earlier chapters, we had developed the Chinese concept of ancestor veneration and saw that there are some similarities and differences with the communion of saints. Moving ahead in our research, this chapter will unfold Mary's place in the communion of saints. How can Mary be a bridge between communion of saints and
Chinese ancestor veneration? This chapter will present the teachings of the Catholic church regarding Mary in the communion of saints before and after Vatican II. In highlighting some important Marian themes, this will lead us to understanding some recent developments in Mariology. The maternal presence of Mary as shown by John Paul II and companionship model of Elizabeth Johnson can assist us to honor Mary in the communion of saints and in ancestor veneration.

A chronological study of some important Mariological Ecumenical Congresses, meetings, and dialogues regarding Mary and the communion of saints will enrich our study and call us into a conversion. They are the development of different Marian congresses, meetings, and dialogues between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church; the Group of Dombes; the Roman Church and the Anglican Church; and other recent Protestant literature. The framework of this chapter is as follows:

I. The Catholic teaching about Mary in the communion of saints:

1. The Theological development of Mary in the communion of saints before Vatican II.

   1.1 Scripture

   1.2 Early Tradition

2. Mary in the communion of saints since Vatican II.

   2.1 The foundation of Mary’s faith and her relationship with the Trinity:
Mary is the chosen one.

2.2 Mary in the family of Jesus: she is a Jewish woman, virgin, daughter, wife, and mother.

2.3 Mary in the Church of believers: companionship in holiness and eternal life: sister in faith.

2.4 Mary’s Assumption in relation to eschatology.

2.5 Mary in the human family and in the cosmic world: her maternal presence.

II. A chronological study about Mary and the communion of saints in different Ecumenical Mariological Meetings/ Congresses:

1. The International Ecumenical Mariological Congresses.

2. The Roman Catholic and the Lutheran Church Dialogue.

3. The Group of Dombes.

4. The Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church.

5. Some recent Protestant literatures.

III. General Conclusion:

I. The Catholic teaching about Mary in the communion of saints.

1. The Theological development of Mary in the communion of saints before
Vatican II.

"While there are thousands of studies on the Immaculate Conception, Mary Mediatrix, Mary Co-redemption, the Assumption, and Our lady's other privileges, the theme of Mary in the communion of saints has been sadly neglected by Catholic mariologists." This is a comment coming from one of the well-known Mariologists, Rene Laurentin.

According to him,

"although, the relationship of Mary with the communion of saints is not the ground-base par excellence compared to Mary's maternal relationship with Christ, which must have the price of pride, one should not forget that Mary's relationship with God is shared with us also. To isolate the Mother of God from all Christians and from the plan of salvation would be to falsify the part she plays. (Lk 1: 28-38) By so doing would snatch her away from solidarity with the human race and solidarity within the economy of grace. Any such separation would carry with it the risk of setting her up as goddess or an idol. Nor is this risk a figment of the imagination." 1

In brief, before Vatican II, a presentation on the theological teaching of the Church on Mary in the communion of saints will assist us to understand where and how some of its abuses and weaknesses came about. We shall approach this subject in two ways: first from the Scripture, and secondly, from early tradition.

1.1 Scripture

The Scripture and early tradition of the Church always portrayed Mary, the mother of Jesus, in relation with Christ, that is to say that the relationship is not a personal, individualistic one but a community oriented one. The stress is laid not on the privileges Mary enjoyed but on her participation, her sharing; not on the monopoly right to exceptional treatment but on ‘communion with the faithful.’ The formative text of the New Testament is in Acts 1:14. This passage recorded Mary’s presence within the first Christian community made up from those who waited in Jerusalem for the first Christian Pentecost.

“All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.”

(Acts 1: 14)

Scripture scholars say that the first experiment, living in communion, fellowship, is expressed in words loaded with meaning such as:

1) *Pantes*, all, at once, evokes the idea of unanimity.

2) *Proscarterountes* conveys the group’s perseverance.

3) *Homothymadon* expands the idea of unanimity. That word *homothymadon*, used again in Acts 2:46; 24:5,12, etc., is formed from the prefix homo which clearly conveys homogeneity, conntnaturalness, and
thymes which places the communion, fellowship at the level of the breath, heart, and life. This is in line with Greek trilogy: *nous, thymos, and epithymia.*

There are two themes that are significant in Acts of the Apostles: Mary is linked with other women, introduced as one of them, by means of the preposition *syn* (with), which denotes union, gathering, and synthesis, and the theme of communion, fellowship (*Kiononia*). Communion keeps returning like a leitmotiv, almost like a refrain in the first chapter of Acts: 2:42-44; 4:32-33; 5:12-16.

It was not until much later that iconography pictured Mary at the center of the group, sometimes, placing her in the raised position above the apostles. In rereading the New Testament text, Mary is allotted a humble place within the communion, fellowship, after the apostles but before the brethren of Jesus. Two remarks on the traditional roles of women helped us to understand Mary’s place in the new community.

1) The synagogue was exclusively for men because they were circumcised, the sign of belonging to the old covenant people, while women were excluded. But, because of baptism that is the sign of new belonging of the new people of God, Mary and other women formed an integral part.

2) The mother and the brethren of Jesus are united with the apostles who are witnesses of the resurrection. By virtue of faith, they are united

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2 Rene Laurentin, "Mary and the Communion of Saints," pp. 3-4
not by virtue of blood line or dynasty privilege.³

There are other texts where the perspective of communion, fellowship is found. For example in the Gospel of John, where Mary is portrayed as personifying the people of God, at the moment when that people becomes a messianic people, an eschatological people. This happened in the scene of Cana, Mary’s word to the servants, “Whatever he tells you, do it.” (Jn 2:6) is parallel to Exodus 19:8, “whatever the Lord has said, we will do it.” Moreover, at Cana, Mary turns to the servants in order that they may obey the words spoken by Jesus; this they do; and what they do bears fruit, not only in the miraculous transformation of the water to wine, an eschatological symbol, but also in the spread of faith. “This, the first signs, Jesus did and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.” (Jn 2:11)⁴

As a summary, in all of these texts, Mary is shown not only to be in solidarity with the Jewish people, the people of the poor, but also to personify the ideal, of a communion and communication in Jesus Christ.

1.2 Early Tradition:

In the Roman Canon Mary is commemorated in terms of communion, as the very first word shows, the key word in this prayer: Communicantes et

⁴ R. Laurentin, “Mary and the Communion of Saints,” p.13
memoriam venerantes; in primis gloriosae semper Virginis Mariae
Genericis Dei et Domini nostril Jesu Christi.  

This ancient prayer is recorded at the end of the fifth century at the time of Saint Leo the First (440-461). It is borrowed from the Eastern liturgies, where it is found from the beginning of the fourth century. The idea of communion expressed in the communicantes was especially striking, since it extended the meaning of Roman 12:13, which “called upon believers to contribute to the needs of the saints on earth so as to convey the communion with the saints in heaven.”

From the study of this ancient prayer in the Roman Canon, Laurentin further made a deep and mature reflection of this prayer related to the two spiritual themes of the time.

1) In the tradition of John’s gospel and that of Luke, (Jn 1: 13) there is a parallel between the birth of Jesus in Mary and the birth of Jesus in the heart of every believer. “Mary conceived in her heart before in her body” (St. Augustine). This saying demonstrated what is in common between Mary’s faith and the faith of the believers throughout the community: the faith which conceives Christ and gives birth to Him down the ages.

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5 R. Laurentin, pp 13-14.
2) Mary as the second Eve is an ancient theme which implies a similar juxtaposition of Mary and the Church. Mary and every other Christians, from the angle of communion is in and with Christ.\(^6\)

Since scripture and tradition proved that the Communion of saints is the setting in which Mary is placed, how did her profile change? Laurentin explained, "this occurred because the evangelists view was replaced by the hierarchical view. Instead of meditating on the spiritual riches which Mary's humble participation brought the People of God, some mariologists sought to set her at the 'apex of the pyramid.' For example, on the throne from which she surveyed all other Christians with queenly dignity: less and less one of them and with them but more and more opposite and apart from them. Undue stress was laid on her difference, her uniqueness and her great privilege God had granted her; and this sometimes resulted in a serious obscuring of the fact that, from the very beginning, Mary drew on the same source of grace as every other Christian: her Lord, who is also the Lord of the believers."\(^7\)

2. Mary in the Communion of saints since Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council reacted against abuses of hierarchical forms and thought-forms; it did so by restoring the communion of saints to its rightful place in

\(^{6}\) R. Laurentin, pp.13-14.

\(^{7}\) R. Laurentin, "Mary and the Communion of Saints," pp.12-16. For more information regarding the influences of the "Hierarchy concept in the Church".
the Church’s teaching. The Church is a communion, a fellowship, and a community sharing the life of God. In the same perspective regarding Mary, the 8th Chapter of *Lumen Gentium* is entitled “The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church.” In other words, the Council concentrated on the union and communion of Mary with Christ to describe her union with Christ, with the Church, and with all Christians. The Council used Mariology of privilege in a sense that privileges are bound up with Mary’s functions and are always to be seen in relation to Christ, and Mariology of sharing of grace is not exclusive but exemplary since all Christians are invited to share in the mediation which Christ continues to effect in and through his Body, which is the Church.8

From the documents of Vatican II, Mary in the communion of saints is re-discovered as a person in relationship to the Triune God, with her Jewish family, with the people of God, with humanity and with the cosmos. The focal point is to contemplate Mary, and what the Church said about her. Some mariologists put more emphasis in her individuality, while others, analogically, see her as a corporate person.9 The theory of ‘corporate personality’ has two aspects: first, that the person in question primarily signifies certain individuals, for example, the royal head of the family, a king or a queen, insofar as that royal person includes the entire group within himself/herself as

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8 Rene Laurentin, pp30-34
the royal family. Secondly, a corporate personality means that the community is summed up completely and concretely in one individual. Mary in this case, is the corporate person who represents the Israelite people, or she symbolizes the church. She is the corporate person towards the eschatology of God’s reign, in so far as she lives her life completely and perfectly in the companionship of saints in the mystery of the Assumption. An exploration of Mary’s maternal presence by John Paul II and model of companionship presented by Elizabeth Johnson led us to a better understanding of the different expressions of Mary’s mediation and prayer in the communion of saints, which as a social dimension of holiness integrated in the theological, pastoral, and liturgical life of the Church.

2.1. The foundation of Mary’s faith and her relationship with the Trinity: she is a chosen one.

Mary, a historical woman, was chosen by God to be the Mother of Jesus. God communicated to her divine grace through Jesus Christ and preserved her from original sin in her Immaculate Conception. Throughout the centuries, the Church has affirmed that Mary is immaculate, full of grace, and was redeemed from the moment of her conception. The statement of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854 announces this mystery:

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10 Joseph Cahill, S.J., "Our Lady's Role in the Communion of Saints," pp.31-32.
“The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.”

She lives the mission and the tension of being a virgin and a mother, but there is total harmony in her response, ‘yes’, through the divine initiative. In fullness of grace, the Immaculate Conception is a mystery of God the Father who blessed Mary more than any other created person “in Christ with every spiritual blessing in heaven places” and chose her “in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love” (Eph 1:3-4). This is true to Mary, the overflowing measure of grace, and also to us, in the communion of saints.

Chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus, Mary was very much aware of this role when she asked the angel at the Annunciation: “How can this be, since I know no man”? (Luke 1:34) A gift freely given, to be the mother of Jesus, Mary’s virginity becomes a sincere gift for God, a free choice. Through the action of the Spirit, Mary’s decision is ‘one’ in communion with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Mary, the woman blessed among women is the “one closest to humankind because she is the one closest to the Triune God.”

“To be close and to be united with” are some synonymous expressions flowing from the concept of communion.

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2.2 Mary in the family of Jesus: she is a Jewish woman, virgin, daughter, wife

and mother.

Vatican II encouraged the act of anamnesis “to reverence the memory of Mary “(LG 52). The relationship between knowledge (theological) and memory through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is a form of prayer, a tradition used in the liturgical life of the Church. This section will recall the Jewishness of Mary by bringing out several Scripture passages: walking through the Jewish tradition in Mary’s family, her people and her faith. There is a link between Jesus, and the people of Israel, and Mary, because she is the mother of Jesus.

The Vatican II document, Dei Verbum (DV 5, 11, 14,) states “the revelation declares in prophecy that the preparation for the coming of the Messiah, born of the Virgin Mary (Son of Mary) strengthens the bond of the church to the Jewish people, the cultural rootedness of Mary and Jesus.” There is little data found in scripture on Mary’s life. We do not know much about details regarding her person, for example, her own personal likes, habits, and etc. It is also impossible to establish a chronology of Mary’s birth, her presence in the temple, and other activities. Mary of Nazareth is first mentioned as daughter of Joachim and Anna in the Proto-evangelium of St. James, 8, in the Gospel of St Matthew, 1:16, in the account of Jesus’ genealogy, “and to Jacob was born Joseph, the husband of Mary, a wife, by whom was born, Jesus, who is
called Christ.” And in the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians 4:4 “when the fullness of time has come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.”

Mary is from Galilee, lived in a village called Nazareth (Lk1: 26), and she is a virgin. (Lk 1: 27)

According to Jewish tradition, as a young girl, Mary would have received some education in the synagogue, such as the reading of the Torah and the prophets. She could have known the prayers. "Since Mary was born into Judaism, the Hebrew Scriptures were important to her both in her prayer and her mode of life as a woman of Nazareth.” At 12 years old a Jewish girl is considered to be of age and at about fourteen, a marriageable age, Mary was promised to Joseph. The time of betrothal generally lasted for a year. Presumably, the Annunciation occurred during this time. Indeed, at the Annunciation, Mary entrusted herself to God completely, with the full submission of will and intellect manifesting ‘the obedience faith’ (RM 13) to God who spoke to her through God’s messenger. She responded in faith including both a perfect collaboration with the grace of God that precedes, assists, and opens to the action of the Spirit. She constantly brings faith to completion by God’s gift. Such is the faith of a Jewish woman; such is the greatest of Mary’s faith, a woman of great

14 In all the Epistles written by St. Paul, nowhere can we find the name of Mary. Yet, he calls her woman like the book of Genesis 3: 15. She is that woman who is present in the central salvific event, which marks the fullness of time; this event is realized in her and through her. To be born under the law means, for Jesus, that he was fully integrated into human condition in both time and place through his roots in the Jewish people. [MD 3]

Following the Annunciation Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, to render a charitable service. She is a woman of charity. This encounter had a tremendous effect on Zechariah's house. Elizabeth prophesized, the baby leapt in her womb, and the mute man of the house would eventually speak again. Mary's *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46ff) based on Hannah's song in I Sam, harmonizes with Zechariah's *Benedictus* (Lk 1:68ff) and reflects her deep roots in Jewish tradition as well as in the Hebrew Scriptures: God has done great things.

The Visitation is thus the point of departure for Mary's active journey of faith. With Jesus in her womb, she made this initial journey and prepared in joy for the mission of John the Precursor. The song of *Magnificat* continues to be a refrain of what had happened to Mary both in the Annunciation and in the Visitation. This is Mary's hymn of praise to God for the wonders that are being accomplished for Mary and for all God's people. As a daughter of Israel, Mary sang in unison with other Jewish women: Miriam, the sister of Moses, Hannah, and the mother of Samuel.

Matthew's gospel affirms the legitimacy of Jesus as a Jew, born of Jewish parents. Joseph is the lawful father of Jesus and has the responsibility of naming the child.

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17 Bertrand Buby developed these passages as "a link to what has preceded both in the canticle of Zechariah and what has follows in the Magnificat of Mary. It also unites the triad of Elizabeth, Zechariah, and John the Baptist with that of Mary, Joseph and Jesus. The fulfillment of the first covenant flows into the second covenant at the advent of the Messiah." (Cf. *Mary of Galilee*, Vol.1, 76)
Mary is the mother of this child and in an extraordinary way is mentioned in the genealogy from the Gospel of Matthew, along with Rahab, Tamar, Ruth, and Beersheba. Mary is the virgin Mother of the promised Messiah who is called Emmanuel, God with us. The gospel of Luke reminded us that Jesus was taken care by Mary and Joseph, and as Jews, the parents presented Jesus to the temple with a pair of turtledoves as prescribed by the Jewish law. (Lk 2:22-24)

The Holy family lived in Nazareth. Not much is known about their family life; but we know that Jesus and Mary were both under the care of Joseph and most likely lived a normal Jewish family life. Not much is known about Mary’s participation in Jesus’ public life, since Jewish women who were faithful to the law did not participate in public life. In Mark’s gospel, Mary is searching for Jesus (Mk3: 31) and is familiar with his whereabouts. This leads to the conclusion that Mary is then a widow.

In the gospel of John, the marriage in Cana (Jn 2) is understood in the light of another text, “His Mother stands near the cross of Jesus” (Jn19: 25) and hear Him say “woman, there is your son.” These two gospel scenes meant more than a filial duty of the Son to his Mother and the dying Jesus providing care for Mary. They symbolize

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19 Terms like woman and hour are essential to periscopes, Jn 12 and 19: 25-28a. Symbolism, flowing of the water, and the wine of Cana, and the blood and water flowing from Jesus’ side immediately after giving of the Mother of Jesus to the beloved disciple and the disciple to the Mother is a messianic interpretation. According to J. de la Potterie,” the Messianic context of Cana is an anticipation of the cross, in the Calvary. It cannot only be read simple at the level of Son’s filial duty to his Mother. In Patristic tradition it is expresses in relation with the Church as united with her heavenly Spouse for. The guests are gladdened by the water changed into wine.” (Cf. J. de la Potterie,The Hour of Jesus, Alba House, NY, 1990,p.108)
the new Israel, the new people of God, the mother of all, Jews and Gentiles. Mary, in the Gospel of John, is always the center of the community, either that of Israel at Cana or that of the Church, which begun on Calvary. Intimacy, love, and mutual sharing are present at the event at the foot of the Cross. Discipleship and belief in Jesus as the Messiah and the Revealer of God had begun in Cana through the sign of water made into wine, while on Calvary the sign is the continuing of love Jesus had for the disciples and his mother, now being theirs to share with each other.20

The last appearance of Mary is found in Acts 1:14. She is in the midst of the apostles in the upper room, praying and imploring the Holy Spirit to come. Mary is the witness to Jesus' years of infancy and hidden life at Nazareth. Through all the events she has kept all these while pondering them in her heart. It is an act of remembering.

The above citations on Mary are about her as an historical person, chosen and full of grace. Analogically, as a corporate person, there is a link between her and the people of Israel, and similar to the covenant established by Yahweh with His people. Mary, a woman of Israel becomes the daughter of Zion. (Lk 2:19; 2:51). She hears the cry of her people, her forefathers and foremothers, and her ancestors. She is chosen by God to make a covenant with humanity possible, as God did with Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Samson, and others. However, this time, in the fullness of time, God

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addresses to a woman: the virgin of Nazareth. God's new covenant is to be eternal and irrevocable. (MD.11)

As a woman of prayer, she prays for her people, *Magnificat*, (Lk2: 46 ff.), like the women in the Hebrew Scripture such as, Judith, 9:1-14; Esther 4:12-30; Susanna in Dn 13:42-43. The main themes of a Jewish prayer are divided into different parts:

1) The benediction that attributes to God divine magnitude and magnificence: the wonders that God has done for them and their people.

2) The personal experience of God's mercy in the Hebrew Scripture leads to faith in the protection that God offers to his people from generation to generation.

3) As a servant, anawim, handmaid of the Lord, metaphor of Israel, the people remember God in worship and in devotion, a reflection of God's mercy to others.

4) Mary, like the women in the Hebrew Scriptures, recognized her lowliness and poverty and thus, placed all trust in God.21 This type of prayer captures the spirit of the prophets and psalmists and resounded in the Jewish prayer in the first century.

The typical blessings of Jewish prayer, thanksgiving, and praise are within the framework of gratitude that is the foundation of all petitions. Compassion for the poor and the downtrodden are linked profoundly in the faith, an affirmation of God by the people of Israel.

Mary personifies the vocation of Zion-Jerusalem, which is a powerful symbol of holiness, security, salvation, and joy. Mary’s ‘yes’ answer is a covenantal response. Bertrand Buby further explains.

“Mary’s yes is seen both at the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38) and Cana (Jn 2: 1-11). In the light of the Hebrew texts about the covenant and the ‘yes’ of Israel, Mary’s response at the Annunciation and at Cana can be better understood. For the Annunciation narrative is analogous to the Sinai covenant. The ‘yes’ and the amen of Israel to God is the heart of the Old Testament message, Moses, the Mediator of God’s message, inaugurates Israel’s yes. (Ex 19:6b-8). Angel Gabriel is the Mediator like Moses was. Mary is called by a special name Kecharitomene or the one who has been found already graced or favored by God. In the promise made to her that a child is to be born who is the Holy One or Son of God, she will inherit a new house of Israel, the Church. This is similar to the promise made to David. (2 S 7:8-16) Mary’s fiat is like that of her people Israel: “Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and all your soul, with all your strength.” (Dt. 6: 5)²²

In summary, Mary of Nazareth in the New Testament is a prayerful, Jewish woman who follows the practices set by Jewish law and religion. Mary celebrates (Cana), she suffers lost of the child Jesus in the temple, she observes in Jesus’ preaching, “Who is my mother, my brother?” she prays the Magnificat. But above all, she treasures things in her heart and reflects on them. To understand Mary as a Jewish woman with a firm and deep relationship with her ancestors, the people of Israel and her rootedness in the Jewish religion is to remember her in the tradition and in the scriptures: a knowledge of her becomes an experience not only as intellect but as wisdom.

2.3 Mary in the Church of believers: companionship in holiness and in eternal life.

This section will first explore the meaning of the call to holiness in the Catholic

Church. Two church documents: *Redemptoris Mater* and *Marialis Cultus* will show how Mary is the Mother of the Faithful and the disciple of Jesus. The feminist perspective of naming Mary ‘truly our sister’\(^2\) is our companion and our guide to holiness and to an eternal life. The companionship model of the communion of the saints will be included in this section.

2.3.1 The Call to Holiness

In the communion of saints, sanctity (holiness) comes as a mission and a vocation to members of the Church. First, it is necessary to clarify the basic question about the call to holiness. Who are called and what are the means to attain this perfection of union with Christ? The call to holiness in the Catholic Church is constantly shown in the fruits of grace that the Spirit produces in the faithful. This is expressed in many ways by the individual, according to his/her own state of life, and tends to the perfection of love. *(LG 39)* It is clear that all Christians whatever their state of life is are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love. In order to reach this perfection, the faithful need to use the strength given to them by Christ’s gift, so that, following in his footsteps, being conformed to his image they do the will of God in everything. They may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus, the holiness of the people of God will


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grow in abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the life of so many saints. (LG 40 b.)

Commenting on these two sections in *Lumen Gentium 39 and 40*, Paul Molinari explains:

"One fact that emerges clearly in number 39 is the ontological and objective aspect of the Church’s holiness as well as its finality; the sanctity of the Church is not something which depends on the will of man/woman, but has its own theological, Trinitarian, Christological and ecclesial *raison d’etre*. Number 40 points out that Christians justified by faith in baptism are truly and radically holy. Thus, the ontological basis for holiness is laid down.”

Thus, the reality of Christian holiness and sanctification, which are the process of growth towards holiness, are developed in terms of our union with Christ in the Church. All the faithful are to be holy in their moral conduct because they must live in accordance with what they are in being and in doing, as members of the Church, which is ‘holy’.

"Furthermore, it can be said that God is ‘holy’, in virtue of God’s divine nature, God is holy in being and in acting. The humanity of Christ is ‘holy’ because it is hypostatically united to the Person of the Word of God; the Church is ‘holy’ because of the mediation of the Holy Spirit, it is united to Christ as his Mystical Body; human beings are ‘holy’ because, and in so far that they are, through the mediation of the Church, united to Christ by the Holy Spirit, and live his/her life both ontologically and morally.” (Cf., P. Molinari, p. 38)

There are manifold ways of living holiness (LG 41). Vatican Council II developed the theme of a common vocation to holiness and the duty of each one to strive towards it, according to his/her way of life. Taking into account the type of union with Christ proper to each, for example: the ordinary people, who are engaged in particular

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manual work; those who are weighed down by sickness; those who suffer persecution
for the sake of justice, etc, there are many who are striving to live a life according to
the Kingdom values, to follow Jesus.

During the Council discussion on the chapter relating to holiness there were some
debates to have a document dedicated to the Virgin Mary and another one to the saints.
There were some persons in the Council who thought that too much weight was being
given to Mariology. A vote was taken and it was decided to the insert a chapter on
Mary in *Lumen Gentium*. There was a difference of 50 votes out of a total of 2,000.
The same thing happened with the voting for the document of saints. Pope John XXIII
had requested that a special constitution be prepared on devotion to the saints, because
he was very concerned about the diminishing of the devotion to the saints. At the end,
the Council Fathers voted that a section on Mary be included in *Lumen Gentium*, it
was also decided to include the saints. From this historical account, one can draw an
interesting relationship between the devotion to Mary and the saints as the Church
understands the holiness of the Virgin Mary and the saints. Mary in the community of
saints accompany the believers in the church, the mystery of the Church, and that of
Christ.\(^{25}\)

2.3.2 Mary, Mother of the faithful and the Disciple of Christ: *Redemptoris Mater*

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\(^{25}\) An interview with Peter Gumpel S.J., *40 years after Lumen Gentium*, Zenith Vatican Website,
1) Mother of the Faithful *Redemptoris Mater* was published in the Marian Year proclaimed by Pope John Paul II in 1987. The aim of this Year was “to promote a new and a more careful reading of what the Council (1965) said about the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, in the Mystery of the Church and Christ”. It was to promote a doctrine of faith and also a life of faith and thus, a way of life, an authentic ‘Marian spirituality’ seen in the light of Catholic tradition and the exhortation of the Vatican Council II. (RM 49). The Sacred Scripture is the first source of knowledge about the Mother of the Redeemer. Life-lived out of faith based on Scripture, is the source of Marian spirituality. Whereas *Marialis Cultus* directed Christians to a correct devotion, that is to correct liturgical celebration and public expression of devotion based on doctrinal criteria, *Redemptoris Mater* aimed at formation of life based on doctrine, a Marian Spirituality. (RM1) The following is a brief survey pertaining to Mary, as the Mother of the faithful, in *Redemptoris Mater*: the Church venerates Mother of Christ as her beloved Mother. (RM 2) In the same faith, she discovered and accepted the other dimension of spiritual motherhood revealed by Jesus during this messianic mission. (RM 20). The Cana event

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outlines what is actually manifested as a new kind of motherhood according to
the Spirit and not just according to the flesh, that is to say Mary's solicitude for
human beings, her coming to them, in the wide variety of their wants and needs.

(RM 21)

A symbol value is this coming to them in aid of human needs means, at the same time,
bringing them to Christ's messianic mission and salvation. There is mediation: Mary
places herself between her Son and humankind in the reality of their wants, needs and
sufferings. She puts herself 'in the middle' that is to say she acts as a mediatrix not as
an outsider, but in the position as mother. (RM 21) This maternity of Mary in order of
grace will last without interruption until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. (RM 22,
38, 40, and 44)

If Mary's motherhood of the human race had already been outlined, now it is clearly
stated and established. (RM 23) In accordance with the eternal plan of Providence,
Mary's divine motherhood is to be poured out upon the Church, as indicated by
statements of tradition, according to which Mary's motherhood of the church is the
reflection and extension of her motherhood of the Son of God. (RM 24)

Jesus Christ prepared her ever more completely to become for all people their Mother
in the order of grace. (RM 39) With maternal love she cooperates in the birth and
development of the sons and daughters of Mother Church, cooperation with maternal
love. (RM 44) ‘Woman, behold your Son.’ They are words, which determine Mary’s place in Life of Christ’s disciples and they express as new motherhood. Mother of the Redeemer: a spiritual motherhood, born from the heart of the Paschal Mystery of the Redeemer of the world. (RM 44)

Her motherhood is particularly noted and experienced by the Christian people at the Sacred Banquet, the liturgical celebration of the mystery of the Redemption at which Christ, His true body born of the Virgin Mary becomes present. (RM 45)

Paul VI says that Mary is the Mother of the Church, “that is, the mother of the entire Christian people, both the faithful and the pastors. (Nov.21, 1964) Thus, throughout her life, the Church maintains with the Mother of God a link that embraces, in a saving mystery, the past, the present, and the future, and venerated her as the spiritual mother of humanity and the advocate of peace (RM 47).

In summary, Redemptoris Mater lists a variety of ways in which Mary is present in the Church and in the faith and spirituality of believers through various traditions of families, parishes and religious institutes, dioceses, nations, and great shrines. (RM 28)

This document also explains the Marian apostolate which includes striving ‘energetically and constantly to bring all humanity back to Christ its head in the unity of the Spirit.’ (RM 28).

February 2, 1974, a former feast day of Mary’s presentation of Jesus in the temple,
received a name change in post-Vatican II. Today the feast is dedicated to the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. This is a shift from a Marian feast day to a Christ-centered celebration. On this occasion, Pope Paul VI chose to publish a Marian document for the right ordering and development of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in *Marialis Cultus*. This choice was significant, since the church of that time was very much in need of this exhortation regarding the mounting Marian crisis in the universal Church.\(^\text{27}\) Pope Paul VI wrote the exhortation to his fellow bishops and insisted that the bishops counsel, persuade, entreat, admonish, and urge the people to take notice of this troubled aspect of our tradition. Some of these corrections are related to Mary’s place in the liturgical calendar:

“In the Mystery of Mary’s motherhood they confessed that she is the Mother of the Head and the members of the holy mother of God and therefore, the provident mother of the Church.” (11), January 1, New Year’s, prayer after communion, Roman Missal is the spiritual motherhood of Mary towards all members of the Mystical Body. (22). Understanding the nature of the Church will also bring the faithful a deeper realization of the brotherhood, which unites all of them as sons, and daughters of the Virgin Mary (28).”

2) The Disciple of Jesus

The previous section discussed the objective and the finality of holiness as the intimate union with Christ. Mary is first, a disciple of Jesus in her being (listen to the Word) and her acting (doing the will of God). Hence, she leads us to her Son, to journey to perfection, and to become Jesus’ disciple. The church documents will draw

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\(^\text{27}\) Marian crisis is the exaggeration given to the number of Marian feasts in the liturgical calendar year. Some theologians like F. Jelly and B. Buby defined this crisis, a Mariolatry: a devotion turning to Mary rather than Jesus.
out some guidelines for this area:

*Redemptoris Mater* affirms that Mary continued to hear and ponder all that had happened in her life, as she grew in knowledge of her spiritual motherhood. Thus, in a sense Mary as Mother became the ‘first’ disciple of Christ, the first to whom he seemed to say ‘follow me’ even, before he addressed this call to the apostles or to anyone else. (RM 20)

The handmaid of the Lord remained throughout her earthly life faithful to what this name expresses. In this she confirmed that she was the ‘true’ disciple of Christ, who strongly emphasized that his mission was one of service: to the Son of Man who came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. In this way, Mary led the brothers and sisters to that King, Jesus, whom to serve are reign. (RM 41)

*Mariae Cultus* shows that Mary is worthy of imitation because she was the first and the most perfect disciple of Christ. (MC 35) The figure of the Blessed Virgin offers the perfect model of the disciple of the Lord, the disciple who builds up the earthly and temporary city, while being a diligent pilgrim towards the heavenly and eternal city. The disciple who works for that justice sets free the oppressed and for that charity, assists the needy; but above all, the disciple who is the active witness of that love which builds up Christ in people’s hearts. (RM 37)
2.3.3 Mary, truly our sister: a feminist perspective

*Truly Our Sister, A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints.* (2003), is a companion volume to *Friends of God and Prophets: A Feminist Theological Reading of the Communion of Saints* (1998). The content of this first book (*Friends of God*) was given already in part one of this dissertation on the feminist perspective of the Communion of saints. *Truly Our Sister* is a long search for the true identity of Mary. It precedes from the first century Mary, a village woman, who has been constantly symbolized as a divine female symbol of mercy and compassion to contemporary historical and feminist approaches to scripture which makes possible a rereading of Mary’s significance that gives greater scope to her own human reality/person.

1) Elizabeth Johnson’s Mariology comprises both ‘from above’ and ‘from below’ elements. ‘From above’, she develops the history of Marian doctrine and devotion which follows the directives of Vatican II Mariology. ‘From below’ she explores a new avenue of approach to Mary, one grounded in scripture, liturgy, ancient preaching and discovery of the presence of the Spirit (*Sophia*) in the community of faith today. Elizabeth Johnson does not begin with Mary as a religious symbol but rather works to understand her meaning as unique person with her own life experience. “For Mary has been symbolized to such an extravagant degree divorced from her own history: Mary

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as the maternal face of God, of the eternal feminine, of the disciple, and of the idealized church."\textsuperscript{29}

2) Feminist hermeneutic principle that challenges the patriarchal tradition of the Church, guided Johnson’s work. These are: Mary is to be presented not as a transcendent symbol but as an historical person. In the description of Miriam of Nazareth’s world of first century Galilee, her social, cultural, political economical situation, the recent archeological excavation in Galilee, and their religious world of second temple Judaism.\textsuperscript{30}

“In all her difference, Miriam of Nazareth abides in the circle of disciples as our sister a poor woman of the people to whom God has done great things; a young Spirit-filled Jewish woman finding her joy in God. A woman vulnerable to violence in a patriarchy setting, a friend of God who made her own difficult choices with courage; a prophet whose word announced the awesome changes God’s coming would bring about in this world; a God bearer who divinity dancing under her heart in developing human flesh; a married woman with her husband toiled hard to provide for their humble family; a woman with questioning mind who pondered what God was doing in the midst of her life; the mother of the itinerant preacher Jesus, terribly worried about his ministry; a middle aged woman whose agonized grief over the public execution of her firstborn connects her with many bereaved women; an elder in the budding community of the church.”\textsuperscript{31}

3) Elizabeth Johnson focused mainly where Spirit-Sophia weaves connections and brings all together. All separating boundaries between our brothers and sisters are broken and all become one, within the ‘cloud of witnesses’ (Heb.12: 1-2) are paradigmatic figures who accompany us and wonderfully exemplify what we are

\textsuperscript{29} E. Johnson, \textit{Truly Our Sister}, “Introduction”, xiv.
\textsuperscript{30} E. Johnson, \textit{Truly Our Sister} “Part four”, pp.100-102
\textsuperscript{31} E. Johnson, \textit{Truly Our Sister}, p.112.
called to be in the communion of saints. According to E. Johnson, in the community of saints, the Spirit does not limit divine blessing to one group. The communion of saints does not refer to Christians alone but affirms a link between all men and women who are blessed by divine love and who seek to have the living God in their lives: it is an inclusive belief. She places Mary as one within this company who shares in God’s grace (love), a divine blessing from the Spirit and a call to holiness, an intimate union with Christ, as a chosen one of the Father.32

It is helpful to clarify two terms used in Johnson’s writing on the communion of saints: who are the ‘cloud of witnesses’ and the ‘paradigmatic figures’? Inspired by St Paul’s letter to the Hebrews, the dynamic movement of this text expresses a strong sense of solidarity between the living and the dead, the cloud of witnessing.

"The community of saints embraces persons who live and breathe at the present moment along with those who have passed into eternal life. The two groups are related by a common life in the Spirit and by a common history of call and response to God amid the ambiguities of human history. In this great cloud of witnesses that Mary belongs, her historical life having ended, she died and passed into the unimaginable, life-giving life-embrace of the living God. Now she joins the company of loving faithful who encourage those still running the race."33

According to Elizabeth Johnson, the paradigmatic figures are specific persons whose lives concretely embody one or more central values of faith. Mary is one such paradigmatic figure who is first and foremost a woman of our history, graced by God

32 E. Johnson, Truly Our Sister, pp.305-308
33 E. Johnson, Truly our Sister, pp. 312-313
with the gift of the same Spirit given to all. Secondly, even though she has now passed
from history, she remains connected with the community of faithful (fidelity to God).
Her distinctiveness lies in her being the mother of Jesus. Her relationship with the
Messiah is unique and irreplaceable. She is also a faithful partner of the Spirit who
leads her. Mary enters into the life-giving power of the Spirit who makes her a friend
of God and prophet. She listens and acts on the Word of God, which places her in the
company of ancestors whose memory the community celebrates and finds challenging.
She is part of the church, accompanying the faithful in healing, redeeming, and
liberating salvation coming from God. Paradigmatic figures, Mary among them, the
mother of Jesus, form one large family in a living tradition of friendship with God and
compassion toward the whole world.34

In summary, Elizabeth Johnson’s position on Mary’s role in the communion of saints
places Mary as paradigmatic figure and rather than the transcendent symbol in the
cloud of witnesses. Elizabeth Johnson emphasized more on Mary as an historical
person. Throughout all generations, the community of believers remembers Mary and
connects her story with their own amid the searching narrative of the human race in
its history of suffering and hope. Mary is truly our sister in faith, hope and love, who
is above all a sharer of the divine grace and the Spirit poured upon us. She is a faithful

34 E. Johnson, Truly Our Sister p.314-315
partner of the Spirit, as a prophet, who listens, acts and teaches the community of faithful that God is mercy and compassion. She is the link between the living and the dead in the joy and eternal friendship.

4) Elizabeth Johnson says that the first and most obvious image is the transfer of the symbol of God as mother to Mary. The metaphors of birthing and maternal care that the Hebrew scripture uses to describe God's unbreakable love for the covenanted people have been concretized and carried forward to Mary. Throughout the tradition, she has been portrayed predominantly as the mother *par excellence*. Transferring this maternal language back to its scriptural sources enables us to see that God ‘herself’ has a maternal face. Instead, what popular Marian devotion has, by its concept that God is a distant and a judgmental Father, not approachable, intercedes Mary, the mother on behalf of the children. Thus, Mary is sometimes called ‘the maternal face of God’ instead of discovering in the scripture texts that manifest God is tender and merciful. By doing so, the danger is attributing maternal virtues only to Mary and not to God.

Another closely related element is divine compassion. The symbol of ‘womb-love’ of God and Mary, Mother of compassion and mercy, is the title venerated by many

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35 Edward Schillebeeckx during his earlier years wrote Mary Mother of the Redemption [London: Sheed and Ward, 1964, he reasoned that while God’s love is both paternal and maternal, the latter quality is not and cannot fully expressed in the man Jesus because He is a male. Thus, God chose Mary to embody the feminine qualities of the divine, namely all that is tender, mild, simple, generous, gentle and sweet in the divine love. “Mary is the translation and effective expression in maternal terms of God’s mercy, grace and redeeming love which manifested itself to us in a visible
Marian devotees. The danger here is not so much of a philosophical interpretation but an emotional one called cultic-spiritual approach.\textsuperscript{36} It is most present in Marian popular religiosity. The desire for security and the intimate experience of divine goodness and redemptive power is found in female form. The problem is that, sometimes the official theology calls it the feminine face of the divine (God)\textsuperscript{37}. Even when recourse to intercession of the merciful mother, Mary is encouraged, her symbol remains fixed in the patriarchal cosmos and even reinforces it by going to her in a softer, more appealing approach and even by attributing to Mary of the function of the Holy Spirit.

In Taiwan, at the devotional level, the popular Catholic faith has a tendency to isolate, idealize, and elevate Mary. Hence, Mary does not explicitly belong to the communion of saints but above them. In Taiwan sometimes she is seen as the Christian goddess and compares her to other goddesses of Chinese popular religions: Ma-Zu and tangible form in the person of Christ, Redeemer.” pp.113-114.

\textsuperscript{36} E. Johnson, Truly Our Sister, Ibid, p.40
\textsuperscript{37} Leonardo Boff in The Maternal Face of God: The Feminine and its Religious Expression, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1987: 79 wrote “We maintain the hypothesis that the Virgin Mary, Mother of God and all men and women, realizes the feminine absolutely and eschatologically, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit has made her temple, sanctuary, and tabernacle in so real and genuine a way that she is to be regarded hypostatically united to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.” This union to L. Boff is an ontologically one so profound that the Spirit can be said to have taken flesh in the Virgin Mary, which in turn personifies the Spirit. Boff argues that Jesus Christ is ‘masculine’... while the ‘feminine’ is assumed and is divinized only directly as a secondary component of male Conscious of the long-standing subordination of women, he proposes that it is only fitting that the feminine itself should also be assumed and sanctified directly and immediately. Such is the case of Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God. In her, the feminine is ‘hypostatically assumed’ by the Holy Spirit, with the result that the created feminine is now eternally associated with the Mystery of the being of God and is a vehicle of God’s own self-realization. Mary rightly belongs not subordinate to Christ but by his side. Widespread attribution to her of the functions of the Holy Spirit In my observation, this maybe a misleading concept that Mary is the fourth member adding to the Triune God.
Kwan-yin. The title of Mary as the Mother of God is also a title given to Ma-Zu by her disciples, Mother of Heavens, while Kuan-yin is venerated as Mother of Mercy, the Buddhist Madonna. Mary, Ma-Zu and Kwan-yin are venerated primarily because of their motherhood. Their maternal protection and presence is vital in the lives of believers.

2.3.4 Companionship Model: Mary in the communion of saints

The pattern of Marian relationship that characterized both the idealization of Mary and rationalism of Mary functions in a patronage model. Whether Mary is seen in relation to God, to the Church, or to humanity, there it is a relationship between unequal. In sociological terms, patronage is a system of exchange founded on asymmetrical relations between persons of unequal status; it is the antithesis of friendship between equals: Mary and other women, men and women, the clergy and the faithful, the living and the dead and most of all, Mary and the communion of saints. It is also significant to note that even the saints themselves are arranged in a hierarchy, in both liturgy and official iconography, with the Virgin Mary as the

38 Ma-Zu is the goddess of the popular religion in Taiwan. Her feast day is celebrated on the fourth month of the lunar calendar. She is carried in the procession across the island for more than one week. Kwan-yin, in the Buddhist tradition is the compassion Buddha, Mother of Mercy transformed into a woman. She is also venerated as a goddess in Taiwan, the Buddhist Madonna.


40 E. Johnson, Truly Our Sister, pp. 315-316.
arc-intercessor through whom petitions of other saints are directed. Consequently, patron-client practices became a feature of Catholic spirituality, especially in Marian devotion throughout the reform period and were kept by Vatican II. However, it is still strong in the Christian community to go back to this model of relationship with Mary and in the communion of saints. Little steps have moved forward in area of Marian devotion following the guidelines of Pope Paul VI in *Maria/is Cultus* (1974)\(^4\). And inspired by following Paul VI in naming Mary as Truly our Sister, (#56) Elizabeth Johnson offers a reconstruction: a Companionship Model of Mary in the community of saints.

This model is found in the Scripture in the letter of St. Paul to the Hebrews, which is a pattern present during the first three Christian centuries.\(^4\)

> “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding in shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb.12: 1-2)

It can be heard from the account of St. Polycarp:

> “Little did they know that we could never abandon Christ, who alone suffered from the redemption of those who are saved in the whole world, the innocent one dying on behalf of the sinners. Nor could we worship anyone else. For him we worship as the Son of God. But the martyrs we love as disciples and imitators of

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\(^4\) Pope Paul VI in his encyclical letter *Maria/is Cultus* [1974] gives four main guidelines for a Marian devotion. They are namely: Biblical, liturgical, ecumenical and anthropological.

the Lord, and rightly so because of their comrades and fellow disciples."^{43}

St. Augustine preached, "Blessed be the saints in whose memory we are celebrating the day they suffered on. They have left us lessons of encouragement."^{44} We are heirs of a tradition shaped by persons who have contributed to who and what we are and in turn for the next generation.

"The communion of saints in a companionship model strengthens bonds across history that sustains faith in time and place. In this sense, companionship model runs through a pattern of relationship. The living and the dead together are a holy people, redeemed sinners, at different stages of the journey. The whole group is friend and prophet centered on the love of Christ. Without ignoring the differences of each one, it promotes mutuality and not hierarchy. To use a spatial metaphor, here the saints in heaven are not situated between God and those on earth with some more or less with more powerful intercession pull, but rather, with their sisters and brothers in one Spirit."^{45}

The core practice that connects the living and the dead friends of God and prophets is the act of remembrance. Companions in memory and in hope shape the Christian identity, the liturgical memorial: remembrance of the life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Mary, among her ancestors in faith, nurtures the spirit of the community by remembering the dangerous memory of Jesus. Faithful to God through all the events of human life, she is a part of the community’s story. Companion in memory, she becomes in solidarity with the struggles of women and men; she is a companion of hope (in her Assumption). She is truly, our sister.^{46}

According to Elizabeth Johnson, Mary’s role in the communion of saints has a

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^{44} Augustine, Sermon. 273.2 In Sermons, 8:7.
^{45} E. Johnson, Truly Our Sister, pp. 315-322.
^{46} E. Johnson, Truly Our Sister, p.322.
pneumatological framework that consists of five dimensions.

1) Those who are alive, the graced lives of human beings: the graced of the living. To call Mary blessed is to recognize the blessedness of ordinary people who are called to participate in the work of God in their daily living.

2) Those who have died. (The cloud of witnesses). “Whether we live or whether we die, we are in the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and rose again, that He might be the Lord of both the living and the dead.”(Rm. 14: 7-9)

3) Those persons who immerse their lives in one or more central values of faith in strikingly concrete forms. (The paradigmatic figures). Traditionally we called them saints. Mary is among them, the Mother of Jesus.

4) The members of the church (The disciples of God): those who are partners and companions in relationship with the living and the dead. They are redeemed sinners at different stages of the journey. Mary is a friend and a prophet of God.

5) The companionship model where Mary with Jesus releases spirited filled energies for an ongoing fidelity. The relationship among the living on earth and those with God in glory is fundamentally mutual and collegial. They form a circle of friendship centered in the graciousness of God.47

The concept of Mary with the communion of saints in which Elizabeth Johnson

47 E. Johnson, pp. 308 ff.
argued, "first and foremost Mary is not a model, a type, an archetype, a prototype, an icon, a representative figure, a theological idea, an ideological cipher, a metaphor, a utopian principle, a feminine principle, a feminine essence, the image of the eternal feminine, an ideal disciple, ideal woman, ideal mother, a myth, a corporate personality, and every woman, a cultural artifact, a literary device, a motif, an exemplar, a paradigm, or in any other way a religious symbol. All these terms are drawn from contemporary writing. To the contrary, she is first and foremost herself." Elizabeth Johnson sees Mary in her historical existence as a graced woman.48

2.4 Mary’s Assumption in relation to Eschatology

2.4.1 A brief history of the Dogma: Assumption of the Virgin Mary

(Munificentissimus Deus, 1950)

Emmon Caroll claims that historically, “the Assumption ran a smoother course than the Immaculate Conception”.49 Still this does not mean that its historical course did not move along without considerable difficulty. The earliest testimonies to the Assumption are liturgical. During the fifth century, Christians already celebrated a feast called the ‘Memorial of Mary’, which was patterned on the birthday into heaven. This feast is observed in the East on August 15, and eventually came to be a so-called dormition (Latin) the falling asleep of the Virgin Mary. This expressed the deep faith

48 E. Johnson, p.100-101
of the early Christians in life after death and the resurrection when the body and soul
would be reunited. For them, at death the body fell asleep and rested until awakened
in the glory of eternal life. And so they looked upon the death of the saints and
martyrs as the day of their ‘falling asleep’ in the Lord, and joyfully celebrated it as
their ‘birthday ‘into a new life.50 Although the question of whether or not Mary died
is still unresolved, the tradition appears the fact that she did experience death. Besides
the liturgical feast of dormition, the majority of the Fathers believe that Mary did die.
All the great scholastic theologians taught it. After the Council of Ephesus (431),
apocryphal literature about the end of Mary’s life upon earth began to circulate. 51
These writings had influenced the development of doctrine by providing valuable
evidence of popular piety. The sensus fidelium or beliefs and devotion of the faithful
came into play. In some of these stories Mary is assumed into heaven while the
apostles are still in Jerusalem, while in others they are miraculously reunited at her
deathbed after having dispersed, and in others, only after a period of time, Mary died
of a natural death and was neither martyred nor immortal.

50 F. Jelly, OP, Madonna: Mary in the Catholic Tradition. Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division,
Huntington, Indiana, (1986), Chapter IX, "Mary and Son Reunited, Mary’s Glorious Assumption”.
Pp. 117-130.
51 In an homily of bishop of Livias on the left Bank of Jordan [550-650], he spoke of the feast of
Assumption as the most fitting that the most holy body of the Mary, God -bearing body, receptacle of
God, divinized incorruptible, illuminated by divine grace and full of glory. Should be entrusted to the
earth for a while and raised o heaven in glory, with her soul pleasing to God. [Theotokos, A
Theological Encyclopedia of the BVM, # 57]. In the West, St Gregory of Tours [593], borrowing
from the Apocryphal Transitus legends, said that Mary’s body was taken up and borne on a cloud
into Paradise, where now with her soul and rejecting with the elect, it enjoys the good things of
eternity which shall never come to an end. [ML, J.P. Migne, Ed, Patrologiae cursus complectus,
series Latina, 71,70B].
As Catholics, the faithful believe that the authority of the magisterium is required to determine what takes place as authentic development in matters of faith and morals. But, all the faithful have a hand in the process of helping make the divine suggestions or insinuations of the Scriptures clear and explicit. And so the beliefs and devotion of and the faithful are an important witness to what is contained in the deposit of faith, especially in the Marian dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption. In this sense Pope Pius XII teaches that the Sacred Writings are the ultimate foundation for any proofs and considerations of the Fathers and theologians regarding Mary’s Assumption. Pope Pius XII mentioned names of Doctors of the Church who followed the great thirteen-century scholastics and promoted the doctrine. They are St. Bernadine of Sienna (1380-1444), St. Robert Bellarmine (1545-1621) and St Alphonse Liguori (1696-1787).

The faith of the Church showed itself clearly between 1849 to 1950, when an astonishing number of petitions for the definition of the dogma came to Rome from various part of the world. On May 1, 1946, Pope XII issued an encyclical Deiperae Virginis, to the bishops of the world asking whether they thought that the bodily Assumption of the Immaculate Blessed Virgin could be defined and whether their

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52 PTOL (Papal Teaching on Our Lady), 518.
53 The reason that Pope Pius XII proclaimed this dogma is to bring joy to the Catholic world in a period of great turmoil, after two World Wars. The Catholic world at that time, majority, did not show objection directly or at least very pointedly. Reference to a reflection of William U. Marshner, Virginia, USA, "The Assumption and Eschatology", Marian Studies, and XXXIII [1982] p 148.
priests and people also desired it. In response, only 22 ordinaries out of 1,181 disented, two out of 59 abbots and prelates nullitis; three out of 206 vicars apostolic; five out of 381 titular bishops. These statistics are indeed significant. On November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII solemnly defined the Dogma of Mary's Glorious Assumption:

*Munificentissimus Deus.*

We pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the immaculate Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthy life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory. (Papal Teaching, 524)

The 1950's, when many of the Church's major theologians wrote books on Mary were one of the peak times in Mariology. In the 1960's, Vatican II disputes over whether emphasis on Mary was a distraction from Christ both in doctrine and in practice, and with its culmination in Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*, treated the teaching on Mary in the Mystery of the Church (communion of saints) and of Christ. Following the Council, a concern was raised by some theologians in ecumenical circles, over the two dogmas: Immaculate Conception (1854) and Assumption of the Virgin Mary (1950).54 The focal issue was the question on the substance of revelation, as well as the critical question of methodology. Both areas are of critical importance for deciding the method that is to be used, in order to come to an understanding of what

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54 While there is significant agreement between Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches regarding Marian Doctrine and devotion, still difficulties abide about The Immaculate Conception and Assumption of the Virgin Mary as dogmas of faith. The rejection is not on the sinlessness and all-holiness of Mary but on the problem of papal primacy and infallibility that form authority behind the defined dogmas. Cf. F. Jelly, "Mariology and Ecumenism -Reflection upon 1965-1990" Mater Fidei et Fidelium, vol. 17-23, (1991) p. 550.
revelation says and what it means.

An assessment of these Marian teachings can seem peripheral to the substance of revelation, because they are not essential in themselves to Christianity like the doctrines of the Trinity, creation, incarnation or the passion and resurrection of Jesus. But, it is important to observe that in any Marian doctrine the profound consequences is that it is rated much higher in the hierarchy of truths and also in the practices, it is vital to Christian life. For example: how does one understand the Dogma of Assumption in relation to the Resurrection of Jesus: resurrection of body and soul? Or the Dogma on the Immaculate Conception, and the theology of Sin and Grace? Or the Theotokos in the affirmation that Mary is truly the Mother of Jesus; Jesus is truly man and God, the reality of the Incarnation? The next section will deal with the Dogma of Mary's Assumption in relation to Eschatology.

2.4.2 Mary's Assumption in relation to Eschatology

What is the impact of the dogma of the Assumption in the area of eschatology? Austin B. Vaughan in his article entitled "The Assumption and the Eschatology" offers eight points for reflection:

1) The church teaches us that Mary's Assumption is unique and maintains that Mary's Assumption is a prime example of what happens to all of the faithful as soon as they

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die; that they receive a new body, distinct from the one that is buried. However, there
is a more dynamic dimension to this dogma. Mary’s Assumption has uniquely
enriched her role in God’s plan. She alone had anticipated resurrection along with
Jesus because of her spiritual motherhood.  

2) The Assumption is a strong reassertion of our belief in the reality of physical
resurrection, which means our belief in the worth and value of the human body and
the significance of our ties with the material world. Mary’s glorified body is the first
proof of the transformation among those who need redemption. When we move into
eternity, we do not become totally different persons. We do not forget what we have
left behind, or the people that we have left behind. We do not divorce ourselves from
our history. The physical assumption of Mary’s body is an assertion that what
happened for Jesus, happen for all of us. 

3) The Assumption of Mary is a reminder of the importance of the future life. We
accept that, as Christians, we do not judge the success of a person’s life to the extent
to which he/she was able to achieve all his/her earthly objectives and even good
ones. What is the priority is the part of our collaboration in God’s providence and

56 More reading on Karl Rahner’s “The Interpretation of the Dogma of the Assumption”. Abstract of
Karl Rahner’s Theological Investigations 1-23, Daniel T. Pekarske, Marquette U. Press, 2002, # 107,
God, Mary and Grace, p 21.  
57 Another way to explain the theological conceptual framework of life after death (eschatology) is to
understand that death is a transformation and a separation from time and space of life on earth. A
person undergoes changes in five dimensions. Material and biological changes in space and its
functions, which are before the transcendent shift in relationship with God takes place: a face to face.
The emphasis is not on the separation of the body and the soul. Cf. Luis Gutheinz, S.J.”Theological
Anthropology”, pp. 311 ff.
plan, which is eternal life.

4) We have lived in a period where there is an emphasis on the intercessory role of the saints. By Mary’s assumption, she is in heaven body and soul. As our mother and the mother of the church. The assumption of Mary reminds us of the closeness of those who have died in Christ and who are aware of all our hopes, needs and fears. Mary helps us to focus on the continuity of this life and the next.

5) The assumption of Mary is Realized Redemption: Mary is totally redeemed. She is the only one who has reached heaven, body and soul. She is a human person who has been chosen in the Incarnation to become the mother of the Incarnated Son. Jesus is really and truly human and divine. Mary is the example of a realized redemption she is not God but an historical woman who needed to be redeemed.

6) The assumption is one of the areas where our doctrines differ most from those of other Christian churches. Some Protestant theologians reacted to the definition of assumption, because of the whole belief in a vital and active communion of saints, which is not a part of their heritage. The difference lies in the doctrine on eschatology and the practice of the communion of saints. While the Catholic believes that those in heaven help us so that we can help those in purgatory, the Protestant believes in the one mediator: Jesus and not the intercession of saints
and for the same reason even Mary’s intercession.\textsuperscript{58}

7) Catholics believe in the uniqueness of Mary’s intercession. This uniqueness is rooted in her Assumption, which in turn is rooted, in her unique role in the Redemption along with Jesus, and in her role as a Mother of the Church and Mother of Christ. The Protestant rejects the term Mary’s intercession, for the reason of one Mediator, One Intercessor: Jesus. So they suggest that the phrase Mary prays for us for us should be changed to Mary prays with us, because she is a human person and not divine.

8) Mary’s assumption is beyond her historical role as the mother of Jesus. Her Jewishness and her being as a virgin of Nazareth is extended and made possible because of her assumption: beyond time and space. Her apparitions in many different places, cultures and people are her universal maternal presence.

5. Mary’s maternal presence in the Human family and Cosmic World

The communion of saints is a doctrine that typically provokes feelings of wonder and hope as well as comfort and encouragement among Christians. By virtue of baptism, we become of God, joint heirs of Jesus. Thus, we belong and enjoy in the fellowship of God, which extends beyond Christians on earth but also to those in heaven with God: the human family and the cosmic world. In this perspective, the

communion of saints is truly universal; it spans history, geography, nationality, race, and all other temporal barriers. In this section, several Church documents: *Redemptoris Mater* sharpen the focus (1987), *Dives in Misericordia* (1980) and *Menso Maio* (1965), will on Mary’s maternal presence and unity.

1) The church document, *Menso Maio* (1965) refers to Mary’s presence in “a special way by her intercession and her protection, as Queen of Peace.” (10) She heeds the appeals for peace rising to her from every part of the world. (11) She grants peace to our time. (11)

2) In *Dives in Misericordia* (1980), “in Mary and through her, God’s love continues to be revealed in the history of the Church and in humanity. This revelation is especially fruitful because in the mother of God, it is based upon the unique fact of her maternal heart, on her particular sensitivity, on her particular fitness to reach all those who most easily accept the merciful love of a mother. This is one of the great life-giving mysteries of Christianity, a mystery intimately connected with the mystery of incarnation.” (9) Let us have recourse to God through Christ, mindful of the words of Mary’s Magnificat, which proclaim mercy “from generation to generation.” Let us implore God’s mercy for the present generation. (15)

3) *Redemptoris Mater* (1987) puts Mary in the middle “that is to say she acts as a
mediatrix not as an outsider, but in her position as a mother.” (RM 21) She knows that as such she can point out to her Son the needs of humankind; her mediation is thus the nature of intercession. Another essential element of Mary’s maternal task is found in the words to the servants at Cana: “Do whatever he tells you.” Vatican II illustrates Mary’s maternal role as it relates to the mediation of Christ. ‘Mary’s maternal function towards humankind in no way obscures or diminishes the unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its efficacy because there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (1Tim.2: 5). In articles 38 and 40 of Redemptoris Mater, the mediation of Mary is qualified as shared mediation. ‘Mary’s mediation is intimately linked with her motherhood distinguished from the mediation of other creatures who in various and always subordinate ways share in one Mediator, Jesus.” Mary’s motherhood is completely pervaded by her attitude as ‘handmaid of the Lord’. (RM 39). Her cooperation and collaboration underwent a singular transformation, becoming ever more imbued with burning charity towards all those to whom Christ’s mission was achieved.

The maternal presence of Mary finds many different expressions in our day, just as it did throughout the Church’s history. It is also a wide field of action, through the faith and piety of individual believers; through the traditions of Christian families or parishes and missionary communities locally or even continentally and through the
radiance and attraction of many shrines where not only individual but also groups seek to meet the Mother of the Lord. One may perhaps speak of a specific ‘geography of faith’ in Marian devotion, which includes this entire special, places or pilgrimages, with in the maternal presence of her ‘who believed’, a strengthening of their own faith. It is an interior space with opening within humanity which the eternal Father can fill “with every spiritual blessing ‘in a new and eternal covenant. It is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God and the unity of all humankind.” (RM 28)

4) John Paul II’s Marian theology: Maternal presence

The chief characteristic of Pope John Paul II’s Marian theology is concentrated in Mary’s divine maternity. Mary is also named as the first disciple of the Lord, but for him, it is especially her motherhood that connects the mysteries of Christ and the Mystery of the Church.59

(1) Mary’s mediation and cooperation in Redemption: the relationship of God and Mary. In Redemptoris Mater, John Paul II reflects that the mediation of Mary is in relation to Christ’s universal and unique mediation. The question of the relationship between uncreated (God) and created being (Mary) emerges in Mary’s participation in the Redemption of humankind that is incorporated in Christ who is the exclusive Redeemer. The mediation of Mary, understood in the context of her relationship with

59 Cf. Antoine Nachef’s Mary’s Pope, Preface .xi, by Fr. Betrand Buby, S.M.
God, constitutes one of the most difficult Marian areas such as with the prayer to Mary asking her to intercede to God for our favors. Mediation is the relationship between humanity and divinity in accomplishing the work of salvation. The issue of Mary’s mediation presents many paradoxical dimensions, because it invites human reason to go beyond the limitations of history to explore the logic of interaction between the transcendental God, who, by becoming man in history, uses human beings to fulfill his plan. (Cf. RM 5).

“With the historical dimension of God that was revealed in and through Jesus Christ, the question of Mary’s mediation does not remain limited to a relationship between her and the divine. It becomes a relationship between her and the divine-human that is the God who become man in her womb. This logic explains the reason behind the great interest Marian theologians has in shedding light on the relationship of Mary and Jesus Christ. It is also in this context that the mediation of Mary is explored, since the Marian qualifications receive their ultimate meaning is in and through Christ: her divine maternity, virginity, immunity from original sin and actual sin (Immaculate Conception), Assumption and her being an eschatological. (the end of time and the fullness of God’s Reign).

(2) Mary’s maternal mediation: the relationship of Son and Mother. The participation of Mary in Christ’s work of Redemption has been an object of discussion within Catholic circles as well as in other Christian churches. It has caused many to reflect on the absolute primacy of Christ who is the unique mediator between God

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60 A.Blancy and Dombes Group, #276- #277.
61 Antoine Nachef explains that John Paul II has a Thomastic concept of mediation. The idea of mediation is projected to Thomas Aquinas’ concept of Creation to the reality of Redemption. Creatures exist and their act of existence, it is true [authentic] as it is shared in the existence of God without adding anything to God’s existence. In the same exact way, creatures, in the context of Redemption, are invited to cooperate without adding anything to the Redemption of Christ. Here, it is easier road to understand why there is mediation, and why Mary’s mediation is different from others. Cf. Mary’s Pope, p. 170
62 A.Nachef, Mary’s Pope, p. 10.
and human beings. Catholics in their fundamental belief agree that Jesus Christ as God-Man is the cause of our Redemption. There is a question on how to understand and to explain the mediation of Mary. It concerns the manner in which Jesus Christ is associated to His Mother in Redemption.

John Paul II introduced a new concept into the discussion, when he added mediation as an adjective of maternal (Maternal mediation). Such a choice not only clarifies and describes the mediation of Mary, but also specifies the specific type of her mediation. For John Paul II, Mary’s maternal mediation in itself necessarily possesses a Christological dimension, seeing Christ as the *nexus mysteriorum* (the unity and the connection between the mysteries). Moreover, Mary’s maternal mediation is “essentially a mediation of a maternal presence, but this becomes active and exemplar only under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit.”

B. Billet explained the double meaning of ‘presence’ through the action of the Holy Spirit. First, in a passive sense, it means to be ‘there, in front.’ (*d’être la devant*). For example, a person existing on the side of another one. Second, the active meaning of being present is to make one presents, a relationship, a complementarity, an attentiveness and above all a readiness to act benevolently for others. It is in action, that Mary’s mediation is maternally present and special, active and exemplar.

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64 B. Billet, “Mediation,” p. 734-735.
Mary in the communion of saints: a relationship with humankind and the universe.

Mary’s maternal role in the historical event of the Incarnation continues to operate now in a more perfect way in the order of grace. John Paul II declares it as follows ‘She knows that as such she can point out to her son the needs of mankind, and in fact she has the right to do so’. He also refers to the Gospel scene where Mary is present at the foot of the cross, (Jn.19: 26-27)

“The divine maternity of Mary, which is the essential element of all the dimensions of her motherhood, receives a new reality when Christ on the cross reveals her motherhood of His mystical body, the church. If the Redemption of Christ transcends the historical realm and includes a universal salvation, so the motherhood of Mary and the sonship of John are extended to all who are redeemed.” (Cf. Mary’s Pope, p. 162)

John Paul II goes a step further and illustrates the definite condition of Mary in the mystery of eternal glory, the union of church members here on pilgrimage and those that are in heaven in her role as ‘Queen of the Universe’. For him this is an eschatological reality in the communion of saints.66

In summary, Pope John Paul II’s Mariology focused on the divine motherhood of Mary expressed in her maternal and spiritual mediation to all humankind, in the Church and in the universe. In other words, Mary’s mediation is based on her

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66 According to researcher’s observation, the conjunction ‘so’, can be theologically misleading to interpret Pope John Paul II. It seems that the author is using the principle of ‘cause and effect’: Christ’ role in the salvation work (cause) and the extension of Mary’s maternal mediation, (effect), not by analogy but a matter of fact.
motherhood both divine and spiritual; her mediation is between Jesus Christ and humanity, believers and the universe. In her maternal mediation, a special attribute given to her by John Paul II is her motherhood, as Mother of Jesus. Her maternal motherhood is extended through the action of the Holy Spirit, by her maternal presence.

In John Paul II's understanding, if Mary did not receive the saving influence from the divine motherhood, she would not be able to have cared for the brothers and sisters of the Lord. On the divine level, the Holy Spirit connects Mary's maternal presence and her mediation, starting from the annunciation to Jesus Christ and after, His resurrection, with the Church. On the human level, Mary extends the same activity as that of Calvary at the side of her Son on earth, to continue to act in the same way in the glory of heaven. Therefore, the mediation of Mary, even though can be compared to the mediation of other human beings, and is unique because it is maternal.67

"Although participated norms of mediation of different kinds and degrees are not excluded, they acquire meaning and value only on the basis of the full truth of this motherhood." (RM 5)

The motherhood of Mary has a Christological dimension which is her presence in the mysteries of Christ. Her presence in the Mystery of the Church through the Holy Spirit has a pneumatological dimension. Because the Holy Spirit is the divine agent that fulfills the contact with Mary, and Mary is the human agent that cooperates with

66 A. Nachef, Mary's Pope,p.162
God’s initiative; Christ and the Church are divine and human. The christological and pneumatological studies of Mary in *Redemptoris Mater* help to eliminate false tendencies to exaggerate Mary’s independence from the economy of Salvation.

Mary’s maternal presence in the unity of God is extended to all the human family and the cosmic world. Mary is the prototype of unity, a person in relationship, in the communion of saints; and through God’s grace; God has accomplished this form of unity. She is a historical holy woman, included in the communion of saints. She is an exemplar of how this unity is achieved: virgin and mother, one with the Triune God and one with human community. The greatest unifying force of this unity is love. Mary is the prototype of the unifying love in her role as Queen of Peace (praying for peace); Icon of God’s Mercy and Compassion. Her intercession and mediation of people’s needs especially the poor are signs of her maternal and spiritual presence.

The next section will discuss on the theological and pastoral role of Mary in the communion of saints from the Protestant perspective. Important agreements and controversies which have arisen from Ecumenical dialogues on Mary’s role in the communion of saints will be included. This on-going search for Mary’s role in Christian life is valuable in terms of finding a balance in Catholic Marian devotional practices.

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II. Chronological study about Mary and the communion of saints in different ecumenical congresses, meetings and dialogues.

1. International Ecumenical Mariological Congresses

Since Vatican II, the international congresses, organized every four years by the Pontifical International Marian Academy (PIMA) of Rome had the participation of a number of non-Catholic participants Orthodox, Anglicans, and Protestants, of various denominations: Lutheran, Reformed, and Evangelical. The participants, searching toward a greater understanding, chose the theme of each congress, which desired to work for unity among the separated brethren. The International Ecumenical Mariological Congress which is held every four years is another effort to bring about an Ecumenical dialogue about Mary. Since 1965, in Santo Domingo, the venue of the International Mariological Congress has been held at or near a world-renowned Marian shrine: 1965 at Santo Domingo; 1967 at Lisbon and Fatima; 1971 at Zagreb and the Sanctuary of Maria Bistrica; 1975 at Rome; 1979 at Saragossa in Spain; 1983 at Malta; 1987 at Kevelaer, Germany, near Munster, and 2000, Rome, Italy. It is interesting to notice that the subject on the communion of saints was chosen three times as the central theme, in Malta, 1983 and Kevelaer, Germany in 1987, and Rome, 2000. This section will only concentrate on the congresses that dealt with Mary and the communication of saints.
The discussion on Mary in the communion of saints is a topic to be explored as a new way towards achieving an ecumenical understanding of Mary through the communion of all the Disciples of Christ, here below and in the hereafter. (Malta 1983). Further reflection on Mary in the communion of saints was made at Kevelaer, Germany in 1987. Since the very expression of communion of saints of love between the departed and those still on earth is shown in prayer and intercession, Mary who is a member of the communion of saints, also intercedes in prayer. 69

One may ask, why a doctrine on Mary should be important or worth an ecumenical effort? The first reason is the attention given to Mary by the Catholic Church, a stand by the Protestants that is an extensive cult to Mary seemingly endangered the true worship due to God was taken more or less negatively in the past. A new ecumenical approach would be more open and have a greater sense of the meaning and person of Mary in Christian doctrine. In any ecumenical effort, the question of Mary in cult becomes essential. For example, the concentration on the theme of the communion of saints seeks for the meaning and the role of Mary. The second reason is the recognition of the role of Mary in the life of Jesus. All Christians accept that Mary is the mother of Jesus and this becomes a platform towards reconciliation and unity. There is still discussion on whether the doctrine on Mary can be considered optional.

or superfluous as it is taught to be an important part in Christian doctrine and reality.

The third reason is the process of concessions in ecumenical dialogue. This means some silencing of certain data or at least, concentrating on points of accord, like the common understanding on Mary’s motherhood which may open avenues to transcendental questions on the Eucharist and Magisterium still remain a focus of serious discord. 

The theme of the communion of saints was a recurrent theme in three International Marian ecumenical Congresses. This theme became central in the last two meetings; it grew in an effort to find a basis of dialogue. Thus, a place for Mary was found once the larger company of saints was called into presence. Other saints are in the company of God’s elect, so is Mary. They are exchanging mutual love for us, so is Mary. They are concentrating upon rendering the final cult of glory to God, so is Mary. This approach is meaningful under many aspects, and it strengthens the place of Mary in the Church and in Christ. We will take a closer look at some important controversies around the theme of communion of saints in three International Ecumenical Mariological Congresses: Saragossa, 1979; Malta, 1983; Kevelaer, 1987.

1) Saragossa, 1979

The general theme of the Saragossa congress, held at the famous shrine of our Lady of

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Pillar, was devotion to Mary in 1500, the century of both the Protestant Reformation and the Council of Trent. The roundtable discussion took up the various forms of devotion to the Blessed Virgin mentioned by Vatican Council II: praise, imitation and veneration, then invocation. It is a painful paradox, that divided Christians are in basic agreement, at times strongly so, on three of four aspects i.e., veneration, praise and imitation. They (Protestant group) do not agree on invocation, even when there is some admission of a possible heavenly ‘intercession’ by the Mother of Savior. It is a disagreement on terminology of invocation.

Eamon Carroll, a active participant in the Congress, commented that,” In my judgment, the Saragossa meeting is the high point... it concentrated on the place of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the communion of saints, setting forth calmly and clearly agreements and disagreements. Among the common conviction is that the group described the praise of Mary as the Mother of God as essentially giving glory to God; for God in glorifying the saints crowns his own gifts (from the preface of the Roman Liturgy). Such praise has become an urgent question for all Christians.”71 There is also a distinction to be made between the adoration given to God and the veneration given to saints. Then, there was an enlightenment from Rene Laurentin72 saying that the psychological difficulties of many Christians experience over the Marian

72 E. Carroll, “Ecumenism and Mariological Congresses”, p. 572
questions arose from different spiritual heritages and also from linguistic and cultural differences, i.e. the word cult used with respect to created person might meant a cult to God (an expression of adoration) in American culture. The participants crafted with this statement:

“Difficulties which are primarily of an affective nature and which have divided us in the past ought not finally to separate us in an effort towards the unity of Christians. This does not resolve all the remaining theological questions, but we wish to continue the dialogue and we have confidence in the assistance of the Holy Spirit.” 73

2) Malta, 1983

The dialogue continued on the theme of the communion of saints, beginning with the common bond between the members of the Body of Christ on earth and the understanding of the intercession of the saints on our behalf, similar to the prayers which the faithful offer to one another. The following statement concerns Mary, the Mother of God in the communion of saints and appeals to the common Christian faith-conviction:

“The inclusion of Mary in the worship of the Lamb that has been sacrificed (the Christological aspect) as well as her part in the heavenly liturgy (the eschatological aspect) must not give rise to any interpretation which would attribute to Mary the honor due to God alone. Moreover, no member of the church can add anything to whatsoever to the work of Christ, which remains the only source of salvation; it is not possible to ‘by pass’ him or to find an easier way to come to the Father than through the Son of God. At the same time, it is clear that Mary has her place in the communion of saints.” 74

At the end of the meeting, the concluding prayer of gratitude to the Maltese people shows a point of hope: the fervor of Maltese people pray with Mary who

73 E. Carroll, “Ecumenism and Mariological Congresses”, p. 573
accompanies us.

3) Kevealer, Germany 1987

The general theme at the Marian shrine of Kevealer, in West Germany is the tenth in the Mariological series, the seventeenth of the Marian congresses. The theme was on devotion to Mary from 1800 to the eve of Vatican II. The ecumenical roundtable stayed with the topic begun in Saragossa and Malta: the role of Mary in the communion of saints. The signatories sought and found a common ground in their shared Christian heritage, to which they allude both in the introduction and the conclusion of the Kevealer statement:

“Aware of the differences which remain, but sensitive too, to the urgency of continuing to consider the difficulties in obedience to Jesus’ prayer for unity of his disciples. Our Christian communion is rooted in Christ; hence to love and to be loved is our spiritual way of life. Death does not destroy the basic Christian attitude of love of God and love of neighbor. We look forward to unending communion with the Triune God and with all that belong to him. Always under the headship of Christ, the pilgrim people of God recognize their unity with those who have achieved perfect union with Christ. Those who have reached completion in Christ - and his Mother belongs to that glad company - love in him and with him all who are still on earth. An expression of this love is their prayer for us. We should be grateful”. 75

As expressed at the Saragossa, Malta and Kevealer roundtables, the participants stressed again that the Christian attitudes toward Mary and the saints are essentially directed to the praise of the eternal Father, with the Son, in the Holy Spirit: inspired by the Holy Spirit, the people of God on earth desire to unite their praises with Christ and with all, who as the perfected ones, belong to him.

74 E. Caroll, "Ecumenism", p.575.
75 E. Caroll, Ecumenism, p.576.
Showing the efforts of a genuine and sincere dialogue in the meetings held at the
International Ecumenical Mariological congresses, the desire for unity as disciples of
Christ and the Christian's devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is strong. Yet, the
main controversial question of Catholic Church Marian practices still remains a cause
of separation in doctrine and devotion.

Lutheran - Catholic Church Dialogue in the United States of America.

From 1983 to 1990, the Lutheran-Catholic Church's representatives met for several
times. On the eighth round, they discussed the topic of "The One Mediator, the Saints
and Mary". The theological material of the seventh round, which dealt with
'Justification by Faith', tested the doctrinal implications of some fundamental
affirmations and convergences as well as divergences regarding veneration to Mary
and the saints. Considerable research into the long history of these doctrinal and
pastoral issues accompanied the discussion. Undoubtedly, after four centuries of a
long debate, today, appreciation and understanding on both parties reigned more than
division. The sincere articulation of the divergences as well as finding uniting
convergences had warranted these seven years of prayers and dialogue.76

In 1990, on the eighth round, in the light of the sole mediatorship of Christ, which

76 Cf. J. Francis Stafford, Archbishop of Denver and H. George Anderson, President of the Luther
College, preface in "The Common Statement of the One Mediator, the Saints and Mary," Lutherans
was termed as "the corrective of the principle of justification", the statements focusing on the saints and Mary became a main agenda. In many instances, they were dealing not only with doctrines but also Catholic and Lutheran thought structures as well as expressions of worship and piety. The dialogue did not discuss in any depth, nor did they attempt to report on present day matters of popular religions, aspects of comparative religions, feminist questions, nor systematic theology of saints and Mary. The content of this dialogue is only based on issues that have divided the two churches since the sixteenth century. 

There are two principal parts to the Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VIII, 1990.

The first part entitled "Issues and Perspectives" begins with the problems of the sixteenth century, proceeds with Lutheran and Catholic perspectives on the critical issues involved, and then, concludes with an examination of the divergences as well as on the uniting convergences on the topic: the second part of the common statements provides biblical and historical foundations of the study, from the scriptural to the contemporary teaching; and finally, Catholic and Lutheran reflections conclude the statements.

The divergence between Lutheran and Catholic teaching on the intercession of saints is in the context of invoking Mary and the saints in heaven. Although in the Catholic

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tradition, the teaching of Vatican II says “that it is supremely fitting’ to invoke the
saints and have recourse to their prayers” (LG 50), there has never been the doctrine
of any council or Pope that individuals must venerate or invoke saints. The precise
problem is not the private veneration but the public or liturgical worship of the
Catholic Church. Same argument with veneration of Mary, even if it is rare to invoke
Mary or saints in the Eucharistic celebration for example the litany of the saints
during some festive occasions like Easter, the opinion of the members is that, it
should not obligatory. Up to the present time, the Lutherans still consider that there is
no scriptural foundation for the veneration of saints and Mary (solo scriptural) and
might be prone to compete with Christ as the sole mediator (solus Christus), including
the meritorious divine favor of intercessory prayers. (sola gratia). Additional
convergences concern the two Marian Dogmas: Immaculate Conception and Mary’s
Assumption and the papal infallibility. Sufficient clarifications were given to both
parties hoping that these divergences will be overcome someday.

Among the 19 churches uniting convergence statements, eleven of them are about the
saints, Mary, and the communion of saints. They are as follows:79

1. The term ‘saint’ is used in both traditions for all justified by the grace of

Christ.

79 F. Jelly, O.P., p 561.
2. All the sanctified constituted a communion of saints with Christ who sanctifies.

3. There is solidarity of the church on earth with the church in heaven.

4. We are promised eternal life as members of the community of saints.

5. This fellowship includes the hope of resurrection.

6. In the fellowship of the living and the departed saints we are inspired to greater holiness.

7. We show honor to the saints by thanking God for them, by having our faith strengthened through their response in God’s grace, and by imitating their faith and their virtues.

8. Among the saints, Mary is especially to be honored as ‘God-bearer’ and as the pure, holy and most blessed virgin.

9. Prayers to God in its many forms have divine command and promise and are an integral part of the Christian life.

10. Saints on earth ask one another to pray to God for each other through Christ, and are neither commanded nor forbidden to ask the saints to pray for them.

11. Devotion to Mary and the saints should not be practiced so as to detract from the ultimate trust to be placed in Christ alone.

12. What is normative for both the Catholic and the Lutheran traditions is that
doctrine (*lex credendi*) and worship (*lex orandi*) together should promote the unique mediatorship of Christ.

Another recent Bilateral Working Group of the German National Bishops’ Conference and the church leadership of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany are about *Communio Sanctorium, The Church as the Communion of Saints*. This an overall ecumenical dialogue of the two churches on various levels with the path which goal is a growth in consensus. (271) In the final statement, we read that “the solid basis for agreement in difficult questions was the agreement that the Holy Scripture, as the unsurpassable norm for the church, proclamation, and faith, is the fundamental and decisive measure for all other witnessing authorities. These authorities – tradition, the faith sense of the people, the teaching office of the Church, and the academic theology, are not to be viewed in isolation, but rather must be seen in their relation to Scripture and to each other.” (271).

Chapter seven is on the “Communion of Saints beyond Death “ which has three subheadings: Eternal Life in Full Communion with the Triune God; Prayer for the dead and the veneration of saints (Mary). For the interest of our research we shall draw some orientations from this section:⁸⁰

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1) Just as the love of God gives itself to humanity in eternal faithfulness, so also everything that is the consequence and form of His love will endure, including the calling to the communion of saints effected in baptism and through which the person gains “being in Christ” (I Cor 12:12f; 2Cor 5:17) Therefore, the Christians bears the faith conviction that death is not the end of the ‘communion of saints’; it extends beyond this age. (201)

2) In many New testament passages ‘eternal life’ described life in the ‘the age to come’ (Mk 10:30.) and many more. (203)

3) St. Paul speaks about a transformation of our earthly existence into a ‘spiritual body I Cor 15:44) through the resurrection of the dead. This transformation means that there is something lasting, our personal identity, and through this new creation, also something new that eludes our imagination. (208)

4) In order to resist the picture of a natural immortality, many recent Protestant theologians consciously avoided the concept of ‘soul’. They want to underline that death radically affects the whole person and that resurrection of the dead is completely a deed of God. (210)

5) The church celebrates its deepest mystery as the communion of saints in the Eucharist, in which it ‘proclaims the Lord’s death until he comes.’ (220)
6) The Catholic and the Lutheran churches agree that praying for the dead corresponds to the communion in which we are bound together in Christ beyond death with those who have already died to pray for them and to commend them in the loving memory to the mercy of God. (223)

7) Today, we can speak together of purification in the following sense: the communion in Christ into which human beings are called endures in death and judgment. It becomes complete as, through the pain over failure in earthly life; persons come with their love to give the perfect response to the love of God. That this may take place, the communion of the faithful on earth may constantly pray on the basis of the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ. This prayer, like the veneration of saints, a liturgical expression of their eschatological hope. (228)

8) According to the Catholic tradition, venerating God and venerating the saints are connected to each other and at the same time are carefully distinguished from one another. This is manifested in the following theological concepts: God is the object of our worship (latria, adoratio); the saints deserve veneration (dulia, veneration) (237)

9) The Lutheran tradition honors the exemplary the witness of faith of the saints, sees a connection between remembrance of the saints and worship of God. as much as it emphasizes that the Triune God alone is to be called upon in prayer, the
remembrance of the saints still has its place in prayer; in thanksgiving and intercession the church remembers the gracious work of God that has taken shape in the life and prayer of the saints and abides eternally. (238)

10) Since New Testament times, Mary has taken a special place among the ‘cloud of witnesses’. By God’s own gracious care alone, she was selected to become the other of Jesus Christ, and in the early Church and often used today, she is sister in the faith. Thus she has, just like all other Christians and at the same time in a special way because of her special salvation-historical task, an unmistakable place in the communion of saints; the task which God intended for her and gave her, to be the mother of his Son, sets her apart from all people and gives her a special significance.

11) The conflict thus created has appeared to this day so insurmountable that the doctrine and veneration of Mary has previously scarcely been a subject of ecumenical dialogue. In recent years a change has occurred in both churches. This indicates in the emphasized sentence of the Lutheran adult catechism: Mary belongs to the Gospel. Mary is not only ‘Catholic’; she is also ‘Lutheran.’ (258)

In summary, Mary belongs, and as the most distinguished member, she is completely and fully in the communion of saints. For all the reasons agreed upon, Christians in the communion of saints, those who still find themselves on the pilgrimage of faith,
can not forget Mary, the Mother of Christ: for she sees that God alone is great in all things... she sees God in all things, depends on no creature, relates things to God. Our faith looks in the same direction.

3. The group of Dombes

In 1996, a group of French theologians called ‘Groupe des Dombes’ published the first part of a document on *Marie dans le Dessin de Dieu et la Communion des saints* in 1998-1999. The English version (*Mary in the Plan of God and in the Communion of Saints*) appeared in the year 2002. The second volume was published on the following year, jubilee year, 2000 and celebrated its 60th year of existence as an ecumenical group in France. The theme of these two volumes made a step towards a dialogue focusing on the two ideas related to Mary: first, Mary in the plan of God, second, Mary in the communion of saints.

The major difficulties encountered were almost the same as those of the Ecumenical Mariological Congress namely: the development of the two dogmas (Immaculate Conception and Assumption) and the role of the magisterium. Concerning the Marian doctrine, they stressed on the scripture foundation against Catholic affection and tradition. They affirmed that “Although the Virgin Mary was not the cause of the separation between the churches in the West, she has unfortunately become the sign of

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81 The Dombes Group (Groupe des Dombes) was founded in 1937 by Paul Couturier, the Dombes Group represents a spiritual approach to ecumenism: discussions of doctrinal matters, common prayer and a call to conversion addressed to churches. Paul Couturier was the one who established...
separation." The major obstacle and controversy is the invocation to Mary and the saints like invoking to Jesus.

4. The Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church

It all started in a pilgrimage; in 1966 Archbishop Michael Ramsey visited Pope Paul VI and met in Rome. At the end of their conversation, both of them intended to inaugurate a serious dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church. Both of them believed that these two churches are founded on the Gospels and the ancient common traditions and may lead to that unity in truth for which Christ prayed. ⁸³

In 1982, Pope John Paul II went to Great Britain and knelt to pray with Archbishop Runcie in Canterbury Cathedral. At the beginning of the year 2000, Archbishop George Carey and a representative of His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church were invited by Pope John Paul II to the opening of the Door in the Basilica of St. Paul. Hence, the ARCIC (Anglican Roman Catholic International Congress) takes the road of a dialogue.⁸⁴

Up to the year 2001, the work of ARCIC to date had been centered around the themes on the Eucharist, Ministry, Salvation, the Church, morals—all areas where they had

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⁸² English translation from Mary in the Plan of God and in the Communion of Saints, Alain Blaney and Maurice Jourjon and the Dombes Group, Mahweh, NJ. Paulist Press, 2002, p.13...

expressed real agreement: 1976, 1981, and 1998. Although not all the statements have been recognized by the authorities in both Churches, but then had been in different degrees revaluated.

It took more than one decade, before the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue could agree to discuss the subject of Mariology. But, the Declaration of 1981 on the 'Authority of the Church' took the priority at the discussion table and the question of Infallibility impeded the Marian dialogue. It is to be noted that the major difficulties of the Anglican Church about Mary still remained. The Anglican agreed that: the two Marian Dogmas had a close relationship with Christology and Ecclesiology but they cannot accept the Catholic viewpoint regarding the devotion to Mary and the Saints. The Anglican Church sees these devotions as an exaggeration.85

5. Some recent Protestant literatures:

In addition to what took place in the Ecumenical Meetings and Congresses, there has been some revival or re-discovery of Mary in the Protestant tradition. A Presbyterian biblical scholar, Beverly Gaventa when interviewed by a journalist, states:

"In 1989, when Princeton Scripture a specialist invited me to write about Mary for a series called Personalities of the New Testaments, there was a silence from the pulpit regarding Mary but I was even more shocked to find that my academic peers had been equally mute. So I offered to do something about Mary. And there will be some embarrassed pause and we will say, we are mostly Protestant

84 Samuel Poyntz, p. 220
around here. “Later on she says that she approached her Mary work in ‘a Protestant way. We pride ourselves on reading the Scripture, so let’s read Scripture and see what we find.’”

In brief, some major findings of Gaventa in her re-reading of Scripture summarize her saying that “although Mary’s appearances can be brief and frustratingly devoid of anecdote, there is not a figure comparable to her. No major player appears earlier in the story and none is present in all key situations: at Jesus’ birth, at his death, in the upper room. Therefore, she is the first disciple.” Protestant treatments, Gaventa asserted, are tended to what God does through Mary rather than talk about Mary herself.

Furthermore, in an interview Gaventa revealed that:

“as a mother my profound connection with my child makes it concrete for me do it otherwise, and I cannot pretend to distance myself from certain aspects of these texts (on Mary). When St. Mathew’s Gospel depicts the bloody Roman Bethlehem and the treatment of Jesus, a cold fear grabs me. When Luke described Mary’s puzzlement over the Son who is both hers and not hers, I worry very much for her. Some may find this lamentably sentimental. For me, it is simply life.”

In another instance, Christianity Today publishers acknowledge that more books have been written on the Protestant perspective on Mary. So, the online editor Todd Hertz

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86 A special issue on Mary by Time Magazine. Hail Mary, and March 21, 2005 featured some well-known Protestant theologians like Beverly Gaventa; consult this issue for more information.
met with the executive editors and theologians J.I. Packer and Tom Oden to discuss the role of Mary throughout history and why Mary remains important to all Christians today. Their observations follow:

"It is important that evangelicals clearly affirm that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. But it is nothing unusual with that: it is a consensual, classical teaching. What is more controversial is the notion of Mary as intercessor. That is very controversial between the Catholics and the Protestants because in the 16th century (that teaching) had been abused. Luther never revolted against the Virgin Mary. There is no hint of that. But he did revolt or protest against the abuses of Mary as intercessor."\(^{90}\) (Tom Oden)

"I think we lost by not focusing on Mary. She is magnificent model of total trustful devotion. She is being told to fulfill the public role of an unmarried mother. Yet she says ‘Be it done to me according to your will.’ We evangelicals ought to remember Mary for that. We ought to take the theology of the Magnificat seriously and celebrate Mary, the mother of the Lord, as head of those, who are blessed to be saved sinners."\(^{91}\) (J.I. Parker)

In summary, detailed study on the place of Mary in the communion of saints from the Catholic and the Protestant points of view highlighted issues for ecumenical dialogues can be a call to a conversion in attitudes, doctrines and practices for all Christian believers. The on-going rediscovery of Mary in Scripture, for example in the Gospel of St. John, when Jesus confided Mary to the disciple, John. Then, Jesus confided John to Mary. Here, Mary in the plan of God and in the origin of the communion of saints has been actualized. For Mary’s maternal presence embraces not only Jesus, her son,


\(^{91}\) Gaventa, "There is Something About Mary," p.2
but also the first community of the disciples which includes all Christians. Scholars
from different Protestant denominations are reviving their interest in Mary, not that
she is the focus of devotion, but rather Mary as the first disciple of Lord, the first
beneficiary from the Incarnation.

III. Conclusion

This chapter had developed the history of Mary in the communion of Saints.
Throughout the centuries, some abuses and exaggerations had blurred this original
concept. Vatican II’s documents tried to reconstruct Mariology: Mary in relation to
the mystery of Christ and the Church. Since Vatican II, a few theologians, both
Catholic, and Protestant groups, expounded the subject matter. Here are some
conclusions:

1. The study on John Paul II’s Mariology has shed light on the terminology of Mary’s
   maternal mediation, presence, and intercession in the communion of Saints. The
   basic and fundamental contribution of Mary in the Incarnation and Redemption, as
   Mother of Jesus, Mother of the Church, and Mother of us all highlighted yet, other
   imageries of her; also express deep veneration and love.

Mary’s central role in the communion of saints in the Church’s teaching is John Paul
II’s Mariology. Mary’s her maternal mediation and presence are found in the
spiritual, liturgical and pastoral life of the believers. In the spiritual life of the
community of saints, Mary as a mother, a sister, a friend, a companion is
remembered as intimately connected to the Word of God. While in liturgical life,
Mary is celebrated and asked for prayers and petitions. In devotional practices, Mary
is the mother of Jesus because she is filled with the Holy Spirit. From the beginning
of the Church down through the middle ages up to the present day, this disposition of
her heart, anima ecclesiastica is a loving response to God’s call: a vocation and a
mission to be a being for one another, she is a mother and also our sister.

1. The feminist’s perspective of Mary according to Elizabeth Johnson placed Mary
within the communion of saints in the Creedal framework (Credo). This had a
double advantage: first, it profoundly connects Mary’s life to that of other men and
women whose lives are shaped by response to the Spirit of God. It allowed female
imagery or attribute of God, such as compassion, tenderness etc., traditionally
associated with the Holy Spirit to play a guiding role in the interpretation of the
maternal and the feminine face of God.

“The first article of the Creed, regarding God who creates the world out of
love and the second article regarding Jesus Christ, born of Mary, was crucified,
and was risen can find a meaning in the third article, which professes the
belief in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of Life. Thus, taken together, all
three articles of the creed constitute an understanding of Mary in the
communion of saints.”

92 E. Johnson, Truly Our Sister, p. 102
3. Aside from the many contributions about Mary written and preached after Vatican II, when exaggerated, a negative tendency to isolate Mary from her humanity and over emphasize her place in the Mysteries of Christ and the Church can occur. By doing so, Mary becomes an *idealization* of the mystery. The opposite tendency could reduce the mystery to human dimensions by another tendency: *rationalism*. Rationalism does not accept the notion of mystery and attributes it to natural reason, a knowledge, which only the light of faith could confer. Rationalism ignores the transcendence aspect of Mary’s mystery.

4. The reconstruction model of companionship offered by Elizabeth Johnson is attractive, however, it is also has its limits. In order to understand Mary in a contemporary way, it is necessary to integrate the transcendental symbol in the historical symbol. By uncovering Mary of Nazareth (a historical person) as a Jewish woman, a woman of faith, love and hope to her motherhood and her specific role (transcendental symbol): maternal mediation, presence and intercession in the communion of saints. Thus, there is inclusive way of remembering and loving Mary,

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93 Thomas A. Thompson S.M. in his book review on Elizabeth Johnson's book *Truly our Sister*, The Marian Library, Newsletter, University of Dayton, Ohio, winter, 2003, commented: first, while presenting Mary and the saints as paradigmatic figures we should reject neither their ‘transcendent symbol’ nor her historical symbol. For there is the need of being lifted and transformed in the call to holiness, here on earth. Second, in the eschatological communion where God will be all in all, what Marian images might help us to cope with the sinful realities we find ourselves in? Thirdly, when we speak of Mary on an almost exclusive way of a woman related to the Holy Spirit, we should not forget that Mary is the Mother of Jesus. But as Christ without the Holy Spirit is incomplete, so we wonder about a work on Mary and the Holy Spirit with little reference of Christ. The researcher’s opinion, an inclusive and an integrated view: traditional and feminist will be enriching and revitalizing to today’s Marian devotion and doctrine.
a paradigmatic figure in our ancestors in faith and in human race.

5. The experiences of the Ecumenical Mariological Meetings and other ecumenical dialogues challenged the Catholic Church to rethink some controversies about Marian invocation or intercession that still need to be clarified. A few results from the multiple dialogues with different Protestant denominations are useful for the Catholics, such as rediscovering the historical Mary written by the scriptures, and putting more emphasis in our prayers, Jesus as our one mediator, while Mary and the saints are God's co-mediators in the order of grace. Clarity of Marian doctrine is especially needed in the context of Taiwan Catholicism so that the people will not differentiate Catholics from Protestants by saying that 'Catholics adore Mary and Protestants worship Jesus.'

The long tradition of the Church's doctrine of Mary in the communion of saints had undergone a process from creed to cult. On the doctrinal side, it seemed that in inter-religious dialogue and ecumenical conversation are areas for a discourse. For example in Taiwan, how people venerate Mary and Ma-Zu. At the spiritual devotional level, the veneration of saints, Chinese ancestor veneration and Mary need to be further explored, so that there will be a true integration between Chinese culture and practices with the Catholicism, avoiding idealization or rationalism of Mary. But, as she really is, the mother of Jesus, mother of our ancestors, and our sister in faith. The
next chapters will specifically deal on Chinese ancestor veneration, the communion of
saints, and Mary.
Chapter VI

Chinese Ancestor Veneration, the Communion of Saints and Mary in the Category of Relationship: a Reconstruction.

Introduction:

Chapter III of this dissertation used qualitative research to collect and study data from six case studies and additional in depth interviews. The first hypothesis was verified that there is a relationship between Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints, and that it is relevant and alive in modern Chinese Catholic families in Taiwan.

The second hypothesis regarding Mary’s place in ancestor veneration and the communion of saints received vague and general answers along with some hesitations. Denials came mainly from the Protestant-Presbyterian group. It proved that encouragement is needed for the efforts towards ecumenical dialogue and inter-religious conversation.

Based on the studies of three realities of this dissertation: ancestor veneration, the communion of saints, and Mary, relationship was found to be a common vocabulary, a reality and a factor that is present among them. Meaning to say, that ancestor veneration is a social group that involves families and their deceased ancestors; that the
communion of saints is an organization that functions in the Church among the members and sharing holy things, and Mary is a relational person with the Triune God, Church, believers, humanity and cosmos. At this stage, it is appropriate to recapitulate the findings of previous chapters. Then, present the category of relationship before connecting Mary in the communion of saints to ancestor veneration. We will also show how the category of relationship can point out the divergences and convergences of these three realities.

Using the category of relationship, this study asks: what needs to be done? It is the step towards an action plan. The objective is to find ways of how the category of relationship can serve concretely as a mediating factor between Chinese ancestor veneration and the Catholic understanding of Mary’s place in the communion of saints.

As a consequence, suggestions in areas of Marian theology and spirituality will be a means of reconstruction. Therefore, this chapter will develop the category of relationship, and a reconstruction in ancestor veneration, communion of saints and Mary.

The framework of this chapter follows:

I. Brief summary of the major findings:

1. Chinese ancestor veneration
2. Mary’s place in the communion of saints.

II. The category of relationship:

1. Description of the five dimensions in the field of human relationships.

2. Application to the three realities; points of convergence and divergence.

III. Reconstruction:

1. Meaning of reconstruction in the methodology.

2. Mary in the communion of saints’ contributions to ancestor veneration.

IV. Conclusion

I. Brief summary of major findings:

1.1 Chinese ancestor veneration

The Chinese traditional ancestor veneration practice that presently exists in Taiwan can be understood at two levels: first, at the family-clan existential level. There is a close relationship-vertical lineage between the living and the ancestors. This relationship can be described as origin rootedness. Asian as well as Chinese cultural consciousness has a deep awareness of the principle: “because I belong, therefore, I exist.” A Chinese would say that he/she is a member of a family rooted in ancestral origin, as well as he/she belongs to the Catholic Church and is rooted in Christian faith believing in the communion of saints. Second, at the cultural level,
Chinese Catholics in Taiwan who practice ancestor veneration and venerate the saints point out common motivations underlying these two practices: these are filial piety, gratitude to the ancestors, and request for caring-protection in the communion of saints.

1.2 Mary’s place in the communion of saints.

Before Vatican Council II, the concept of *Koinonia* lived by the first Christian Community was the model of understanding Mary in the communion of saints. (However, during Constantine’s Empire and throughout the Middle Ages, the hierarchy form replaced the concept of communion-fellowship. The tendencies to idealize Mary and to isolate her were strong. For example, she was isolated among the saints, or she was venerated because she was considered powerful and neglected her as a historical person. With the teaching of Vatican II, Mary is integrated in the mystery of Christ and the mystery of the Church. Mary’s maternal/spiritual mediation, presence and intercession in the communion of saints were emphasized. From the feminist perspective, the transcendental symbol of Mary needs to be integrated with her history, by uncovering Mary of Nazareth (historical woman) and her specific role (transcendental symbol); she is our sister in faith. The question before us now is what draws Chinese ancestor veneration, communion of saints,
and Mary together. We will apply the category of relationships to these three realities.

II. The category of relationship

It is acknowledged that human relationships give meaning to life and thus, are important in the process of integration. This section will draw on the category of the five dimensions in the field of human relationships. 1 Gutheinz points out that first, it is important to define the meaning of dimension. Second, to explain the five dimensions in the field of human relationships, third, its inter-relatedness, and finally, how these five dimensions of a human relationships bridge Mary in the Chinese ancestor veneration and in the communion of saints. Subsequently, three charts will illustrate the process of integration of the three realities: Chinese ancestor veneration, Mary in the communion of saints and using the category of relationship. The first chart is to show the four dimensions applied to Mary in the communion of saints. The second chart is to point out divergence and convergence

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1 Luis Gutheinz, S.J. (1933-) has been a missioner in Taiwan for more than forty years. His academic and pastoral contributions are in the fields of Systematic theological writing and teaching to priests, seminarians, religious women and lay people in the Chinese context: Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China. The category of relationship is in his book on “Theological-Anthropology (Man)”, Heaven-Earth and Man (神學中的人學), a Trilogy, in Chinese, Kuangchi Press, 1996, part V, Chapters I to III. pp.263-338. Luis Gutheinz expands the concept of relationship, one of the nine accidents of metaphysics of substance conceived by Aristotle. According to Aristotle, in the static approach to reality, relation among beings is considered an accident, not a fundamental and constitutive universal principle of reality. Precisely, at this point, a growing feeling about the limitations of this static approach to the understanding of reality emerges: the static approach can be compared with a cross-cut of reality, showing the various elements of reality in detail and in a more easy understandable way. But this static approach has serious difficulties to describe the dynamism of life and the process-character of reality, e.g. the fundamental experience of love and being loved; the integral totality of cosmos in its multiformity of relationships.
between these three realities. And, the third one is an attempt to show Mary in the
communion of saints' contributions to ancestor veneration.

1. Description of the five dimensions in the field of human relationship:

In order to expand the category of relationship in the vast cosmos of human beings, the
concept of dimension and function offered themselves as means to describe more
adequately, the meaning of relationship and the field of relationships. Dimension tries
to avoid the thinking in concrete things and layers. It intends to serve the metaphysical
insight of the ontological inter-relatedness of all beings. Function is described as a
complementary concept to the interconnectedness of all beings, pointing to their mutual
interdependence and solidarity. Dimension is used here as a metaphysical concept; it
supports the understanding of the human person with three interdependent categories:
relationship, process, and structure. Hence, the metaphysical dimension of human
relationships is a basic concept pointing to the qualities and aspects of being of the
human person in an inter-related way. These aspects of being are dynamic rather than
static and are not a property of time and space that can be measured. Moreover, a human
being exists in manifold realities that unfold in different degrees and these manifold
realities are expressed in five dimensions of human relationships: transcendent,
human-social, spiritual, biological, and material.²

² Luis Gutheinz, S.J., “Theological—Anthropology (Man)”, p. 287. This researcher did the translation of
the texts from Chinese in to English.
1) The Five dimensions of human relationships:

1.1 Transcendent dimension

The ultimate source of the transcendent relationship is the Triune God; where as a human person finds a response to the Eternal: the self-communicating presence of God. A finite (limited) human person is in reality, a communion-relationship with the Triune God. 

The transcendent mystery of the Triune God consists in three relationships. God the Father is a relationship; God the Son is a relationship; and God the Holy Spirit is a relationship. The Trinitarian relationships are: (1) The relation of God the Father to His Son, Jesus; (2) The Eternal Word, God the Son to the Father. (3) The active union of the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit of Love. God the Father (Eternal Source and Goal of a relationship) is the Creator of the Universe. He begot Jesus, His Son and sent him. Finally, Jesus returned to God the Father. Human beings are God’s children through Jesus Christ, God’s Incarnated Son. (Cor.1: 16-18). Jesus in a responding love is the Incarnated relationship between His Father and humanity. The Holy Spirit is the radical mystery of unity, the unifying factor of Love between God the Father and God the Son, likewise, between Heaven and Earth and in the harmony of the universe (the cosmic world). This relationship brings a fulfillment and enables
a human person to experience unity (communion).³

1.2 Human (social) dimension:

The overall context of all human beings is that they are mutually interdependent; they exist, because they belong to another. It is the dimension of a global village, the family of humanity. In Asian cultural consciousness, there is a deep awareness of the principle: 'because I belong, therefore, I exist.' There is a Chinese proverb that says, ‘We are brothers and sisters within the Four Seas’.⁴ An Asian would also say that he/she is a member of a family, ancestors, humanity, and bigger community, before his/her own personal relationship, a one to one. Here, an Asian believes that the lifeline is from the vertical lineage. Therefore, it is important for him/her to pay tribute, honor, reverence and even veneration to ancestors. In many cultures, there exists a relationship not only between living persons and the cosmos, but also with the dead. In Catholicism, this relationship, known as the communion of saints, has two lines of relationship: one with God and with those who are with the Risen Lord in the eternal life and the other one in a personal human relationship with the other one.

1.3 Spiritual dimension:

This dimension of spiritual relation is dynamically actualized in the cycle of:

⁴ Luis Gutheinz, S.J., "Theological Anthropology", p. 288. It is a popular saying taken from the universal principle of Dr. Sun Yat-Sin, the father of the Republic of China, 1911. It express the bond between all
experience (religious and spiritual), understanding, discernment, and decision. It covers areas of psychology, intellect, and conscience that include an awareness of a beyond, (vision). At the same time, the dimensions of beauty, creativeness, seeking for truth, moral and ethical pursue of what is good, beautiful, true and holy.\textsuperscript{5}

1.4 Biological dimension:

This dimension includes the organic life of a human person and its relation to the ecological relationship with Mother Earth. It is also experienced how nature can diminish and release fatigue (tiredness) and vice-versa. Living in an industrialized society can cause physical and psychological tensions, stress and even some psychosomatic sicknesses of human persons.\textsuperscript{6}

1.5 Material dimension:

This dimension includes the world of so called material things, including money and material possessions. Since this dimension of relation is a concrete and most tangible one, many people think it is the most important dimension because of the recognition of utility and immediate usage of things.

Catholicism has a positive outlook on matter that is integrated in the being and the spirit; thus, the Catholic Church affirms the integral mystery of the human person.

The Resurrection of Jesus is the authentic witness of the integration of matter and

\textsuperscript{5} Luis Gutheinz, S.J., "Theological Anthropology", p. 288.
spirit. In the Risen Lord, there is an achievement of these five dimensions of human relationships.\(^7\)

As a critic to this section, the researcher affirms the dynamic presentation of the category of relationship. However, when it comes to apply these five dimensions in the category of relationship to our research, we ask the question: What was the intention of the author regarding its practical application? Does he intend for the Western realities or to the Asian, or to both in general? We know that the realities are experienced differently as the locality varies. However, taking into account the validity of the five dimensions in the field of human relationships, and for a better understanding of the 'material dimension' that has an eschatological connotation, we shall use 'eschatological' instead of 'material'. Moreover, to simplify the comprehension of terms, the researcher wishes to combine the human-social dimension and the biological dimension into one because some of the realities in the two dimensions are overlapping.

We shall name the third dimension as 'social-historical reality.' Therefore, we shall only refer four dimensions instead of five in our research. Below is a chart illustrating the four dimensions in the field of human relationships applied to Mary in the communion of saints. The Marian data are based from the previous chapter: Mary, as a relational person has fulfilled the four dimensions. Using these four dimensions to define who she

\(^7\) Luis Gutheinz, S.J., "Theological Anthropology", p. 289.
is, we can make application to Mary in the communion of saints and ancestor veneration.

**Chart one: Mary in the communion of saints and the four dimensions in the field of human relationships:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four dimensions</th>
<th>Mary in the communion of saints.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Transcendental</td>
<td>1. She is the chosen one: close relationship with the Triune God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Spiritual</td>
<td>2. She actualized in her life the 'fiat structure': &quot;I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done according to your will.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Historical-social</td>
<td>3. Her historical reality: related to Israel people: daughter of Zion, to Jesus and to His family. Her maternal presence relates to humanity and the universe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Eschatological.</td>
<td>4. Mary's Assumption, her final fulfillment in glory.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) The inter-relatedness of these four dimensions: mediation

In the field of human relationships, the dynamic source of inter-relatedness comes from within through mediation, which provides reciprocity that influences and promotes mutual growth. There are three ways by which human beings interact: through the body, a medium and a language.

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8 CF. Mary in the communion of saints, Chapter V. of this research.
2.1 Human body:

A metaphysical and systematic outlook of the human body is an essential aspect of being human. It is not that the spirit comes first, then the body. A human person is his/her body: a human body is the place a person relates with the material environment and in reciprocity; it is in this ‘divine milieu’ (time and space) that a relationship is experienced. Because a human person exists in five dimensions, a person in his/her integral being is greater than the physical body.

There are two ways in which a human body functions as mediation: a human body in space and time enables a person to go through the experience of a giving and of a receiving relationship. It is in the body where one can see expansion, history, moods, joys, and pains of a person. In the interrelatedness of the five dimensions in the field of human relationships, Astronomy and Ecology directly influence different dimensions of human relationship with the cosmos such as our spirit, the human-social, and the transcendent. While, the dimensions of transcendent, human-social, and spirit point and affect the biological and material dimensions. For example, in a pursuit of what is beautiful, true, good and holy, words and deeds should be coherent. In the training of a charitable heart, facial expression should show mercy and kindness. In contrast, evil doing, selfishness and, haughty behaviors
create negative feelings and result in unpleasant relationship.\textsuperscript{10}

Jesus’ body is the way the Son of God entered a relationship with the whole humanity and the material world. Jesus, with the exception of sin, lived the life of a human person. In His death and resurrection, the mystery of Christ’s body is manifested to us in two ways: first, in the sacrament of the Eucharist and then in Christ’s mystical body. There are three expressions of Christ’s body: First, in Jesus’ physical body in history; second, in the sacrament of His body and blood, and third, in persons who live a relationship with Christ: His mystical body.\textsuperscript{11}

The inter-relatedness of the four dimensions in the field of human relationships is an integral whole and is a contained form of mediation, one dimension mediates the other. When a human person is faced with the Triune God, he/she is not in an immediate direct contact, but it needs a mediation, a medium such as a concept (idea), a symbol, metaphor, or things that can enable a human person to experience the presence of God.

It is through this medium, that a human person says that “I have met God” in the course of his/her ordinary life that God’s presence comes to her/him.

2.2 Symbol:

Each dimension in the field of a human relationship has its own characteristic, they are in communication, influencing one another and transforming one another. In other

\textsuperscript{10} Luis Gutheinz, S.J., “Theological Anthropology”, p. 289.
\textsuperscript{11} Luis Gutheinz, S.J., “Theological Anthropology”, p. 290.
words, each dimension participates in the action of the other. For example: in the material dimension, the weather temperature can influence a person’s psychological mood and ways of thinking. Because these five dimensions are mutually communicating and inter-related, they become an integral whole. When one dimension gives meaning to another dimension, it expresses its needs and becomes the source of a symbol. Symbol is an expression of a presence. What is invisible and untouchable becomes visible and touchable as the source of being in a symbol. For example: the giving of a gift to a beloved is a symbol of love.12

2.3 Language:

In Catholic practices, a sacrament has three elements: 1) language to express some meaning 2) action; and 3) material objects. Language is a system of important symbols. It is not only a simple way of disclosing oneself; it is also how one can be totally present to other persons. In today’s theology, the Church is called ‘the universal sacrament (fundamental sacrament)’. Because the Church is visible, she is the symbol of the mysterious presence of the Triune God: God the Father through the resurrection of His Son in the Holy Spirit is a manifestation of the salvific presence. Trying to express the presence of God is limited for it cannot include all symbols. The deepest symbol of God the Father, His Perfect image in all time and space, is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the

In our post-modern world and in our society, there is a tendency of isolating realities. For example, some medical doctors only diagnose the type of disease instead of caring for the integral needs of the patient; the so-called specialization in the field of sciences, which makes psychology, moral, ethics, spirituality, etc. isolated from one another. In the Christian point of view, one cannot isolate any dimension in the field of human relationships. In a research work, integration is important, the dimension of the transcendent is vital, it is the pivotal point for equilibrium or balanced way of living that promotes a healthy human mental health, builds a peaceful and stable community, and enhances a deep communion.

In the study of the three forms of mediation: human body, symbol, and language, it is deemed by the researcher as valuable means but each form functions best in a process. Our research emphasizes more on person rather than process, i.e., ancestor veneration and Mary in the communion of saints. For the flow of this dissertation, we shall limit it to the application of the four dimensions in the field of human relationships. First, we will study the comparison between ancestor veneration, Mary in the communion of saints applied to the four dimensions of the category of relationship. Then, illustrate how Mary in the communion of saints can influence ancestor veneration.

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2. Application of the category of relationship to the three realities: convergence and divergence.

The first chart showed how the four dimensions of human relationship applied to Mary in the communion of saints. In the following section, we shall try to go a step further that is through a comparative study which points out the convergence and divergence in ancestor veneration and Mary in the communion of saints. Lastly, a study will show how Mary in the communion of saints can contribute and influence ancestor veneration.

The criteria to link these three realities are based on four elements: ontology, faith experience, a sense of belonging, and eschatology. These elements are word synthesized from the four dimensions. Here, we shall point out convergences and divergences between Chinese ancestor veneration, communion of saints and Mary. In summary, this chart wanted to show some convergences and divergences of ancestor veneration and Mary in the communion of saints. By way of a conclusion, elements of convergence and divergence demonstrate how Mary in the communion of saints can influence, complement and enrich Catholic practice of ancestor veneration.

**Chart two: convergence and divergence between ancestor veneration, the communion of saints and Mary in the category of relationship.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of comparison</th>
<th>Four dimensions in the field of human relationship</th>
<th>Chinese ancestor veneration</th>
<th>The communion of saints</th>
<th>Mary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontologically</td>
<td>Transcendent dimension</td>
<td>The practice of ancestor veneration taught by Confucianism does not explicitly refer to a transcendental being. 14</td>
<td>The saints are strongly united in the Risen Lord.</td>
<td>She is the chosen one. She is ‘full of grace.’ Her being is rooted in the Triune God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential</td>
<td>Spiritual dimension</td>
<td>Focused more on ethical and moral values, a humanistic approach rather than a religious one. 15</td>
<td>The saints are holy persons who had lived their lives in testimony to Kingdom’s values.</td>
<td>All the ‘yes’ in her life ‘Fiat-structure’, Let it be done according to your will.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially: sense of belonging</td>
<td>Human dimension</td>
<td>The sense of belonging to a family and to a clan is strong; but ancestor veneration practice remains only within the family and clan circle. 16</td>
<td>There is no boundary in the Resurrected Christ. All those who are baptized enjoyed in the communal relationship.</td>
<td>Historically and culturally, Mary is related to the people of Israel, she is the ‘daughter of Zion’, And ‘Virgin-mother’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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15 Confucians engage in the process of self-transcendence (to become a virtuous person) and self-effort. Interpreted by Tu Wei Ming and Mou Tsung-San stressing the centrality of creativity in being human: for Confucius the heart of being human is creative reason, the capacity to transform the self and relate in a humane way to others. Cf. Tu Wei-Ming, “Centrality and Commonality, An Essay on Confucius Religiousness”, Sunny Series in Philosophy and Culture, Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press, 1989, p.94.

16 Confucian’s value of humanness comes from the institution (family) where a person primarily learns humanness. From this standpoint, the obligation of filial piety, a motivation for ancestor veneration practice is not only to care for the deceased ancestor but also to become a virtuous person. Cf. Robert Cummings Neville, “Conscious and Unconscious Placing of Ritual (li) and Humanity (ren)” in Ecumenical Studies: A Contemporary Confucianism and Western Culture, Winter-Spring 2003, XL, 1-2, p51.
Chinese ancestor veneration

There are three ways of communication and transmission between the living and the dead: by the petitions of the living and the dead, especially during the Eucharistic celebration and in commemorating their entry to Heaven.

Recalling the dead (Daoism), by re-incarnation (Buddhism) and by the ancestor tablet (Confucianism).

There are three ways of communication and transmission between the living and the dead: by the petitions of the living and the dead, especially during the Eucharistic celebration and in commemorating their entry to Heaven.

Mary in her vocation as mother relates to us, and the universe.

Eschatologically

More pragmatic and focused on the present life rather than preoccupied with life after death.

Eternally in the presence of the Risen Christ

Her Assumption: eschatological fulfillment.

### III. Reconstruction:

I. The meaning of reconstruction

Reconstruction is the third stage in the main methodology used in the research.

The two other stages are: critical analysis and alternative sources.

In chapter one, reconstruction was described as a creative inculturation process that seeks to integrate Mary in the communion of saints to ancestor veneration. After studying the four dimensions in the field of human relationships, we discover that there are some significant contributions in Mariology that can contribute to ancestor veneration.

Based on the results of our study regarding the four dimensions in the field of human relationships applied to ancestor veneration, the communion of saints, and Mary, we came to some critical observations of convergences and divergences.

We believe that Mary in the communion of saints has a social nature in the realm of spirituality and fulfills the four dimensions of human relationships. She can
influence, complement, and enrich Chinese Catholic ancestor practice. Therefore, we will show how Mary in the communion of saints contributes to Chinese Catholic ancestor veneration by identifying four corresponding roles of Mary.

They are as follows:

**Chart three: Four Marian roles fulfilled in the four dimensions:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four dimensions in human relationship</th>
<th>Mary’s roles and Dogmas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Spiritual</td>
<td>2. Her perpetual virginity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Historical-social reality</td>
<td>3. She is our ancestor in faith, and witness to Christian living: Mary’s Motherhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Eschatological</td>
<td>4. She guides us to eschatological fulfillment: Her Assumption</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Mary in the communion of saints’ contributions to ancestor veneration:

This third chart identifies five Marian roles, corresponding to four dimensions in the field of human relationships. We shall apply these four Marian roles to ancestor veneration.
1) Transcendental dimension:

The transcendental dimension is strongly present in Mary and the communion of saints: faith is the root of Christian being. While the ancestor veneration practice seems to neglect this dimension and emphasize more on the relationships between the livings and that of the living and the dead, without referring to a personal God. It is in this the transcendental dimension that Mary in the communion of saints can complement in the Catholic practice of ancestor veneration. By presenting Mary as rooted in God, her Immaculate Conception, will guide the Chinese Catholics to deepen the transcendental dimension in their lives. As children of God chosen and loved, we can live a life in God's graces. Motivations of practicing the ancestor veneration will not only because of filial piety towards our ancestor but also, like Mary, a form of filial piety par excellence, gratitude and respect to God.

2) Among the divergences, we saw that in daily life of Chinese Catholics practicing ancestor veneration, they can learn from Mary in the spiritual dimension. She is the handmaid of the Lord. Mary is committed to her faith and concretized in her in prayer and in charity, The actualization of spiritual life towards our neighbors, especially those who professed other faiths than
Christianity. She is a virgin - mother and a disciple. Mary can be our guide in seeking and doing God’s will.

3) In the historical social reality dimension, ancestor veneration and the communion of saints are groups of persons who belong and are united together for a specific aim. They have a reciprocal relationship such as ancestor veneration practiced in families and clans commemorate the ancestors with gratitude, pay respect, and fulfill their filial piety and in turn receive care and protection from their ancestors. The communion of saints unites members of the Church on earth to those who are in heaven, those who need prayers, and intercession. Mary in the communion of saints manifests the social aspect of her virtue: she is our ancestor in faith. She, as a mother teaches us how to care, intercede, protect, and mediate graces received from God to others as a sign of sharing and affection. She is a witness of Christian faith, whom we can learn to share with others, Jesus.

4) These realities: ancestor veneration and Mary in the communion of saints asked the question of life after death. Especially, in ancestor veneration practiced by non-Christians also believe a deceased person lives and still needs material things. Only in Confucian tradition, there is a pragmatic
concentration on the present life without giving any answer to a life after.

Mary in the communion of saints is a guide to the eschatological fulfillment: her Assumption is a sign of hope.

IV. Conclusion

The category of relationship shows the four dynamic dimensions in the field of human relationships. It is simple yet differentiates in the realization of co-existence, communion, presence, and personal relationship of an individual (Mary) as well as a group, family, clan (Chinese ancestor veneration), and Church (the communion of saints). The category of relationship uncovers many dimensions in the life of a human person. For example, it gives meaning as well as an identity to a person in relation to a family and in journeying to eternal life. The four dimensions of human relationships interact with one another based on the experiences of the past, present, and future, the sequence of time, from one generation to another generation, and has an impact to transmit from one culture to another culture (Chinese ancestor veneration).

The category of relationship is also a call to imitate the virtues or good deeds of the ancestors. In Catholic teaching of holy persons, such as Mary of Nazareth, they witness faith. Mary is a graced woman and an historical person, who shows us the possibility to claim our concrete faith history, participate in venerating our ancestors, in the Church, and be in communion with the saints. In the category of relationship, instead of
separating and isolating Mary, she is an historical person created in the same image and likeness of God. Positioning her as a creature and a believer, she inspires hope in suffering. Nurtured in the life of the Spirit, she is an encouragement for the community of the believers, the community of saints. Sharing our human conditions, she is in solidarity with the struggle of many, including our ancestors. Therefore, it can be said that Mary in the communion of saints, shows us the possibility to live the four dimensions of human relationship. She is the mother of us all, the handmaid of the Lord, our ancestor in faith and a witness to Christian faith, a sister in faith and someone who led us to the eschatological fulfillment.

In the next section, we will conclude our study by drawing out some significant findings by recapitulating the methodology used: critics, alternative sources and reconstruction. Three schemas will illustrate salvation history including Mary in the communion of saints and ancestors. Through these three illustrations, we can visualize the development of Church teachings on the three realities of our research work. In the final conclusion will include some recommendations and an assessment will show the strengths and the weaknesses of this dissertation.
Chapter VII

Recommendations, Assessment and Conclusion

Introduction:

The understanding and application of the category of relationship pointed out some significant links between Chinese ancestor veneration, the communion of saints and Mary, as convergence and divergence. Human relationships give meaning to life as individuals as well as groups. Chinese Catholic ancestor veneration practices lead Chinese Catholics in Taiwan to identify with their root of origins. There is interrelatedness (vertical lineage) with the family, with the clan and with the Church. Through faith experiences, devotion to Mary and the saints, as model guides them to Jesus.

This concluding chapter will recall the methodology used in this research work. The principal method includes three stages: to see (critic), to judge (alternate sources), and to act (reconstruction). Here is a summary on how this methodology was used to draw significant findings.
I. **Methodology used**:

1. Chinese ancestor veneration:

   1.1 Critic:

   Chapters two and three developed at length the differences between Chinese ancestor veneration and ancestor worship. Four different ethnic groups representing the population of Taiwan showed us how ancestor veneration, still strong, faces social and cultural differences in the past as well as in the present time. Reviewing the history of the ‘Chinese rite controversy’ in 1917 to 1939, we come to understand better its complexity and its impact to Chinese Catholics. Some main reasons of the ‘Chinese rite controversy’ were on the cultural level rather than religious. It was difficult for the Catholic Church to sanction the rootedness of Chinese people to the Confucian virtue of filial piety prescribed to all Chinese people. Throughout the centuries, the prohibition to venerate ancestor as Catholics was experienced alienation to one’s cultural origin (identity). Hence, Catholicism was often seen as a foreign religion.

   1.2 Alternate sources:

   Qualitative research analysis of six case studies and additional in depth studies showed how these primary sources were also alternative resources used to verify the relevance and meaning of ancestor veneration to Chinese Christians:
Catholics and Protestants. The experiences of individual person as well as families and the clan testified that indeed, ancestor veneration, as a practice is alive in the heart and mind of Chinese Christians. Even when there were some denials on the part of Chinese Protestants, our study showed that ancestor veneration remains to be a ‘hot’ topic for an ecumenical dialogue.

1.3 Reconstruction:

Our survey on ancestor veneration practiced by Catholics parishes and the Catholic University in Taiwan guided to a reconstruction. Guidelines given by the Taiwan Catholic Bishops Conference and Liturgical Commission were seen suited and recommended for public and private ancestor veneration practices. Moreover, the Marian dimension of our research was elaborated to link Mary with the Chinese Ancestors Veneration and the Communion of Saints.

2. Mary in the communion of saints:

2.1 Critic:

Chapters three, four and five were focused on the meaning of ‘communion’ as a Church model and how the communion of saints is related to Mary. Based on the rich scripture, Church documents, and traditions, the insertion of the article “I believe in the communion of saints” in the Apostles’ Creed has its profound meaning along with other articles. We saw the effects of the ‘over-emphasized
of hierarchy form’ instead of ‘kiononia’ as in the Acts of the Apostles in the history of Mary in the communion of saints. Mary was isolated, privileged, almost idealized for centuries.

2.2 Alternate sources:

Vatican II documents had placed Mary back into the Mystery of Christ and the Mystery of the Church; the negative reactions among some Protestants against the veneration, and mediation of Mary and the saints, ancestors included were still present. These occasioned the Catholic Church to re-think our own Mariology. Protestants’ points of view on Marian mediation, forms, veneration and intercession questioned some Catholics’ exaggeration and narrowness. Feminist theology suggested that Mary in the communion of saints should be refocused on her historical person as a companion, and a sister in faith. Furthermore, this research found that the Church documents answered the question of salvation for non-Christians. The positive attitudes and responses from Church documents and the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences gave hope to Taiwan Catholics.

2.3 Reconstruction:

Reconstruction of Mary in the communion of saints in general and in particular among the Asian Catholics can be observed by a change in attitudes and
teachings from the Catholic Church as well as to the question of salvation for non-Christians ancestors. This research suggested more Ecumenical dialogues and Inter-religious conversations as concrete reconstruction.

3. Mary in the communion of saints and ancestor veneration

3.1 Critic:

The category of relationship explained through the five dimensions was studied and found applicable for Mary in the communion of saints' contribution to ancestor veneration. However, in the five dimensions, it was deemed that the human-social dimension and the biological dimension were overlapping. To the benefit of this research, these two dimensions were integrated into one dimension named ‘human–historical reality.’

3.2 Alternate sources:

The researcher made some attempts at alternate sources: first, by re-discovering Mary as an historical person and an ancestor in faith. She fulfilled the four dimensions in the field of human relationships. Second, using a comparative study on the three realities: ancestor veneration, the communion of saints and Mary, convergence and divergence pointed out to the link between these three and the five (by now used as four) dimensions in the category of relationship.
3.3 Reconstruction:

The final reconstruction of our research applied the roles of Mary in the communion of saints, which fulfilled the four dimensions in the field of human relationships to ancestor veneration. This attempt of a reconstruction showed some enriching elements, complementary aspects, and constructive influences to Chinese Catholic ancestor veneration. To summarize our conclusion, here is a presentation of three schemas on how this research understood the development and integration of Mary in the communion of saints and the ancestor veneration in the salvation history.

After showing how this research was accomplished using the methodology of the three stages: critic, alternate sources, and reconstruction, we move now to some recommendations that aim to contribute and facilitate the inculturation process of Mary in the communion of saints and the ancestor veneration.

II. Recommendations:

1. For many years, in Taiwan, Mary had many faces; most of them came from foreign missioners who presented the face of Mary through foreign lenses and the official universal Roman Catholic Church. Some Chinese artists had sought to inculturate
the face of Mary in their arts like Monica Liu (Liu He Bei) and in Marian hymns composed by Fr. Li Zhen Bang and Mr. Zhang Wun Xi. The pluralistic religions context and realities of Taiwan with its many folk religions and beliefs make the Marian quest rich in the possibility to explore. The search to discover the face of Mary in Taiwan is vital not only for Catholics but also for Protestant Churches. More and more Presbyterian and Anglican theology students are enrolled in our Catholic Theologate for courses on Mary. In recent years, writings and academic discussion have been a means of collaboration between Catholic and Protestant theologians about Mary and the ancestor veneration.

2. The results from the qualitative study of the six case studies and additional in depth interviews show that, for most Taiwanese Catholics, different faces of Mary, appeal to their hearts. First of all, she is seen as a mother who is compassionate, merciful

1 Ms. Monica Liu is a well-known artist in Taiwan who paints Mary with a Chinese face. Her annual exhibits and calendars are appreciated in most Catholic Chinese communities.

2 Freedom of religions is a constitutional right in Taiwan. Polytheistic and syncretistic, Chinese religions blends aspects of ancestor worship, Daoism, Buddhism, and folk beliefs. In a population of more than 23 million, nearly 48,899 temples and churches are scattered around the island serving 11 million believers. Christian believers remain a minority, and they count not more than 5 % of the total population. Taiwan currently has around 304,000 Catholics and 793 churches. (CF. a Brief Introduction, Republic of China-Taiwan 2003 Government Information Office, pp.176-155.)

3 For the past decade, there are about two to three Protestant students enroll in Taiwan- Fu Jen Catholic University, Faculty of Theology, annually.

4 In 1985 and 2000, Protestant Presbyterian groups had sponsored Ecumenical conferences on ancestor veneration in Taiwan. In 2000, in memory of Pastor Dr. Mackay, the Canadian pioneer missioner of Taiwan, Ms. Theresa Chian, the director of Liturgy at Fu Jen Faculty of Theology was invited as one of the speakers. She spoke on the topic of “Catholic Perspective on Ancestor Veneration.” In the same year, Sister Cecilia Yeh, F.M.M. had contributed an article “Many Faces of Mary” in a Protestant journal called Dao, The Way.

5 Heart is taken from the biblical language that indicates a person’s center and seat of feelings and intentions.
and present to all, (her maternal presence). She is a companion in their journey (her spiritual life: *fìat* structure) and she is a holy (virtuous) person, who had done good deeds. She is our ancestor in faith, a witness to Christian life, and a sister in faith.\(^7\)

For the future, the researcher would make some suggestions to continue painting Mary’s roles with ‘Taiwan’s brush and hues’, so that Chinese Catholics in Taiwan can recognize her in the practices of the veneration of ancestors and the saints.

3. By experience, as tested by approving the two hypotheses, there had always been a desire to integrate faith (Mary in the communion of saints) and culture (ancestor veneration). The category of relationship applied as the link was not always simple. How do we integrate the metaphysical principle of the West to the pragmatic practices of the East? Much more, this research sought to offer some Marian contributions to ancestor veneration, an innovation and a challenge to the academic world in today’s Catholicism. As suggestions, first, Mary in the communion of saints can be a topic for renewal. What we had seen in Chapter VI on how Mary in the communion of saints can contribute to ancestor veneration can be made available and shared in Chinese Catholic communities of Taiwan. Second, as practical application, during seasonal festivals in the Chinese calendar, the Catholic

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\(^6\) In the Chinese context, Mary is called the ‘Holy Mother’ and not ‘Blessed Mary’ and Marian studies as ‘Holy Mother Studies’, instead of ‘Mariology’.

\(^7\) The results of this dissertation show that three Marian roles: maternal presence, companionship, and witness to Christian life are possible to integrate Mary in the ancestor veneration (culture) and faith (communion of saints) among Taiwan Catholics.
calendar of saints and Marian feast days, incorporating Chinese ancestor rites with
the litany of Mary and of the saints can be a concrete gesture of praising God for
our ancestors in faith and in human race. Third, an improvement on ancestral tablet
used in the Church to include Mary in the communion of saints, so that the Chinese
faithful will be able to comprehend that their ancestors are also in heaven.

4. One of the significant findings of our qualitative research is the question most
respondents asked, “in the history of salvation, where are their ancestors who were
not baptized?” The three schemas below illustrate the development of salvation
history, including Mary, the saints, and ancestors. The first schema shows the
concept of salvation taught from the early period of Church history till Vatican
Council II. This covered the longest period of theological concept, that emphasized
a hierarchical idea, a priority in the order of holiness (holy persons), and in the
sharing (communion) of spiritual goods. The Church teaching on the communion of
saints is composed of a body of earthly and heavenly saints, where Jesus is the head.
The communion of saints was understood as the communion of holy things (sancta)
among holy persons (sancti) those who were baptized in the Church. There was a
separation between those who were baptized and those who were not, even in the
notion of heaven, hell, purgatory and... limbo! There was little inter-relationship

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8 See Chapter V, Laurentin’s argument on the changes from ‘communion’ to ‘hierarchic’ form.
9 CF. Chapter IV dealt with the communion of saints.
between each level, except through intercessory prayers, penance, and supplication.

Mary was isolated from the communion of saints, she was interceded and venerated and had occupied a special place. The relationship was more vertical than horizontal. This schema influenced the spirituality of 'I, me and myself and God or with Mary.' It also overstressed practices about penance, atonement, and even accumulation of merits from prayers to God, Mary, saints and ancestors.

First model: the following diagram illustrates this understanding:

![Diagram](image)

This model had provoked people from inside and outside the Catholic Church, to ask questions on the relevance of the hierarchical concept of holiness. Coming from the
non-Christian world how, does the saying ‘Outside the Church there is no salvation’ apply to them?\footnote{Cyprian (200-258) had addressed the non-Christians with this attitude. Although the Church had never official confirmed this statement, it was a popular belief till the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.} As in the case of Chinese ancestor veneration, it took some time for the official Church to restudy the question of the controversy of rites and approved it as an expression of filial piety by Catholics, in the veneration of their ancestors.\footnote{From the responses recorded in Chapter three: Chinese ancestor veneration.}

During and after Vatican II, important issues like the attitude of dialogue vis-à-vis non-Christian religions on salvation were discussed and voted upon. Documents were published to foster the idea of dialogue.\footnote{Vatican Document, \textit{Nostra Aetate}, 1965 \#2 says “The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy of these (other non-Christian) religions.”} The model of the Church as People of God and the Church as Communion brought about a circular model of sharing of God’s grace in, among, and even those who are outside the Catholic Church. Mary, Mother of Jesus, whose maternal presence embraces all, is called ‘the mother of us all.’\footnote{Pope John Paul II, \textit{Ecclesial in Asia}, p. 137.} Protestants and Catholics began to meet, and through several Ecumenical congresses, they called for a rethinking of Catholic’s Marian doctrine and devotion.\footnote{Cf. Chapter V of this thesis.}

\textbf{Second model: communion relationship}

This model focused on the Triune God with Jesus Christ the only Savior as the center of all relationships. All created human beings are in God’s likeness and image; different persons and groups, baptized or not, live in a different degree and manner of
being in an intimacy with God. However, there is a strong pull and attraction to the center of holiness\textsuperscript{15} deep seated in the natural world and human beings. God is perceived as inside all beings, existing presence in every created living thing and nature included. The spirituality is holistic, where different dimensions of a human person are important in the growth process, “It must therefore be firmly believed as a truth of Catholic Faith that the universal salvific will of the one and the Triune God is offered and accomplished once for all in the mystery of the incarnation, death and resurrection of the Son of God.” (\textit{Dominus Iesus}, 14) Integration: a relationship with God (transcendent), self, others, and the cosmos.

The saying “Outside Jesus Christ there is no salvation” is eluded in the declaration \textit{Dominus Iesus}. On the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus and the Church, it says “Hence, those solutions that proposed a salvific action of God beyond the unique mediation of Christ would be contrary to Christians and Catholic Faith.” (\textit{Dominus Iesus} #15).\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15} For more documentation, read the thesis of P. T. de Chardin, \textit{Toward a Science Charged with Faith}, http://661027104 search? www.crosscurrent.org/chardinhml, 2005/3/9, p.5 His life spins itself around two poles of thought and feeling: his sense of fascination and wonder about the natural world and his sense of God’s presence welling up from within the world: centration. Also Professor John Haught says “that for Teilard, a scientific reason for a claim (intensification of faith, hope and love) is that there is an increasing centration at the heart of socialization (relationship). Religions are fundamentally ways through which the universe continues, at least at the terrestrial and human levels, its ageless search (higher) for a Center.” Cf. John Haught, a symposium given at Fu Jen Catholic University, Faculty of Theology, “Darwin and Divine Providence”, Nov. 28, 2004. For more information refer to Professor John Haught, \textit{The Cosmic Adventure}, Paulist Press, New York, 1984.

Recent re-interpretations of the historical Mary of Galilee by some biblical scholars both Catholics and Protestants, see Mary's presence in every important life event of Jesus. Her place in the history of salvation, inside and outside the Church, is significant and can be found also in the messages of her apparitions in the 20th century. It is a tangible sign that Mary is among God's people regardless of culture, race, and religion. Today, Mary as a mother of all and a sister in faith are names appropriated to her. She is seen as among the little ones, the poor of Yahweh, and accompanying humanity towards the New Heaven and the New Earth (Apoc.21, 1-4).

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17 Cf. Chapter V of this thesis.
18 Cf. Chapter V of this thesis.
Third model: the Evolutionary model

In the past decade, with the recognition and through the contribution of interdisciplinary sciences, the concept of inter-dependence and inter-penetration paved ways to a re-thinking on the law of evolution and theology. Prompted by many changes which brought confusion and disorder, theologians and theoreticians admit that there is indeed, a relationship between human beings, living and dead, nature and the cosmos, and most of all that God is present at the heart of all changes, movements, even chaos until the fulfillment is achieved.\footnote{Ewert Cousins, \textit{Christ of the 21st Century}, New York: Continuum, 1992. p.4.} Ewert Cousins pointed out the axial age as distinguished from the pre-axial period where the dominant form of consciousness was cosmic, collective, tribal, and ritual and was an arena where a rich harmony between people and nature could thrive. In other words, the eschatological-evolution model promises hope and a new vision to a new order of relationship between God and human beings, God’s friends and prophets.\footnote{Elizabeth A. Johnson, \textit{Friends of God and Prophets}, Novalis, 1998.} By her maternal presence, Mary, mother of all, chosen and graced by God for humanity, has a role in this evolution. She journeys in God’s grace, in constant changes and movement, in her faith, hope,
and love that is solidly grounded in the compassionate God the Father, in the cosmic Christ, and in the life of the Spirit with humanity and the cosmos world. This aspect of Marian presence in salvation history shows her collaboration with God. 'It is clear that in order to understand Mary, she must be considered within the salvation history.'

5. As a result of the development on ancestor veneration, the communion of saints, and Mary, primarily, the Marian quest can open inter-religious conversations as topics of studies, such as the relationship between the Christian creation spirituality and the Chinese concept of life. Another one could be the search for a Christian creation spirituality. It is not advocating a new religion, but is concerned with theologies and practices within religions and cultures that promote personal as well as universal interdependence. Secondly, who is Mary for us and among us? How can she bring us to our real ‘home’, eternity? This awareness is strong, especially among those living in a non-Christian context, they believe that their non-baptized ancestors are also holy men and women who had struggled (in the company of Mary and the saints) journeying towards Eternal Life. An Asian theologians like Aloysius Pieris claims, “Outside God’s covenant with the poor, there is no salvation”. For him, the Triumph of the Cross reveals that “We are before a God

who turns his option for the poor and a covenant with the oppressed into a salvific path that finally constitute also that ultimate proof of that particular God’s claim to be Savior-God i.e. Christ.”

As a summary, the understanding of Mary’s role in salvation history, in the category of relationship links her in the veneration of ancestor and the communion of saints at all times and for all ages. She is not only referred to as mother, companion, and sister in faith to those who are outstanding individuals, traditionally called ‘saints’, and canonized by the Church, but also to the whole community of people including ancestors, graced by the Spirit of God. Neither is Mary’s presence exclusively to those who have died but also the community of living persons. Furthermore, the third model about the evolution movement might be more acceptable in a Taiwan context, for it is circular, inclusive, and embraces the community of the visible and the invisible world. This circular model can be supported and draws as sources, the early age of the martyrs, creed, liturgy, and Church teaching of a communal relationship. This model also signifies the relationship flowing among different groups of persons, Christian and non-Christian, ancestors included, profoundly touched by the God where the members sharing in the community of life which is also holy. Ultimately, this model points to the Creator Spirit who vivifies creation, weaves interconnections, and makes
holy the world.\textsuperscript{22} Although there is still a long way to go in order to arrive at the fulfillment, God's faithful covenant with his people will guide all as well as the Taiwan Catholics. A renewal of Marian spirituality and liturgical life will foster a pursuit to inter-religions conversation and dialogue among the Catholics.

### III. Assessment:

As we come to the end of this dissertation, the researcher wishes to offer some learning observations: its strengths as well as weaknesses.

1. Strengths:

   The development of this dissertation attempted to use an Asia methodology together with a sociological study (Qualitative research method applied in case studies and additional in depth interviews). Multiple variables were interesting, and pluralistic approaches were enriching to decipher the realities of our theme. Usually, the findings were studied and verified not only through doctrinal and historical data but measured and sometimes, confusion set in, especially in areas of sociological study. This research in itself is an-open ended question and it would be pretentious to say that a clear solution is found, especially to the existential question of salvation of non-Christians. Our main purpose was an attempt to get a deeper

\textsuperscript{22} Paraphrased from Elizabeth A. Johnson, \textit{Friends of God and Prophets}, p.2.
understanding of Mary in the communion of saints and Chinese ancestor veneration.

However, the Marian quest among the Catholics in Taiwan can be a path to seek for a dialogue. We discover that the Motherhood of Mary stands out not only among Chinese Catholics but also to the Protestants and the non-Christians; although, this Marian icon is expressed differently to different people, but in reality, Mary has only one face in the history of humanity: Mary of Nazareth. Various expressions of Mary as mother in salvation history can be consolidated in her maternal presence, companionship, and Christian witness. Efforts in Marian doctrine and devotion in the ancestor veneration and the communion of saints could provide a rich Church educational plan. The future of Mariology in Taiwan faces challenges as well as demands to continue to make Mary known and loved.

2. Weaknesses:

Taking a second look at different findings in this dissertation, some of them are not neatly ‘clear’ but pointing to future on-going work. The theme is an open-ended quest that can be complex and confusing. Yet, it has already begun. Some contributions can be experimented, for example, in area of Marian spirituality; and some recommendations for a growth in the life of Chinese Catholics regarding ancestor veneration and Marian devotion. The task of inculturation is not easy, but it is an important and challenging area of Mariology for Taiwan.
In conclusion, when Mary is assured that her God directs all things according to a loving plan, she freely consents to God’s loving call. “Here I am, the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done according to your word.” (Lk 1:38) If it is the Father’s plan to unite all things in Christ (Eph 1:10), then the whole of creation is in some way touched by the divine favor with which her God looks upon her and makes her the Mother of His Son. The whole humanity, in turn, is embraced by the ‘yes’ with which Mary really agrees to do God’s will.

IV. General Conclusion:

Looking at the research’s findings and suggestions about Chinese ancestor veneration, communion of saints, and Mary, we have come to the full circle of this dissertation. Although suggestions given might challenge the present and future task of evangelization and inculturation for theologians and Mariologists in Taiwan, to seek the Chinese (Taiwan) faces of Mary, it is deemed vital for Taiwan. There is a rich treasury in the orthodox Marian teaching of the Church, it is a desire that the orthopraxis be left for each culture to find actualization of Marian doctrine and devotion.

1. This dissertation attempts to link Mary to Chinese ancestor veneration and the communion of saints in the category of relationship and uncovers three Marian roles taught by the Church. Her maternal presence is for all human kind. She is our
ancestor in faith. Her Christian testimony guides us to eschatological fulfillment. These Marian roles are studied in ecclesial (local Church) context and ecumenical dialogue. The dimension of spirituality in the category of relationship which is one of the most important contributions, can be defined as Marian spirituality, grounded in the Gospel of John 19:25-27, a dimension added to Christian life. It is the dimension of continuity and permanence in the relationship between Mary and God’s people. Marian spirituality, by description, stresses with greater emphasis, the mutuality and interactive character of a relationship between God, human persons (on earth and in heaven), and Mary. This mutuality and interactive character could be further understood as a complement of Christian formation and dedication to follow Jesus. Mary, through her maternal presence, is also the spiritual mother of Jesus’ disciples. She can form a human person to be receptive and faithful, and like her to be attentive to the teaching of Jesus and in the spirit of Jesus’ love. The disciple shows his/her readiness and availability to dedicate oneself to God.23

2. However, actualization of the above suggestions will depend on the leaders in the communities of believers and the collaboration of members in renewal and ongoing formation programs. As we have seen in previous chapters, the model of

communities of believers can undergo a transformation from the model of
communion to centration and to evolution. Of course, it implies that members are
conscious that all human beings are God's children, and called to holiness and
conversion. Can we say then that through Mary's maternal mediation, our
ancestors, including those who are not members of the Church, are in the Presence
of the Risen Lord?

3. As a part of ancestor veneration, offerings of nature harvests like: fruits, flowers,
and burning incense are important symbols. To these offerings, corresponding
scriptural readings can be included. For the offering of the fruits, John 14:14-16;
flowers, Mt. 5:24-25; and incense, Mt.5: 20-23. The community remembers the
good deeds and virtues of the departed ones with respect and affection. Meaning to
say, that there is a strong belief that the deceased person is in the company of the
ancestors and the saints. In the litany, the name of Mary is mentioned along with
the choir of the angels and the saints. Choices of scriptural readings can be selected
from the Old and New Testaments.24

4. Other Chinese ancestor veneration practices in seasonal feasts are an invocation
for God's protection and blessings through Mary in the company of the saints.

Mary does not take part as a mediatrix but as an important member of the Church

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24 Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World is a book written by Kowk Pui Lan, a Hong Kong
Chinese Biblical Scholar referring to how Scriptural readings can be presented to non-Christians,
and in the universal family. She shares with us God’s graces, together with Jesus, as mediator, she, as the mother of Jesus, is also the mother of the whole humanity. Mary, as our ancestor in faith, is present in ancestor veneration; in as much as she is with the ancestors in heaven, she is also with the ancestors in every secular celebration on earth.\(^{25}\)

Most Taiwan Catholic families expressed a devotion to the Holy Family by placing an image in their homes. By encouraging families to pray together, it can strengthen family ties and family spirit. In our modern days, when everyone seems to be busy attending to his/her own chores, there is a necessity to emphasize of a family gathering in prayers and in reconciliation. To encourage family prayers, Fr. Zhao Yi-Zhou had written two volumes on Family prayers.\(^{26}\) These books are also good suggestions for ancestor veneration.

Moreover, the parish ancestral tablet\(^ {27}\) should be a symbol that expresses the integral concept that the deceased persons (ancestors) are united with the Risen Lord in the company of Mary and of the saints. Its theological meaning needs to be emphasized.

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\(^{25}\) Guidelines to Ancestor veneration for Families and Parishes in Chinese were revised by the Liturgical Commission of FuJen Catholic University, Theologate, endorsed by the Regional Taiwan Bishops Conference, in 2000.

\(^{26}\) Fr. Zhao Yi-Zhou, a diocesan priest is a liturgist. His two volumes written for family prayers include: First volume, family Eucharist according to liturgical cycle and the second volume, family prayers such as morning, evening, and during mealtime. Family Prayers, two volumes, Chinese Catholic Bishops Conference Printing Press, 1994).

\(^{27}\) From an interview with the director of the Liturgical Commission at FuJen Theologate, Miss Theresa China says that there are 160 parishes in the archdiocese of Taipei, almost all of them have installed an ancestral tablet inside the Church but they vary in types.
Mary’s presence in one’s life is a relational reality, it implies being present to God, to self, to others, to things, to events, and to the universe. It might seem obvious, yet, it presupposes an awareness to grow and to develop the relational capacities in each human person personally as well as in a group. Presence occurs in relationship, it is an invitation to integrate Marian spirituality in our Christian life. We have also seen the category of human relationships and realize how it (relationship) is never unilateral, meaning to say, how can we talk about Mary’s presence in our lives without ascertaining that, at the same time, we also are present to her? The same can be applied to practices regarding ancestor veneration and the communion of saints as essential and vital. Furthermore, presence, as we understand it, can never be a direct or immediate presence. It is mediated among human persons, such as God, our ancestors, saints, and Mary. As human persons, we use words, (language) - written or oral - as in prayers and gestures (offerings, signs of gifts) to express our presence. Marian devotion like ancestor veneration is a ritualized and symbolic activity by using images, ancestral tablets, and formalized texts (scripture or from the ancestors’ deeds) in ordinary and special seasonal feasts to establish contact with the invisible (deceased ancestor, saints, God, and Mary). In Taiwan, we do not only ask: “who Mary is for us but where is Mary among us?” She is always

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28 J. Roten, S.M., Marian Spirituality, pp.2-4.
present in our salvation history and accompanying us in our pilgrimage, as our mother and sister in faith.

Finally, in Taiwan’s pluralistic society, religious freedom gives us opportunities to seek ones’ salvation in different religions. Mary as ‘ecumenical facilitator’ and ‘inter-religious companion’ can assist us in the ecumenical dialogue and inter-religious conversation, in order to share our human and spiritual knowledge and experiences with our brothers and sisters towards a harmony between Heaven, human persons, and earth.
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Appendices

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Appendix 1: Confucius Anaclets, Book I, Filial Piety. (Original texts in Chinese Translated in English) pp. 325-334


Confucius

Confucius (551-479 BC -- Wade-Giles K'ung-fu-tzu or Pinyin Kongfuzi), or Master K'ung, whose life defines the end of the Spring and Autumn Period in Chinese history, becomes long after his death the dominant Chinese philosopher both morally and politically. In the Warring States Period Mencius (Meng Tzu) (c.390-305 BC) extended and systematized Confucius's ideas; but with Confucius's adoption in the Han Dynasty as the official moral and political doctrine of the State, the Confucian tradition became so broad that "Scholar" or "Literatus" became all but synonymous with "Confucian," and so Confucianism could simply be called the Ju Chia [Pinyin Ru Jia], or School of the Literati. As one of the "Three Ways," together with Taoism and Buddhism, Confucianism also grew into one of the traditional religions of the Han Chinese [1].

The following table gives the basic moral terminology of Confucius, with the Chinese characters. This goes a long way to explaining the nature of Confucius's moral doctrine, since each term embodies the values or disvalues considered morally important. The table is divided into categories that are familiar from the structure of ethics in Western philosophy. Indeed, while many people may think of Indian or Chinese philosophy as intuitionistic or mystical, which is rather like what we do find in Taoism, Confucianism has been said to be a hundred times more rationalistic than Western philosophy. Confucian ethics are certainly clear and uncompromising, with points of similarity to Immanuel Kant and Christianity.

<table>
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<th>BEING</th>
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| 仁 Rén, "benevolence, charity, humanity, love," kindness.  
Confucius defines it as "Ai rén," "love others." [Analects XII:22] | 義 Yi, "right conduct, morality, duty to one's neighbor," righteousness. | 利 Li, "profit, gain, advantage": NOT a proper motive for actions affecting others. The idea that profit is the source of temptation to do wrong is the Confucian ground of the later official disparagement of commerce and industry. |
| 禮 Lì, "propriety, good manners, politeness, ceremony, worship." | 君子 The gentleman (chün tzu or 君子) understands li. The small man understands 正. [Analects IV:16] |
| Yi may be broken down [Analects IV:15] into:  
zhóng, doing one's best, | | |
Yu Tzǐ said,

“It is seldom that a man of filial piety and brotherly love would be inclined to offend those above. There has not been a man inclined to cause disorder without the inclination to offend those above. The gentleman nourishes the roots. With the roots established, the way grows. Are filial piety and brotherly love not the roots of benevolence?”

1. Disciple
2. Chinese traditional family concept of devotion, duty and respect which, according to The Lun Yü (《論語》), is extended to include all elders, living or dead
Chapter 1
Verse 6

Confucius said,
"In the home, the young should behave with filial piety, and out in the world, with brotherly love. They should be prudent and trustworthy. They should love all people and be close to the benevolent. Having so done, their remaining strength should be used to learn literature."
Tzü Hsia¹ said,
"To revere virtue instead of beauty,
to devote all strength to serving parents,
to be willing to die in serving the lord,
to speak with trustworthiness in dealings with friends:
even though it is said this is not to have learned,
I say this is."

¹ Disciple
Chapter 1
Verse 11

子曰、父在觀其志、父沒觀其行、三年無改於父之道、可謂孝矣。

Confucius said,
"Note the aspirations of the man during his father's lifetime\(^1\), and the conduct of the man after his father's death. If after three years he has not changed his father's way, this could be considered filial piety."

\(^1\) The code of conduct based on filial piety was that a man should act according to the wishes of his father. Therefore while his father was alive, a man's true character could not be judged by his conduct, only by his aspirations.
Chapter 1
Verse 13

Yu Tzü said,
"When trustworthiness complements righteousness, words can be fulfilled.
When courtesy complements the rites, shame and disgrace are kept afar.
Thereby those closest are not lost and the honour of the ancestors is preserved."

1 Disciple
Chapter 4
Verse 20

Confucius said,
"If after three years\(^1\) the father's way has not changed, this could be considered filial piety."\(^2\)

\(^1\) Three years after the father's death
\(^2\) See also CHAPTER ONE: Eleven
Appendix 2: Original Text on "Chinese Rites Controversy." pp335-338

(in Latin, English translation, Chapter II)

CF. "Acta Apostolica Sedes, Commentarium Officiale",
Suprema Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide,
Nov. 29, 1939, pp. 24-26.
ACTA SS. CONGREGATIONUM

SUPREMA SACRA CONGREGATIO S. OFFICI

DECRETUM

In generali consessu Supremae Sacrae Congregationis Sancti Officii habito Feria IV, die 29 Novembris 1939, proposito dubio:

«An devotionis formas, vulgo — Devozione all'Amore annientato di Gesù — et — Rosario delle Santissime Piaghe di Nostro Signor Gesù Cristo — inter fideles fovere liceat».


Et Feria V, die 7 Decembris 1939, Ss:nus D. N. Pius Divina Providentia Papa XII, in Audientia Excm:o ac Revmo Domino Adseessori sancti Officii impertita, relatam Sibi Excm:o Patrum resolutionem adprobavit, confirmavit, et publicari iussit.

Datum Romae, ex Aedibus Sancti Officii, die 12 Decembris 1939.


SACRA CONGREGATIO DE PROPAGANDA FIDE

INSTRUCTIO

CIRCA QUASDAM CAEREMONIAS ET JURAMENTUM SUPER RITIBUS SINENSIBUS

Plane compertum est in Orientalium Regionibus nonnullas caeremonias, licet antiquitas cum ethnicae ritibus connexae essent, in praesentiarum, mutatis saecularum fluxu moribus et animis, civilis tantum servare significacionem pietatis in antenatos vel amoris in patriam vel urbanitatis in proximos.
Quapropter hoc S. Consilium Christiano Nomini Propagando, Summo Pontifice Pio XI f. r. approbante, novas super hac re annis 1935 et 1936 imperit Ordinaris Manchiuriae et Imperii Iaponici, iuxta can. 22, normas hodiernis rerum adiunctis magis congruentes.

Sacer Congregatio de Propaganda Fide

Nuper vero Een Patres eodem S. Consilio Christiano Nomini Propagando praepositi, in generali consessu, die 4 vertentis mensis Decemberis celebrato, consideraverunt an alius quoque in locis, ubi similis rerum adiunctorum mutationes decursu temporum advenisse constaret, similis agendi ratio admittenda esset.

Argumentis itaque hinc inde attente perpensis, prudentium atque experientium virorum sententia exquisita, idem Een Patres, quae sequuntur censuerunt esse declaranda:

1. Cum Sinense Gubernium pluries aperteque enuntiaverit omnibus esse liberum quam malint religionem profiteri et alienum esse a sua mente de rebus religiosis leges aut iussa edere; ideoque caeremonias, quae in honorem Confucii a publicis Auctoritatibus sive peragunt sive inuentur, non fieri animo tribuendi religiosum cultum, sed hunc solum in finem ut foveatur et expromatur in virum clarissimum dignus honor et in traditiones patrum debitus cultus: licitum est catholicis adesse actibus honoris, qui ante Confucii imaginem vel tabellam, in monumentis confucianis vel in scholis perpenderit.

2. Ideoque non habendum est illicitum imaginem Confucii, vel etiam tabellam eius nomine inscriptam, in scholis catholicis collocari, praestim si Auctoritates id iusserint, aut eam capitis inclinatione salutare. Si quando timeatur scandalum, declaretur recta catholicorum intentione.

3. Tolerandum ut catholici magistratus et alumni, si publicis caeremoniis adiuvantur quae speciem praeseferant superstitionis, intersint quidem, dummodo, ad mentem can. 1258, passive se habeant signaque illius taetum obsequii faciant, quod ut mere civile iure haberi possit; declarata, ut supra, sua intentione, si quando hoc necessarium apparuerit ad falsas interpretationes sui actus removendas.

4. Inclinationes atque aliae civilis observantiae manifestatio-nes ante defunctos vel defunctorum imagines, et etiam ante tabellam defuncti, simplici nomine inscriptam, uti licitae et honestae habendae sunt.

Considerantes praeterea idem Een Patres iuramentum super ritibus sinensibus a Summo Pontifice Benedicto XIV per Constitutionem Ex quo singulari diei 11 Iulii 1742 omnibus sacerdotibus « in Sinarum Imperio alisque ei conterminis sive adiacentibus Regnis ac Provinciis » impe-
ratum. non plene congruere cum recentibus normis ab hac S. Congregatione datis, atque insuper idem iuramentum nunc temporis uti disciplinare instrumentum omnino esse superfluum, cum notum sit antiquas de ritibus sinensibus controversias esse pacatas, et, ceterum, missionarios et alios sacerdotes nulla indigere iuramenti coactione ut promptam filiallemque praestent S. Sed obedience: censuerunt dispensandum esse ab obligatione illius iuramenti, ubicunque, sive in Sinis, sive alibi illud in usu esset; firmis manentibus ceteris praescriptis Summi Pontificis Benedicti XIV, quatenus recentioribus Instructionibus non sint immutata, prae primis prohibiteionem super ritibus sinensibus disputandi.

Quam Eorum Patrum sententiam, Ssno Domino Nostro Pio Prov. Div. Papae XII, ab infrascripto Cardinali huius S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Praefecto, in audience diei 7 mensis Decembris relationem Sanctitatem Sua in omnibus dignata est approbare et ratam habere.

Datum Romae, ex Aedibus Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, die 8 mensis Decembris A. D. 1939, in festo Conceptionis Immaculatae B. M. V.

PETRUS CARD. FUMASONI BIONDI, Praefectus.

L. B S.

† Celss Costantini, Archiep. tit. Theodos.,
Secretarius.

——

SACRA CONGREGATIO RITUUM

——

CHICAGIEN. SEU LAUDEN.

CANONIZATIONIS B. FRANCISCÆ XAVERIAE CABRINI VIRG., FUNDATRICIS INSTI-
TUTI MISSIONARIARUM A S. CORDE IESU.

SUPER DUBIO

An signanda sit Commissio Reassumptionis Causae in casu et ad effectum
de quo agitur.

«Gaudium, quo repleti fuimus, dum in Urbe solemnia Beatificationis
praeclarae mulieris Franciscæ Xaveriae Cabrini, Virginis, Fundatricis
Missionariarum a S. Corde Iesu, celebravimus, ingeminatur et adhuc
augetur. Tanta enim erga Beatam fervet devotio tantaque fidelicia in eius

1. **Proposed Catholic Ancestor Veneration**
   Memorial Liturgy for Church and Family Use,
   Chinese Bishops Conference Region of Taiwan,
   Taipei, Dec. 29, 1974, pp.1-5

2. **Proposed Catholic Ancestor Veneration**
   Liturgy for Church and Family Use,
   Holy Family Church, Taipei, Taiwan,
祭祖儀式

（祭祖儀式参照我國現行民禮儀範例第三十八條辦理）

每當我國農曆春節、清明節及秋節所訂諸節日，追思已亡
節等，由主任司鐘宣吿敘友參與祭禮為之隆重獻祭外，並於
祭禮開始換穿中國禮服（長袍），由輔祭二人陪同至祖先靈位
前，舉行祭禮。儀式如後：

1. 祭祖典禮開始

（由輔祭或另請成年敘友一人任司儀，輔助進行）。

2. 全體肅立

3. 主祭就位

4. 奏樂歌唱

F 3/4

主題：$\begin{align*}
  & 1 & 6 & 1 & 2 & 1 & 3 & 2 & 1 & 2 & 1 & 1-
\end{align*}$

上主是我的，光明我的救恩。Finc

領：（聖誔126）自由節奏

i------------2i760------------67560

1. 上主是我們的，回到房裡，我們在夢裡。
2. 那時列國萬民都讚嘆不已，上主向我們行了偉大事蹟。

5. 祭燒

6. 聖經

（出稱篇，四四，1—15，或由神父任選適當經文，由
輔祭或敘友朗讀，敘友起座）。
現在讓我們來讚揚那些著名的偉人，和我們歷代的祖先：
上主在他們身上，做出許多光耀的事，自太古就對他們顯示了自己的偉大。他們中，有在自己國內為王的，有因自己的能幹而聞名天下的；有因自己的明智而作參議的；有因自己的先知任務而明察一切的；有因自己的決策和明智，而作當時民衆領袖的；有以自己賢明的訓言，教導民衆的學者；有因其所長，創作樂曲的，有寫作敘事詩的；有的是富而有權勢的人，有的愛好美術，在自己家中，過著安靜的生活。這一切人，在自己的民族中，歷代受人尊敬，他們在世時，就被人誇讚。他們中有有的已留名於後世，使人讚頌不已；我所要稱揚的人，都是寬大為懷的人，他們的義舉，不會被人遺忘；他們的善行與子孫同存，他們的後裔，保有這善行的產業；他們的子孫履行盟約，他們的子女，因了他們，也是如此：子孫孫孫，永世常存；他們的光榮，決不會滅滅；他們的名譽，必留於永世；民衆必稱述他們的智慧，集合必傳揚他們的美德。——以上是天主的聖訓。

衆：感謝天主。

7. 講道
（由主祭講解聖言及當日祭祖之意義與關係）

8. 上香 （執友起立）
（由司儀將燒香三炷點燃，雙手捧交主祭，主祭接過以雙手舉香齊額致敬後，將香分三次插入香爐中央。又香爐通常設於香案之前中央。
用乳香提燈奉獻亦可。）
9. 祭献祭品

(1) 花：司儀將花束捧交主祭，主祭雙手舉花束頌於祭壇後，插入花瓶中。花瓶通常擺於祖先牌位左右側，與點燃之紅色蠟燭平排。

(2) 酒：司儀將美酒壺捧交主祭，主祭雙手舉壺致祭後，酌酒三杯，酒杯懸於祖先牌位之最近前排。

(3) 果：司儀將水果盤捧交主祭，主祭雙手舉果盤齊額致祭後，放於酒杯左右。

10. 祝壽及鞠躬禮（為祖先祈禱）

主祭：天主願意我們紀念祖先，追憶已亡的親友，現在我們為他們祈求天父，恩准他們進入天鄉。

全體念：我們的天父，願祢的名受顯揚，願祢的國來臨；願祢的旨意奉行在人間，如同在天上。

求祢今天賞給我們日用的食糧；求祢寬恕我們的罪過，如同我們寬恕別人一樣；不要讓我們陷於誘惑，但救我們免於凶惡。阿們。

主祭：我們也為他們祈求聖母瑪利亞，代為轉求天主，賜他們福分永福。

全體念：萬福瑪利亞，你充滿聖寵，主與你同在，你在婦女中受讚頌，你的親朋與眾人受讚頌。

天主聖母瑪利亞，求你現在和我們臨終時，為我們罪人祈求天主。阿們。

主祭：最後我們為他們念聖三頌，求天主恩赐他們在天國與諸位聖聖一齊歌頌天主升天，分享天主的無限幸福。

全體：願光榮歸於父、及子及聖神；起初如何，今日亦然，直到永遠。阿們。

（最後向祖先牌位行三鞠躬禮，司儀呼一鞠躬、再鞠躬、三鞠躬時，主祭及全體親友一齊行禮。）
11. 信友禱詞

主祭：各位教友：天主的誡命要我們孝敬父母，追念祖先；今天我們懷着對先祖感恩的心情，也特別為他們向天父祈禱。

領一：請為我們的祖先和所有故去的親友祈禱，求主恩賜他們都能在天國團聚，共享永生的福樂。我們同聲祈禱。

眾：求主俯聽我們。

領二：請為所有已去世而無人追念的先人祈禱，求主賜施仁慈，恩賜他們都能進入天國，參加天主子女的行列。我們同聲祈禱。

眾：求主俯聽我們。

領三：請為所有作子女的祈禱，求主使他們常感念父母養育之恩，都能善盡孝道。我們同聲祈禱。

眾：求主俯聽我們。

領四：請為我們堂區所有家庭祈禱，求主恩賜我們在現世能和平相處，精誠團結，使我們日後都能到天上與我們的祖先和親友團聚。我們同聲祈禱。

眾：求主俯聽我們。

主祭：仁慈的天父！祢是亞巴郎和亞格伯的天主，也是我們祖先的天主，求祢俯聽我們這個大家庭的祈禱，使我們的祖先都能安息在祢的懷內，分享祢的慈愛。因我們的主基督。

眾：阿們。

12. 禮成
禮成

請唱：

(1) 聖歌 詔粹 第三三八頁
(2) 讀頌上主 增訂本 第三頁
(3) 歡樂年華 （革新本） 第二二〇頁　

願主內兄弟姊妹以中緩為準向左向右豎，相互一鞠躬。

神長與教友們相互一鞠躬。

神長與教友們相互一鞠躬。

我們神長的諸多照顧，求主降福他們德化日隆，身體健康，永沐主恩。我們也要彼此拜年，表達主內

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祭祖典禮

敬拜

上香 獻花 獻果 獻爵
向列祖列宗靈位行三鞠躬禮：一鞠躬、再鞠躬、三鞠躬（請坐）

讀經
恭讀德訓篇（四十四，1-15）
現在讓我們來讚揚那些著名的偉人，和我們歷代的祖先：上主在他們身上，做了許多光耀的事，自太古就對他們顯示了自己的偉大。他們中，有在自己國內為王的，有因自己的能幹而聞名天下的；有因自己的明智而作參議的；有因自己的先知任務而蒙恩一切的；有因自己的決策和明智，而作當時民衆領袖的；有以自己賢明的訓言，教導民衆的學者；有因其所長，創作樂曲的，有寫作敘事詩的；有的是富而有權勢的人，有的愛好美術，在自己家中，過著安靜的生活。這一切人，在自己的民族中，歷代受人尊敬，他們在世時，就被人誇讚。他們中有的已留名於後世，使人讚頌不已；我所要讚揚的人，都是寬大為懷的人，他們的義舉，不會被人遺忘；他們的善行與子孫同存，他們的後裔，保有這善行的產業；他們的子孫履行盟約，他們的子女，因了他們，也是如此：子子孫孫，永世長存；他們的光榮，絕不會泯滅；他們的名譽必留於永世；民衆必稱述他們的智慧，集會必傳揚他們的美德。

—以上是天主的聖言—

（默禱片刻）

~15~
聖歌

一、讚頌感謝天主

1. 我等著頌感謝全能者天主聖父慈仁；請天朝諸聖敬拜同聲歡呼歌吟。至尊至聖亨榮福世世無窮，我等讚揚天主聖名。天庭，

2. 我等著頌欽敬救世者耶穌良善聖心；救萬民建聖殿，人靈恩賜無限聖情。可愛可敬，吾願終身矢忠勤，

二、望主使我心煥然一新

對經: 望主使我心煥然一新，又於主聖精神沛我身

1. 上主天主這樣說: 請看好日子快要來臨，我與以色

人民將訂立新盟約。

2. 我必要把法律，深深銘刻其內蘊，永久留在我們心中

3. 我將作其上主，他們將是我的子民。

4. 至於其過犯，我必要全赦免，永不再記憶他們的罪
三、所有全奉獻

1. 我將所有獻給耶穌，一切甘願獻給主。我要永遠愛主
   靠主，日日虔誠服侍主。所有全奉獻，所有全奉獻，
   獻給愛我尊貴主，所有全奉獻。
2. 我將所有獻給耶穌，謙卑服主面前。放棄世間享樂
   虛榮，求主做我的明燈。所有全奉獻，所有全奉獻，
   獻給愛我尊貴主，所有全奉獻。
3. 我將所有獻給耶穌，將我自己獻給主。將你恩典權能
   賜我，平安隨我到永遠。所有全奉獻，所有全奉獻，
   獻給愛我尊貴主，所有全奉獻。

四、上主是我的牧人

對經：上主是我的牧人，我什麼也不缺。

1. 上主真是我的好牧人，我什麼也不缺，祂領我走向那
   草地上，憩息在小溪旁，使得我的靈魂重甦醒，上主
   是我的好牧人。
2. 你的木杖跟隨我左右，成為我的安慰，在我的眾仇敵
   的面前，你為我設宴席，聖油抹在我額頭上，杯爵中
   洋溢著甘飴。
3. 我將常有幸福和安樂，主將與我同在，我要居住天主
   的寶殿，直到世界永遠，天主真是我的好牧人，引領
   著我走向天庭。

五、賀新年

1. 賀新年，祝新年，新年啊，年連年，今逢佳節，主
   台前。
2. 賀新年，祝新年，新年啊，年連年，歲月悠悠，
   如箭。
3. 回首一年苦樂，謝主宏恩，求主助佑迎接新年。
4. 賀新年，祝新年，新年啊，年連年，求天主賜大
   福年。
Appendix 4: Six Case Studies: Letter of the Researcher And Six Responses to Questionnaire in Chinese.
(English Translation: Chapter III)

1. Letter of the Researcher to the Respondents

2. Six Case Studies’ Responses to Questionnaire.
Taiwan, October 2004 to February 2005
敬愛的

主內平安與喜樂！

帶著我無限的感謝與期待寫這封信給您，盼望您能積極的回應我的邀請，透過回答這份問卷與後續的訪談，讓我們可以一起為這份研究工作而合作。這為我將是很大的鼓勵，因為這份研究工作，是要幫助我完成我的博士論文（輔仁大學神學院）----走向在脈絡中發展的聖母學：從現代台灣天主教教友祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發。

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謝謝你的參與及支持。我將會在十月中旬後與你聯絡，若你有任何問題，也請別客氣的找我，電話：02-27051841，

E-Mail：celiamic@tttn.net。

同時也要麻煩您在十一月中前填妥這份問卷，並寄回給我。

我的地址是：(106) 台北市復興南路二段148巷27號5樓

讓我們協同聖母，一起頌揚天主！

蔡愛美 MIC

2004-10-7
問卷：走向在脈絡中發展的聖母學：

從現代台灣天主教祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發

2004-10

一．你的背景

姓名：顧寶 Steph （原住民的名字）

國籍或省籍：台灣

宗教信仰：天主教

若是天主教，請寫出領洗時間：1959年

二．歷史與文化的幅度

1）你是在什麼時後開始祭祖？

從小時候約5歲跟著爸媽學祭祖。

你的家庭是什麼時候開始參與祭祖？

祭祖是族裡已存在的牧祝的表現。

2）近十年內，你家族中的祭祖有哪些改變？
較大的改變有：從信奉天主教後全程都改變了，按著天主教的儀式祭祖。

我們原住民和漢人的祭祖儀式有大大的不同，我們用豬、牛整條祭祖，

和朋友友邦分享（分得各乙份）的祭品，留下一部分大家一起吃喝等。

較小的變動：清一色的使月天主教的方式舉行（這一點我們的祭祖的方式變為洋化了）。

3）在祭祖時，會不會提出祖先做過的好事與美德？

會，用什麼方式：用口頭的方式一一說出他在部落及社會之間的善表、

領導風格等。

不會，因為：

4）如果你們是基督徒家庭，祭祖的儀式與基督徒的禮儀有關嗎？

相關的有：我是信奉天主教，天主教祭祖的儀式使用，採用佛教的方式

（除）彌撒外，我們是原住民與佛教祭祖的方式大大的不同，使我們非常
無形。如果天主教會用佛教的方式祭祖，為何不用我（原住民）的方式？

無關的是：

三．社會與文化的幅度

1) 每年會祭祖幾次？

通常在什麼時候？一、農作物收穫期，就在八月十五日。二、過新年即十一月三十日。

怎麼做？一、用農產品及獵物祭祖。

二、在祖墓前選模範父母及子女，在祖墓前表懇，使族人和下一代能仿效。

2) 有沒有特別的禮儀與經文？

1. 殺豬、鴨、雞供奉，沒有一定的經文，用口頭唱儀。
3) 由誰主禮？

由族裡有名望的人為主。

4) 祭祖時有放牌位嗎？

有，是：

沒有，因為：原住民絕不立牌位，因為沒有文字的關係，只用記號來唱儀（他的名字）。

5) 你們祭祖的理由與動機是：

1. 感恩他們在世的善行及教育之恩和求恩。

2. 不讓惡魔來傷害我們的生活圈。

禮儀的內容為：

集會、獻品、救恩、求定救、保護。

6) 祭祖時，扄 由家族自己做。
還有其他人的參與。有：以前是集眾舉行。自從信奉天主教後，清一色的用教堂所擬定的方式做，就是佛教儀式（除彌撒外），對我們很無奈。

7）祖先牌位中，有女性嗎？

点亮：有，她們是：不設牌位，如上項第四節所行。

在家庭中的地位：

沒有。因為：我們是由男做主，但如果女性中族（或外部落）有善表，也列唱名行列，讓下一代的子孫做榜樣。

四．神學與神修的幅度

1）你們家對「生」與「死」的看法是什麼？

「生」：尚未信奉天主教前，「生」是神所按那，因此對神非常的敬拜，不任意逆理。

「死」：死為可怕，變鬼神可來害人，也可來幫助人，不清不楚的鬼神。

2）你認為祖先們，現在在哪裡？
我不知道你這樣問我時，我應該站在現在的想法或以前的還沒有接受基督
耶穌的信仰前的我？我不懂您把我放在那一方？

1. 如果以現在的信仰的幅度回答你，我會按照信仰的幅度來回答。

2. 如果依以前未信奉天主教的幅度回答，他們的處境非常的廣泛，任何
地方相信他們都遊手好閒。

3) 你認為祖先們，現在在做什麼？

同上。

4) 你認為祖先們，與我們家庭的關係是：

他們在保護我們，也會懲罰我們。因此必須遵守祖先的遺訓，互愛互助
，不侵犯他人。

五、中國的祭祖與聖母在諸聖相通的關係

1) 從你的經驗，你認為「中國的祭祖」與「聖母在諸聖相通」二者中是有關
連的嗎？

有，因為:
沒有，因為：我還是強調我是原住民，跟中國的習俗完全不同。以我的
觀察，中國人祭祀的目的及用意非常的狹義，本位主義非常
的濃厚，如果為別人去做，好像為他們是

2) 從你的經驗，你認為祖先們是諸聖相通中嗎？

是，因為：

不是，因為：死後只管自己及族人的關係，死後不知道還能為別人做什
麼，有那樣的能力嗎？這是一般人的想法。

六．請寫下你在回答此份問卷時的感想與意見：

我生長的年代是錯綜複雜的環境長大，十時父親過世，又是在日據時代在山
上的小部落裡長大，對自己的文化幾乎都不清楚，絕大部分的老年人以接受
日本文化為榮，因此不了解自己的文化，也不了解中國人的文化，無從比較
。但我很早就接受了天主教的教義，因此我回答這份問卷時，我無法作主。

1.我要站我祖先的想法來回答？

2.我要站在天主教信仰的想法來回答？

好像兩面都不是。又不懂中國人對祖先的祭儀，我只能說他們祖先的祭儀
沒有諸聖相通之意。
敬愛的

主內平安與喜樂！

帶著我無限的感謝與期待寫這封信給您，昰望您能積極的回應我的邀請，透過回答這份問卷與後續的訪談，讓我們可以一起為這份研究工作而合作。這為我將是很大的鼓勵，因為這份研究工作，是要幫助我完成我的博士論文 ( 輔仁大學神學院 ) ----走向在脈絡中發展的聖母學 : 從現代台灣天主教教友祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發。

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我的地址是 :( 106 ) 台北市復興南路二段 148 巷 27 號 5 樓

讓我們協同聖母，一起頌揚天主！

蔡愛美 MIC

2004-10-7
問卷：走向在脈絡中發展的聖母學：
從現代台灣天主教祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發

2004-10

一．你的背景

姓名： 吳曉嵐

籍貫或省籍： 山東省

宗教信仰： 天主教

若是天主教，請寫上領洗時間： 1960

二．歷史與文化的幅度

1）你是在什麼時後開始祭祖？

1978 年。

2）你的家庭是什麼時候開始參與祭祖？

我的家庭在欣喜得知教宗發佈准予祭祖時，即刻安排相關事宜。

2）近十年內，你家族中的祭祖有哪些改變？
較大的改變有：父親在世時與叔叔全家人（亦即在台灣的家族全員）一起祭祖；但父親離世後，大家協議分開進行。

較小的變動：以往祭祖時，會準備牲禮（魚、肉等），現較趨向簡的鮮花水果。

3) 在祭祖時，會不會提出祖先做過的好事與美德？

會，用什麼方式：用口禱讚頌及感謝。因若祖先的美德，在血脈相傳中，我們這些子孫會得到天主的祝福！

不會，因為：

4) 如果你們是基督徒家庭，祭祖的儀式與基督徒的禮儀有關嗎？

相關的有：行鞠躬禮並燃香；祖先牌位之上方有聖家相片。一定會誦讀
三．社會與文化的幅度

1) 每年會祭祖幾次？至少三次

通常在什麼時候？中國的重要三個節慶（農曆過年、端午、中秋）。

怎麼做？買鮮花、水果（三樣）祭拜，並追思感念他們在世時的教誨及義德。

2) 有沒有特別的禮儀與經文？

沒有特別的禮儀與經文。
3) 由誰主禮？

一之主（往年是父親主禮，現在由母親主禮）。

4) 祭祖時有放牌位嗎？

有，是：吳氏歷代祖先。

沒有，因為：

5) 你們祭祖的理由與動機是：

慎終追遠。

禮儀的內容為：

簡單、莊重；在祭祖之禮儀當中，定有感謝、讚美天主的恩典。

6) 祭祖時，由家族自己做。

□ 還有其他人的參與。有：
7) 祖先牌位中，有女性嗎？

- 有，她們是：列祖列宗，尤其在每年奶奶生日忌日都有儀式。
  在家庭中的地位：

- 沒有。因為：

四、神學與神修的幅度

1) 你們家對「生」與「死」的看法是什麼？

  「生」：天主賜我們每個人生命，並要我們生活得好。

  「死」：要將靈魂隨時準備好，離世時即刻到天父那裡享永福。

2) 你認為祖先們，現在在哪裡？

  在慈愛的天父那裡。
3) 你認為祖先們，現在在做什麼？

喜樂的歡聚在一起，並會為我們這些子孫們祈福轉禱。


4) 你認為祖先們，與我們家庭的關係是。

有他們在世時的許多福蔭，也有他們回歸天鄉後的庇佑。


五．中國的祭祖與聖母在諸聖相通的關係

1) 從你的經驗，你認為「中國的祭祖」與「聖母在諸聖相通」二者中是有關係的嗎？

有，因為：與「諸聖相通」是同一道理。


沒有，因為：


2) 從你的經驗，你認為祖先們是諸聖相通中嗎？

是，因為：我深知祖先們已多位成聖。
六．請寫下你在回答此份問卷時的感想與意見:

很榮幸有機會更深地感動 (及感謝) 祖先們將寶貴的禮物 (認識天主，親近天主...) 送給我們；他們早已是耶穌基督揀選的葡萄枝，我可以很自然地吸取在這脈絡相傳的養分...，許多的感謝與讚美，更提醒自己要將此珍貴的禮物，傳承予子女，子子孫孫，生生不息...。
敬愛的

主內平安與喜樂！

帶著我無限的感謝與期待寫這封信給您，盼望您能積極的回應我的邀請，透過回答這份問卷與後續的訪談，讓我們可以一起為這份研究工作而合作。這為我將是很大的鼓勵，因為這份研究工作，是要幫助我完成我的博士論文（輔仁大學神學院）----走向在脈絡中發展的聖母學：從現代台灣天主教教友祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發。

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從現代台灣天主教祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發

2004-10

一．你的背景

姓名：李淑芬

國籍或省籍：台灣省

宗教信仰：天主教

若是天主教，請寫上領洗時間：1989.12.24

二．歷史與文化的幅度

1) 你是在什麼時後開始祭祖?

家族是民間宗教信仰，故從小家人即有祭祖的傳統。

你的家庭是什麼時候開始參與祭祖？

祖先代代相傳的習慣，自有記憶便有。

2) 近十年內，你家族中的祭祖有哪些改變？
較大的改變有： 沒有。


較小的變動： 將過去的傳統的一些習俗慢慢的精簡。


3）在祭祖時，會不會提出祖先做過的好事與美德？

會，用什麼方式： 於清明掃墓前父母再提到過去曾祖父母如何持家、貧

困中如何節儉過生活等等。

不會，因為：


4）如果你們是基督徒家庭，祭祖的儀式與基督徒的禮儀有關嗎？

相關的有：


無關的是： 家族都不基督徒。
三、社會與文化的幅度

1) 每年會祭祖幾次？ 365 次

通常在什麼時候？ 每天晚上。

怎麼做？ 由父親先向神明上香後向祖先上香。

初二、十六，中國的三大節日，重要節慶則攜上鮮花、素果，先祭神明

再祭祖先，祭祖時會加上三牲及飯菜。中國清明節一定會掃墓祭祖。

2) 有沒有特別的禮儀與經文？

沒有特別的經文，平時先祭神明再祭祖先（順序：廳堂神明，祖先，門神）。

掃墓時禮儀程序：先祭土地公、后土、祖先。

3) 由誰主禮？

家中長輩：親族中的長輩，父親或哥哥。

4) 祭祖時有放牌位嗎？
5) 你們祭祖的理由與動機是:

中國人的傳統習俗，慎終追遠。俗語云：「吃果子拜樹頭，飲泉水思源頭」。父親常常會說：「人要常常飲水思源」。

禮儀的內容為：

如上所提。

6) 祭祖時，□ 由家族自己做。

□ 還有其他人的參與。有：

7) 祖先牌位中，有女性嗎？

□ 有，她們是：

在家庭中的地位：
沒有。因為：納入李氏祖先牌位中，牌位中有「公媽」兩個字含括所有男女祖先在內。廳堂兩側擺放曾祖父母、祖父的遺像，男右女左。

四．神學與神修的幅度

1) 你們家對「生」與「死」的看法是什麼？

「生」：好好的過每一天的生活，活在當下，不去追逐功名權力，多做善事積陰德。近幾年家人部分加入宗教信仰的行列，有佛教、一貫道、民間宗教、天主教，會受其宗教信仰的教義所影響，而對生活的態度有所不一樣。

「死」：民：人死後會先到閻羅王那裡報到，若是沒有太大的罪過，在地獄中的閻會比較短，然後再投胎轉世。

佛：說法同上，並努力修行早日超生了死不再輪迴。

天主教：死後進入煉獄，而後回到天父的懷抱。

2) 你認為祖先們，現在在哪裡？

1.不是在煉獄，就是胎轉世去了。
2. 傳道，進入永恆的天鄉。

3) 你認為祖先們，現在在做什麼？

不知道。

4) 你認為祖先們，與我們家庭的關係是：

精神上的連結，若是祖上有德，則庇祐在世的後生晚輩；若是無功無德，
則尚需要在世的親人為他們做善事以為功德迴向，幫助他們早日離開地獄
之苦，早日投胎轉世。

五．中國的祭祖與聖母在諸聖相通的關係

1) 從你的經驗，你認為「中國的祭祖」與「聖母在諸聖相通」二者中是有關
連的嗎？

有，因為：______________________________

______________________________

沒有，因為：家人很少會這樣想，家人都不天主教徒。__________________
大部分台灣人如果家運不順，則會想到是不是與祖先、風水有關，有時會去問神明，請神明幫助超渡或是做功德迴向，使他早日安息。所以會去「落觀音」、「作法會」等等。

無非是希望生者能平安，死者能安息並早日投胎轉世。

2）從你的經驗，你認為祖先們是諸聖相通中嗎？

是，因為：祖先會透過某種意念或是託夢給親人，讓他們知道她們的需
求或是家人有難時會預先告知。當這樣情況發生時，親人或其他人會說：「祖先護佑，有燒香有保佑」。

不是，因為：

六。請寫下你在回答此份問卷時的感想與意見：

很多問題非一言兩語說得清楚，其背後有著龐雜的中國人的傳統，並且受其
民間信仰影響，而民間信仰中又有道教、佛教的觀念，很難劃分，加上本身
後來有加入天主教，其思想會交錯摻合在一起。

個人與家族的關係是相連的。
敬愛的

主內平安與喜樂！

帶著我無限的感謝與期待寫這封信給您，盼望您能積極的回應我的邀請，透過回答這份問卷與後續的訪談，讓我們可以一起為這份研究工作而合作。這為我將是很大的鼓勵，因為這份研究工作，是要幫助我完成我的博士論文（輔仁大學神學院）----走向在脈絡中發展的聖母學：從現代台灣天主教教友祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發。

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謝謝你的參與及支持。我將會在十月中旬後與你聯絡，若你有任何問題，也請別客氣的找我，電話：02-27051841，

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同時也要麻煩您在十一月中前填妥這份問卷，並寄回給我。
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讓我們協同聖母，一起頌揚天主！

蔡愛美 MIC
2004-10-7
問題：走向在脈絡中發展的聖母學：

從現代台灣天主教祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發

2004-10

一．你的背景

姓名：姚玲

國籍或省籍：中華民國

宗教信仰：天主教

若是天主教，請寫上領洗時間：1960（出生）

二．歷史與文化的幅度

1）你是在什麼時後開始祭祖？

2001年返鄉（大陸廣東梅縣）

你的家庭是什麼時候開始參與祭祖？

在台：春節至寺廟祭（祖父），自1970年。

2）近十年內，你家族中的祭祖有哪些改變？
較大的改變有：返鄉祭祖是與家族成員一起祭祖，是在家屋祠堂，祠堂
內有歷代祖先牌位及畫像，大陸文革後中斷祭祠。近十年恢復，僅有舉
香動作，不再有族長帶領唸頌詞、祭文，而是唸禱詞，請祖先保佑，報上
與祭人名。

較小的變動：

3) 在祭祖時，會不會提出祖先做過的好事與美德？

會，用什麼方式：大陸文革前會唸頌詞。

不會，因為：

4) 如果你們是基督徒家庭，祭祖的儀式與基督徒的禮儀有關嗎？

相關的有：父親不是基督徒，所以祭祖時儀式與教會禮儀無關。
無關的是：

三．社會與文化的幅度

1）每年祭祖幾次？___________次

通常在什麼時候？新年。

怎麼做？在祖父、祖母牌位前上香。

2）有沒有特別的禮儀與經文？

無，自行默禱。

3）由誰主禮？

父親。
4) 祭祖時有放牌位嗎？

有，是：祖父、祖母牌位。

沒有，因為：

5) 你們祭祖的理由與動機是：

懷念祖父母。

讓父親安心（我們都是女兒，出嫁後理論上是不用做的，但很願意陪伴父親）。

禮儀的內容為：

上香、鞠躬、默念禱詞。

6) 祭祖時，

☐ 還有其他人的參與。有：

______________________________
7) 祖先牌位中，有女性嗎？

☐ 有，她們是：配偶。近年來子女中，女性也刻在祠堂家譜牌上。

在家庭中的地位：配偶或子女。____________________________

☐ 沒有。因為：__________________________________________

四、神學與神修的幅度

1) 您們家對「生」與「死」的看法是什麼？

「生」：傳承家業、香火。____________________________________

「死」：歸宿，回到列祖群中。____________________________________

2) 你認為祖先們，現在在哪裡？

天上。________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

3) 你認為祖先們，現在在做什麼？

看望著後代。__________________________________________________
4) 你認為祖先們，與我們家庭的關係是：

留下重視教育的傳統，以及樸實、自立的家風。期待家風的維繫、振作。

五．中國的祭祖與聖母在諸聖相通的關係

1) 從你的經驗，你認為「中國的祭祖」與「聖母在諸聖相通」二者中是有關連的嗎？

有，因為：有親屬、家屬的歸納感，也是良好典範的提示，鼓勵我們效法。

2) 從你的經驗，你認為祖先們是諸聖相通中嗎？

是，因為：他們會保佑、看顧後代。我們與他們是可以接連延續的。

不是，因為：
六．請寫下你在回答此份問卷時的感想與意見：

我的經驗可以分成台灣與大陸兩部分。

台灣：春節陪父親到松山寺給祖父母上香。

大陸：1999年首次帶(姓)兒子返鄉祭祖(認祖)。2001年祖母逝世百日。2003年祖母撿骨入墓地。

三次返鄉祭祖，見到大家族親友，突然覺得生命的長度、廣度變得好豐富，
也覺得更安然了解自己從何而來，尤其是父親帶我們走過家族六代的發展及
居屋如何擴展，回憶與我曾祖父、祖父相處的情形、父親在大陸成長至青年
的過程，曾經走過的地方，頓時從一個台灣只有父母親及姊妹的小家庭 (很
簡單，與人無關)，進入一個大家庭 (人多，可以追溯廿八代，也有新生命延
續)，知道自己從何而來，有許多人與我有血緣關係，有許多祖先才有我，也
有許多祖先會保護我，也會給我很好的典範。

祭祖最先為我是陪伴父親盡孝心，尊重父親 (客家人) 的傳統，並表示雖然
我信天主教，但仍然會如此做，懷念他。

但是返鄉的經驗就不只是孝心，也讓我的生命更豐富了。
敬愛的

主內平安與喜樂！

帶著我無限的感謝與期待寫這封信給您，盼望您能積極的回應我的邀請，透過回答這份問卷與後續的訪談，讓我們可以一起為這份研究工作而合作。這為我將是很大的鼓勵，因為這份研究工作，是要幫助我完成我的博士論文（輔仁大學神學院）----走向在脈絡中發展的聖母學：從現代台灣天主教教友祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發。

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蔡愛美 MIC
2004-10-7
問卷：走向在脈絡中發展的聖母學:

從現代台灣天主教祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發

2004-10

一．你的背景

姓名：湯維菊

國籍或省籍：中國台灣

宗教信仰：天主教

若是天主教，請寫上領洗時間：1961.8.15

二．歷史與文化的幅度

1) 你是在什麼時後開始祭祖？

從小開始。

你的家庭是什麼時候開始參與祭祖？

從小開始參與。

2) 近十年內，你家族中的祭祖有哪些改變？
較大的改變有：原以肉類為主的祭品，漸為水果所取代。

較小的變動：

3) 在祭祖時，會不會提出祖先做過的好事與美德？

會，用什麼方式：在交談中自然地提出。

不會，因為：

4) 如果你們是基督徒家庭，祭祖的儀式與基督徒的禮儀有關嗎？

相關的有：中國年、清明節、追思已亡日參與彌撒祭祖。

無關的是：與非基督徒的家庭一起祭祖時。
三．社會與文化的幅度

1) 每年會祭祀幾次？ 三 次

通常在什麼時候？ 中國年、清明節、追思已亡日。與家族（非基督徒）

一起時另有端午節、中元節，但不一定參加。

怎麼做？ 1. 具備綾緞。2. 與家族一在祖先牌位前或墓前，以鮮花水果或

糕餅祭拜。

2) 有沒有特別的禮儀與經文？

沒有。

3) 由誰主禮？

參與的長者。
4) 祭祖時有放牌位嗎？

有，是：有牌位，或有祖父母或父母之遺像。

沒有，因為：

5) 你們祭祖的理由與動機是：

1. 追思紀念祖先。

2. 彼此代禱。

禮儀的內容為：

1. 在牌位前之供桌上擺好酒、鮮花、三牲或水果、糕餅等祭品。

2. 上香：每人一柱香，全體向牌位行三鞠躬禮。由主禮代表恭請祖先收納我們的供品，之後每個人可自由默禱。

6) 祭祖時，由家族自己做。

□ 還有其他人的參與。有：

7) 祖先牌位中，有女性嗎？

□ 有，她們是：祖母、母親。
在家庭中的地位：是孕育子女的母親，是長輩。

□ 沒有。因為：

四．神學與神修的幅度

1) 你們家對「生」與「死」的看法是什麼？

「生」：是天主所賜，父母所生，當珍惜生命，尊重生命。

「死」：是的最後自然階段，但我們相信經由死而後得永生。

2) 你認為祖先們，現在在哪裡？

在天國。

在天國。

在天國。

3) 你認為祖先們，現在在做什麼？

在享福樂，並為我們祈禱。

在享福樂，並為我們祈禱。

在享福樂，並為我們祈禱。
4) 你認為祖先們，與我們家庭的關係是：

很密切，尤其是父母、祖父母。  


五．中國的祭祖與聖母在諸聖相通的關係

1) 從你的經驗，你認為「中國的祭祖」與「聖母在諸聖相通」二者中是有關連的嗎？

有，因為：祭祖的意義在恭敬紀念祖先，我們為他們祈禱，他們亦為我們祈禱，亦即有相通的意義。此與聖母在諸聖相通是理當有關聯的。聖母為世人之母，等同於世人之祖先，祭祖時若包括聖母在內，將更富意義。只是對聖母，我們有更多的讚美和感謝以及更需要她的代禱。

沒有，因為：  


2) 從你的經驗，你認為祖先們是諸聖相通中嗎？

是，因為：從信仰使我認為祖先們是在諸聖相通中的。


六．請寫下你在回答此份問卷時的感想與意見：

回答此問卷使我沉浸在追憶父母的思緒中，同時亦將聖母也具體地納入思念中，則倍感溫馨和安寂。我想這即祖先、聖母、諸聖相通（信、望、愛）的甜美吧！
敬愛的

主內平安與喜樂！

帶著我無限的感謝與期待寫這封信給您，盼望您能積極的回應我的邀請，透過回答這份問卷與後續的訪談，讓我們可以一起為這份研究工作而合作。這為我將是很大的鼓勵，因為這份研究工作，是要幫助我完成我的博士論文（輔仁大學神學院）----走向在脈絡中發展的聖母學；從現代台灣天主教教友祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發。

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蔡愛美 MIC

2004-10-7
問卷：走向在脈絡中發展的聖母學：

從現代台灣天主教祭祖與諸聖相通的經驗出發

2004-10

一．你的背景

姓名：張曼琳

國籍或省籍：山東省

宗教信仰：天主教

若是天主教，請寫上領洗時間：8/21/1955

二．歷史與文化的幅度

1）你是在什麼時候開始祭祖？

二十年前

你的家庭是什麼時候開始參與祭祖？

二十年前

2）近十年內，你家族中的祭祖有哪些改變？
較大的改變有：沒有改變，有時在祭祖時加讀一段聖經及長輩説些勸勉
晚輩的話。______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

較小的變動：______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

3) 在祭祖時，會不會提出祖先做過的好事與美德？

會，用什麼方式：祖德是以祠堂裡的對聯表達慎終追遠，誠正修齊效先
祖，忠孝仁愛勵後人也光宗耀祖（清河堂）。______________________________

______________________________

不會，因為：祠堂的對聯已表達了祖德及他們的精神。______________________________

______________________________

4) 如果你們是基督徒家庭，祭祖的儀式與基督徒的禮儀有關嗎？

相關的有：長輩會在祭祖時以愛德行善避惡的話勸勉後代（並非全是教
友）。______________________________

______________________________
無關的是：

三. 社會與文化的幅度

1) 每年會祭祖幾次？________次

通常在什麼時候？春節早上。

怎麼做？年前迎接祖先，至牌位前點燭、燒香供花、水果。每餐飯前供奉食品鮮果及上香祈禱。

2) 有沒有特別的禮儀與經文？

沒有特別的經文，但有上香鞠躬等祭拜儀。
3) 由誰主禮？

由最年長輩份最高的人主持，我家輩份最高是家父。

4) 祭祖時有放牌位嗎？

有，是：有的。

沒有，因為：

5) 你們祭祖的理由與動機是：

慎終追遠，不可忘本，請祖先們親臨祝祐後代子孫。

禮儀的內容為：

上香，鞠躬，祭拜。

6) 祭祖時，由家族自己做。

□ 還有其他人的參與。有：


7) 祖先牌位中，有女性嗎？

- 有，她們是：牌位寫的是列祖列宗，分辨不出性別。
  在家庭中的地位：但是族譜是放在祭祖台上的，其中男女都列在內。

- 沒有。因為：

四．神學與神修的幅度

1) 你們家對「生」與「死」的看法是什麼？

「生」：多數家人受天主教的影響，生命來自天主。

「死」：死亡是回歸家鄉。

2) 你認為祖先們，現在在哪裡？

家人多從事醫療工作，認為祖德環繞我們。祖示的遺傳活在我們的基因裡，使我們倍加感恩，讓我們更珍惜生命。
3 ) 你認為祖先們，現在在做什麼？

以一個不同於我們的形式存在著，且享有無限的福樂。

4 ) 你認為祖先們，與我們家庭的關係是：

已故逝的爺爺、奶奶輩和我們是很親近的。

五．中國的祭祖與聖母在諸聖相通的關係

1 ) 從你的經驗，你認為「中國的祭祖」與「聖母在諸聖相通」二者中是有關連的嗎？

有，因為：沒有這個道地，但認為中國的祭祖和諸聖相通的道地在精神上有許多地方是相同的，沒有想過聖母在諸聖相通的事。

沒有，因為：


2) 從你的經驗，你認為祖先們是諸聖相通中嗎？

是，因為：是的，這是非常自然的，而且是必然的。

不是，因為：

六．請寫下你在回答此份問卷時的感想與意見：

這是第一次回答這樣的主題，覺得非常有趣，而且幫助我去統合一些以往沒有細心體會的經驗及問題。
Appendix 5: Photos of Catholic Chinese Ancestor Veneration, after the Eucharistic Celebration, Chinese Lunar New Year, 2005. Holy Family Church, Taipei, Taiwan (with permission) pp.397-408
In 1715, Pope Clement XI condemned the practice of ‘Chinese Rite.’ In 1939, Pope Pius XII abolished the decree. Since then, most Chinese Catholic Churches in Taiwan practice an ancestor veneration rite.

This photo shows the parish priest who presided at this rite after the Lunar New Year’s Eucharistic celebration held at the Holy Family Church, Taipei city. The presider dressed in red vestments which are a color of festivity for the Chinese. Three incense sticks are to venerate God, and one stick for our ancestor.
Chinese Ancestor Veneration (2)

- Offering of gifts is an important part in the rite.
- The offering of flowers:
- Symbol of ancestors' virtues pleasing to God.
Chinese Ancestor Veneration (3)

- Offering of fruits:
- Symbol of prosperity and fruitfulness of ancestors’ works and good deeds.
- Thanking God for giving us models, especially for the younger generation.
Chinese Ancestor Veneration (4)

- Offering of wine:
- Symbol of joy and happiness.
- Praising God in joy and gratitude for our ancestors.
Chinese Veneration (5)

- Offering of flowers:
- symbols of affection and love for God and filial piety for our ancestors.
Chinese Ancestor Veneration (6)

- Offering of Chinese bread as food.
- In gratitude for all the nourishment provided by God through our ancestors.
Chinese Ancestral Altar (7)

- This altar is placed in the center aisle of the church.
- The red table cloth is a sign of festivity.
- The ancestral tablet is in the middle of the altar table. The inscription in black ink writes ‘in commemoration to all our ancestors.’
- The orange plants are symbol of abundance of fruits: the golden color is from the oranges.
- The offerings are in their respective places.
Chinese ancestor veneration (8)

- Another front view of the ancestral altar.
Chinese Ancestor Veneration (9)

- The ancestral altar is in the central aisle.
- The main altar at the back and the two co-presiders, usually chosen from the lay leaders.
Another view..
At the beginning and the end of the rite, there is always a choir singing hymns and songs.

‘The Lord is my shepherd’ is one of the most popular hymns.