

Revolutionary Church

A Sesquicentennial Remembrance of GomBurZa
and a Celebration of the Church Birthed
from the Nationalism They Inspired

Proceedings of
a Gathering of Inclusive Catholic
Clergy & Laity

Austin, Texas

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Edited by
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Preface

Rev. Dr. Jayme Mathias

I'm fond of repeating a community organizing axiom that I learned some 15 years ago: The two paths to power and influence in this world are organizing people and organizing resources. Here in the United States, the Inclusive Catholic movement has largely failed in both respects, leaving us with few people in many of our eucharistic communities and with even fewer resources.

If you've never heard of the Philippine Independent Church, you're in good company: I first learned of the Philippine Independent Church only three years ago. Ever since, I have admired the church from afar for its apparent ability to organize people and resources, as evidenced by its membership and its ability to enter into communion with the likes of the Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church and the Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches. I greatly enjoyed the experience of penning my 2020 work, *Aglipayan: The Flourishing of Independent Catholicism in the Philippines*, which we debuted on World Mission Sunday as we raised money to support the Philippine Independent Church's seminary in Guimaras, Philippines.

In my experience, very few people within our movement know much about the Philippine Independent Church, and even fewer have heard of the three martyrs of the Cavite Terror of 1872. Even "Sacramental Whine," the most prolific podcast in the English-speaking Independent Sacramental Movement at present, has not featured a single voice from the Philippine Independent Church in over 100 episodes.

Naturally, when I learned that 2022 is the sesquicentennial of the brutal execution of GomBurZa—Mariano Gómez, José Burgos and Jacinto Zamora—I knew that we had to find some way here in the United States to celebrate the church that was birthed through the nationalism that they inspired. Like fire-tried gold (Is. 1:25, Job 23:10, Eccl. 2:5, 1Pet. 1:7), the tragic events surrounding GomBurZa and the horrendous oppression suffered by the Filipino people have resulted in the largest manifestation of Inclusive Catholicism in our world today!

"Revolutionary Church: A Sesquicentennial Remembrance of GomBurZa and a Celebration of the Church Birthed from the

Nationalism They Inspired” was our attempt here in the United States to learn more about the historical, cultural, ecclesiological and theological considerations surrounding the Philippine Independent Church. It was also our third interjurisdictional gathering in less than three years.

In a special way, I wish to thank the presenters who were willing to travel to Austin, to share their knowledge and insights: Father Henry Janiola of the Philippine Independent Church, Reverend Doctor Trish Sullivan Vanni of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, Archbishop Alan Kemp of the Ascension Alliance, Father Marek Bożek of St. Stanislaus Polish Catholic Church, and Father Libardo Rocha of the American Catholic Church in the United States.

I also thank the corps of dedicated volunteers here at Holy Family Catholic Church in Austin, Texas who assisted with so many details behind the scenes: Rebecca Saenz, Terry Ann Caballero, Rosa Gil, Janie Gomez and Mario & Maria Cruz.

I pray that the proceedings of “Revolutionary Church: A Sesquicentennial Remembrance of GomBurZa and a Celebration of the Church Birthed from the Nationalism They Inspired” might stir you to learn more about and spread word of the largest manifestation of Inclusive Catholicism on our planet today!

Pre-conference

What We (Don't) Know About GomBurZa & the IFI

In preparation for our interjurisdictional gathering, Father Jayme Mathias, pastor of Holy Family Catholic Church in Austin, convened a think tank conversation through Zoom on May 2, 2022 to inquire into what Inclusive Catholic clergy in the United States know – or don't know – about GomBurZa and the Philippine Independent Church. The transcript of the conversation of this representative group of clergy follows. Participants in the conversation included:

- *Rev. Dr. Wayne Barry, Outer Banks, North Carolina;*
- *Rev. Rosa Buffone, Holy Spirit Ecumenical Catholic Community, Ecumenical Catholic Communion, Newton, Massachusetts;*
- *Very Rev. Scott Carter, Pilgrim Chapel of Contemplative Conscience, Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch, Ashland, Oregon;*
- *Rev. Joseph Dang, Catholic Apostolic Church International, Denver, Colorado;*
- *Most Rev. Bernie Finch, Ascension Alliance, Pepin, Wisconsin;*
- *Rev. Rock Fremont, International Council of Community Churches, Phoenix, Arizona;*
- *Rev. Paul Leary, Shamrock Ministries, Reformed Catholic Church International, Franklin, New Hampshire;*
- *Rev. Dr. Jayme Mathias, Holy Family Catholic Church, Austin, Texas;*
- *Most Rev. Betty McManus, Orthodox Catholic Church of America, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and*
- *Rev. Frank Quintana, Ecumenical Catholic Communion, Denver Colorado.*

Mathias: We'll soon be gathering here in Austin, Texas for our next interjurisdictional gathering, which will be a sesquicentennial remembrance of the nationalism inspired by the brutal execution of three Filipino priests, which led to the birth of the world's largest expression of Inclusive Catholicism: the Philippine Independent Church (the PIC) – or the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (the

IFI), as it's known in Spanish. How much do we really know about GomBurZa—these three Filipino priests—and the Philippine Independent Church? What would we like to know about them? Are the organizers of this encounter correct in thinking that many of us know relatively little about this religious phenomenon in the Philippines? How much do we know about other manifestations of Inclusive Catholicism outside of our local ministries, religious communities and jurisdictions? Where do we get our information on the larger movement to which we all belong? And how might we better spread word of all that's happening in our movement throughout the world and let folks know about the many, diverse, beautiful expressions of Inclusive Catholicism?

Carter: My initial question is: How inclusive is the Philippine Independent Church? Do they perform same-sex weddings? And do they have female bishops and priests?

Mathias: That's an excellent question. The Philippine Independent Church now has its first woman bishop: Bishop Emelyn Dacuycuy was consecrated in 2019. To my knowledge, the Philippines does not yet allow for same-sex marriage, so the celebration of the sacrament of Marriage for same-sex couples is not yet possible there.

Quintana: When I was part of the Anglican Catholic Church, the Philippine Independent Catholic Church, through Bishop Francisco Paktaghan, was involved in the consecration of three bishops of the Anglican Catholic Church. Bishop Paktaghan was their chief ecumenical officer at the time, and he was involved in several episcopal consecrations of emerging jurisdictions within the Independent Catholic movement in the 1970s and beyond. At that time, they were not ordaining gay men or women, nor were they doing same-sex weddings. That could have changed.

Mathias: Your words bring to mind the fact that the Philippine Independent Church enjoys full communion with the Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches and with the Anglican Communion. For that reason, many of us look at the PIC as an ecumenical model for the communion that

we hope to one day share with one another and with other larger ecclesial bodies.

Quintana: It's my understanding that the Philippine Independent Church pretty much sprang from the Episcopal Church in the Philippines.

Fremont: Through social media, I have gotten to know quite a few priests and bishops from the Philippine Independent Church over the years. I don't know what their national stance is, but many of them are very openminded in terms of human sexuality. I don't know their stance on transgender issues, but I sense a very strong welcome in the gay and lesbian realm. As Jayme suggested, I do know that they have a female bishop whom they recently consecrated.

Buffone: Do we know whether they have any female presbyters?

Mathias: They certainly do. It would be fascinating to know how many. It's difficult for us to learn a great deal about the Philippine Independent Church here in the United States. The PIC has a new website (ifi.org.ph), which is difficult to find, since it doesn't appear near the top of internet searches. It is still under construction, takes a long time to load its pages, and contains test posts and much Latin placeholder text (*Lorem ipsum dolor sit...*). This makes research on the PIC very difficult, and most information comes to us from secondary sources. The church has no online directory of clergy, so it is difficult to discern how many women priests they have. The names of clergy contained in our own online directory (https://en.everybodywiki.com/Independent_Catholic_Clergy) were scraped from websites and Facebook pages, and it's my understanding that PIC clergy have been persecuted in the past. The PIC has had martyrs as recently as 2010, with the deaths of Benjie Bayles and Joselito Agustín. I attended the Utrecht summer school with Bishop Antonio Nercua Ablon, and I was of the impression that he was receiving death threats at that time, perhaps even from the Filipino government. I get the impression that it can be dangerous to be part of a minority religion in such places!

Quintana: The Roman Catholic Church is the main religion – almost a state religion – of the Philippines.

Buffone: I did a bit of research today and discovered a Harvard report that stated that the Philippine Independent Church at one time affiliated with Unitarian Universalism, but then, after the leader of the church at that time died, the church reverted them back to Trinitarian thought. There was also some reference – not about the priests who were executed – but about unhappiness with the Spanish clergy who were coming to the Philippines and lording power over Filipino priests. Before these gatherings, I didn't know anything about the Philippine Independent Church, and I look forward to being part of this conference virtually!

Mathias: I joined this movement in 2012, and I knew nothing of the Philippine Independent Church for those first seven years – until I attended the Utrecht summer school in 2019 with Father Franz Foerster and Bishop Antonio Nercua Ablon. I was blown away by their suggestion that their church might possess some six to eight million Inclusive Catholics! I thought: Why have I not heard of them all these years? I sense that we, here in Austin, were like many clergy and communities: focused on our local ministry and our jurisdiction, and not aware of our connection to so many other Inclusive Catholics throughout the world. Now, as part of our announcements at Holy Family every Sunday, I share “This Week in Inclusive Catholicism,” where I essentially tick through the people and events that we list in the “This Day in Inclusive Catholicism” section of *Extraordinary Catholics* magazine. It's gratifying to celebrate other Inclusive Catholics throughout the world and throughout history – to give people an idea of our connection with something much larger than our local community. There's a lot of pride, for instance, in knowing that we celebrate this week an Inclusive Catholic who serves as governor of a province in the Philippines, or that we commemorate the passing of an Inclusive Catholic who served as the first Prime Minister of the Philippines. It's

exciting to open people’s eyes to Inclusive Catholics in history—and there are a lot of Inclusive Catholics to celebrate in the Philippines!

Dang: The Filipino community here in Denver has spoken with me about the IFI. I watched one of their masses on YouTube. It struck me as a rather traditional Catholic mass.

Mathias: Father Henry Janiola will be joining us here in Austin and will be celebrating for us an IFI mass. Because of their communion with the Episcopal Church, I’m imagining that their liturgy is largely based on the *Book of Common Prayer*. I’m sure it will be an interesting experience of prayer for those of us who wonder what the IFI liturgy is like.

Quintana: I recall their liturgy being a derivative of the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*, due to their ties to the Episcopal Church. If I recall correctly, Bishop Paktaghan was very facile with the *BCP*.

Dang: Are there IFI clergy here in the United States?

Mathias: There are. Father Henry Janiola, who will be joining us, is coming from New York.

Fremont: I believe they have an archbishop for North America or the United States. I’m of the impression that he’s in Chicago. I tried to contact him years ago, and I never heard anything. I know that, due to their relationship with the Episcopal Church USA, they restored apostolic succession in the Anglican line.

Mathias: Their Wikipedia page suggests that they have two dioceses here in the United States: an eastern diocese centered in Tampa, Florida, and a western diocese centered in Los Angeles, California. When I wrote my book, *Aglipayan: The Flourishing of Independent Catholicism in the Philippines*, I was unable to determine how many Aglipayans that might be here in the United States. In Utrecht, Father Franz and Bishop Antonio suggested that the IFI might have as many as six to eight million people. I can’t substantiate that, but the 2015 Philippine census did enumerate over 750,000 Aglipayans—three-quarters of a million adherents of this non-Roman Catholic

religion! That's a significant number. If we were to estimate the number of Inclusive Catholics in the United States, it would likely be only a small fraction of that.

Quintana: That number—750,000—might speak to the relative anonymity that they have in the world. They are part of a colonized nation and have suffered at the hands of a colonizing church. The Spanish priests had a tendency to colonize!

Mathias: That's certainly a part of their history: A part of their desire to form their own church was a revolt against the Spanish friars, whom they found to be very oppressive. As a result, they sought to overthrow such forces as the Spanish Crown and its church.

Quintana: As a Franciscan, I'll tell you that type of colonizing work by Franciscan friars is not unknown to us here in the United States. I served as pastor of St. Óscar Romero Catholic Community in Albuquerque when Junípero Serra was being canonized—and we picketed in front of the offices of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Santa Fe, saying, "He ain't no saint!"

Mathias: We haven't had much luck involving our friends from the IFI in our efforts here in the United States. After my trip to the 2019 Utrecht summer school, Father Franz Foerster was part of our 2020 virtual summer school. The distance makes it difficult: Because they're halfway around the world, they're unable to participate in afternoon events or classes here. When Father Franz joined us for an evening class, it was an early morning for him. I've not had any luck connecting with their Supreme Bishop. One of my questions is how we might better connect with them. It's a veritable challenge.

Quintana: What efforts have we made to contact their clergy here in the United States?

Mathias: Father Mike López in Brooklyn, New York connected us with Father Henry, who, it seems, rents a church space from Father Mike. Father Henry is my first contact with an IFI priest in the United States.

Quintana: I wonder if their relationship with Utrecht and other ecclesial bodies hinder our ability to connect more closely with them.

Mathias: Some of us are planning to attend the Utrecht summer school again this year, where I'm imagining we'll meet other clergy from the IFI. We're also hoping to have a conversation with the Archbishop of Utrecht, if he will have us.

Quintana: I really hope that we can begin to erase 100 years of foolishness in the eyes of Utrecht!

Mathias: Returning to our original questions, it seems that the organizers of this conference may be correct in assuming that many of us here in the United States know relatively little about the Philippine Independent Church. I'm imagining it might be fair to suggest that many of us have little knowledge of and/or relationship with other Independent Catholic groups throughout the world – that bridges remain to be built. Do we have any ideas on how we might better build bridges with churches in other nations: getting information from them on their ministries, and sharing information with them about us and our ministries?

Quintana: Let's try good, old-fashioned letter writing. Perhaps we could involve kids in writing letters to children in the Philippines. Perhaps that might be more palatable.

Carter: From a sociological point of view, the cohesion of our Independent/Inclusive Catholic movement here in the United States is relatively new, and Jayme has been an effective force in bringing us together. Before 2019, we existed as a loose movement.

Mathias: Now that we're coming together in the United States, is there a way for us to use our current efforts as a springboard to increase our relationships outside the United States? Is there a way for us to create an ever-widening circle, where our friends from the Philippines somehow feel something for what's happening in the United States, and vice versa? With the tremendous movement in the Philippines, I wonder if there's a way for us to get more information on what's happening in the

Philippines, for us to be able to brag on them and for us to be able to lift up and celebrate their successes, and vice versa.

Quintana: We were able to get the IFI involved in the consecrations of the Anglican Church by offering missionary aid. We gathered money for specific things that they needed. That might be an effort that they would appreciate.

Mathias: In 2020, after Father Franz attended our virtual summer school, we raised money on World Mission Sunday to help purchase a three-wheeled motorbike for their seminary in Guimaras. It was exciting for us to support their church in a concrete way. I've also thought that, in the same way that we brought Father Libardo to the United States on an R-1 religious visa, it would be exciting to bring an IFI priest to Austin. It might be two or three or five years until the opportunity opens up for us to bring aboard another member of the clergy here in Austin, but I would love to enhance our relationship through such a gesture.

Leary: I offer a word of caution: Until we have a good, solid foundation here in the U.S., we need to focus our attention here and be careful not to alienate our base group of clergy. We'll need to strike a balance, so that our efforts here and with others don't end up failing. Many groups here in the U.S. are getting involved at the international level because their clergy here in the U.S. are aging and dying off, and younger clergy from other areas—from South America, Europe and the Far East—and hungry, thirsty and wanting to jump in. We don't want to alienate people, but we also want to pull in diverse people and diverse communities. Rather than shut ourselves off, we can learn from all kinds of people!

Mathias: You mention the youthfulness of other clergy from throughout the world. Many of the photos that I see of IFI seminarians contain classes of 20, 30 or 40 students dressed in cassocks. There seems an opportunity for us to support them and their formation and education for ministry. You can see their enthusiasm for their church—for the Aglipayan Church in the Philippines. Is there some

way for us to build bridges and to support their church and their seminarians, in a way that their youthfulness and energy might revitalize our aging clergy here in the United States?

Carter: I love the idea of closer ties, and I think it's worth pursuing. I question the idea, though, that their "secret sauce" will work here. We experience it here in the United States, too: The large Roman-style churches are not the result of gradually building up from young people—in the States or in the Philippines. They are the result of the break-up of larger Romanesque groups. So, we see a Philippine Catholic Church that is more inclusive and independent, but it doesn't have a means of growth that we can apply to our situation here. There's an adage in the restaurant industry: If you want to make a million dollars in the restaurant business, you need to start with \$10 million. I love the idea of getting closer to them and supporting them without any underlying goal. When Christmas and Easter and important dates in the Philippine Church's calendar come around, let's get a bunch of young people from our larger congregations writing letters with crayons to their kids. Let's do things that don't necessarily look like they'll "pay off." I say: Let's get closer, closer, closer! They have figured out what we have figured out: If you fracture from something big, you can always be bigger than someone else—but they don't teach us how to grow from small communities of individuals. The fastest growth in religions throughout the world is not occurring among liberal, independent, inclusive groups; it's happening in conservative, evangelical, populous areas of the world. We could be bigger if we were not ourselves!

Leary: It's interesting that we really don't know that much about them. They may have a way to see through the fracture, to go out and offer inclusiveness, to "move the needle" and bring others in. Here in the U.S., we have all these tiny groups that need to start working together and become a working union. Here in New England, I'd love to see us get together and start piecing ourselves together into a

loose confederacy of groups with a common goal. We're all out there, doing the same thing, and not making much headway. As a larger group, we can use one or two people to do the work that 20 people are currently doing. We've got way too many bishops and self-ordained people: We need to sort through them and find which ones are actually serious about what they're doing, which have the potential but lack the skill sets or the resources to make it happen. Let's get two or three groups together in an area and get them working together toward a common cause, rather than fighting over who's in charge. We're all doing the same thing—even if we're all doing it a little differently!

Quintana: I have an idea for how we might better our ties with the IFI. When I was pastor of St. Óscar Romero Catholic Community, we became a member of FOCES, the Friends of the Children of El Salvador. We adopted one child a year who was experiencing difficulties and was on the verge of dropping out of school to support their family. We committed \$1,500 to them, to keep them in school. All of us who went to the seminary remember the things we needed: clothes or supplies. Their seminarians have needs that we might help meet. Perhaps we could have a concerted effort among us to provide help for their seminarians.

Dang: It doesn't hurt for us to reach out. The Filipino community here in Denver introduced me to the Philippine Independent Church. It will be really cool to learn more about them and get to know them. I wonder if Pope Francis visited their supreme bishop as part of his visit to the Philippines.

Carter: It would surprise me if Pope Francis reached out to the IFI and risked offending Roman Catholics in the Philippines.

Mathias: I don't believe such a visit occurred. Pope Francis has been a pope of surprises in many ways, but he's also dragging with him a lot of institutional weight.

Carter: It's the politics of the situation: If Francis reaches out to a smaller group, he risks alienating a larger group. Francis is a wonderful man and is doing amazing things, but such

a gesture would require making politics less important than Christianity.

Dang: We see pictures on social media of bishops within our movement who go to the Vatican and meet with people there. It might be a dream, but wouldn't it be really cool for us to have a liaison to get us an audience with the pope. Francis is really cool and down-to-earth. Is it a dream for us to sit down and fill him in on our church?

Carter: We don't have the kind of reach that could get us in a room with the pope, do we?

Dang: Bishop Robert Chung in our movement goes back and forth to the Vatican, dining with cardinal archbishops and posting photos on social media.

Mathias: There is a fascinating element within our movement where individuals don their regalia and, some might say, flaunt their connections within the Roman Catholic Church. Such photos speak of some relationship with the individuals in those photos—and they're certainly great photo opportunities!—but I'm not aware of anything that we've done as a movement that gives us any status other than "outsider."

Quintana: We need not be concerned with it. We're all out of Rome for a reason!

Carter: If the whole point of our existence is simply to gain the acceptance of people who don't like us, we're wasting our time! We don't need the Vatican's "seal of approval"—nor should we expect to get it—to do God's work the best we can, as clearly as we can see it, and with the gifts we have from God.

Quintana: Let's just do our work—Matthew 25—and get 'er done!

Carter: If we help people across borders, if we be good neighbors and good friends, showing up for and supporting one another, that'll make all the difference in the long run. Everything else will be an outreach or development of that. The work is our Christian work—and that's within our control.

Dang: I only wish the Roman Church would appreciate our existence more than they do: We minister to people when

they refuse to! I wish they would see us as true neighbors. Instead, they get power hungry, “excommunicating” us and telling people that our masses and sacraments aren’t valid. It’s all about control—and not relying on Jesus’ mercy. As churches, I wish that we could open our arms and embrace and support one another. We’re not trying to bash the Roman Church; we’re just trying to fix what’s wrong with it! But the Roman Church, with its corruption and cover-up of sex abuse, thinks it’s better than us.

Leary: We just need to out-survive them. Here in Vermont, the Roman Church has 52 clergy, but only 29 to 31 of them are active. And they have some great challenges that hinder them. We are a resource to the people they’re underserving or not serving, if they can get their egos out of the way.

Quintana: We’ve all heard the statistic that the second-largest “religious” group in America is fallen-away Catholics. That should be our target population. Those are the people we ought to be reaching. For one reason or another, they were alienated. There’s a missionary opportunity for us to reach out to Catholics who’ve left the church—and we don’t have to be deputized by Rome. I once knew a Roman Catholic priest who worked for the archdiocesan marriage tribunal: When he couldn’t grant an annulment for people, he would send them to me, and I would celebrate their wedding. At age 70, I don’t have much time left in ministry, so I say: Let’s do what’s efficacious!

Carter: Due to my daughter’s graduation from college, I won’t be able to attend the conference in a few weeks, but I’m eager to hear what you learn—and how the connections between us improve. Most importantly, we need to learn what we can exchange for *lumpia*, which is worth having in large quantities!

Dang: When I escaped from Vietnam at ten years old, a French boat took us to the Philippines, where I stayed in Palawan for two and a half years. The nuns there taught me a lot of Tagalog, and I still remember a few words. Some Filipinos speak to me in Tagalog, and I have to tell them, “No, I

can't speak Tagalog; I'm Vietnamese!" I look forward to being part of this experience in Austin!

Quintana: Some 30 years ago, my husband was a missionary in the Philippines for a few years, with Campus Crusade. He taught me a lot about Filipino culture and of the desperate situation in which many people there find themselves. I don't know what it's like now, but we should work at improving our relationship with the IFI—and also with Duarte Costa's church in Brazil.

Mathias: For those who are able to join us, we'll look forward to hosting you in Austin in less than three weeks! So far, we have 14 people confirmed as coming from outside of Holy Family. We'll also be spreading word of the online option, for those who can join us virtually. We never want money to be an obstacle to participation, so we'll have scholarships for this event, and we're hoping to publish the proceedings, so that everyone can learn from our time together in Austin. Let's learn together about GomBurZa and the nationalism they inspired, which led to the birth of the world's largest manifestation of Inclusive Catholicism—and let's see how the Spirit continues to be at work among us, helping us to build "bridges" and relationships with one another!

Pre-conference

The “Secret Sauce” of Building & Leading Large Inclusive Catholic Communities

At our first interjurisdictional gathering in 2019, Father Kevin Przybylski shared the “secret sauce” of Rabbouni Catholic Community in Louisville, Kentucky – its formula for success in bringing together greater numbers of people and resources than many Inclusive Catholic communities. At this gathering, we hosted a pre-conference session featuring the “secret sauce” of three other large Inclusive Catholic communities: All Saints Priory in Ridgewood, New York, represented by pastor Father Mike López; Holy Family Catholic Church in Austin, Texas, represented by pastor Father Jayme Mathias; and St. Stanislaus Polish Catholic Community in St. Louis, Missouri, represented by pastor Father Marek Bozek. This conversation was moderated by Rev. Dr. Trish Sullivan Vanni of Charis Ecumenical Catholic Community in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

Vanni: When I ran a national nonprofit for people in ministry, someone told me I needed to go to Disney and learn the CASE system of management. One of the Disney Corporation’s basic premises is CASE: “Copy And Steal Everything”! They encouraged us to look out into the world, to identify best practices, then to reproduce them in our particular settings. That’s what this session is: our “CASEing” of three of the larger Independent Catholic churches in the United States. They have some things in common, and they have their differences. This conversation springs from a conversation in October 2019, and I’ll invite Jayme to “catch us up” on that conversation.

Mathias: In October 2019, we held our first interjurisdictional gathering here in this very room at Holy Family. As part of that gathering, which is now captured in *A New Way of Being Catholic*, we invited Father Kevin Przybylski of Rabbouni Catholic Community in Louisville, Kentucky to share with us the “secret sauce” of his community, which is led by our friend, Father Lawman Chibundi. At that time, we thought: There’s something about that

community that is drawing in folks, and perhaps that might serve as a model for us. We called that presentation “The ‘Secret Sauce’ of Rabbouni Catholic Community.” Since that talk, others have asked us about the “secret sauce” of other large Inclusive Catholic communities – which is the genesis of this presentation today.

Vanni: So, that’s what we’re about today, and we do well to ask ourselves what we might learn and take home from this presentation today.

One thing that these three brothers of mine have in common is that they are the incorporators of the New Catholic Community. Jayme gave me a guideline with 579 questions, so I’ll try to be like Leslie Stahl of “60 Minutes,” and we’ll have to be very on-point with our answers. We’ll start by asking them to introduce themselves. We’ll begin with Marek: Tell about your community of St. Stan’s in St. Louis.

Bożek: I am Marek Bożek, the pastor of St. Stanislaus Polish Catholic Church in St. Louis, Missouri. It’s the oldest church of our group here: They have been in existence for 131 years and have been “cursed” with my presence for the last 17 years! It’s been a wonderful adventure, and our situation is unique in the Independent movement: When St. Stanislaus arrived to the movement, it had 100+ years of existence under its belt, so it counted on an infrastructure and a membership that most of our communities do not have from the beginning. There have been two forces at work in the history of St. Stanislaus: In many ways, St. Stanislaus was set up to succeed, and it was also set up to fail by the grace of our archbishop. Some of you may know of the parish’s somewhat-explosive history with Archbishop Raymond Burke. 117 years after its founding, St. Stanislaus remains a vibrant parish that is both Catholic and unashamedly inclusive. We have about 200 registered households, with three masses each weekend and one mass on Wednesdays. We have a Sunday school program with 20 to 25 children. We have four priests and one deacon serving our community. From a Roman Catholic perspective, we would be a small parish,

but, from an Independent Catholic perspective, we're a good-size parish. St. Stanislaus has been sustainable for 130 years. It owns its own property and is a good steward of that property, which allows me to focus on ministry and the priestly part of my job, rather than worrying about keeping the bills paid. I'm very blessed from that perspective.

Lopez: I'm the senior priest at All Saints Priory in Ridgewood, Queens, New York. We were initially founded as a parish, then changed our model to a religious community that has open liturgies and invites the community to participate. We are a Benedictine Community affiliated with the Anglican Benedictine movement worldwide. We planted the parish in 2012, and we are probably the largest and most active Independent Catholic mission in New York City. It has been a super roller coaster of ups and downs: Our first mass was just me and Father Angel and our mothers, with cheese and crackers after mass, and we've grown into a really vibrant community. We are very clear about the fact that we no longer identify ourselves as a parish. We function as a religious community with seven active members in our local community, as part of the greater Benedictine community. We think of ourselves as "active contemplatives." We have a number of ministries. We are the one of New York City's homeless outreach providers, which is a source of income and service at the same time. That ministry contributes to the sustainability of our parish. We do food insecurity work and feed about 3,500 families a week. We're looking to start a "Mini Monks" program, to get de-churched children and families involved. Instead of "work and prayer," we're calling it "work and play," so that the children can grow in an understanding of their spirituality. We invite people where they're at, and we invite them into service first. We're a service-first church, and we invite people to come as they are—and, if you want, we also have liturgy on Sundays. As a result, we've seen an explosion of growth during the past few years. We have about 160 volunteers for our secular programming. It's a lot of hard work, but it's been a joy for nearly ten years now.

Mathias: I'm Jayme Mathias, the pastor of Holy Family Catholic Church here in Austin, Texas. We are proud to be Austin's only Inclusive Catholic community. Like All Saints Priory, we are celebrating our tenth anniversary this year: We were birthed in March 2012, so we celebrated our tenth anniversary earlier this year, amid the openings and closures of this pandemic. You might say that Holy Family resulted from a schism within the Roman Catholic Church. I previously served as pastor of Cristo Rey Roman Catholic Church in East Austin, which we built up to be Austin's largest Spanish-language community, with 4,000 to 5,000 people coming to us each Sunday. We celebrated nine Sunday masses, only one of which was in English—and I was without an associate pastor for the first ten months. We served the immigrant community of Austin. My predecessor lacked any pastoral sensitivity and made more than a few mistakes: He sent people out of the confessional crying, and he referred to folks in the pews as cockroaches who scurried to the church for sacraments, before disappearing back into the "woodwork" of their daily lives. Father Roy and many others picketed outside the bishop's office, insisting that this man be removed. He came to an untimely end when he was murdered by his lover in Mexico on the very night that the parish's Finance Council had demanded his resignation. I loved that community, and we were doing great work—then a new bishop, an appointee of Papa Ratzinger, was assigned to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Austin. The new bishop made quite clear that my relationship with the Roman church was no longer a "good marriage." Things came to a head in April 2011 when I had invited U.S. Congressman Luis Gutierrez of Chicago—a champion of the immigrant community—to speak to our immigrant community on comprehensive immigration reform. Two days before the event, his vicar, who now serves as the Roman Catholic Bishop of San Angelo, called to say, "Your bishop has asked you to do disinvite the congressman—and I am simply being obedient to your bishop." It was at that moment that I realized that I could no longer in good conscience serve the Roman papacracy and Papa

Ratzinger's divisive new bishop, who was more interested in appeasing conservative factions opposed to women's reproductive health, than in siding with the immigrant community of Austin. We brought Holy Family to birth in 2012, with 19 people attending two masses in my living room: 10 people in English and nine people in Spanish. It has been a delight to serve Holy Family. Sure, we have nice liturgies, but I believe that most people come because of the community – the parish Family, as I call it – that we're building. Before the pandemic, we easily had 200 to 300 people on a Sunday. During the pandemic, Holy Family was the only Catholic church in Austin to close its doors when Austin reached Stage 5 – the highest stage of the pandemic – which created some instability in our community that has been difficult to recover from. We now have 100 to 150 people joining us in the church each Sunday, with some 300 people now joining our liturgies through Facebook. Our community has magnanimously supported Holy Family financially, but it seems that many people now find it easier – and perhaps safer – to join our liturgies online. Our demographics skew older, so we encourage our folks to be safe.

Vanni: I'd like to hear more about the demographics of your communities. We're living in an era in which all religious institutions, particularly Christian institutions, are having a hard time attracting and retaining certain cohorts and generations.

Božek: Like many churches, St. Stanislaus is predominantly a mature congregation, with people in their 50s, 60s and 70s, being a majority of our members. It's a reality we have to live with, until and unless we have schools in our churches, which bring families with children. If a church has no school, it's difficult to draw several school-age children with their parents and families. My dream of creating a church school never came to fruition, but I believe that a Sunday school or catechetical program designed for young ones is necessary to keep our congregations involved with people who are younger than 50 or 60 years of age. All churches, especially the mainline Christian

denominations, are experiencing the aging process. As people mature, they get more interested in the spiritual life and have more time to talk church and be church. For parents engaged in the constant battle of driving kids to school, rehearsals, practices, and meeting after meeting after meeting, church ends up being another “extracurricular” – unless you have a parish school. If your child attends a parish school, your entire life revolves around the school and the church, but if your child attends a public school, there’s sometimes very little time left for church. During the pandemic, we experienced an influx of Spanish-speaking families – and many of them come with children. I still have not deciphered what happened, or what brought them to St. Stanislaus. As our English members stayed home and watched us on livestream, our Spanish-speaking members kept coming. As is true in this country, our youngest population at this point is not Polish or English, but Spanish-speaking.

Lopez: With New York being what it is, we’re super mixed. I like to tell people that All Saints is 90% homeless and poor people, and 10% catholic church. We’re a service-first community, so we’re focused on those in their mid-20s to mid-30s who are attracted to service work or a spiritual lifestyle. We received people that we weren’t reaching out to – like four transgender young people who came to our parish and serve tremendously in our food outreach. They ask us, “Are you guys really a church? Because we’ve never felt so welcomed!” So, we reach out to people on the margins, and we call our volunteers parishioners because, even if they don’t come to our Sunday liturgies, they’re fulfilling “Jesus work.” They’re living the gospel. We’re reaching people who haven’t felt loved and accepted in the church. The homeless men in our homeless programming have become part of the life of the parish. We always want kids and families, but the church is changing in such a drastic way. My daughter just made her First Communion with the classmates of her Roman Catholic parochial school. It’s part of one of the largest parishes in the Diocese of Brooklyn. Before COVID, that communion class had almost 500 kids – and this year they had 40 kids. And the

priests haven't learned: They still yell at you, and they're still being jerks. They're not being loving or caring, and the only thing they have to hold onto are their buildings. We worship at a Lutheran church which served one of the largest German Lutheran populations forever – and now they struggle to get ten people at their liturgy. It's the same with the Presbyterians down the block: They struggle to get five people. I'm the president of the local ecumenical community group, and people look at me like I'm the one with the big church! There's a drastic decline in the church, and we focus on dechurched people who believe in God and want spirituality, but who haven't found a place that loves them. So we just focus on loving people. We walk down the street in our habits, and everyone knows us. Parochial schools are collapsing, but I'm hopeful that the young people who serve our community will soon be bringing their children.

Mathias: I was looking at our sacramental records here at Holy Family earlier this week: In ten years, we've celebrated over 3,000 sacraments. We find that there is a big thirst for the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Many churches offer the sacraments, but with so many obstacles and hurdles. In line with the heresy of semi-Pelagianism, which suggested that you could "earn" God's grace, Roman Catholic parishes here require two years of preparation for the Eucharist and two years of preparation for Confirmation – so part of our "competitive edge" has been meeting the sacramental needs of families. We celebrate Baptisms and First Communions every fourth Sunday of the month, so this Sunday, we'll celebrate the Baptism of four infants, as well as one First Communion – all at our Spanish mass – and we'll probably have 100 people in the church to celebrate. Those who come to us for sacraments and other celebrations, like *quinceañeras*, are principally Spanish-speaking, and Roman Catholic parishes tell young ladies that they can't celebrate their *quinceañera* if they're not enrolled in the parish's two-year Confirmation program. That creates an opportunity for us, and, as soon as this conference finishes on Saturday, I'll be racing to celebrate a *quinceañera*. Our demographics here at Holy

Family largely mirror those of Cristo Rey, my former parish within the Roman church: We serve a large number of immigrant families from Mexico. We also see the same cultural phenomenon: When we pass the collection basket, Spanish-speaking persons typically put in a dollar or two; it's the English-speaking congregation that supports our parish financially and sustains our ministry. Whereas many Spanish-speaking persons are working hard to support their families, it's the English-speaking community that provides the lion's share of volunteerism, sharing of their time and talent with us. The generous sharing of time, talent and treasure by our English-speaking community supports the ministry we provide to the Spanish-speaking population of Central Texas.

Vanni: The three of you lead independent churches. Unlike my community, which is under the umbrella of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, you don't belong to a jurisdiction. I'm wondering if you have any commonalities with respect to your liturgies.

Lopez: A good friend, Dave Martins, always says, "The books have already been created: Just read the black and do the red." At All Saints, we have never not been a Catholic community. Recognizing that we are part of the Western, Latin-rite Church, we use the *Novus ordo*. We're still in the 1980s and 1990s, with the second translation, and we bought every copy of that Sacramentary on eBay. We wanted people to feel at home. We really focus on the liturgy. People want to be spiritually fed through the liturgy, so we are liturgically traditional and socially progressive—which is welcomed by many lifelong Catholics who tell us, "I have never been to such a great lit!" We use incense and aspergilla at every mass—the "smells and bells" of high mass—because they are sacramentals that everyone can hold on to. We also have a large community of deaf and hearing-impaired adults. Before we had a full-time interpreter, they were fed not by hearing what was spoken, but by living the liturgy. When the deacon or priest passes with the aspergilla, they want the holy water to fall on them. I won't say that they're

superstitious, but our Latino community likes the iconostasis and the iconography of the Church. So, we just stick with what's good; there's no need to change it. I say that respectfully to people who want to experiment with the liturgy, but at All Saints we feed a very particular group of people, many of whom are immigrants and lifelong Catholics who are coming for Catholic experience of the Church. We have a phenomenal music ministry: We had melded a retired Roman Catholic organist with the rock-and-roll of an evangelical Korean Presbyterian. The organist has since gone, but, even though we have a very traditional liturgy, we have a guitarist who plays "folk mass" and contemporary Christian music – and it sounds really good!

Bożek: I am a firm believer that the liturgy does not need to be reinvented. We use the second edition of the Roman rite. I recognize that many of its texts and translations are very dated, so I encourage my clergy siblings to be creative and to edit those texts. When the text says "God the Father" five times in one sentence, I encourage them to find more inclusive ways to convey the same message, but in ways that don't leave behind 60% of the congregation. We try to reconcile two needs: the need to be faithful to our Catholic identity and to follow the books that have been with us for centuries, and the need to be sensitive to questions of justice and modern language. So, we follow the ritual, but we're also mind not to say, "men, men, men" or "brothers, brothers, brothers" or to refer to the Holy Spirit with masculine pronouns all the time. There are elegant ways to do this that respect the flow of the liturgy and that keep it faithful to its original concept. When the third edition of the Roman rite was being introduced 12 years ago, in 2010, that was one of our first experiences of democracy at St. Stanislaus. For a year or two before the Roman Catholic Church imposed that translation on every parish, we did our own line-by-line comparison of the two translations, and, in the end, we asked our members to decide whether they wanted to switch to the new translation or keep the older one. Over 90% chose what we now use, which is a good thing and gives us a distinct identity. If a 20-year-old

from the Roman Catholic Church comes to us, they'll recognize that it's different right away, and if someone comes to us who's 40 years or older, they say, "I recognize this from my younger days!" It's a good reaction in both cases, since we don't pretend to be Roman Catholic or to have the same liturgy as Roman Catholic parishes. Many times the liturgy of our childhood and high school years brings back good memories of a positive experience. We have a distinct liturgy: It's happy and, as our entire clergy team will testify, it tries to be inclusive in its language and social aspects. In my experience, two things bring people to church: good preaching and good music. The sacramentals—the "smells and bells"—are also super-important. Without good preaching, the congregation will not grow. The same could be said with respect to music. Our church has an organ, so we have organ music. We sometimes have guitar masses. For two years during the pandemic, our Saturday mass was a drive-in service, like a drive-in theater. Fortunately, we have a green area with parking spots on three sides for 50 to 60 cars to have a direct view of the altar that we erected every weekend. A sound engineer provided us a radio station, so that people could stay in their cars and tune in to 90.1 FM for mass from the safety of their vehicles. We used pre-recorded music for those masses. Our current director of music comes from a Baptist background: She's a great pianist and is becoming a better and better organist as well. We're beginning to include more Spanish and bilingual hymns, which is a wonderful experience.

Mathias: Here at Holy Family, like in New York and St. Louis, we use the Roman Rite second edition, mostly for theological reasons. I left the Roman church in 2011, when the church was trying to get its priests excited about the top-down imposition of what *Commonweal* and *America* referred to as a wooden and stilted translation—and we were supposed to champion this new translation. Not "sold" themselves, diocesan officials tried to get us excited about saying words like "consubstantial" and phrases like "and with your spirit." They twisted themselves in knots, trying to explain how Jesus died for "many," and not for all. That

was a propitious time for me to transition from the Roman church, and we decided to stick with what people knew and loved for years and years. It was also a great way for us to differentiate ourselves from the Roman Catholic Church. Like St. Stan's, we cleanse the scriptures of all exclusive language and of all exclusively-masculine images of God. We help people to appreciate that God is as much Mother as Father, and we try to model inclusive language for an inclusive community. Our music is largely *a capella*, without accompaniment. When I pastored Cristo Rey, we had five mariachi masses every Sunday, which was an incredible experience, even if a bit costly. Another sign of how God's hand guided and blessed Holy Family: Our first Sunday at Holy Family was the first Sunday in which my previous mariachi was released from its service at Cristo Rey, so they enjoyed a seamless transition to Holy Family! It wasn't sustainable for a small, nascent community to enjoy two or three mariachi masses each Sunday, so we transitioned to *a capella* singing, which has become our "bar": We very much believe in the value of full, conscious, active participation by all present, so any musician who comes to our parish would be expected to get people singing as strongly as they currently do. As much as we'd like talented instrumentalists to lead us in song, it's an admittedly high bar to cross! As a musician myself, good music is important to me, and you'll notice that our liturgy this evening will contain organ and piano music.

Vanni: In the Independent Sacramental Movement as a whole, we find a predominance of small communities. A number of communities in my own communion are very vital, but pray with some 15 people on a Sunday. Larger communities, like yours, tend to be the outliers, the anomaly in our movement. Why is that? And is head-counting the right way to judge vitality? It's part of an old paradigm of "filling pews" in order to pay the mariachi or keep the lights on.

Mathias: Because of our movement's inability to bring together people and resources, our movement is largely viewed as

“insignificant” by the likes of Wikipedia. I have long believed in the community organizing maxim that there are two sources of power and influence in this world: organizing people and organizing resources. The Roman church is a master at both: For centuries, it drew people together, telling them they would go to hell for missing Sunday mass, and each time it got people together, it passed around a basket. At Holy Family, we’re aware that we need to bring together people and resources to sustain our ministry, so, from the beginning, two of our key performance indicators at Holy Family have been mass attendance and income. It’s a common adage: If you do the same things, you should expect the same results. Our sisters and brothers in the movement who are pulling together 10 or 15 people are doing what it takes to pull together that number of people. They can’t expect different results if they keep doing the same thing. They have to do something different if they want to see and experience growth. Here at Holy Family, we try to foster a community that draws in people. We also try to cultivate extraordinary celebrations. We ask ourselves: What will we do next Sunday to draw to Holy Family those people who might otherwise be tempted to choose another church, to merely worship with us online, or worse, to stay in bed! This Sunday, for instance, we’ll feature the preaching of three guest clergy: Father Joseph, Father Brett and Bishop John. We’ll also be awarding scholarship and graduation cords to graduating seniors. I’m willing to bet that no other Catholic church in Austin will award graduation cords to its graduating seniors. Every Sunday, I ask our clergy and our extraordinary volunteers, Becky and Terry Ann: What will we do during the coming weeks to help people in their decision to get out of bed and come to Holy Family!

Lopez: It’s really important for us to ask how we’re different. At All Saints, it’s important for us to be an outward-facing community. Any success that we’ve had is because we’ve become completely outward-facing. I had a formator who once said: If you can walk in civilian clothes one block from your rectory and no one recognizes you as a priest, you’re doing a shitty job. After mass, for instance, Sister Gillian

leaves the church with clothing that she passes out on the subway to Brooklyn, to make sure that homeless people are being taken care of. Our willingness to be outward-facing makes us different, and it has become a priority for all clergy at All Saints. The people are already there in the community: How can we push ourselves into the community? The second thing that makes us different is that we do everything with food. As part of our Benedictine hospitality, we have a huge breakfast buffet after our Sunday liturgy, and you'll see a table of homeless guys who smell terribly sitting next to a family of four with young children, sitting next to members of our deaf community – and they all stay for our sign language class after breakfast. I joke with a friend who is a Roman Catholic priest: You have all this space and money, but all you have to do is give people bagels and they'll keep on coming! It's our job to feed people (Mt. 25:35), so I'll sometimes stand in front of the church during our breakfast and invite in random people: "Hey, we're having breakfast! Wanna come in?" And some people will wander in and have breakfast. We're a community of the poor, so we're lucky to get \$100 in the Sunday collection, but we're constantly giving because God has enabled us to do that. So we feed people and give them pantry bags, and that brings people in – and that's what makes us different.

Mathias: 25 years ago, when I worked in youth ministry, we were told, "If you want to draw in young people, you need to offer three things: food, friends and fun."

Bozek: I say "ditto" to all that. Consistency is also important if you want to grow your community. It's extremely hard to build a following if you're not consistent. If your schedule keeps changing or is hard to remember – like every first Sunday or third Wednesday of the month – that will impact your growth. We also have to be visible. When I walk to the church from my apartment on Sundays, I'm usually followed by a bunch of kids. Our leaders and our communities need to be visible and consistent for people to notice us. The neighborhood of St. Stanislaus has changed multiple times. When the church was built in the

1890s, it was located in a very traditional, Irish/German/Polish neighborhood. In the 1950s, when “White flight” took people to the suburbs, some of the first federal projects to come to St. Louis drastically changed the face of our neighborhood. For some strange reason, many previous pastors acted as if it was still the same old Irish/German/Polish neighborhood. It’s only been in the last 10 or 15 years that St. Stanislaus has been intentionally aware of its community, which is now a mostly African-American and immigrant community. We cannot pretend that nothing has changed. We can’t remain stuck in the 1950s or 1960s. We have to learn from the reality that God has given us, rather than live with a mindset that no longer works.

Vanni: I’ll ask one more question, then I’ll invite others to ask questions. Apart from Mike’s affiliation with the Episcopal Church, none of you belongs to a jurisdiction. Many of us here represent larger or smaller jurisdictions. What are some of the pluses and minuses of being independent from any jurisdiction?

Lopez: The other thing that we have in common is that all three of us benefited from a Roman Catholic formation. You might wonder: Could that have something to do with our success? Absolutely not! In all churches, you have superstar producers, and you have slackers. I come from a law enforcement background in my secular work, and I’ve been a “boss fighter” my entire life. “Boss fighter” is a term we use in law enforcement for those who don’t “fall in line” or who have issues with authority. I know I have authority issues: I was diagnosed at a young age as oppositional defiant. We tried to align ourselves multiple times with various jurisdictions. We wanted to be part of them, since joining others is part of our catholicity. We have experienced a lot of bad leadership: leaders with egos and leaders who don’t recognize the gifts and talents of others. Bad leaders temper the work of the Spirit. We need good leaders in this movement. We have a lot of terrible leaders. I hope not to offend anyone in particular, but it is what it is. Many leaders within our movement buy into

mainline top-down models of leadership and attempt to enforce ridiculous, nonsensical things that don't support the people we serve. Some bishops say, "I don't get a vote on your board of directors!" And I say, "You shouldn't be voting in a board decision." Others are bent out of shape when their clergy don't pay the annual clergy bill of \$200— even though they spent thousands of dollars to bring in the bishop for Confirmation. Bishops need to come from a "heart space," not a "head space." None of us wants to be "independent." We rely on these relationships— and that's why we're here. That's why we come to these gatherings. We have to see and love and hug one another. Poor leadership causes groups that are doing well to say, "We don't need you." I want to have a bishop that I need. I want to have a bishop that I can love and trust and respect and share with, and who has at heart the best interests of the people that we serve. In my experience, I have not seen that in this movement. I know I have a huge ego, and I work every day to keep it in check. I know that a lot of the work that we get done is because of the egos that we have. We want to be successful, but good, caring bishops and jurisdictions who really are focused on people, and not on themselves and their power, are lacking. I tell my counterparts in other traditions: Nobody here is paying my salary. I'm not going to lose my livelihood tomorrow if I leave the church. Clergy in mainline churches are totally dependent on the church. Many of our clergy friends have been suffering for years and will continue to suffer and be abused until they retire, because they feel that they can't make it in the world. That's really sad. If our leadership reflected love and care—if they were good shepherds— perhaps our friends would see the Independent movement as an option.

Bozek: St. Stanislaus was very close to coming into union with two large organizations: the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (ECC) and the Episcopal Church. We found the ECC to be the most reliable and serious of the plethora of independent jurisdictions we encountered, and we were very involved in conversations with them. We still have a very good relationship with the local diocese of the

Episcopal Church, but that communion was not effected due to questions of property ownership. St. Stanislaus owns its land and buildings, and the Episcopal Church insisted on putting them in trust. If we were not so traumatized by our history with the Roman church, perhaps it would have been easier to process, but, because we were traumatized, it did not happen. We also spoke with the PNCC, the Polish National Catholic Church, and a few other groups, and, after a serious dialogue, we decided not to go with any of them. In most of these cases, we found two issues: lack of standards, and the fact that apples like to be with apples, and oranges like to be with oranges. The vast majority of Independent Catholic communities in this country are beautiful, holy, small communities, while we have to think like a large community: Our insurance bill alone is \$40,000 to \$50,000 each year. We have to think about the brick-and-mortar reality of owning a church. At the end of the day, there is no Independent Catholic jurisdiction that can benefit us and our huge campus with its experiences, resources and infrastructure. With respect to the lack of standards, the Ecumenical Catholic Communion seemed the best option, since it has standards and guidelines. I love that the ECC has black-and-white standards for ordination and membership. After two years of closing observing the ECC, though, I and many of our members have come to realize that theoretical written standards are not applied on a daily basis, and that there are people who are consecrated bishops even though they lack a master's degree in theology. Other jurisdictions have no psychological evaluation or background checks. That lack of standards has kept us away from formally affiliating with any Independent Catholic jurisdiction. Apples like apples, and oranges like oranges.

Vanni: I will say that no one in the ECC has been ordained without a background or psyche check. However, I hear what you're saying about that whole dilemma concerning seminary education. I have an M.Div., but I brought that to the ECC, and there's a big conversation afoot in our group on whether to uphold the standard of an M.Div. versus

alternative paths to ordination for older vocations and those who are less prepared for the weight of academic formation.

Mathias: This question points to the phenomenon within our movement of large eucharistic communities that are bishopless. We're not just talking about our three communities; our friends at Rabbouni Catholic Community in Louisville, Kentucky are in the same "bucket." Here at Holy Family, we belonged to a jurisdiction for six and a half of our ten years. Even after ten years of seminary studies and ten years of ministry as a priest in the Roman church, I had never heard of Independent Catholicism or Old Catholicism. It was like a secret that had been kept from me. When I discovered Independent Catholicism, it was through a Roman Catholic parishioner who pulled out his iPad and said, "Father Jayme, my wife and I believe that you need to bring the American Catholic Church to Austin" – and that jurisdiction that he brought to my attention became our jurisdiction for the next six and a half years. We parted ways in 2018. That jurisdiction couldn't offer me, my clergy, and our community communion with other clergy involved in similar ministries. We were the only vibrant parish in a jurisdiction of 17 clergy, and you can imagine our disappointment when we offered to fly in all the clergy of that jurisdiction for Father Libardo's silver jubilee – and only a single priest showed any semblance of interest in celebrating that special day with us. There's another phenomenon involved with these pastors of large, bishopless eucharistic communities. My Ph.D. is in Leadership Studies, so I often frame this conversation in terms of leadership. Any pastor of a large parish community obviously possesses the necessary skills, abilities and personality traits to attract large numbers of persons and the resources that they bring with them. John Maxwell likes to brag that he is the #1 author on leadership in the U.S. today and that the #1 rule of the #1 bestselling book of the #1 author of leadership is the Law of the Lid. In plain English, rate your own leadership ability on a scale of one to ten. Now, on a scale of one to ten, rate the

leadership of someone else you know. Maxwell notes the need for us to lift the “lid” of our leadership, since an “eight” will never follow a “two.” I’ll say what Marek and Mike might not: Leaders of large eucharistic communities are looking for bishops whose leadership ability exceeds their own. They are looking for bishops with greater knowledge, skills and experiences than their own. They’re looking for bishops who can bring more to their communities than the ability to share the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders. One of the questions that occupies my thought is: How do we help to increase the formation, education and leadership skills of one another, so that we’re able to lead more and more people in our local communities and in our jurisdictions? In this movement, people ask me, “Father Jayme, why don’t you become a bishop?” I tell them, “I am a bishop.” Before you mistakenly think that I’ve been secretly consecrated, which I haven’t, remember that the ancient role of the bishop was as the *episkopos*, the “overseer” of a local community. In the ancient sense of the word, I am the “bishop,” the overseer of Holy Family. I fulfill the ancient role of the bishop for Holy Family—and if everyone who possesses the title “bishop” in our movement were doing the same thing, we’d have an entirely different movement! I love the fact that our separation from our old jurisdiction has allowed Holy Family to make new friends. We can now invite in a host of bishops to celebrate with us the sacraments of the Church. We can invite Archbishop Alan to celebrate our ordination tomorrow, and Bishop John to celebrate Confirmation with us on Saturday. I’ll be honest: We miss having a bishop, having a person that we can point to and say, “That’s our bishop!” But there’s also something very special about being able to live the vision of the early Church!

Vanni: I want to reflect on the phenomenon, on the fact that so many of us are steeped in the worldview and formation that comes from Roman Catholicism. Many of us are “cradle Catholics” or we went to a Roman Catholic seminary. We’ve been shaped by that, and when I talk about that with my community, I always refer to our

“family of origin.” Your family of origin might be dysfunctional: You know when you go home for Thanksgiving that Uncle Charlie is going to tell that same stupid, sexist joke, but you go home anyway, because it’s family and Mom is going to have the turkey on the table. The formation of our “family of origin” seeps into us in insidious ways: in clericalism and in abuse of power. I ran a national ministry for people who were leading some of the most successful Roman Catholic parishes in the United States. We used to convene groups of 20 to 25 people based on their role in the church: priests or religious educators or deacons or parish administrators. One of the things that I heard epically from the priests in particular was that once they stood out in the diocese, once they were being successful in a particular way, the system would work to take them down! It seems a part of our DNA. I wonder: Can we be alongside each other and celebrate each other’s success and cheer each other on, rather than participate in the darker aspects of our movement? The “ugly” in our movement plays out in a very public way on social media, with all its judging, evaluating and critiquing. That said, let’s open this conversation up for questions from others.

Luft: St. Anne’s in Fort Worth might resonate better with Father Mike’s community, than with the other two, which came from established Roman communities. We have literally had to build from the ground up, from nothing. What might you offer to Independent Catholic communities that are in that process of building from the ground up? What has worked for y’all that might work in other places?

Lopez: First, you need a place that is public and is not your home, a place that is forward-facing and accessible. My first parish opportunity came when I was walking with my wife to buy ice cream: A bulletin board on a Presbyterian church literally said, “Are you a pastor? Do you need a home for your church? Call us!” My wife said, “Whoa, look at that!” That’s where we garnered our first successes, at a physical location. People need to know where you are. When we drove up to Holy Family today, Sister Gillian said, “Look at Father Jayme on the bubbly guy [the air

dancer]! Look at the banners! What a cute church!" Visibility is very important. You need to have a place, and you need to be at that place at scheduled times. You have to be consistent. Get people involved in your liturgy. We have adult acolytes in our church – and people love it: We have six-year-olds and 77-year-olds serving together at the altar! Get people to understand that this belongs to them. We're *in persona Christi* – but so are they! We have six-year-old Pedro who serves at the altar and sings at the top of his lungs, totally out of tune, but he is totally fulfilled! If I had to do it again, the first thing I would do is look for a location and set it up to look, smell and "taste" like a church. When people go to church, that's what they want! They want church. They don't want the "pizza mass" or the "hippie mass." Those things didn't work. We see Pew studies now within the Roman church and the Anglican churches on young people who are tired of everything that has happened in the world and who want a mystical experience. They want good liturgy. You have to have good liturgy. You have one hour each week to take these people to "heaven" – and you don't do that by consecrating a pizza pie. There's a place for the pizza pie, but, in our Catholic experience, people want Catholic liturgy. They want a Catholic "feel." They want to see their clergy wearing collars. We don't do these things for ourselves. When we wear our collars for ourselves, it goes to our head, and things get crazy. Then, whether people come or not, be consistent. Celebrate good liturgy, then be outward-facing. And, if that doesn't work, grow a beard, get tattoos, and people will take notice! Have a brick-and-mortar space, have a regular schedule, and keep being present.

Vanni: I'm not sure about the "pizza mass," but, in Minnesota, polka masses really turn out the people!

Mathias: There's something to be said for getting people involved in our communities. As leaders, we have to ask ourselves: Why should people come to this community, when there are all sorts of other things that people can do with their time? Then, once they've come the first time, why should

they come back? Here at Holy Family, we have celebrated 3,000 sacraments in ten years. People come for the sacraments of the Church: Why should they come back? We need to provide an experience that draws them back. There's something beautiful about what Father Mike is saying: Once you involve people in the liturgy, they begin to feel ownership and investment. They say, "I need to go to mass: Father Mike is counting on me to light the candles on Sunday!" One of the great challenges that we need to guide people through is not becoming possessive of "their" ministries, but helping them to empower others to do what they do. When we started Holy Family ten years ago, people referred to it as "Father Jayme's church." It's beautiful to see how Holy Family has now come into a new identity based on the people whom we've equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to play an active role in our community and be ambassadors of our parish Family.

Božek: Perhaps the first question to ask yourself is: What kind of church do you want to have? Not every member of the clergy wants to have a St. Stanislaus or a Holy Family, especially those with nine-to-five jobs. What kind of community do you want to build, and are you willing to invest the necessary time and resources to sustain it? The goal of ministry is not to kill yourself with a 40-hour work week, followed by ten hours of ministry each weekend. You may have to reevaluate your resources and how you manage your time. If you choose to build a bigger parish, ask yourself: Who is in your neighborhood? Who's in your zip code. If you have a significant number of Serbian refugees, as we do in St. Louis, may you need to learn the Serbian language. If you minister in Texas, it is a mortal sin not to have a Spanish mass. If you're not willing to learn another language to serve your people, you're not willing to grow your church. Our job is not to do what pleases us. Sometimes we need to suffer through a polka mass with a smile on our faces because that's what people want. Our job is to serve others and do what it takes to bring more people to our communities. Create a space for different "niches" in your community. The polka mass, the "pizza

mass,” and the Latin mass will serve different people within your community—if you’re willing to do what people like.

Navarro: When I started at All Saints, Father Mike said, “Be Christ in the world! That’s your only job!” There’s where we have to start if we’re going to build up the church. It’s that easy. You have to be kind. You have to love. Start with God’s greatest commandment! That’s what people are looking for, and, if they don’t get it, they’ll run somewhere else to find it. Be Christ, serve, and be love!

Bozek: Being Christ and loving like Christ is the foundation of community. We talk about being inclusive and welcoming: Do you recognize newcomers at your Sunday mass? Do you go out of your way to make them feel welcomed? Do you invite them and empower them and make them responsible for things? That’s difficult if you’re the only clergy person in the community: Find others who will notice newcomers in the pews and make them feel welcomed and show them where the coffee and doughnuts are. I am blessed to have several great people who are intentionally welcoming, who know right away when there is someone new in the church, and who make sure that this is the first time but not the last time that they are with us.

Vanni: When I was working on my Ph.D., a gender-fluid friend noted that it’s not enough for a church to be welcoming. We have to ask whether or not people have a concrete experience of being welcomed. That raises the questions: Who do we welcome, and how do we welcome? One of the challenges that we’ve embraced in a very clear way within the ECC is to look at and undo the embedded racism and Whiteness that so many of us bring to our settings. When people come in, will they find pieces of their culture reflected? What biases do we have based on culture or skin color? The African American community is one of the oldest Catholic communities in the United States, and it possesses a very vibrant cultural expression. We also have new immigrants from Catholic countries who have dark complexions and who are bringing the practices of the

African continent into our communities. It's something for us to constantly interrogate. As part of our visioning process, we're asking ourselves what we do to make people feel loved. Everything in our thinking should be about people walking away feeling love. Mainline Protestant denominations say that you have to have about 100 donating households to be viable and to support a clergy person. My community is small. A good attender in our community comes twice a month. There are many deeply committed people, but we're still very small. Our viability and sustainability financially depend on some growth, but I've been wondering what that means. Does it mean having 500 people in the pews, or does it mean having 100 really committed people? So we've been working on a plan. How actively do you make plans, and think about mission and vision, and how do you lead around business leadership issues?

Mathias: Strategic planning is important—but, to cite Stephen Covey, the “important” is often sacrificed in our ministries to the “urgent.” There's always something “urgent” that comes up and keeps us from doing what is “important.” Here at Holy Family, for instance, strategic planning is always part of the July meeting of our Board of Directors, but, after we finish our business and every other conversation, strategic planning too often comes at the end of the night, when we no longer have the time or energy to discuss it. You may notice: At the bottom of the emails that I share is our parish motto: “Loving. Catholic. Inclusive. Doing It Jesus' Way.” That motto was part of a strategic planning session on mission and vision a few years ago. I'll never forget: We brought together tremendous ideas and fed off the insights of one another. The challenge lies in continuing that amid all the other action of ministry. I love the idea of “retreat,” of pausing and stepping back from what we're doing, to focus on what's important.

Lopez: Strategies don't always work. In New York City, there's a sandwich shop called Sal, Kris & Charlie's. They have no website or advertisement, and when the line gets too long, they kick you out—but they have a good product. Because

of the quality of their product, they'll never have an issue. At All Saints, we had a strategy: "We're going to reach out to all the frustrated Catholics!" It didn't happen. "We're going to target the LGBT community!" It didn't happen. "We're going to target the Latino community!" It didn't happen. Preparation is important, but those who know me know that my preparation is often what pops into my brain during mass, and I'll say, "There's something in my brain that wants to come to life! Pray for it!" Our strategy is often to do what God puts into Father Mike's head! It's not a great strategy. However, we have a good product of outward-facing Christian love. One thing I want to be clear about is that you cannot be a single-issue church. There are enough single-issue churches. Strategy and organization are important, but we haven't been so intentional about sitting down and strategizing. As a community, we sit down and talk about what's coming next. I suspect that what the three of us have in common is that we initiate these conversations in our communities, and we think about what matters, and what's super-urgent, and what's coming down the road. It's super-important to have a vision to focus on; otherwise, things come up—like funerals—that distract us. But we also have to recognize what matters right now in this moment. If a parishioner is tugging at my cassock and needs me, but I say, "I've got to go: I have a board meeting to go to," I'm not doing my job. All the strategizing goes down the drain when there's one person or one family that needs to speak with any of us—and we find ourselves sitting down, talking with people, and fixing problems. Organizational strategies are super-important, but so is being super-present! We need to balance those.

Božek: Unlike many of you, I have no business experience. I'm really lucky to have a functional board of directors whose only goal is to do the business the church. I don't have to worry about other projects. I don't have to worry about paying the insurance. If you are a member of the clergy, your mission is easy: Be Christ for the people around you! Part of our growth is from those who come to us for sacraments. We celebrate a similar number of sacraments

to Holy Family. If you celebrate 20 to 30 weddings a year, make your goal to bring 10% of them to the church! Is that too high a goal? Encourage people to give you a longer try, to come and experience more of Christ's message. Don't pretend to be a nuclear physicist if you're not, and don't pretend to know how to run a church, if you don't. Find or hire people to do that for you. Many of us received a good education in how to be a good minister. If not, you can work on becoming better prepared. Find ways to improve your ministry. In business, if you have a good "product" to "sell," people will come back wanting more of that "product." As clergy, we can do better. We can improve ourselves. We can take classes and participate in trainings. If you think there's nothing you can learn, you're lying to yourself. Even at age 100, you can improve yourself. Never stop trying to be better!

Vanni: Bishop David Strong shares that, in one of Jayme's books, he speaks of visiting non-Catholic churches and learning from them. Any suggestions on how we might create such experiences in our own communities?

Mathias: In my 2019 book, *Extraordinary Celebrations, Extraordinary Growth*, I told the story of how Father Roy, Father Cleofas María, Deacon John and Deacon Angelita "held down the fort" at Holy Family while Father Libardo and I visited the largest megachurches in Texas over four weekends. We found that much of what distinguished them was their sense of hospitality and community, the quality of their preaching and teaching, and, if we were to be honest, the "show" that many megachurches put on to appeal to certain people and personalities. Father Libardo and I were just talking about those visits the other day, when he asked, "Why isn't Holy Family a megachurch today?" The answer is simple: Holy Family could be what it is not...if it's willing to be what it's not. Holy Family has its "groove" and is a parish community that appeals to certain people. Every system is designed to get the results it achieves, and Holy Family is perfectly "built" to be a community that gathers x people. Gathering more people than that would require us to do something different, and change is always

difficult for organizations. It's like walking: One leg is reaching forward, but the other is planted on the ground and provides stability. We provide that stability with one "leg" through our praying of the Roman Rite, and we stretch forward the other "leg" by constantly asking ourselves: What extraordinary thing will we do next Sunday, and the Sunday after that, and the Sunday after that?

Lopez: That sounds like the story from *Rebuilt: The Story of a Catholic Parish*. An older couple came to us on Sunday, after missing the liturgy at their Roman Catholic parish. When they saw Deacon Marianne vested for mass, they freaked out and started asking questions. They said, "We thought this was a Lutheran church." They were willing to go to a Lutheran liturgy, but they weren't willing to attend a "pseudo-catholic" liturgy! With the exception of George Stallings, we haven't had mega churches in our tradition. For the same reason, the Episcopal Church isn't growing with former Roman Catholics: because it's too catholic! People are trying to escape that. People are running away from the Roman Church and are looking for another experience of church—and those churches are experiencing growth—but they're not willing to go to better experience of Catholicism. They're scared. The Roman Church has programmed them to think it is the *only* church. That's how the Roman Church raised us! The first time that I said mass in this movement, I sat behind the altar and said to myself, "I'm going to go to hell!" When I raised the host, I began to panic and think, "This isn't real!" That's how ingrained that thinking is in us. The trauma has dug far into our brain. Stallings pulled together people looking for a Black Catholic experience of liturgy. No one else has done that—and I'm not sure that any of us will do it. A new mega church has moved one block from us, and they changed their name to Saints Church. It's filled with fully-initiated Roman Catholics—and they're happy to go to that place. They won't come to us, and there's a reason why. Unless something tremendous happens in the Vatican, or unless the Roman Church implodes, I don't think we'll ever see people flocking to us. These two guys

have a great ability to organize and pull things together – and the people don’t come. People are scared. I went to Denny’s last night, and everyone was speaking Spanish – but, if they’re Catholic, fear has been ingrained in them. Those two people who came to us last Sunday got up and shot out of the church. As Roman Catholics, they were okay going to a Lutheran liturgy, but not to a Catholic church with women clergy. Had they stayed, they would have had a good experience. We carry a trauma in our hearts and minds. We want to believe that we’re over it, but we’re not. We are bastard children who’ve been hurt – and we have “daddy issues.”

Quintana: In Albuquerque, I used the phrase “Stockholm Catholics” to describe those who sympathize with the Roman Church despite its abuses. In Albuquerque, I was famous for getting my boots on the street. I was involved in the Black Lives Matter movement and several social justice causes. People loved me and asked me to do certain things, but when I saw them at the local Roman church after baptizing their baby or celebrating their *quinceañera*, I could see in their eyes that they were Stockholm Catholics. You wouldn’t believe the number of complaints, the lamenting and the crying I heard of what the Roman Church was doing – but still they couldn’t break away. They wouldn’t join St. Óscar Romero, our parish community.

Božek: Absolutely. It happens in many of our parishes, especially if we have something – like female clergy – that stands out to former Roman Catholics. We often have newcomers who googled the closest Catholic church and who come to us not knowing that we are not Roman Catholic. They have a panic attack the moment they see a female deacon or priest – and they storm out of the church! Catholic Stockholm Syndrome is real. We have all been traumatized. Tons of gay people go to the fabulous cathedrals and never leave them because that’s “where” salvation is. They enjoy the beautiful vestments, even while interiorizing and getting used to the trauma. I’m not a psychologist, but it seems they cannot live without the abuser. There are things that we should be learning from

those megachurches that bombard people with love and who know as soon as you walk in the doors what your phone number and email address are, where you work, and who your children are. You will always be on their mailing list! We don't do that as well as they do. Let's learn from these churches and bombard people with love and care! There are probably things we'll never do: We'll never have a smoke machine and dramatic lights—but maybe the incense becomes our "smoke machine." There's no shame in learning from other denominations and using it for our advantage.

Lopez: There's a reason that the second-largest "religion" in the country is former Roman Catholics. We just need to focus on being an extremely well put-together church that gives people something. That's what the "secret sauce" is. At All Saints, we want the homeless to feel just as important as anyone else—so we spare them the embarrassment of having nothing to put into the basket by not taking up a collection during the liturgy. To the detriment of our parish finances, we have a basket on a table, and we tell people, "If you can't find anything in your wallet to put into the basket, find something in your heart to put there. Touch the basket and say, 'Multiply this.'" We let them know that they are just as important as everybody else. We have a homeless guy who has set up the altar for the past seven years. He puts on an alb, and he feels like he belongs. Who cares about megachurches? Small, local parishes are beautiful!

Božek: Perhaps there's one thing that would make Catholics stop and wake up—and that's why I pray every day Cardinal Raymond Burke might become the next pope. If he were elected pope, we would see a lot of people turned off to the Roman Catholic Church and considering churches that are "Catholic-but-not-Roman-Catholic."

Vanni: We started Charis five years ago. Before I convened the founders, I did a lot of reading on the megachurch movement. I also led two national Roman Catholic ministries. Perhaps it's our suburban setting, but I've experienced a lot of indifference to attending church.

Young people are not sure that the Church is relevant to them. They go to the gym. They have their 12-step meetings. They have other ways of creating community. The things that held me when I was their age was community, being connected to other people. The sacraments were also a big thing for me. But at Charis, in four years, I have done one baptism. I've done multiple weddings, but never one held inside a church, so that is not a moment in which people might identify with my congregation. At the weddings I do, I'm just another "player" among many, including the caterer and the wedding planner. I'm the "pastor person." It's a strange moment in which we're living. I don't sense ill will, only indifference. That's the thing that I have found hardest. David is pointing to the fact that people need to have an experience of something—and every community will have its charism. Mike's community includes this radical welcome and inclusion. I'm not sure what our charism will be, but it will have to be different and attractive. We probably have 70 people who consider themselves members of Charis. We see 25 to 30 each week. We have a list of 270 people that I email every week, and more people open my emails than come to us each week. People are engaged. I don't tend to think about "massgoers." I tend to think about people more holistically.

Lopez: Liturgy is where the "party" is at. Priests who went too far to the left after Vatican II saw their communities decline because a lot of people want the mystical experience of the Eucharist. When people play too much with the liturgy, I ask, "Are you sure you want to do that?" The liturgy connects us as Catholics. A lot of young evangelicals are leaving for the Orthodox Church of America, an Eastern-rite "high church." They want to experience the Church of their ancestors. We celebrate Mass at an Episcopal church that has a high mass, and it draws in the young people. They want that *ad orientem*, "smells-and-bells" experience of Church. Everything is so free now. If you want to watch sex, it's on your phone: You can have it in five seconds. If you need a new mouse for your computer, Amazon can have it to you in 20 minutes. We don't have anything

mystical to hold onto anymore. It doesn't matter who you are—if you're gay or divorced—we all want that mystical experience. That's what draws people into our communities, especially Latinos. I could be a sacramental "machine." We all could. When people come to us, looking for the sacraments, they're looking for a mystical experience. They believe that the sacraments are important for their children to have. They believe, "My kid is not going to be okay unless they have the sacraments!" When Father Henry celebrates his IFI liturgy for Filipinos of different catholic traditions, coming together to worship and pray. They want that mystical experience, as they understand it. We're lost in our movement when we try to follow that Vatican II craziness. I grew up with a Vatican II priest who went too far: He just threw his chasuble over his shirt. Those things matter. People notice that something—the alb—is missing, and they wonder, "Where's the white thing?" My kids are eight and five, and they understand if I do something ridiculous!

- Vanni: We don't pray the Roman Missal, and we have a very beautiful mass that's fully identifiable as a Catholic mass. I have to lovingly dissent: The Roman rite is one of many rites and many different "flavors" over the centuries.
- Lopez: We know that there are tons of rites. I use the Book of Common Prayer when I say mass at the Episcopal church. Our liturgies have to be reverent, guided, meditative experiences, with good music and good preaching. We have one hour a week to take people to heaven!
- Vanni: I have often reflected on the difference between "saying mass" and leading the community in prayer. We all know people who use the books and march through the prayers, inside our movement and outside. What I hear you asking is: Are you really inviting people into a prayer experience?
- Lopez: Just remember: In all churches, people choose which priest they want to see. They ask, "Who has the mass? Is it Father Marek? I want to see Father Jayme: He leads me in!" There's something to be said for that.
- Vanni: I had a teenager say to me, "Mom, I will never set foot at our Catholic community again if [a certain priest] is there.

I will turn around and walk out!” She was so offended by the way this priest chastised the people. We started watching the bulletin to see when Father Bill or Father Steve were celebrating, so that we could go to mass as a family. I respected her boundary.

Thank you, brothers, for your time and perspectives, and thank you to all who joined us this afternoon. Let’s continue to reflect on the “secret sauce” of our own communities!

**A Sesquicentennial Remembrance
of the Martyrdom of Three Filipino Priests:
Mariano Gómez, José Burgos & Jacinto Zamora**

**Order of the Mass
according to the rites of
the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (IFI)**

Father Henry Casanova Janiola of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (IFI) opened our gathering with an IFI mass in honor of GomBurZa. The contents of the mass program he created and shared with all are contained below.

THE ORDER OF MASS

The Processional Hymn

A psalm, hymn or anthem may be sung or said during the entrance of the Ministers, all standing.

The Priest, standing before the People and facing them, says,

Priest: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People: **And blessed be his Kingdom now and forever. Amen.**

Priest: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid. Cleanse our hearts by your Holy Spirit, that we may truly love you, and worthily praise your holy Name, through Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

Then may be said:

Priest or Deacon: Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ says: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.

The Penitential Order following may be omitted, provided that it is used at least one each week, and on days of fasting or penitence.

Priest or Deacon: Let us humbly confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

All Kneel. Silence is kept for a time.

All: We confess to God Almighty, to all the saints, and to each other, in what we have thought, in what we have said, in what we have done, and in what we have failed to do; and it was our own fault. Therefore we beg God to have mercy on us, and we ask all the saints to pray for us to the Lord our God. Amen.

The Bishop, if present, or the Priest, stands and faces the People.

Priest: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

All stand. The Ministers and People sing or say together the Kyrie Eleison. The Kyrie may be omitted when Gloria in Excelsis is appointed to be sung. During the singing of the hymn or before it, the Ministers go to their seats.

Kyrie Eleison

Priest: Lord, have mercy.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Priest: Lord, have mercy.

People: **Christ, have mercy.**

Priest: Christ, have mercy.

People: **Christ, have mercy.**

Priest: Lord, have mercy.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Priest: Lord, have mercy.

On all Sundays except those in Advent and lent, throughout the Christmas and Easter Seasons, and on Festivals, the following hymn is sung or said. Te Deum or a hymn of praise may be used in place of the Gloria.

Gloria in Excelsis

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, Almighty God and Father, we worship You, we give You thanks, we praise You for Your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father, receive our prayer. For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord, You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD OF GOD

All standing, the Priest says the prayer for the day.

The Collect

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Priest: Let us pray. Almighty God, you called your servants, Fathers José Burgos, Mariano Gómez, and Jacinto Zamora, to proclaim your love, equality and liberty amidst oppression and racial discrimination. Their suffering and death inspired our forebears to continue the struggle for freedom and independence of the motherland: Grant us, as we remember their martyrdom, to be so faithful in our witness to you in this world, that we may receive with the same servant the crown of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

The Ministers and People are seated. The appointed selections from the Holy Scriptures are read by Laypersons or Ministers. The Readers stand at a Lectern or in the Pulpit, or where they may best be seen and heard by the Congregation.

Reader: A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters: If God is for us, who can be against us? God did not spare God's own Son, but handed him over for us all. Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? As it is written: For your sake we are being slain all the day; we are looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things, we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 124:2-8

R. Our soul has been rescued like a bird from the fowler's snare.

Had not the LORD been with us when men rose up against us,
then would they have swallowed us alive
when their fury was inflamed against us.

R. Our soul has been rescued like a bird from the fowler's snare.

Then would the waters have overwhelmed us;
the torrent would have swept over us;
over us then would have swept the raging waters.

R. Our soul has been rescued like a bird from the fowler's snare.

Broken was the snare, and we were freed.

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

R. Our soul has been rescued like a bird from the fowler's snare.

The Holy Gospel

Psalm 124:2-8

Deacon: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Deacon: Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. Matthew.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Deacon: Jesus said to his disciples: "See that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will deceive many. You will hear of wars and reports of wars; see that you are not alarmed, for these things must happen, but it will not yet be the end. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be famines and earthquakes from place to place. All these are the beginning of the labor pains. Then they will hand you over to persecution, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of my name. And then many will be led into sin; they will betray and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and deceive many; and because of the increase of evildoing, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved."

The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

All shall seat.

The Sermon

The Creed

All: **We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontus Pilate; He suffered,**

died, and was buried. On the third day He rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, with the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. We believe in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Intercession

The Intercession is led by a Deacon, or by a member or members of the Congregation, or else by the Priest. The Leader stands in the Congregation, or before the People, facing them.

Priest or Deacon: Let us pray for the whole Church of Christ, and for all men according to their needs.

The People may kneel.

Leader: Almighty and everlasting God, You have taught us by Your holy Word, to pray and to give thanks for all men: We ask You now to receive our prayers which we offer to Your divine Majesty.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for Your Holy Catholic Church, especially the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*: Fill it with truth, righteousness, and peace; and grant that all who confess Your holy Name may agree in the truth of Your holy Word, and live together in unity and love.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: Give grace, heavenly Father, to all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; and especially to Rhee Timbang, our *Obispo Máximo*; Raul Tobias, the Diocesan Bishop of Western America & Western Canada, to Valentine Lorejo, the co-adjutor Bishop of the diocese of Eastern America & Eastern Canada, and to all priests and deacons of the IFI and of the

United States: by their life and teaching may they faithfully proclaim Your true and life-giving Word and administer Your holy Sacraments.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: We ask You also to rule the hearts of those who bear the authority of government in this and every land, especially the Presidents of the Philippines and of the United States of America: may they make wise and just decisions, and promote the liberty, peace and welfare of Your people.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: To all Your People give Your heavenly grace, and particularly to this congregation: May they hear and receive Your holy Word wit humble and obedient hearts and serve You faithfully all the days of their life.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Here prayers may be offered for special needs or persons, or there may be a time of silent intercession.

Leader: We ask You, Lord, of Your goodness to strengthen and help all who are in trouble, sorrow, need, or sickness, especially those who are infected by COVID19.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: We remember before You Your servants who have died in the faith of Christ, especially the three martyrs Fathers José Burgos, Mariano Gómez, and Jacinto Zamora, asking You to grant them continual growth in Your love and service.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: We also praise Your holy Name for all Your Saints. Give us grace to follow their good examples; may we with them come to the fullness of Your Kingdom.

People: **Grant our prayers, Father, for the sake of him who ever lives to intercede for Us, Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

The Peace

All stand. The Priest, standing before the People, says

Priest: Brothers, we are the Body of Christ: by one Spirit we were all baptized into one: Body.

People: **Let us keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

Priest: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

The Priest, Ministers, and People give each other the Greetings of Peace.

The Offertory

The Priest goes to the Holy Table, and begins the Offertory.

Priest: Give the Lord the honor due his Name; bring presents and come into His courts.

The priest places his hands on the Gifts, or extends his hands over them, is they are presented, and the priest and people together say the following prayers:

Offering of Alms

Everlasting God, You have given us all we have, Your bounty supplies all our needs: We, Your humble servants, offer You this token of our gratitude for all Your mercies. Amen.

Offering of the Bread

Eternal God, You caused the grain to grow, and from it we have made this Bread: We offer it to You that it may become for us the Bread of Life. Grant that we who shall receive it may be united in the bond of love. Amen.

Offering of the Wine

God Almighty, accept this Wine we have made from Your gifts; may it become our spiritual drink, that we who shall receive it. May be refreshed and renewed for Your service. Amen.

Here, in sung Masses, incense is offered. During the incensing, a hymn may be sung.

Priest: Pray, brothers, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty.

People: **May the Lord receive our sacrifice, for the praise and glory of his Name, for our good, and that of all his Church.**

The Great Thanksgiving

All stand throughout the Thanksgiving.

Priest: The merciful goodness of the Lord endures for ever and ever on those who fear Him, and His righteousness from generation to generation.

People: **Even on those who keep His covenant and remember His commandments and do them.**

Priest: The Lord has set His throne in heaven; and His kingship has dominion overall.

People: **Praise the Lord, you angels of His: you mighty ones who do His bidding and listen to the voice of His word.**

Priest: Praise the Lord, all you His hosts, you ministers of His who do His will.

People: **Praise the Lord, all you works of His; in the places of His dominion, praise the Lord!**

Priest: The Lord be with you,

People: **And also with you.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

Priest: It is truly right, it is our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God. But chiefly are we bound to praise You for the glorious resurrection of You Son Jesus Christ our Lord. For He is the Paschal Lamb who by His death has overcome death, and by His rising to life again has opened to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we joyfully proclaim Your glory, evermore praising You and saying:

All: Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Priest: All glory is Yours, almighty God, heavenly Father, for of Your love and mercy You gave Your only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon Him, and to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption. He made there, by the one offering of Himself, and He instituted and commanded us to continue a memorial of His precious death and sacrifice, until His coming again.

At the following words concerning the Bread, the Priest lays his hands upon the Bread or takes it into his hands. And at the words concerning the Cup, he lays his hands upon the Cup or takes it into his hands.

For in the night in which He was betrayed, He took bread; and when He had given thanks to you, He broken it, and gave it to His disciples and said: "TAKE, EAT, THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS GIVEN FOR YOU: DO THIS TO REMEMBER ME."

After supper He took the cup; and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them and said: "DRINK THIS, ALL OF YOU; FOR THIS IS MY BLOOD OF NEW COVENANT WHICH IS Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. WHATEVER YOU DRINK IT, DO THIS TO REMEMBER ME."

The Priest and People acclaim:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Priest: Therefore, Lord and heavenly Father, we Your humble servants celebrate the memorial Your Son commanded: having in remembrance His blessed passion and precious death, His mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for His coming in glory, we offer You this Bread of Life and this Cup of Salvation. And with these gifts we offer ourselves, asking You to accept upon Your heavenly altar, this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Gracious Father, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, bless and sanctify this Bread and Wine, that they may be to us the most precious Body and Blood of Your Son Jesus Christ. May all who receive this Holy

Communion be filled with Your grace and heavenly blessing, and be made one body with Him, that He may dwell in us and we in Him. And although we are not worthy to offer You any sacrifice, yet we ask You to accept this our duty and service, through Jesus Christ our Lord; by Him, and with Him, and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

The priest lifts up the Bread and Cup.

All honor and glory is Yours, O Father Almighty, now and forever.

The people answer in a loud voice,

All: **Amen!**

The people may kneel. Silence is kept for a time.

Priest: As our Savior Christ has taught us, with confidence we pray:

All: **Our Father in heaven, holy be Your Name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven, Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Do not bring us the test but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

The priest may say the following:

Priest: Lord, we ask You to deliver us from all evil and to grant peace in our time. By the help of Your mercy keep us free from sin and safe from anxiety; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

Here the priest shall break the Bread. Meanwhile the people sing or say:

Priest: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

People: **Have mercy on us.**

Priest: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

People: **Have mercy on us.**

Priest: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

People: **Grant us your peace.**

Silence is kept for a time.

The Holy Communion

All: We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Your many great mercies. We are not worthy to gather the crumbs from under Your table. But it is Your nature always to have mercy: Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the Body of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and to drink his Blood, that we being strengthened and refreshed by His life, may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us. Amen.

The priest, lifting up the Bread and Cup, says to the people:

Priest: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ gave Himself for you, and feed on Him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The priest receives Holy Communion, then the Ministers, and the people.

The Post Communion Prayer

The priest returns to his place behind the Table or goes to his chair. All shall stand.

Priest: The Lord be with you

People: **And also with you.**

Priest: Let us pray.

All: Eternal God our Father, You have accepted us as living members of the Body of Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and You have nourished us with the Sacrament of His victorious life; May we now be bread broken and given to the people, may Your love in us heal the wounds we have made, may Your words on our lips speak peace to all people; Send us with vision and strength to serve Your Son in the least of His brothers; so will Your Name be praised and glorified, now and in time to come, until all be fulfilled in Your Kingdom. Amen.

The blessing following is to be said by the Bishop when he is Presiding Celebrant. It may be said by a Priest without the verses.

The Benediction

Priest: The peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep you strong in the knowledge and love of God, and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord: And the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

People: **Amen.**

The Commissioning (Dismissal)

Priest: Go now to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia! Alleluia!

People: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

The Recessional Hymn

A Homily in Memory of GomBurZa

Rev. Mike López
All Saints Priory
Ridgewood, New York

Romans 8:31-39; Psalm 23; Matthew 24:4-13

It's good to be here today, to come together as a community and to share of the things that make us grow, and of the things that hinder us, to share of our wants and our fears and those things that bring us from death into life. I give thanks to God for allowing me to be here amongst sisters and brothers, amongst heroes, amongst champions, amongst brand-new, soon-to-be-deacons, and people whose hearts are filled with the zeal of a God who calls us to go out into the world and be selfless givers.

There should be a very clear understanding of the one thing that brings us here together and creates community amongst us. There are many options: We might say "We're Texans" or "We're Latinos" or "We're Catholics" or "We're clergy." We can divide ourselves into all sorts of subgroups, but we should deeply understand within our hearts and minds that what brings us here is the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross of Jesus Christ is, in and of itself, an eternal martyrdom. The cross of Jesus Christ breaks tombs, destroys death, and liberates us. It makes the poor rich, and it gives all things to those who need them.

There is nothing beautiful about the cross—even though we, in the life of the Church, have somehow made the cross a beautiful thing, and I never leave the house without my beautiful cross! If we're honest, there's nothing beautiful about the cross that Stephen is about to take on his back when he's ordained to the diaconate tomorrow. There's nothing beautiful about making that sign of suffering over our body: It's a sign of pain and destruction. It's a sign of torture and of fear for ruling powers. It's a sign of hatred and death—and not the good and holy death for which we pray! It's the sign of a miserable, bloody, painful, lung-filling, sweating death where you scream to God to take away your pain!

Today, as we celebrate this liturgy and come together for these next three days, we bring the martyrs, GomBurZa, to the forefront, to the center of what we are doing here. We can have all kinds of historical

lessons about why those men are important to the life of the Church, particularly to the local church in the Philippines. Father Henry will lead us in exploring that tomorrow. What we find within GomBurZa is something we should find within ourselves: a willingness to fight to the death for what we believe.

It's very romantic to say that we believe in Jesus. It's very romantic to say that we're willing to die for the Church. GomBurZa didn't die simply because they were priests. They didn't die simply because they were "Jesus people." They didn't die simply because they were willing to fight. They died for specific, particular reason: They recognized and understood that all of God's creation—including the indigenous Filipino and the *mestizo* of mixed culture—was perfect and new and deserved the same love as the European brother. They understood and recognized that they had to be a voice that spoke out against injustice.

We, sisters and brothers, as people who have given ourselves to the service of God, are called to use our voice against injustice—and not only for the injustices that affect us! A sin of our movement is that so many of us are vocal about the injustice that affects us, that we're willing to leave other injustices aside. As a people of the cross, we have to go and fight and speak and scream at the top of our lungs for justice for all of God's perfect creation:

- For little Black boys and girls in our country who are not being taken care of the way they should be;
- For the elderly who often die alone, sad and afraid and without anyone to hold their hand;
- For immigrants crossing our borders and braving dangerous experiences so that they can create a better life for their families;
- For our sisters and brothers in the LGBT community, who haven't been loved and cared for, as if they were something other than God's perfect creation.

We call upon the Spirit who inspired GomBurZa to come into this place, to come into our hearts and our hands and our minds and our lives:

- That we might not be a stagnant Church anymore;
- That we be a Church that stirs up revolution;
- That we might call people out of oppression;
- That we might be the new "Moses" in our world;

- That we might lead our people out of slavery, out of “Egypt,” out of pain, and into glory!

There is no other reason for us to come into this place than the suffering on the cross!

“Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants.” What do I want? Do I want what’s best for the people? Do I just want to look cool in a collar? Do I just want to take care of *my* people?

“Shepherd me, O God, beyond my fears.” What are the fears that keep us oppressed and afraid, that keep us from going out and touching and loving and hugging and embracing and lifting up all of God’s perfect creation?

“Shepherd me, O God, from death into life.” Are we willing to keep death in front of us, and understand that we are limited people – or will we continue to whip ourselves because we’re not perfect enough? Will we continue to be hard on ourselves because our ministries are not as big as we hope they’d be? Will we continue to drag ourselves down because – no matter how long I’ve done this and no matter how well people say I do it – that voice inside of us says that we are incapable little children who are trying to do good and right in this world.

May we who have been called to be shepherds in this world hold on tightly to those “dry bones” and “dead spirits,” those “corpses” in our world that are so afflicted by the wars, the evils and the pains that Jesus described in today’s gospel. May we not be shepherds who drag people from the front, but who support and lift up and push people from behind, pushing them in the direction of glory, pushing them in the direction of heaven, pushing them in the direction of a God who loves them despite what may be going on in their lives at any given moment, bringing them from death to life!

Sisters and brothers, on this special night, as we pray with the martyrs and saints and the whole choir of heaven, and all the heavenly hosts who will come down upon this altar when Father Henry lifts up this host, let us know that they sing with us. Let us not be afraid to push and shepherd and love those who are dying, into eternal life!

When We First Learned about the Philippine Independent Church

As we gathered for this experience, Father Jayme invited all participants to share when and how they learned about the Philippine Independent Church and how much they know about the PIC. Their responses follow.

Mathias: In ten years of seminary studies and over ten years as a Roman Catholic priest, I had never once heard of the Old Catholic Church, much less the Philippine Independent Church. It was as if these were “secrets” that were kept from me so long as I was part of the Roman papacracy! I first discovered the Philippine Independent Church when I attended the Utrecht Summer School in the Netherlands in 2019. It was there that I met Father Franz Foerster and Bishop Antonio Nercua Ablon of the Philippine Independent Church – and I admit that my mind was blown: To think that there was a church of over one million Independent Catholics in this world! I’ll never forget that lunch conversation with Father Franz and Bishop Antonio, when they shared their estimate that the IFI might contain as many as six to eight million people. I thought: Why have I never heard of this in my whole entire life? It was that encounter that inspired my 2020 book, *Aglipayan: The Flourishing of Independent Catholicism in the Philippines*, which we published for World Mission Sunday as a vehicle for others to learn more about this intriguing religious phenomenon in the Philippines! So, I knew nothing of the IFI until 2019 – when I was no longer a “spring chicken”! I just love the story of how the execution of these three good, holy Filipino priests, collectively known as GomBurZa, contributed to a sense of nationalism that inspired the Filipino people to shake their shackles from the Spanish Crown, but more importantly from the Roman Church – and I look forward to learning more about them and the church that was born of the nationalism they inspired!

Bożek: Growing up in Poland, I was aware of the Old Catholic movement and the Independent Catholic movement: The Polish Catholic Church and the Polish National Catholic Church in the U.S. are familiar “brands” in Polish circles! But I did not know about the IFI until I went to Utrecht for the first time in 2014. There I met an IFI priest who worked with sailors in a shipyard. That was my first encounter with the Independent movement in the Philippines. The more I learned about it, the more parallels I saw between the nationalist movements in Poland and the Philippines. I have enjoyed reading about both movements from political and religious perspectives. I had never heard about GomBurZa until a few weeks ago, but I am impressed by their witness and their martyrdom, and I’m looking forward to learning more tomorrow!

Nachefski: I had never heard of the Philippine Independent Church until we were in Utrecht for the 2017 summer school. Two of the ladies in our class were part of the Philippine Independent Church: One was a priest, and the other was the director of their seminary, and she was married to a priest. That was the first time that I had heard of it—and I was ecstatic to hear that there were women priests in the movement! I see their posts on Facebook, so I see what they’re doing, but I don’t know a lot about their church—so I hope to learn a lot tomorrow!

Vanni: Here’s the amazing data point for me: I did a Ph.D. in Catholic Ecclesiology and never once read the words “Old Catholic”! Just think about that: the sheer volume of books that I read about the life of the Church, and I never once came across it—not even on books on inculturation. I also didn’t hear about the Philippine Independent Church until I was in Utrecht, and I did not pick up how big it was from my fellow classmate, who didn’t socialize with us as much. So, I had no clue that it was that big—and I had never heard about GomBurZa until Jayme sent me his book!

Lopez: I first heard of the Philippine Independent Church, when I was at a chaplains meeting for the NYPD. A

Roman Catholic Filipino priest asked me where I was assigned, and I explained that I wasn't a Roman Catholic priest. He grabbed my hand and said, "You're Aglipayan!" I said, "What the hell is that?" I thought he was calling me an alien! He insisted: "You're Aglipayan! You're Aglipayan!", and I said, "Okay, yeah, I guess." I googled Aglipayan, and I learned about the history of the IFI, and I found it really interesting. I have long been an admirer of the IFI because they have accomplished what we have hoped to accomplish here in the U.S. — but keep failing to do. One of the particulars about the IFI that I find amazing is their inclusivity of women and the LGBT community in ministry. I am friends with many IFI priests and seminarians, and I would like to take credit for Father Henry being here, because Father Henry is sharing space with us at a parish in Woodside. It was really interesting when an Episcopal priest friend, Father Paul, called me and said, "The IFI is looking for a home," and I said "Yes!" right away. I'm grateful for our collaboration and the presence of their young adults in our space. I'm also grateful for their kindness and hospitality: They bring *lumpia* and all this good food! Our collaboration is a good thing, and it's an honor to host the IFI. I'm always very impressed with their liturgies and the way that young people are very engaged and respectful of what they're doing. I also respect their sense of intercommunion: with Roman Catholics, the Episcopal Church and the Old Catholic Church. I wish they would adopt us!

Kemp: I've been in the Independent movement for some 25 years, so I've heard of the Philippine Independent Church. I haven't come across a lot of literature on the Philippine Independent Church, and, until Jayme's alter ego, Carlos, sent me *Aglipayan*, I had never heard of Gomburza.

Navarro: I wasn't Roman Catholic, so I had no clue about anything when I walked into All Saints. I learned about the IFI when they started doing service over at the monastery at Woodside. That's when I first heard about

them. And GomBurZa? Zeroes across the board. I have no clue – but I’ll be learning about that one!

Loong: I had no clue about the Philippine Independent Church. After Sister Mary Ruth gave me a copy of a book, I read it, then texted a friend from the Philippines, who was in the Legion of Mary with me. I asked, “Do you know anything about this?” She said, “I have no idea.” That’s how much I know about it – and I’d like to learn more tomorrow!

Banks: I was exposed to the Philippine Independent Church through Facebook connections. I didn’t know that it existed until I stumbled upon it. I’ve made some great friends within the Independent movement in the Philippines, and I think of them as brothers and sisters – but I certainly had no knowledge of GomBurZa!

Luft: I knew nothing about GomBurZa or the IFI until I saw this conference. It piqued my interest, since I’m not aware of Independent Catholic movements in other parts of the world. I had a suspicion about the IFI, though: I had a parishioner who married a Filipino girl, and who requested the Sacraments of Initiation before going to the Philippines. I counseled him: “The Roman church there will likely not accept your sacraments.” He got married over there, and I never inquired – but someone over there accepted our sacraments! Surely, it had to be an Independent Catholic church there. It leads me to the next question: If the Independent Catholic Church exists in the Philippines, in what other nations around the world does it exist?

Gomez: I can barely remember my name or what happened last week, let alone when I first heard of this church! Father Jayme brings us up-to-date on things like this during our meetings, but I had never heard of these martyrs. Even though my name is Gomez, I don’t remember Mariano! I’m looking forward to learning about them and their impact on the Filipino people!

Nelligan: I heard about the Philippine Independent movement from Father Jayme, when he came back from

Netherlands, and from the little bit that I've read about it. I'm amazed to know how many people are in the Independent movement over there!

Rodriguez: How much do I know about the IFI? Only as much as Father Jayme has told us. And the GomBurZa guys? Only as much as Father Jayme has told us!

Caballero: Before I came to Holy Family, I thought that everybody who was a Catholic was a Roman Catholic, so I was really taken with the Independent Catholic Church. I didn't know that there were Independent Catholics out there. I didn't know that there was a Philippine Independent Church out there. Nothing. I just love the fact that this Church exists—and, of course, I've never heard of GomBurZa either. I'm really excited to learn tomorrow about their journey, what their life entailed, why they became martyrs for the Church, and why they are the epitome of the Independent Catholic movement in the Philippines!

Saenz: Like Terry, I thought that everybody who was Catholic was Roman Catholic. I'm dearly looking forward to tomorrow. I didn't know that the Independent Catholic movement existed, and I didn't know anything about the GomBurZa thing until Father Jayme told us about them. This man is a freaking educational genius: He knows everything—and we soak it up!

Dickenson: Anything we've learned about the Philippine Independent Church and GomBurZa has been through Father Jayme. He's a pretty knowledgeable resource, and we get a lot out of him!

Janiola: I just learned about GomBurZa yesterday! All joking aside, I hope that your expectations will be met tomorrow. First, I extend my thanks to Father Jayme, for inviting me here to officiate the Holy Mass according to the rite of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*. I also thank Father Mike for sharing his space with me at Woodside, which is populated with so many Filipinos. It was God's providence that a member of our community reached out to the priest in Elmhurst, who reached out to Father Mike—and we are so blessed that Father Mike opened

his arms to welcome us. He not only houses houseless people; he also houses churchless churches! I graduated from St. Andrew's Theological Seminary in the Philippines, a seminary that exists by virtue of the concordat relation between the Episcopal Church and the IFI. I've been ordained with the IFI since 1992. I was assigned to three parishes. I was assigned for 14 years at the national cathedral of the Philippine Independent Church—the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*—in Manila. I have worked with five *Obispos Máximos* already—with five Supreme Bishops. I came to the U.S. to mission the IFI to a small community here. We estimate 80 IFI members in New York, but only a few show up for Mass. Our church is an inclusive church, so I also minister to non-IFI Filipinos. We welcome everybody who believes in the Triune God! The IFI has 49 dioceses. We have two dioceses here in the U.S. The Diocese of Eastern United States and Eastern Canada is under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Bishop, and his coadjutor, Bishop Valentin Lorejo, is based in Tampa, Florida, where we have our cathedral for the Diocese of the Eastern United States and Eastern Canada. Here in Texas, we are in the Diocese of the Western United States and Western Canada, under Bishop Raul Tobias, who granted me permission to be with you for this gathering. I extend to you our heartfelt gratitude for your recognition of GomBurZa and the IFI. Bishop Tobias is happy to deepen and enhance his friendship with you. We currently have 57 women priests, and one woman bishop, who was consecrated in 2019. In all, we have 885 ordained priests throughout the world, including Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, the UK and Germany. We estimate the membership of the IFI to be seven million throughout the world, according to our census, with which not all parishes comply. Personally, I'm amazed at how interested you are to know about the IFI because of our commonalities: We're all independent from the Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church!

To answer your questions, I was not baptized by the IFI. I was baptized by the United Church of Christ in the

Philippines. My mother and her family are active in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), and the local UCCP church is across the street from her home. As a child, I attended the three-hour Sunday services at that church. My father attended the local Roman Catholic Church. When we moved to a new city, my parents enrolled me in a high school of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*. In our study of social sciences and history, I was attracted with the history of the IFI. I realized that the bible is the same for the UCCP, the Roman Catholic Church, and the IFI. What convinced me to be an IFI is its unique history. I am married, and we have three children, all girls. I'll look forward to telling you more about the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* tomorrow!

The Context that Birthed a New Expression of Catholicism in the Philippines

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“New Wineskins”: A “Flat” World Turns Spherical

Step with me back in time! We think of the world as round, but it hasn't always been conceived in that way. Around 500 B.C., Pythagóras observed that the sun and the moon are round, and wondered whether the land on which we stand might be round as well—just like that round object that passes in front of the moon during lunar eclipses! Some 150 years later, Aristotélēs (Aristotle, 384–322 B.C.) knew that constellations change as a person moves north, suggesting that the earth was spherical. Within another 150 years, Eratosthenes estimated the circumference of the Earth when the sun of the summer solstice illuminated the water at the bottom of a deep well in Swenet, Egypt, near the Nile River, while casting a shadow on a pole in Alexandria some 500 miles to the west.

Due to a certain antagonism between religion and science, and the ideological struggle over biological evolution, flat-world theories prevailed from 1870 to 1920, but historian Jeffrey Burton Russell has pointed out: “With extraordinarily few exceptions, no educated person in the history of Western Civilization from the third century B.C. onward believed that the Earth was flat.” That tension between religion and science had previously reared its head in the 16th and 17th centuries when the Roman Catholic Church condemned the heliocentric views of Polish Roman Catholic canon Mikołaj Kopernik (Nikolaus Copernicus, 1473–1543 A.D.), Italian Dominican friar Giordano Bruno (1548–1600), and Italian astronomer and physicist Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). It was hard for the Roman Church to release its grip on its “old wineskins” (Mk. 2:21-22, Mt. 9:16-17, Lk. 5:36-39)!

An “Age of Discovery” for Geography & Theology

Contrary to popular belief, the question in 15th-century Europe, when Italian Cristoforo Colombo (Christopher Columbus) set sail

from Spain, was not whether the Earth was round, but what the distance was from the west coast of Europe to east coast of the “West Indies.” Would we be able to traverse such a distance with limited supplies aboard such small boats? Consider this: Columbus’ three ships measured only 67 to 77 feet long: Place 14 average-height people on the ground, head to foot, and you have the length of Columbus’ largest ship! We wondered whether we could carry enough food and water aboard such a ship in order to arrive in the Indies – and all the mutinies that were threatened against Columbus pertained to the prospect of a shortage of food or water!

Karl Rahner (1904-1984), one of the greatest Roman Catholic theologians of the 20th century, suggested that the human person is a transcendent being: We constantly reach beyond our grasp, desiring to grasp more. This was exactly the case during the “Age of Discovery.” After Columbus bumped into the “West Indies” in 1492, we wanted to reach farther. A year later, in his papal bull *Inter caetera*, Pope Alexander VI divided all undiscovered lands between Spain and Portugal, with the understanding that he himself would assume spiritual authority over the inhabitants of all “discovered” lands and provide the necessary missionaries to maintain the colonial governance of the monarchs who planted the Roman Church in those lands. The race was off, with Spain and Portugal racing to colonize and “civilize” indigenous people through “cross and sword,” through the Roman Catholic faith and military might!

At the same time, the Roman Church was engaged in other battles for power and riches. In its quest to build the world’s largest church – St. Peter’s Basilica, at that time – the Roman Church had initiated the practice of selling indulgences to gullible faithful, who were willing to buy time out of the recently-invented “space” of Purgatory (1274 A.D.). Have you seen the movie, “Luther”? There’s a great scene where the young Augustinian friar visits Rome and is swept up in the emotion of purchasing time out of Purgatory for his family. Holding an indulgence in his hand, he realizes what he has done, and he feels the mixed emotions of sickness, anger and even outrage. The 1517 “reformation” of Martin Luther focused on such corruptions in the Roman Church as simony and the sale of indulgences. He was condemned in 1520, along with three of the works he penned that year: *On the Freedom of a Christian*, *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*. Luther

wasn't alone in his questioning of Roman ways: Roman Catholic priest Huldrych (or Ulrich) Zwingli began preaching an updated doctrine of justification in Zürich, in the Swiss Confederation, in 1518.

European Sea Voyages Extend to the Philippines

Back to our stories of sea voyages and conquest: The year before the 1520 condemnation of Martin Luther, Hernán Cortés de Monroy y Pizarro Altamirano landed in present-day Veracruz, Mexico—significantly on Good Friday. Tellingly, he is known in history as a *conquistador*, a “conqueror” of other human beings.

In the race to conquer the world, a Portuguese-born explorer, Fernão de Magalhães, was commissioned by the Spanish Crown that same year. We know him in English as Ferdinand Magellan, the man credited with first circumnavigating the globe. Perhaps you didn't know, though, that Magellan didn't make it home alive: He was killed in—you guessed it—the Philippines. Now, less than 30 years after Columbus bumped into the “West Indies,” Magellan had wound his way around the southern tip of present-day South America, landing in the present-day Philippines on March 17, 1521 and claiming the *Islas de San Lázaro* (the St. Lazarus Islands) for Spain. Two weeks later, the Augustinian friars aboard his ship erected a cross on the highest hill of the small island of Limasawa and celebrated their first mass on the archipelago on Holy Thursday, March 31, 1521. Within a month, Magellan met his Maker after having been slaughtered with his missionaries by the residents of the nearby island of Mactan. Fun fact: Not only did Magellan not circumnavigate the globe, but, of the two ships that set out from the *Islas de San Lázaro*, only the westward ship, which rounded the southern tip of Africa, safely returned to Spain in September 1522; the ship that sailed east from the islands disappeared into the Pacific Ocean.

Revolution Continues in the Roman Church

The next Spanish fleet to reach the present-day Philippines did so 21 years later, in 1543. There were some fascinating developments in the Church of Europe during those 21 years:

- In 1527, Pope Clement VII made an unholy alliance with Holy Roman Emperor Karl V (Charles V), who, with the support of Spanish soldiers, Italian mercenaries and

German Protestant *Landsknechte*, freed the pope from prison after the 1527 Sack of Rome by imperial troops.

- The 1530 Diet of Augsburg summarized “Lutheran” beliefs in Philip Melancthon’s “Augsburg Confession.”
- In 1531, Pope Clement VII sent a letter to King Henry VIII of England, refusing to annul the king’s marriage to Charles V’s aunt, Catalina de Aragón y Castilla (Catharine of Aragon), and forbidding Henry to remarry under the penalty of excommunication. Henry remarried anyway, to Anne Boleyn in 1533, Clement excommunicated him, and Henry responded to Clement’s “unreasonable and uncharitable usurpations and exactions” with the Act of Conditional Restraint of Annates, which transferred the taxes on ecclesiastical income from the pope to the Crown. The 1534 Act of Supremacy declared the independence of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church.
- The previous year, in 1533, Clement VII approved the geocentric theory of Father Mikołaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus)—99 years before the Roman Catholic Church condemned Galileo Galilei for similar ideas.
- And in 1536, Father Jean Cauvin (John Calvin) of the Kingdom of France initiated the second generation of the “Reformation” with his preaching on predestination in Geneva, in the Swiss Confederation.

Spanish Conquest & Colonization of the Philippines

In 1543, Ruy López de Villalobos, the Spanish viceroy of New Spain (in present-day Mexico), returned with Spanish friars and soldiers to the *Islas de San Lázaro*, this time claiming them for Prince Felipe Próspero José Francisco Domingo Ignacio Antonio Buenaventura Diego Miguel Luis Alfonso Isidro Ramón Víctor de Austria. Prince Philip, as we know him in English, would later be crowned king of Spain, Portugal, Naples, Sicily, and the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands. After marrying Queen Mary I, he became the sovereign of England and Ireland as well. The *Islas de San Lázaro* were henceforth known as *las Islas Filipinas*—the Philippine Islands.

Later that year, in 1543, a Portuguese fleet arrived in the Philippines as well, demanding an explanation for the presence of the

Spanish fleet in the territory that Pope Alexander VI had ceded to Portugal. The Portuguese fleet imprisoned López de Villalobos, and he died in prison in the Maluku Islands (in present-day Indonesia) in April 1544.

Another 21 years passed. In 1565, two years after the conclusion of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), Miguel López de Legazpi brought some 500 Spanish settlers to the archipelago, to the island of Cebu. Another 200 Spanish soldiers arrived two years later. Finally, the Spanish were establishing a foothold in the islands they had claimed for Prince Felipe!

In his 1899 work, *The Friars in the Philippines*, Dominican friar and Roman Catholic apologist Father Ambrose Coleman painted an idyllic picture of his conquering church: “As Philip was inspired by religious zeal, and his principal and perhaps only object was to spread the light of the Gospel, six Augustinian friars accompanied the expedition. We may say with truth that it was these missionaries, and the others who followed in rapid succession, who conquered the Archipelago for Spain. No conquest occurred in the strict sense of the term. The Spaniards in most places simply showed themselves to the natives; and the religious, who accompanied them, persuaded the untutored individuals to submit to the King of Spain, through whom they would obtain the two-fold blessing of civilization and Christianity.” Ha!

This system of colonization and collusion between the Spanish Crown and Roman papacy is better known as *patronato real* (royal patronage). According to this mutually-agreeable arrangement—for the Crown and the Roman Church, that is—the Spanish Crown assumed responsibility for establishing the Roman Catholic religion in its colonies (and the king enjoyed the right to name his friends and allies to ecclesiastical positions), and the Church committed missionaries to the Crown’s effort to “civilize” native populations.

Similar to the systems of Spanish missions in Texas and California, the Spanish military built a series of *presidios* or lowland fortresses to protect the archipelago from encroachment by Portuguese, British, Dutch, Muslim and Wokou forces. The Spanish government also shipped thousands of Roman Catholics to the islands: 1,200 Spanish families settled in Manila, 2,100 soldiers from New Spain (present-day Mexico) came to Cebu, Peruvians arrived in Zamboanga City in Mindanao, and *mestizos* (persons of mixed ancestry) made their home

in Iloilo, Negros, and Vigan. Many indigenous people on the archipelago found the ritual and pageantry of the new religion very attractive, and, as they did elsewhere, the friars incorporated indigenous customs into their missionary efforts. In the same way that the friars “baptized” the Nahuatl goddess Tonantzin as Our Lady of Guadalupe in present-day Mexico, for instance, they created a remembrance of the “Fish of the 12 Apostles” in the Philippines. Such syncretism was a covert attempt to eliminate the last vestiges of indigenous religions.

The planting of Spanish bodies in the *Islas Filipinas* began in 1565. Three years later, King Felipe, who now ruled Spain and all its colonies, found himself plunged into the Eighty Years’ War (1568-1648) with the largely-Protestant seventeen provinces of the Netherlands (in present-day Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and part of France). Spain struggled to govern its far-reaching territories, and the colonial treasury in the archipelago was exhausted from constant warfare against the Japanese Wokou in the north and against Muslims in the south. The Royal Fiscal of Manila recommended that King Carlos Sebastián (Charles III), who ruled Spain from 1759 to 1788, abandon the colony in the archipelago. Even the *Real Compañía Filipina* (Royal Philippine Company), which held a monopoly on trade between Spain and the Philippines, closed in 1834, due to financial losses. Intent on winning the entire archipelago for their church, though, Roman Catholic religious orders opposed the withdrawal of Spain from the Philippines. Forced to remain, the colonial treasury quadrupled its taxation of the Filipino people, to recoup its losses.

Religious Conquest and Colonization

Franciscan friars first arrived in the *Islas Filipinas* in 1577. Manila was founded and named the episcopal see of the archipelago, under the archdiocese of New Spain (in present-day Mexico). Dominican friar Domingo de Salazar was appointed the first bishop of the new diocese. Jesuits and Recollects (Discalced Augustinians) arrived in 1579. With so many religious, Coleman suggests that the Roman Church occupied a third of Manila, with colleges and convents preparing missionaries for the archipelago, China and Japan. These religious oversaw the construction and operation of the cathedral, the episcopal palace, churches, schools, universities and hospitals.

Their conquest came at a cost, and Coleman shares that 6,000 missionaries were martyred before the close of the 16th century. On the upside, though, for the Roman Church, Coleman shared the following numbers of Filipino converts by various missionaries through 1892:

<u>Clergy/Religious</u>	<u>Claimed Converts</u>
Calced Augustinians	2,082,131
Discalced Augustinians	1,175,156
Franciscans	1,010,753
Secular Clergy	967,294
Dominicans	699,851
<u>Jesuits</u>	<u>213,065</u>
Total	6,148,250

The archipelago, conquered by “cross and sword,” was now deeply Roman Catholic!

I’m personally taken with a book that was lent to us for the purpose of this conference by a friend, Carlos Gaztambide. The book, with the very colonial title *Our Islands and Their People*, was commissioned by the United States of America when it claimed the archipelago, along with Puerto Rico and Cuba, at the end of the Spanish-American War (1898). It provides a rich perspective on how the colonizers—now Americans!—viewed the indigenous people of the islands. You’ll see pages of pictures of grass huts, the dwellings of the “natives,” followed by pages of the cityscapes constructed by the European settlers. You’ll see the grass hut and the carved pole that served as the “temple” for indigenous religious rituals, then you see the marble steps and gilded altars inside the great stone edifices that were the cathedral and churches built by the friars. Imagine being an indigenous inhabitant of the archipelago: Which expression of religion might you choose, and for which reasons?

Most telling, though, is one photo titled, “A native Filipino priest.” The photo makes clear that there were likely motivations for indigenous people not only to join the new religion, but also to join its ranks of clergy and religious! Look carefully: You see his indigenous features, but you also notice his haircut, how not a single hair is out of place, and how cleanly he is shaven. Look even more closely: This is a priest—but he’s clothed in what resembles a military

uniform, with a large ribbon and medallion around his neck. It's clear that being part of the Roman Catholic power system brought some semblance of power and prestige to the indigenous people who were charmed by its spell!

Worldwide Calls for Independence

The 16th-century calls of reformers for independence from Rome foreshadowed the birth of Independent Catholicism in 1724 and the "declaration of independence" by the Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches less than 150 years later. Such calls for independence echoed in Church and State.

Consider this: 112 nations in our world have been formed since 1950. Here in the United States, we consider our experiment in democracy to be very "young," and yet we're older than the majority of the current nations in our world! An additional 32 countries were formed during the first half of the 20th century (1900-1950). Stepping back in time from there, the Philippines were at the end of a long string of 29 "victories" for independence during the 19th century: Haiti in 1804; Colombia, Mexico and Chile in 1810; Paraguay and Venezuela in 1811; Argentina in 1816; Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru in 1821; Ecuador and Brazil in 1822; Bolivia and Uruguay in 1825; Greece in 1829; Belgium in 1830; Luxembourg in 1839; Dominican Republic in 1844; Liberia in 1847; Italy in 1861; Canada in 1867; Germany in 1871; Romania in 1877; Bulgaria in 1878; and Ethiopia in 1896. Imagine being in the Philippines at the end of the 19th century, knowing of all these successful attempts to secure independence! Imagine asking yourself: Why can't we, Filipinos, be next? Why must we be ruled by the distant Spanish Crown some 7,245 miles away?

To maintain its control for 250 years, Spain placed Spanish-born *peninsulares* in all military and ecclesiastical leadership positions. The Roman Church and Spanish Crown heavily taxed the people, thus maintaining a tight hold on all financial resources. Wait, did I say that the Roman Catholic Church "taxed" people as well? Consider this: M.M. Parkhurst, who resided in the Philippines for years, reported that Roman Catholic missionaries in the archipelago asked for the following stipends: roughly two month wages for a chimney blessing, five months wages for the poll tax, six months wages for a marriage ("so that common law marriages are the frequent result," Parkhurst

said), and twelve months wages for a “death fee” to cover funeral and burial expenses! It is certainly understandable that there would arise voices in opposition to the Spanish Crown—and to the Roman Catholic Church!

The Terror of 1872

In 1823, inspired by now-independent Latin American nations, Andrés Novales led an uprising in the Philippines, which was quickly and brutally suppressed. Nearly 50 more years would pass before the Terror of 1872, the sesquicentennial event that we now pause to remember.

On January 20, 1872, on the island of Cavite, there was a supposed mutiny by 200 Filipinos at the Spanish arsenal of Fort San Felipe. I say “a supposed mutiny” because we all know how human beings are: We tend to exaggerate things to suit our purposes! Biased Spanish historian José Montero y Vidal suggested that native clergy were the organizing force behind the failed “Cavite Mutiny.” Three were fingered in particular: Father Mariano Gómez de los Ángeles, Father José Burgos and Father Jacinto Zamora—collectively known by the portmanteau GomBurZa. The 73-year-old Gómez de los Ángeles published the newspaper, *La Verdad* (*The Truth*); his age leads to the critique of the three young priests typically pictured together as GomBurZa. The 35-year-old Burgos possessed dual doctorates in theology and canon law. The 37-year-old Zamora, a doctor of philosophy, sat in the carriage of Philippine Governor-General Carlos María de la Torre, a place traditionally reserved for the Spanish-born archbishop of Manila. What made matters worse was that the liberal de la Torre was welcomed and supported by the *mestizo* diocesan parish priests, but was opposed by the conservative Spanish friars.

Beginning in 1871, the Philippines now had a new governor-general, Rafael Izquierdo y Gutiérrez, who was known for his “iron fist.” He knew that a scapegoat was needed for the Cavite Mutiny, and that an example had to be made for those who dared to dream of independence. As outspoken defenders of the rights of Filipino priests and as critics of the abuses by Spanish friars, GomBurZa were the perfect target. Accused of treason and sedition, they were executed two days later by garrote, a torturous death by strangulation. A black cloud followed the shadowy trial and swift demise of GomBurZa. Stories quickly circulated that Spanish

prosecutors bribed the artilleryman who testified against the priests, and, after Archbishop Gregorio Melitón Martínez of Manila refused to defrock the three priests, Governor-General Izquierdo commuted the death sentences of all other purported mutineers, exiling 20 men—including four priests—to the Mariana Islands (present-day Guam).

Filipino historian Dr. Trinidad Hermenegildo Pardo de Tavera wonders whether the “Cavite Mutiny” ever took place. He suggests another perspective: The Spanish friars, who enjoyed power on the archipelago for centuries, believed that they could hold onto their power by distracting Governor-General Izquierdo with ginned-up news of a conspiracy by Filipinos, to delay any proposed educational reforms that would lessen their influence.

Most importantly, the brutal execution of GomBurZa sparked Philippine nationalism and profoundly impacted Filipinos at the time. Dr. José Rizal dedicated his second novel, a condemnation of Spanish rule and elite Filipinos, to their memory, referring to them as “martyrs” and “victims of the evil which [he undertook] in combat.”

The Overthrow of the Spanish Crown and the Imposition of American Imperialism

Twenty years passed after the execution of GomBurZa, and Filipinos struggled to free themselves from the shackles of Church and State. In 1892, Filipinos interested in achieving independence created a secret, alternative Filipino government under the leadership of 29-year-old revolutionary Andrés Bonifacio y de Castro. Later known as “The Father of the Philippine Revolution,” Bonifacio was fluent in Tagalog, Spanish and English, and he was inspired by the works of José Rizal and French novelist Victor Hugo, whose 1862 novel *Les Misérables* received 740 attacks in the Roman Catholic press. Bonifacio helped revive Rizal’s *La Liga Filipina* (Philippine League), which demanded political reforms in the colonial government of the Philippines. The League disbanded after a single meeting—when Rizal was arrested and deported to Mindanao—but Bonifacio, who organized local chapters of the League in Manila, was soon named chief propagandist.

On the day after the announcement of Rizal’s exile, Bonifacio co-founded the *Kataas-taasan, Kagalang-galangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan*—the *Katipunan*, for short. Admittedly, the name of the

Katipunan strikes contemporary Americans as odd, since it was abbreviated “KKK”—an acronym, of course, that Americans associate with the Ku Klux Klan.

Most *Katipuneros* were lower- and middle-class Filipino leaders who despaired of achieving peaceful reform under Spanish rule. In 1895, the *Katipunan*, which quickly spread throughout the archipelago, elected Bonifacio its third *Presidente Supremo* (Supreme President). The *Katipunan* grew from 300 members in March 1896, to over 30,000 members five months later. With such growth, Spanish intelligence became aware of the *Katipunan*, and it began to arrest and imprison suspected traitors.

On May 3, 1896, Bonifacio hosted a general assembly of *Katipunan* leaders, to debate the start date for the revolution. They decided to kick off their revolution against Spain on August 29. On August 30, 1896, Bonifacio personally led the attack against Spanish forces at San Juan del Monte, but his reputation suffered when he was beaten back by outnumbered and soon-reinforced Spanish troops.

The greatest success occurred in Cavite, “the Heartland of the Philippine Revolution,” which fell within a month to rebel control under the leadership of Mariano Álvarez and 27-year-old Emiliano Aguinaldo. Aguinaldo, whose *nom de guerre* in the *Katipunan* was Magdalo, in honor of Mary Magdalene, became famed for his well-planned victories. Like many others, he quickly tired of Bonifacio’s air of superiority—for acting “as if he were a king.” Aguinaldo’s “Magdalo faction” of the *Katipunan* scored the first great victories of Filipinos over colonial powers. As a result, the Spanish soon recognized Aguinaldo as head of the rebellion.

In late October 1897, Aguinaldo convened an assembly of generals and established a second, provisional revolutionary government—a constitutional republic. The generals named Aguinaldo president. Less than two months later, though, on December 14-15, 1897, Aguinaldo was forced by prominent Filipinos to end hostilities and dissolve his government, which he did in exchange for amnesty and 800,000 Mexican pesos. He and his military leaders departed on December 23 for voluntary exile in Hong Kong.

In politics, we say, “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” After the February 15, 1898 sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine* in Havana, Cuba, the United States of America declared war on Spain. As part of its retaliation, the U.S. transported Aguinaldo back to the Philippines

aboard the *U.S.S. McCulloch*, to rally Filipinos against the Spanish government. Aguinaldo resumed command of the revolutionary army, and, after a five-hour skirmish on May 28, 1898—now Philippine Flag Day—Aguinaldo raised the Philippine flag for the first time. Eleven weeks later, on August 13, U.S. troops captured the capital city of Manila.

To symbolize the overthrow of Spain, Aguinaldo was inaugurated as the first and youngest-ever president of the short-lived First Philippine Republic on January 23, 1899. The government possessed the first democratic constitution in Asia, as well as a multi-ethnic army renowned for its Filipino officers and racial tolerance.

Six weeks earlier, however, on December 10, 1898, the Americans who came to the archipelago as seeming allies ended the Spanish-American War with the Treaty of Paris. The United States of America purchased the Philippines for \$20 million, and thus became the new imperial power over the archipelago. With an air of American superiority, U.S. President William McKinley—who noted that the Philippines was “a gift from the gods”—declared that since Filipinos “were unfit for self-government...there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them.”

Within two months of the treaty, on February 4, 1899—just two weeks after the formation of the First Philippine Republic—two American soldiers shot three Filipino soldiers, sparking the Philippine-American War, which climaxed in the 1899 Battle of Manila between American and Filipino forces. Aguinaldo was captured by American forces on March 23, 1901, effectively dissolving the First Philippine Republic. On July 1, 1901, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt named future U.S. President William Howard Taft as Civil Governor of the Philippines. The next year, on July 4, 1902, President Roosevelt unilaterally proclaimed an end to the Philippine-American War. Despite these events, the United States did not recognize the independence of the Philippines for 44 more years, until the Treaty of Manila on July 4, 1946.

The photos in *Our Islands and Their People* give some insight into the situation at that time. The U.S. soldiers pictured here don't resemble the well-trained, clean-shaven, uniformed military members of today. They appear to be bearded, plainly-clothed “country boys” whose cannons and rifles provided them a marked

advantage over indigenous populations. You can even see photos here of “battles,” with U.S. forces lined up and shooting in the direction of Filipino people. You see soldiers setting up telegraph lines, so that they could communicate from outpost to outpost.

From Revolution Against State, to Revolution Against Church

The Philippine-American War ended on July 4, 1902 with the subjection of the archipelago to the United States of America. Three years prior, the invading power established the Philippine Commission, quickly luring Filipino leaders to collaborate as part of what Filipinos characterized as “the civil counterpart of the invading military.” The Philippine Commission, the sole legislative body until the establishment of the Philippine Assembly in 1907, enacted legislation to suppress Filipino aspirations for liberty, including advocacy for independence (1901), armed resistance (1902), support for guerillas (1903), and the display of the Filipino revolutionary flag or the playing of the Filipino national anthem (1907).

Filipino resistance—or, more positively, the Filipino desire for complete independence—continued. Filipinos now channeled their resistance toward the desire for a new, democratic, independent church, free from the grasp of American domination—which valued the separation of church and state.

Leading the movement was Isabelo de los Reyes y Florentino, Sr., the “Father of the Philippine Labor Movement” and the president of the *Unión Obrera Democrática* (Democratic Labor Confederation), which he founded in July 1901. “Don Belong,” as he was colloquially known, was a former seminarian critical of the harsh discipline of the Augustinian friars who educated him—and against whom he once led a student strike to protest their mistreatment. He clung to the idea of establishing a national Catholic church independent of Rome, and the American guarantee of religious freedom would now allow for such a dream.

While exiled in Spain, de los Reyes remained apprised of the plight of Filipino clergy. On January 22, 1899, he visited Papal Nuncio Giuseppe Francica-Nava de Bontifè in Madrid, to ask that the Spanish friars be investigated for their oppression of Filipino clergy. He later wrote in *Filipinas ante Europa*: “Enough of Rome! Let us now form without vacillation our own congregation, a Filipino Church, conserving all that is good in the Roman Church and eliminating all

the deceptions which the diabolical astuteness of the cunning Romanists had introduced to corrupt the moral purity and sacredness of the doctrines of Christ.”

Having returned to the Philippines in 1901, de los Reyes sought permission to form a political party, the *Partido Nacionalista* (Nationalist Party), to advocate for independence within the framework of U.S. occupation. His request was denied, so he shifted his attention from politics, to the organizing of laborers. In February 1902, de los Reyes formed the *Unión Democrática de Litógrafos, Impresores, Encuadernadores y Otros Obreros* (Democratic Union of Lithographers, Printers, Bookbinders & Other Workers). Neighborhood associations and guilds of cooks, sculptors, seamen, tailors and tobacco harvesters joined this first labor union in the Philippines, causing de los Reyes to rebrand the organization as the *Unión Obrera Democrática* (Democratic Labor Confederation), which possessed 20,000 members by 1903.

All this time, de los Reyes continued his campaign for a national Filipino church. Anti-friar journalist Pascual H. Poblete, a former member of the *Katipunan* and now President of de los Reyes’ *Unión Obrera Democrática*, called a rally of the confederation’s general council at the Zorilla Theater on Sunday, August 3, 1902—thirteen days before de los Reyes and four other labor leaders were arrested on the trumped-up charge of ordering the assassination of striking cigar makers if they returned to work at the Commercial Tobacco Factory. Due to bad weather, the afternoon event was canceled.

The same night, de los Reyes, who served as secretary of the organization, called an evening rally at the *Centro de Bellas Artes* (Performing Arts Center), where he announced the formation of a new church, the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (Philippine Independent Church). He also shared the names of those involved in the effort.

According to Dr. William Henry Scott, a historian of Philippine history, de los Reyes declared: “I solemnly and without any reservations declare that today we definitely secede from the Church of Rome and renounce allegiance to the Vatican and, relying on God’s aid, proclaim ourselves members of a Christian, Catholic, Independent Church, to be ruled and administered by Filipinos!” Dr. Scott continues: “Those present then proceeded to elect seventeen ‘bishops’ and Gregorio Aglipay as ‘Supreme Bishop’ (*Obispo Máximo*).

Thus was the *Iglesia Católica Filipina Independiente* finally and officially born.”

The Namesake of the Aglipayan Church:

Gregorio Aglípay y Labayán

Gregorio Aglípay Cruz y Labayán, the third child of Pedro Aglípay Cruz and Victoriana Labayán Hilario, was raised in the poor, rural setting of his family. Gregorio’s mother died when he was one year old, and he was raised by his maternal grandmother and her children. His brother, Benito, died at age 12, and his older brother, Canuto, later served as chief of police in Victoria, Tarlac, the seat of the revolutionary government. Father Eleuterio José Revollido writes, “Gregorio enjoyed a normal childhood and learned to work hard on the farm with his uncles. As an adventuresome boy he liked to climb the tallest trees and to swim in the dangerous currents of the river.”

Various accounts speak of the young Gregorio’s first, negative brush with the Spanish colonial government, when he was arrested with an uncle and brought before the tribunal for failing to meet the family’s tobacco-planting quota. Such agricultural abuses stirred in Gregorio deep grievances against the colonial Spanish government.

Supported by his uncle, Francisco Amor Romas, who worked for the Dominican Sisters in Santa Catalina, Gregorio moved to Manila in 1879, where he studied under the private tutelage of Julián Carpio for two years. With the desire to pursue education and other opportunities outside of farming, Gregorio moved to Manila, where he studied at St. John Lateran College and the University of St. Thomas.

At the University of St. Thomas, Gregorio met several individuals who would later become important Filipino leaders: future revolutionary and Philippine President Emilio Aguinaldo; Isabelo de los Reyes, who later announced the formation of the Philippine Independent Church; “First Filipino Diplomat” Felipe Agoncillo y Encarnación, who represented the Philippines at the negotiations that led to the 1898 Treaty of Paris; *Katipunán* co-founder Ladislao Diwa y Nocoñ; and Marcelo Hilario del Pilar y Gatmaitán, an early leader in the anti-Spanish, anti-friar Filipino propaganda movement. Influenced by his fencing partner, José Rizal, during his last year of studies at St. Thomas, Gregorio decided to enter the seminary, rather than study law.

In 1883, at age 23, Gregorio began his seminary studies for the Archdiocese of Manila. At the seminary in Vigan, 250 miles north of Manila, he studied with Mariano Gaerlan, one of the famous “Nine Clerics” of Nueva Segovia who fought in the revolution, and with Mariano Dacanay, who was tortured by “Blessed” Gabino Olaso Zabala, a controversy that didn’t keep the latter from being beatified by the Roman Catholic Church. It doesn’t seem that Gregorio manifested a revolutionary spirit at the seminary, as attested to by his seminary rector, Father Celedonio Mateo de San José, who in 1903 admonished Gregorio: “You will not have forgotten those years you spent by my side in the Seminary in Vigan, or of our discussions of theological and moral topics, during which I had the pleasure of hearing your arguments based on the doctrines of St. Thomas....You, Father Gregorio, did not show any inclination to disobedience, much less of rebellion, during the time you were at my side.”

On December 21, 1889, at age 29, Gregorio was ordained a priest for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Manila. Retired Spanish Dominican bishop Bernabé García Cezón presided over the ceremony at the old Dominican church in Intramuros, 130 miles south of Vigan. Father Gregorio celebrated his first high mass on January 1, 1890 at Santa Cruz Church in Manila.

Like many Filipino priests, Father Gregorio served his entire priesthood as a parochial vicar, or assistant parish priest, to Spanish clergy, in Indang, 35 miles south of Manila (1890); in Nueva Ecija, 80 miles north of Manila (1891); in Bocaue, now a northern suburb of Manila (1892-1896); in San Pablo, 50 miles northeast of Manila (1896); and finally in Victoria, Tarlac, 85 miles north of Manila (1896-1898). In March 1897, Father Gregorio assumed leadership of the local *Katipunan* chapter in Victoria, where the revolutionary government established itself fifteen months later, in June 1898.

Father Gregorio now found himself in the center of a political and ecclesiastical storm. In the city that served as the seat of the revolutionary government, he employed 30 *Katipunan* carpenters at his church, and they reportedly saved the forces of Revolutionary General Francisco Macabulos from defeat at the hands of Spanish General José de Lachambre. Because of the young priest’s location, Governor-General Basilio Augustín and Archbishop Bernardino Nozaleda commissioned him to plead with revolutionary leaders for the end of the rebellion in exchange for autonomy. On the other side,

now back from Hong Kong, General Emilio Aguinaldo sent Colonel Luciano San Miguel to recruit Father Gregorio for the revolutionary army. Archbishop Nozaleda upped the stakes, asking Father Gregorio to travel north to investigate the condition of the bishopric in Nueva Segovia and to secure the release of two Jesuit priests. He obliged. He then decided to join General Aguinaldo's movement in Cavite.

After the establishment of the Revolutionary Government of the Philippines on June 23, 1898, Father Gregorio was elected as a representative to the national assembly of the Revolutionary Congress, which opened in the strategically-located town of Malolos, 25 miles northwest of Manila, on September 15, 1898. Father Gregorio was the sole priest present during the congress' creation of a constitution for the insurgent Philippine Republic, which formed on January 23, 1899.

On October 20, 1898, one month after the convening of the congress, General Emilio Aguinaldo, the president of the revolutionary government, named Father Gregorio his military vicar general – the religious leader of the revolution and the ecclesiastical superior over all Filipino priests. Daniel Doeppers writes, "In this capacity, Aglipay attempted to persuade the Filipino clergy to rally to the support of the Revolution and to seek the Holy See's recognition of a reconstituted church with a Filipino hierarchy."

Father Gregorio stepped into a challenging position. As vicar general, he would harness the moral authority of the church for the cause of the revolution. In the absence of the Spanish friars who chose exile or imprisonment during the revolution, Father Gregorio also oversaw the appointment of Filipino priests to vacant parishes throughout the archipelago. In the absence of hierarchy, he asked each province to elect a lieutenant military vicar to oversee local affairs.

On October 21, 1898, his first full day in his new position, Father Gregorio issued a manifesto, calling Filipinos to organize themselves into a cohesive body prepared for a national emergency. The following day, he issued a second manifesto demanding Filipino clergy to organize themselves, take charge of all vacant parishes, and rally for the revolutionary cause. He wrote, "The Philippine government, relying on my will and overlooking my lack of merit, has recognized me as *Vicario General Castrense* [Military Vicar

General]—that is to say, Chief Ecclesiastical Superior of those under arms during the Revolution. This means, all Filipinos. For this reason, I am likewise Superior to all Filipino priests who, as such, should all be appointed Military Chaplains for the duration of the war.”

Riding the crest of popular nationalism, the non-compromising, Masonic revolutionary Apolinario Mabini responded the next day with his own manifesto summoning Filipino clergy to organize their own national church.

On October 23, 1898, Father Gregorio brought together 23 Filipino priests for the Filipino Ecclesiastical Council, more popularly known as the Paniqui Assembly. The priests drafted a provisional constitution for a Filipino church, with no intention of separating from Rome, but rather with the intention of serving a diocese now abandoned by Spanish bishops and friars. Believing the revolutionary cause to be so just that it would be recognized by political and ecclesiastical powers, including the Vatican, the signatories—who didn’t count on the support of the parish priest at Paniqui—affirmed that all ecclesiastical authority fell to Filipino clergy.

On November 15, 1898, Roman Catholic Bishop José Hevia Campomanes of Nueva Segovia, who had been taken a political prisoner by revolutionary forces, appointed Father Gregorio—imaginably under some duress—as his diocesan administrator. Historian Tisa Wenger writes: “Although this appointment conferred only a limited administrative authority, Aglipay leveraged it as far as possible. His installation was a grand affair, complete with parades and a public oath of allegiance before the cathedral in Vigan, that highlighted the continuing importance of the church for the success of the revolution. He held out hope that the Vatican would elevate Filipino priests to the episcopacy and so legitimate the steps they were taking along with the independent status of the Philippines.”

As diocesan administrator, Father Gregorio “developed extensive personal ties with the native clergy of the area.” On November 26, Bishop Campomanes acceded to Father Gregorio’s request that he ordain sixteen former seminarians in Vigan—eight priests and eight deacons—to care for parishes in the diocese that had been abandoned by the Spanish friars. One newly-ordained priest, Father Juan Jamias, later became Father Gregorio’s brother-in-law in 1939.

After five months of debate, the Philippine Congress assembled in Malolos in December 1898 to ratify its new constitution. Significantly,

President Aguinaldo's chief advisor, Apolinario Mabini y Maranan, made clear in a draft: "The Republic as a collective entity does not profess any determined religion, leaving to individual consciences full liberty of selecting that one which may appear most worthy and reasonable." In the end, religious freedom emerged as a defining principle of the new republic, and not merely as one freedom among a subsequent list of rights. After the constitution's opening declaration on a republican system of government, and before the enumeration of guaranteed rights and freedoms, the founders of the Philippines Republic wrote: "The state recognizes the equality of all religious worships and the separation of Church and State." Historian Tisa Wenger notes that many devout Roman Catholic congressmen were not entirely convinced of the value of religious freedom. On the one side, Felipe Calderón, who drafted the Malolos Constitution, believed that cutting ties with the Roman Church, a possible source of cohesion in the new republic, would cause far too much disruption and would jeopardize their relationship with the Filipino priests who played a central role in the revolution. On the other side, critics pointed out the flaws of the feudal theocracy of the Spanish colonial system, where the decline of Spain was attributed to powerful clergy and the denial of religious liberty. After two tied votes, the article on religious freedom barely passed.

The separation of church and state remained a contentious issue. One representative continued to staunchly oppose religious freedom. He pleaded: "Neither society nor good government can exist without morality, order and authority...and therefore without religion. To permit the liberty of all religions is to concede liberty to both error and impiety." With Mabini, he approached President Aguinaldo and convinced him to suspend the article on freedom of religion and to support the work of loyal Filipino priests. President Aguinaldo knew the influence this man held over priests: The man so staunchly opposed to religious liberty was his military vicar general, Father Gregorio Aglipay.

The Guerilla Priest

Soon proving himself as "an authentic and widely known figure in the struggle for independence," Father Gregorio was pushed by the Philippine-American War, which broke out on February 4, 1899, to become the "*Guerilla Padre*" [guerilla priest]. In this capacity, he led

armed resistance as a skilled lieutenant general and tactician, repelling the attacks of American forces in the Ilocos Norte region. Father Revollido notes that Father Gregorio “adopted the classic tactics of hit-and-run raids on enemy garrisons and installations.” Despite an absence of love for Father Gregorio in his writings, Jesuit historian John N. Schumacher admitted, “Aglípay himself was, of course, a guerilla leader of undoubted ability and courage. For almost a year and a half, he carried on guerilla warfare in Ilocos Norte, particularly in the area between Badoc and Batac, but ranging even to Loaog at times. All evidence indicates that he was the soul of the resistance. So serious did the situation become for the Americans that in late August 1900 the American Commander was proposing such drastic measures as declaring the entire male population of the area rebels and treating them accordingly. Earlier, his superior officer, Lieutenant Colonel Howze had reported to headquarters: ‘From a very careful investigation in every direction, I find the causes for the outburst to be: first, the fanatical influence Padre Aglípay has over the average man in this province; Aglípay poses and is known as the Filipino government....The greatest number has risen against us because of the fanatical influence Aglípay has over them.’”

Due to Aglípay’s successes, U.S. General Elwell Otis reported that Father Gregorio “by his military operations in the field proved himself to be abler as a soldier than a bishop.” The anger felt by American soldiers against the *Guerilla Padre* and his revolutionaries might best be expressed in the words of one U.S. soldier who wrote to his family, “I would rather send a bullet through one of these black-robed, cut-throat robbers than Aguinaldo.”

One report by Captain George A. Dodd of the Third Infantry contained the following account of an April 1900 American encounter with Father Gregorio’s guerilla fighters: “Captain Dodd’s force, consisting of 87 men and 93 horses, left Vigan, the capital of Ilocos Sur province, on April 8, and headed northward. Early on the morning of the 15th, his command encountered a large party of insurgents under Gregorio Aglípay in the mountains near Badoc. In a fierce fight, lasting an hour, 49 *insurrectos* were killed, four were mortally wounded, and 44 were made prisoners. The affray took place in a thick jungle, which made the movements of the soldiers very difficult.”

According to the report, another 120 insurgents were killed the next day, with only a spear wound inflicted on one of Captain Dodd's sergeants. With 169 deaths to zero, one might wonder whether American newspapers were reporting more than facts, or whether Father Gregorio's guerilla fighters were so unprepared for war against U.S. forces.

Father Gregorio was portrayed as a leader in the Filipino struggle for religious independence, following in the footsteps of the martyred GomBurZa of 1872 and advocating for recognition of the Filipino clergy who received the same formation, education and ordination as Spanish clergy. He perceived himself to be thoroughly Catholic, as is expressed in his first manifesto of 1899: "Because of our sacred ministry, we are called to defend in these islands the immaculate purity of the Catholic religion. It is very necessary that we take advantage against the avalanche of impiety which always takes politico-social disturbances to infect the purest tradition."

In his second manifesto, he echoed this sentiment of Catholic purity, free from foreign domination: "The Revolution, having triumphed and the independence of our Motherland having been solemnly proclaimed by a regularly-constituted government, patriotism imposes on us, in the first place, the duty to acknowledge it as *fait accompli* inasmuch as we clearly see that its purposes, as regards the Catholic religion that the Filipino people profess, tend to preserve it in all its purity; and we must not only recognize it but we must incorporate it by means of our forces and in consonance with the character of our mission to the effective realization of its noble ends without doubting even for a moment that those ends were and are to liberate our people from foreign domination."

On April 29, 1899, within three months of the outbreak of the Philippine-American War, Archbishop Bernardino Nozaleda—a Spanish Dominican friar who believed Filipinos incapable of self-governance and who forbade his priests from supporting the revolution—excommunicated Father Gregorio for usurpation of ecclesiastical jurisdiction (i.e., for assuming the title Military Vicar General). Father Gregorio, in turn, declared Archbishop Bernardino Nozaleda excommunicated for collaborating with Spaniards and Americans to starve and abuse the Filipino people, for supporting an unjust colonial regime, and for betraying Christianity itself by imposing racial distinctions on people.

After the capture of President Emilio Aguinaldo by U.S. forces on March 23, 1901, Father Gregorio surrendered to American troops in April 1901. Dr. Scott notes that “the greatest compliment to his reputation as a patriot was unwittingly paid him by General J. Franklin Bell after the Ilocano surrender [who] requested permission to keep one cavalry unit in the field in case the *Guerilla Padre* changed his mind.”

Having suffered military defeat, Father Gregorio continued his campaign for the right of Filipinos to govern the Philippine church. Relations with the Roman church continued to quickly sour, particularly now that Apostolic Delegate Placide Louis Chapelle, arrived in the Philippines on January 2, 1900. A Frenchman, the former archbishop of Santa Fe, New Mexico and of New Orleans, Louisiana quickly turned Filipinos against him and his church with his pro-friar, anti-Filipino rhetoric, which suggested that Filipinos were only capable of menial positions of responsibility in the Roman church. Historian Tisa Wenger writes: “[Archbishop Chapelle] had begun his ministry in the racially-segregated worlds of Baltimore and Washington, D.C., and brought with him the racial sensibilities of the American South. Much like Nozaleda, he believed Filipinos incapable of managing their own parishes, let alone a diocese or a nation. Chapelle convinced U.S. governor-general E.S. Otis that the Spanish friars should be permitted to return to their former parishes, at least until American priests could be appointed to replace them. Filipino Catholics thus found themselves under the ecclesial authority of an archbishop who came to them from yet another imperial power and considered them racially incapable of governing themselves.”

Some suggest that Chapelle’s less-than-diplomatic manner of speaking facilitated future schism with the Roman Church. Two disappointed Filipino priests, Father Salustiano Araullo and Father José Chanco, attempted to travel to Rome, to plead with the pope for change, but the war impeded this.

Whereas the priests gathered at the Paniqui Assembly desired to remain part of the Roman Catholic Church, Father Gregorio now dialogued with American Protestants about a possible alliance to establish a Filipino-run church. Homer Stuntz, a Methodist bishop, wrote an extended account of his first encounter with Father Gregorio: “In October, 1901, Aglipay called all the Protestant ministers in Manila to a secret conference in the rooms of the

American Bible Society....He disclosed to us at that time his plans with some fullness of detail, and wound up with the modest (?) proposal that we should all merge our work into his, gain the immense numerical strength which he was confident he could command, and then leaven it with the truth....We pointed out to him the essentially negative character of his program and urged him to seize the great advantage afforded by his unique position to give those who should follow his lead something better than a mere rallying cry 'against Rome.' We urged particularly that he give great prominence to the Bible and the reformation of the lives of all who followed him—priests and people. He pleaded the necessity of not going too fast for his [Roman Catholic] constituency, [and] the danger that they would think it a Protestant movement....We were all pledged to secrecy, and I think the pledge was kept inviolate by all who listened with such absorbing interest that day to this anti-Romish plot."

The idea of separating from Rome was gaining momentum, and Father Gregorio spoke of this possibility with other priests and wartime comrades on the occasion of his 42nd birthday, on May 8, 1902, at a gathering now known as the Kullabeng Assembly. He also dialogued about it with his old classmate from St. Thomas University: Isabelo de los Reyes, Sr. of the *Unión Obrera Democrática*. With the imposition of U.S. imperialism, Father Gregorio found himself out of work, without a position in the now-defunct Philippine Republic, and excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church. Little did he know he would soon be put to work by his friend, "Don Belong."

On August 3, 1902, de los Reyes surprised Father Gregorio—not only with the announcement of the formation of a new nationalist church, the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* [Philippine Independent Church], but also with the news that he had nominated Father Gregorio as the nascent church's first *Obispo Máximo* (Supreme Bishop).

Like all Filipino priests, who were now forced to decide whether they would support or rebuff de los Reyes' dream, Father Gregorio had to discern which path he would choose. Nearly two weeks later, on August 16, 1902, he wrote a circular which went public four days later, in which he advocated for exhausting all means of reconciliation with Rome before declaring schism. The following day, the *Manila*

American derided de los Reyes' Philippine Independent Church as "the church that died before it was born."

Undeterred, de los Reyes formed the church's executive committee, comprised of friends from the *Unión Obrera Democrática*. He printed circulars and the church's first "fundamental epistle." In response to Roman Catholic Bishop Martín García y Alcocer's denunciation of the separation, de los Reyes published his second "fundamental epistle," encouraging members not to render evil for evil, but making clear that revolutions can be in accord with the will of God: "Neither the leaf of a tree nor a single bird falls to the earth without the will of our Heavenly Father (Mt. 10:29). Revolutions, therefore, are perfectly providential, and despite their causing us momentary disasters, they ultimately bring us far-reaching redemption and result in benefits that will bless many generations to come. They are like typhoons which, in the twinkling of an eye, destroy and erase secular vices and abuses, and their social upheavals, moreover, have this time been used by Divine Providence to castigate the errors of an enthroned frailocracy, errors over which we now wish to draw the veil of merciful oblivion."

Brave women and men began to join the revolution, aligning themselves with de los Reyes and against the Roman Catholic Church and its Spanish frailocracy. José Rizal submitted the membership applications for Saturnina Bunda and 62 fellow residents of Navasota. Then a watershed moment occurred when Father Pedro Brillantes, the ecclesiastical governor of Ilocos Norte, "accepted and solemnly joined our holy church, and this gave great impetus to the religious movement." As a result, several priests and seminarians began joining the new church, as well as a number of lay persons from several municipalities, guilds and labor unions, "and even expatriates." Twenty-four of twenty-five former Roman Catholic priests in Ilocos Norte participated in Father Pedro's consecration as a bishop on October 1, 1902.

In contrast, Father Gregorio showed an interest in preventing schism. Though he had committed grave acts of insubordination—like declaring his own archbishop excommunicated!—he showed no intention of separating from the Roman Catholic Church. Instead, he continued to dream of an indigenous clergy under the authority of the pope.

Father Gregorio accepted the invitation of Jesuit Fathers Francisco Foradada and Joaquín Villalonga to speak about the matter at the Jesuit house in Santa Ana, Manila. Professor María Christine Halili relates the episode: “For four days, Fr. Francisco Foradada, a Spaniard, exerted all efforts to win back Aglípay to the Catholic fold, although the latter had not yet given up his Catholic faith. On the fifth day, Foradada handed Aglípay a document for his signature, affirming his return to [Roman] Catholicism. Aglípay wanted an assurance that, by signing the document, the problem of the Filipino Catholic priests would be solved, that is, their appointment to the posts formerly held by the Spanish regulars. Foradada in return replied why did he mind so much Filipino priests, considering they are vicious and inefficient. Aglípay felt very offended and he demanded Foradada to withdraw his odious remark. He left the Jesuit house and severed relations with Roman Catholicism.”

After more than a month of discernment, Father Gregorio left the Roman Catholic Church and joined the Philippine Independent Church.

Conclusion

As I wrote my 2020 work *Aglipayan: The Flourishing of Independent Catholicism in the Philippines*, I enjoyed meditating on the great angst that Father Gregorio must have felt with respect to Holy Mother Church, an angst that was likely not too dissimilar to my own. I imagine his courage in leading a revolutionary army, and his surprise—or perhaps no surprise at all—at being asked to lead a revolutionary church.

Throughout our time together here in Austin, we’ll learn more about him, his church, and the ways in which he reimagined traditional Roman Catholic theology for the particular context of the early 20th-century Philippines. He canonized revolutionary heroes and created a church with a real sense of nationalism, with Our Lady of Balintawak—the “*Virgen de Guadalupe*” of the Philippine Independent Church—as its matron...but let’s save that for Father Henry and other speakers!

Gregorio Aglípay and those around him organized people and resources in such a unique way that, less than one year from their founding, the Swiss Old Catholic bishop raced to recognize Aglípay’s Vatican-free, “Aglipayan” church!

Reflections on the Context that Birthed a New Expression of Catholicism in the Philippines

At the conclusion of his presentation, Father Jayme proposed the following questions for conversation:

- *As one who represents the Church to God's people, what thoughts or feelings do you experience when you hear these stories and see these images surrounding Spanish colonialization, American imperial forces, GomBurZa and the nationalism they inspired?*
- *What lessons does this history share with us today?*
- *In what ways do we continue to participate in "colonization"?*

The reflections of conference attendees follow.

Kemp: My initial reaction is that this pattern of oppression is so common: One group of people tries to take the dignity and humanity from another group of people, and they oppress them for their own purposes. How horribly hurtful this is to our dignity as human beings!

Navarro: And we steal their stuff! We steal their ideas and make them our own. We claim things we didn't work for, then we flaunt them in people's faces. It just continues the oppression today!

Janiola: You can see in the Philippines how Church and State worked together to expand "their" colony. Spain used the Catholic Church as a front to colonize the Philippines. Sure, the Church baptized Christians, but its core purpose in the Philippines was to colonize!

Vanni: We all struggle with the legacy of entanglement between Church and Empire. By the end of the first century, we see power and status getting tangled in a system that's completely about the disempowered and those lacking status. They're very hard to tease out. It's ironic that, while the cross and sword went hand-in-hand in Spain, France, Germany and other Christian countries that dominated and Christianized people, religion has also been deployed by revolutionaries to get people to ally. Isabelo Reyes was very savvy to unite

people through the Aglipayan Church. We see a similar trend in this country, where our secular leadership is mobilizing people around a very dangerous, conservative Christianity. It's a very old and insidious entanglement for all of us, and it's hard to extricate ourselves from it. In this movement, we talk a lot about returning to the early Church—but that requires us to completely interrogate what that would look like.

Janiola: The IFI was founded to bring people together around the struggle for the Filipino people's attainment of genuine independence and freedom. Other churches allied with the IFI in its struggle for social justice. When I was a deacon in the early 1990s, we saw an influx of fundamentalist sects or churches from the U.S. into the Philippines, to counter progressive and nationalist clergy who advocated for social justice. The core teaching of these fundamentalist sects is for "salvation of souls," and that people should not go against government officials because they are "chosen by God to lead."

Vanni: As I'll later suggest in my talk, when we look at people and events, we can't simply do so through our own contemporary lens. We have to step back into the culture and sociopolitical reality of the time. We have to recognize that colonization wasn't just about land and possession; there was also a very gripping theology of salvation. Everyone had to be "saved"! We had to go to Africa, South America and Asia to "save" people! That was the theology of emerging 20th-century fundamentalist American churches. It has really only been since Vatican II that the Roman Church has shifted its notion of mission. Mission isn't about going "over there" to "save" someone; it's about living Christ's call and uplifting people in justice. It's a new idea, even in the Catholic community. That's why the Catholic Church is a big "mission field" for evangelicals in this country. Because we were baptized as infants, in their eyes we are not "saved"!

Navarro: That book [*Our Islands and Their People*] has a picture of an execution by several soldiers, and the next picture shows all sorts of bodies on the ground. The caption suggested that they celebrated that. Imagine that message: “It’s okay to kill people; in fact, we’ll have a party with food to celebrate it—so let’s go to the execution!” What’s up with that?

Vanni: It’s been going on for centuries: “Let’s watch the witches burn!” “Let’s see who’s getting guillotined!”

Navarro: There’s no human dignity in that. Everyone becomes involved, thinking “it’s just what we do”—and it’s soulless!

Kemp: It seems we always need to dehumanize others to justify our killing of them. We say, “They’re not human, so what we’re doing is okay.”

Vanni: We see it in our death penalty here in the United States.

Navarro: It’s as if we say, “So long as we do it collectively, it’s okay.” Wow, Jesus must be coming soon—because it can’t get any worse!

Nachefski: I’m in awe that this movement has been going on for as long as it has. When I was growing up, I never heard of anything “independent.” In the world I lived in, everything was “organized religion.” That was the world I lived in, and I went to parochial schools, where they taught organized religion, not anything “independent.” To hear that all this was taking place so long ago is amazing!

Lopez: We have such difficulty organizing our church here in the U.S., and I wonder if that’s because we’re not born of a struggle to survive. We can welcome the divorced, we can welcome the LGBT community—but none of these causes is born of life-threatening needs, as the needs that gave birth to the Philippine Independent Church.

Nelligan: I admire how brave the people were to break away from the Roman Catholic Church. They risked their lives. That took courage!

Lopez: Another thing that I find very sad is the weaponization of the Church to control people. A similar revolution occurred in Mexico, where the people overthrew churches – not because the people were anti-god or anti-faith, but because they were against any establishment that ruined the lives of people.

Nachefski: I did a bit of reading last night on the Philippine Independent Church, and I was scandalized by the way in which the Roman Catholic Church took the churches away from the Independent people. They insisted: “This is the way it needs to be! You need to be with the Roman Church – and those buildings do, too!” There was no “freedom of religion” in that!

Waterhouse: There was a real spirit of self-governance: The people wanted to make a change! That’s where we’re at. We want to change things – and we know that that’s how history is created. We are part of that history – and how effective or long-term the change we create will be remains to be seen. As Father Jayme says, in 100 years, people will be reading about us: what we talked about, what we were thinking, and the change we tried to make!

Gomez: As Roman Catholics, we were raised to think, “I have to do this” and “I have to do that.” The Filipino people didn’t think like that. They weren’t going to be told what to do or how to worship.

Nachefski: Like the Philippine people, it’s as if we’re going from being so structured, to being more free-thinking.

Lopez: A lot has to do with the romanticism of “being saved.” The indigenous people of the Americas were less advanced. They had less technology, and they were less socioeconomically diverse. They saw the Spanish arriving on horseback, and they thought the Spanish were gods who were coming to help and protect them. The real revolution came when they realized that the goal of these new “gods” was to destroy them and their way of life. How can you remedy that when the Church is building schools and hospitals and is becoming the

center of power in a community? You have to destroy that organization!

Nachefski: The Roman Catholic Church had so many missionaries! Before she died, I asked my Native American grandmother how she became Roman Catholic, and she said it all depended on which missionary came to your place. So many people became Catholic because of the Roman Catholic Church's missionary work. And, as a result, my grandmother had 14 kids, and all the girls were named Mary, and all the boys were named Joseph – and they all went by their middle names. They idolized those missionaries!

Nelligan: The situation is quickly changing in Mexico, where many people are leaving the Catholic Church and are joining other evangelical, Christian churches, where the missionaries are reaching them.

Nachefski: I think Father Mike "hit the nail on the head." People are hearing these missionaries preaching love and forgiveness, and they realize that they don't have to follow hard rules: "You have to do this, or else!" We love and accept all people, and people are attracted to that.

Waterhouse: From a broader perspective, you might say that we are part of the process of "colonization" – but attempting to be more open and accepting, to be the "religion of the day," helping people to see the world from our spiritual perspective.

Saenz: I was fascinated by the story of how the people of the Philippines expressed their faith in one way, then the Roman Catholic Church came with all its gold and "glitter." So, the Philippine people switched from their little huts, to beautiful, ornate churches. I couldn't believe the picture of the garrote: They were killing that man by twisting his neck until he couldn't breathe anymore – while everyone watched! How barbaric!

Gomez: It was the same in San Antonio: When you visit the missions, you see where the friars kept the Indians and how they controlled them. It was the same in the Philippines, where they used the cross and the military.

Saenz: It was all about power! It took a lot of guts for those people to leave the Roman Catholic Church and to go against Spanish rule. I still have feelings of guilt for leaving the Roman Catholic Church myself – but I love this church and the fact that we are inclusive. It’s fascinating to hear how they got away from Spanish rule and formed their own Catholic church.

Božek: Nationalism was the reason for their existence as a church. They wanted to be a free nation, which meant that they had to have their own church. The Roman Catholic Church was always the colonizing force, particularly in Mexico and South America, with a cross always next to the sword. Independence meant getting rid of the “cross” as well. That’s one of the reasons that the Netherlands became so anti-Catholic. They were under the Hapsburg/Spanish Crown, and when they kicked out the Spaniards, whom they hated so much, they had to kick out the Spaniards’ church as well! When the Netherlands became a republic, it was staunchly Protestant. For them, Spain and Catholicism were synonymous, so the Roman Church had to go underground, which is part of the history of the Old Catholic Church in the Netherlands. The same was true in the Philippines: The people felt that they had to get rid of the Spanish empire and the Spanish religion – and that they had to create their own, better version of Catholicism.

Luft: It’s fascinating that they maintained the sacramental theology of the Roman Church, but threw off the hierarchy, reestablishing Catholicism in the Philippines based on what they had.

Božek: Aglípay, the first presiding bishop, was very influenced by rationalism and unitarian ideas. He was willing to do away with the Trinity and most of what he would have called “Catholic superstitions.” This was the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the rationalist movement denied miracles and all the transcendental things that are so popular in theology. The Philippine Independent Church would later return to traditional Catholic piety

and sacramental theology in the 1930s and 1940s. I went to Poland a few weeks ago, where I have two nephews. Both were raised Roman Catholic, but the oldest, who is 18, is now becoming Neo-pagan. He knows that Poland became Catholic in 966, some 1,050 years ago, and he believes that it was an act of colonialism to superimpose Roman Catholicism, which was not native to Poland, on our pagan religions and our pagan Poles. He is discovering our pre-Christian traditions and roots. He's researching pagan gods and goddesses—and this is a shock and scandal within our family. If you think about it, though, it makes sense: If you want to reclaim your identity, you have to go back, before that identity was colonized or forced onto you by someone else.

Luft: Christianity and Catholicism were not native to any country in the world – so it's all a matter of colonization!

Božek: There's certainly a tension between colonization and the missionary aspect of the Great Commission!

Luft: We have five missions in San Antonio, where the Franciscans brought faith and European civilization to South Texas. The entire city of San Antonio was structured around the Catholic faith and the Spanish culture.

Banks: We have to acknowledge another U.S. contribution to the colonization of the Philippines: Politically, the Philippines is very staunchly anti-drug. This is post-independence, of course, but our anti-drug rhetoric mixed with their anti-crime rhetoric, to create a culture that tolerates the execution of drug dealers.

Božek: Our U.S. political system is very imperialistic. Entire Mexican cartels exist only because of our U.S. policies!

Quintana: With the Vatican's Doctrine of Discovery, the Church became the "advance troops," converting and subjugating people and preparing them to be compliant to colonizing powers. The Church was involved in the "business" of religiously colonizing people!

The Church Born of the Nationalism Inspired by GomBurZa

Rev. Henry Casanova Janiola
Iglesia Filipina Independiente
New York, New York

When we speak of “the Church born of the nationalism inspired by GomBurZa,” we’re speaking of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* – also known as the IFI, the Philippine Independent Church, and the PIC – a church that is Catholic and apostolic.

The IFI was founded at the beginning of the 20th century as part of the nationalist resistance against colonialism. It was formally organized in 1902 by Catholic priests and lay people who separated from Rome during the country’s struggle for national independence and democracy. In his book, *A History of the Filipino People*, prominent Filipino historian Teodoro Agoncillo writes: “The IFI is the only living, tangible result of the revolution.”

In my talk, we’ll discuss the three stages of struggle by the Filipino people that resulted in the birth of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*: the secularization movement, the Filipinization movement, and the independence of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* from the Roman Catholic Church.

Father Jayme has discussed the beginning of Catholicism in the Philippines. The catholicization and colonialization of the Philippines began on March 16, 1521, when Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan stepped on the island of Cebu with missionary friars of the Roman Catholic Church. They used the Roman Catholic Church as a front to Christianize and colonize the Philippines. When you invert the cross, it becomes a sword – and that’s colonization! The collaboration between Church and State persisted as the framework of colonial government in the Philippines. This system controlled the Filipinos for 400 years. The Roman Catholic Church, represented by the friars of various religious orders, became the primary institution used to successfully subjugate the Filipinos. The colonial Church serves as the principal cultural and political machinery for the successful colonization of the Philippines.

The friars were the inseparable instruments of Spanish rule. They played a great role, taking charge of local administration, amassing great wealth and vast lands, and becoming exceedingly powerful.

What were the impacts of this colonization?

A forced labor policy, called *polo y servicios*, was intact for over 250 years. In an age before trucks and forklifts, Filipinos were forced to build the great stone churches with their own hands, strength and sweat. They were beaten and whipped for resting, and they received no salary. All males ages 16 to 60 were required to perform this forced labor. They were also forced to cut logs and build the great warships that Spain used to defend the Philippines from Britain.

Land grabbing was also a problem. The Church lent money to the native Filipinos, and, when the people couldn't pay it back, the friars seized their land. As a result, the Roman Catholic Church owned much of the land of the native Filipinos.

Native Filipinos were obliged to pay various taxes for Spain, including the *tributo*, *sancturum*, *donativo*, *caja de comunidad*, and *servicio personal*. For those who couldn't pay taxes, their lands were taken as payment.

How did liberal ideas first emerge in the Philippines?

With the opening of the Suez Canal in Egypt in 1869, the liberal ideas of equality, fairness and civil rights could flow more freely between Spain and the Philippines. In 1871, the liberal-leaning Carlos de la Torre was appointed Spanish Governor-General of the Philippines, and he implemented liberal reforms—like exemptions from tributes and forced labor. Unfortunately, de la Torre was replaced in 1872 by Lieutenant General Rafael de Izquierdo, who rescinded the liberal policies of de la Torre.

The liberal ideas of de la Torre inspired thoughts of revolution against the government among the workers in factories and garrisons. In the Cavite Mutiny, Fernando La Madrid led approximately 200 sailors, artillerymen, and workers in the marine battalion of Fort San Felipe to rise up in arms against the colonial government. They seized the fort and subdued seven Spanish officers. Within two days, the mutiny was suppressed with massive arrests by the colonial administration. Even people with no connection to the mutiny were arrested, including half-Spaniards, *creoles*, secular priests, lawyers, merchants, businessmen and local officials. They all had one thing in common: They openly campaigned for and supported liberal ideas!

The Cavite mutiny was one of many revolts and rebellions against the colonial, feudal order. Among the arrested were three secular priests who long spoke out against the unfair treatment of secular Filipino clergy by the Spanish friars. They were Mariano Gómez de los Ángeles, a priest in Bacoor, where I was assigned for five years; José Burgos, a priest from the Manila cathedral; and Jacinto Zamora, a parish priest of Marikina. Why were these three priests implicated in the mutiny?

In tandem with the struggle against the colonial government, native clergy manifested their restless struggle for the secularization of parishes—for leadership in those parishes not by full-blooded Spaniards, but by the half-blood, *mestizo*, secular priests who were discriminated against.

The struggle for the secularization of parishes was started by Father Pedro Pelaez, a brilliant secular priest who was assigned in the Manila cathedral and was eventually elected as *Vicario Capitular*. The secularization movement began when the Jesuits were expelled from the Philippines by royal decree in 1774. This allowed the secular priests to fill parish vacancies. Upon the return of the Jesuits in 1854, many secular priests were displaced.

Another royal order was promulgated on September 10, 1861, this time removing Filipino priests from the administration of parishes. Father Pelaez, the unsung champion of the rights of Filipino priests, protested the discrimination against secular clergy. The Spaniards believed that the Filipino priests were idiots, incapable of administering churches, and fit only to assist Spanish clergy in their administration of Filipino churches. The secularization movement, they said, subverted the authority of the colonial Church and State.

Father Pedro Pelaez died in an 1863 earthquake, which destroyed the Manila cathedral, but the three secular priests now known as GomBurZa continued the secularization movement. According to some stories, they influenced the Filipino people with their liberal ideas and instigated the 1872 Cavite Mutiny—which is the reason they were executed in February 1872.

Decades after the unjust execution of the three Filipino priests, liberal elites formed a reform movement and demanded that the Philippines be named as a province of Spain. They also called for the expulsion of the religious friars and the secularization of their

parishes. This reform movement collapsed amid tensions between the liberal reformists.

The execution of GomBurZa set in motion many forms of unrest and struggle by the Filipino people. José Rizal, a brilliant and prolific novelist, who wrote against the abuses of the Spaniards, penned *El filibusterismo* (*The Reign of Greed*, in English), which exposed the corrupt attitudes of Spaniards against Filipinos. Playwright Marcelo H. del Pilar also wrote against the execution of GomBurZa. In his work, *Frailocracy in the Philippines*, he wrote “The [Cavite] insurrection spreads over an unprecedented number of pages in our history. It has become the topic of discussion everywhere because it implicated and condemned to the gallows three illustrious secular clergymen who distinguished themselves in defending the rights of the secular priests against the regular clergy relative to administering the care of souls, and it imprisoned illustrious jurists, respectable citizens and other secular clergymen in Ceuta and the Marianas.”

The next person to speak out against the execution of GomBurZa and in favor of the liberation of the Filipino people was Andrés Bonifacio. He founded the *Katipunan*, the KKK mentioned by Father Jayme.

Apolinario Mabini, the “brain” of the revolution, wrote of GomBurZa’s significance in his *La revolución filipina*: “The friars wanted to make an example of Burgos and his companions, so that the Filipinos should be afraid to go against them from then on. But that patent injustice, that official crime, aroused not fear but hatred of the friars and of the regime that supported them, and a profound sympathy and sorrow for the victims.” In essence, he said that the execution of GomBurZa was intended to silence the Filipinos who struggled for liberation and secularization!

Then we come to the brilliant journalist who was imprisoned and exiled for his columns against the abuses of the Spaniards: Isabelo de los Reyes, Sr.

In 1896, after the arrest of José Rizal, the revolutionary society called the *Kataastaasan, Kagalanggalangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (the Supreme and Honorable Association of the Children of the Nation), which was also known as *Katipunan*, was founded by Andrés Bonifacio who now spearheaded a national, democratic revolution to overthrow the colonial regime. The revolution gained the widespread support of patriotic Filipinos and drew on the participation of a

number of Filipino clergies. The revolutionary movement took as its agenda the expulsion of the friars and the establishment of a Philippine Church.

And now we come to Father Gregorio Labayán Aglípay, the personification of the patriotic sector of the Filipino clergy who affiliated with the revolution. Aglípay was born in 1864, so he was only eight years old when GomBurZa were executed. After high school, he entered the Roman Catholic seminary, so he was deeply aware of all that was happening within the Church. Aglípay joined the *Katipunan* at the start of the revolution and founded its *Sangay Liwanag* in 1897. He was appointed by President Emilio Aguinaldo as Military Chaplain to the revolutionary forces and promoted as Vicar General of the Revolutionary Army in 1898. As a result, the Roman Catholic Church excommunicated him. It was in his capacity as Vicar General that Aglípay pursued the establishment of the Philippine Church.

The primary demand of the Filipinization movement was that the Spanish friars be expelled from the Philippines and that the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines be led by Filipinos.

In October 1899, Father Aglípay presided over the Paniqui Assembly attended by 44 Filipino clergy. This Assembly decided to form a Philippine church. They also drafted a letter, asking the pope to grant their demand that the Philippine Church be run solely by Filipinos. Their request was not granted. The Paniqui Assembly then penned the "Provisional Ordinances of the Philippine Church," a corpus of canonical laws meant to govern the national church. Father Aglípay was elected President Pro-Tempore of the Council of the Philippine Church or the *Iglesia Filipina*.

While Isabelo de los Reyes was in exile, he was brought to President Theodore Roosevelt, who promised de los Reyes' return to the Philippines, where de los Reyes would help establish a revolutionary government. That never happened, since, on the heels of the 1896 Philippine Revolution, the United States declared war on Spain. The Spanish-American war was ended by the 1898 Treaty of Paris, which ceded Philippines to the United States in return for \$20 million paid to Spain.

Father Aglípay organized a guerilla resistance to hinder advancement of enemy troops, and he established an underground government in Ilocos Norte. After a negotiated surrender in 1901, he

returned to Manila and resumed the struggle for religious liberty. The Filipino people persisted in their nationalist struggle and resisted the U.S. imperialist war. After three years, though, the United States prevailed. On July 4, 1902, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt declared that the Filipino-American War was ended by the four laws passed by the Philippine Commission. These laws included:

1. The Sedition Law (1901), which forbade advocacy of independence, even through peaceful means. Despite this law, Filipino journalists, like Aurelio Tolentino, Juan Matapang Cruz, Juan Abad and Vicente Sotto, continued their “seditious” writings in urban centers, particularly in Manila and Cebu; and
2. The Brigandage Act (1902), which classified all armed resistance as pure banditry. Many of the revolutionaries, like Macario Sakay and the lieutenants of the *Vibora* (Viper), Artemio Ricarte, continued the struggle for liberty.

It was during this period of continued nationalist resistance against U.S. imperialistic designs in the Philippines that the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* was born.

Isabelo de los Reyes organized the federation of labor unions, called as *Unión Obrera Democrática* (UOD). During the General Assembly of the UOD on August 3, 1902, its founding chairman, Isabelo de los Reyes, Sr. proclaimed the establishment of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*. The meeting began on August 2, but ended in the early hours of August 3, and the last item on the agenda was the proclamation of a nationalist church independent from the Roman Catholic Church. Because Father Gregorio L. Aglípay was not part of the *Unión Obrera Democrática*, he was not present at that meeting. Still, they nominated him *in absentia* as *Obispo Maximo* (Supreme Bishop), to head the Philippine Church.

When he was notified of the nomination the next day, Father Aglípay refused the nomination, because he did not want to separate from Rome and his negotiations with the White House for Filipinization were still going on. He wanted Filipinization of the church, but not separation from the Roman Church, and he continued his negotiations with the White House. In fact, in response to the Paniqui Assembly’s demand for Filipinization, the pope sent his emissaries, Monsignor Chapelle and Father Francisco Foradada, who criticized Aglípay for defending the Filipino priests. They underestimated the Filipino priests as incompetent, idiots, and

incapable of running the Church. After that, Aglípay deemed not to return to the White House, and he halted negotiations.

When the negotiations for Filipinization did not succeed, Aglípay accepted the appointment as Supreme Bishop of the newly-proclaimed *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*. In this capacity, Supreme Bishop Aglípay led the masses of patriotic Filipinos – peasants, trade unionists, intellectuals, revolutionaries, and religious independents – who embraced the new-born *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*. In October 1902, he headed the drafting and ratification of the Constitution of the Church.

After the proclamation of the separation of the new church, Supreme Bishop Aglípay wrote in the newspaper: “The *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* was founded by the people of our country. This is the product of their desire for liberty, religiously, politically, and socially. I was only one of the instruments of its expression.”

The newly-born Church resisted the continued suppression of the Roman Catholic Church and the U.S. government. In 1903, the U.S. enacted the Reconcentration Act, which gave legal justification for denying support to guerrillas. When Father Aglípay announced his acceptance of the nomination to lead the newly-born Church, the Filipino clergy took possession of the Roman Catholic churches and properties and drove out the friars. Unfortunately, in 1904, the Philippine Supreme Court, which was chiefly comprised of Americans and contained no Filipinos, decided in favor of the Roman Catholic Church, ordering the return of all church properties to the Roman Catholic Church. The IFI unsuccessfully argued that their Filipino ancestors constructed these churches with their sweat and blood. This began a period of seizure of the parishes that were now in the hands of Filipino pastors. In many places, the priests and people of the IFI fought to retain their stone churches, rather than settle for bamboo and nipa churches.

In 1906, the Flag Law prohibited the display of the Philippine flag and the singing of the Philippine anthem. However, Father Aglípay wore a chasuble made of the Philippine Flag, and he led the people in singing the Philippine anthem during the elevation of the Body and Blood of Christ at mass. In this way, the authorities could not arrest Father Aglípay or the people because these actions done within the context of the Holy Mass. Thus, the singing of the Philippine anthem and the display and waving of the Philippine flag became part of the

IFI liturgy. Still today, all IFI churches display the Philippine flag in the sanctuary and sing the national anthem before the start of the Holy Mass or before the recessional on all Sundays, festivities and special church celebrations. Of all the churches in the Philippines, only the IFI sings the anthem as part of the liturgy. Here's a picture of me waving the flag during the singing of the anthem at our national cathedral in Manila, during my time as canon of the cathedral.

The *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* distinguished itself from the colonial church, both Catholic and Protestant, that cooperated with the U.S. colonial regime in the country, and the IFI upheld the nationalist, democratic aspirations of the Filipino people. It expressed its nationalist character through forms of worship that celebrated the ideals of national independence, as evidenced in the *Oficio Divino* (Divine Office), the *Misa Balintawak* (the Mass in Honor of Our Lady of Balintawak) and the *Misa Rizalina* (the Mass in Honor of José Rizal). The icon of the *Birhen ng Balintawak* (the Virgin of Balintawak) became a very popular symbol for the Church, to which a feast day and special devotion were accorded. In the image of Our Lady of Balintawak, Mary represents the motherland, and the young Jesus represents the *Katipunan*, the struggling Filipino people headed by Bonifacio and Mabini. This image, in Tagalog, says: "Father, may our independence be born!" You can see images of the revolution, including the bullets behind Our Lady of Balintawak and the Child.

That's the church, the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, that was born with the inspiration of the struggle of these three Filipino priests, GomBurZa, and of the Filipino people!

**Reflections on
the Church Born of the Nationalism
Inspired by GomBurZa**

The following comments were shared after Father Henry Janiola's presentation on the Church born of the nationalism inspired by GomBurZa.

- Bożek: We see parallel stories of colonization in so many countries: When a colonizing power comes to a people, it pushes its religious and political system on them at the same time. I'm wondering if this is true in Vietnam as well, since French Catholic missionaries assisted in colonizing efforts there.
- Dang: The French colonial era in Vietnam extended to 1945, and the first person to separate from the Roman Church in Vietnam was Archbishop Pierre Martin Ngô Đình Thục, the brother of the first president of Vietnam. He demanded that the Roman Catholic Church speak up and do something during the Vietnam War, but they didn't, so he created his own St. Pius X Society, if you will. He was hardcore and never reconciled with Rome.
- Bożek: I can understand why Aglípay did not want to accept leadership of his denomination for a while: When you've been brainwashed from an early age to believe that the Roman Catholic is the *only* church, it's a very serious and difficult separation process—even a traumatic experience—to “cut the umbilical cord” and be away from “Mommy.”
- Banks: I'm struck by the image of Our Lady of Balintawak. It really speaks to the ability for the story of Christ to be reinterpreted as a story of liberation in whatever struggle. The colonizers turned the cross into a sword, and the Filipino people turned the cross into a real “chain-breaker.” I just love how that image symbolizes the struggle and the possibilities of the story of Christ!
- Vanni: A majority of Marian apparitions have in common the fact that Mary appeared to indigenous, colonized or oppressed people. Think of Our Lady of Knock, Our

Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Kigali—all these apparitions of Mary to people who experienced oppression!

Kemp: I'm most impressed with the depth of the experience of the people. It's one thing to read about the Philippine Independent Church; it's another to hear the stories of the people who were involved. The stories of those who oppressed others through forced labor really brings to life what oppression and colonization were really about. That really touched my heart.

Nelligan: When Father Jayme spoke about the oppression, it brought to my mind the stories of how our ancestors in Mexico built churches without pay. I'm thinking particularly of the city of Puebla: When I was there years ago, I was impressed with the number of churches. They're everywhere! And to think who built those churches!

Kemp: That oppression is repeated throughout the world, every place that we see colonization.

Janiola: It seems the history of Mexico is very similar to that of the Philippines.

Nachefski: We have a Filipino parishioner who is a physical therapist in Joliet, Illinois, and he was listening in on the presentation. His dad's family was part of the Aglipayan Church, and he is so excited that we are bringing this story to people—because people don't know it! He was so excited, and he said, "No one talks about GomBurZa!"

Quintana: The story illustrates for me how Constantine colonized the Church and made the Church nothing more than a recapitulation of the Roman Empire. We're given a model of how *not* to evangelize people! As part of our spreading of the Gospel and our evangelizing of people, we can't impose our imperialistic will upon the people. We need to give them the power to develop the Church in their locale!

Vanni: Spoken as a true post-Vatican II Catholic! I was struck by Aglipay's devotion to keeping the Church together. Unity is such an important value in Christianity, and I

was struck by how he was dissuaded from that by his visit to the White House. I would have loved to have been “a fly on the wall”! The anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States was rabid, and the only reason American imperialists dealt with Catholicism in the Philippines was due to the sheer volume of Catholics there. It makes you wonder what their agenda was in trying to force him into this independent church, away from Rome. The leadership of the United States would not have wanted Aglípay to ally his church with Rome. Here we see one empire pulling in one direction, and another empire pulling in another, and neither had the Church in the foreground. Domination was in the foreground. I’d love to know more about that meeting, and how U.S. leaders were pushing their agenda!

Waterhouse: What an intense situation there for the community and the culture, in light of so much oppression and revolution. What a contrast with the state of Independent Catholicism in America today. We’re content, and we’re not clashing with the Roman Catholic Church or with any government. We’re definitely in communion with the basic premises of the Filipino Church, but we’re definitely not in the same “place.”

Mathias: I enjoy the entire “reluctant prophet” motif of Gregorio Aglípay’s life. Like Moses and Jeremiah, I imagine Aglípay, upon his nomination as Supreme Bishop, saying, “I didn’t sign up for this!” It causes us to reflect on our own lives: How many of us thought 10 or 20 years ago that we’d be doing what we’re doing, that we’d be part of this movement today? Like Aglípay, we come to a moment in our lives when we say...

Vanni: If somebody’s got to do it, I guess it’s me!

Mathias: Exactly! We prepare to celebrate Stephen’s diaconate ordination this evening. Had you told Stephen five years ago that he’d be a deacon, he would have said, “No way!” But then, like Aglípay, he became involved in the Church, and he began seeing himself differently. Of course, we offered him formation and education, but,

as was true in the story of Aglípay and the clergy he empowered, we trust that the Spirit will supply the rest! That was certainly the case with the phenomenon of the Aglipayan Church and its incredible growth. I wonder: How do we here in the United States get our act together and bring some semblance of unity to our movement, so that we, in some way, might reflect the unity and strength of the Philippine Independent Church?

Vanni: We need to interrogate the idea that there was growth in the Aglipayan Church. This was an instance of schism, not growth. That's a very different situation from what we're in. We need to think through the factors at play – in the culture, in that moment in time, in the theology, in the political situation – that gave such tremendous momentum to this schism. If you look at the numbers, the Philippine Independent Church has been relatively stable. It hasn't experienced tremendous growth. The numbers for the IFI are all over: Is it two million or seven million?

Mathias: Ah, schism is likely a better way to look at it. Father Scott Carter recently shared, "If you want to make a million dollars in the restaurant business, you need to start with \$10 million." It was certainly easier for the Aglipayan Church to get to a million followers, than for any of our communities here in the United States to grow to a million members!

Vanni: Schism has such a negative valence for us. We come from a Roman Catholic system that condemned the schismatic – "schismatics are heretics!" – and that has a strong drive toward unity. We need to invent a new word for the "split" that occurs. Ecumenical dialogue focuses on how we might bring ourselves back together. Can we come together and still be as incredibly diverse as the early Church?

Nachefski: When the Lutheran Church split, they didn't speak of "schism." For them, it was an "exile."

Vanni: Not even Luther wanted to leave the Church!

Nachefski: He just wanted to reform the Church!

Vanni: Aglípay might have been in the same place.

Janiola: Aglípay was referred to as “the Luther of the Philippines.”

Vanni: I’m not surprised. What Aglípay really wanted was reformation, not a fracturing. That was true of so many reformers!

Saenz: That was an interesting history of the Philippines and the IFI – and it was interesting to see the Philippine flag on Father Henry’s vestments last night. I never knew anything about this before today! It’s amazing to hear how so many people were persecuted – and Father Jayme and Father Henry brought their stories to life!

Lopez: As I heard those stories, I wondered why we didn’t see the same uprising against the Church in the Caribbean – but then it occurred to me: In the Caribbean, we almost had a complete annihilation of the indigenous people. The Blacks and *mestizos* who survived had to “fall in line” and adapt to the control of the Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch. The Philippines weren’t colonized prior to this, so they struggled to maintain their identity. Now I understand why the IFI has such standing in the Philippines: They basically took the Roman parishes and made them their own! When we think about our situation here in the United States, maybe we should start ransacking the Roman parishes!

Saenz: The Roman Catholic Church is way too powerful. Just imagine the resources and everything they have.

Caballero: I don’t understand why the Roman Catholic Church feels that it needs to have such control and power. The Church is supposed help people, not...

Saenz: ...make money!

Caballero: Especially money that has to go all the way up the pipeline, to Rome!

Saenz: Everybody has to get their share.

Lopez: There’s something to be said about power in any dynamic – even in our movement. It’s the nature of humans: We get a little power, and we go nuts! Humans are tribal people. We look to our leaders, and then, when

you become the leader, it does something to you mentally.

Caballero: It goes to your head!

Lopez: Just like Jayme said yesterday in that whole discussion on leadership: An “eight” will not follow a “two.” It’s hard for a lot of people to do something without you telling them what to do. But then, for leaders, you have to keep your ego in check—and you have to have a moral compass. It’s much easier to be the guy with the iron fist!

The Philippine Independent Church as a Social Movement

Most Rev. Dr. Alan Kemp
Ascension Alliance
Gig Harbor, Washington

I'm the founder and the first presiding bishop of the Ascension Alliance, which came about as a result of a split with an older group. For my personal ministry, I work with people in recovery. I celebrate a recovery-centered mass at the Olalla Recovery Center, with a livestream on alternating weekends. Moonshadow, my service dog, goes with me, and he knows who to go to, who is hurting, who needs love. He goes from one person to the next, and people pet him during the mass, and I don't pay any attention to that because he's doing his job.

It's important for you to have a sense of who I am as a person. I come from a very rigid, angry, dysfunctional family system. I am a Vietnam combat vet, one of the last Americans on swift boat patrol with the Republic of Vietnam forces. I don't say that to present myself as a war hero; it's simply part of my experience. It's part of who I am. It's part of why I think the way I do. I've been homeless twice in my life, after Vietnam, so I know what it feels like to be homeless. I know what it feels like to be rejected, abandoned, not loved. That's part of who I am. It's part of my experience. Like Jesus, I had the experience of being on the cross, saying, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" During a later time of semi-homelessness, I delivered 600 copies of the *Los Angeles Times* each morning, in order to keep body and soul in one place. You can imagine what it's like to throw 600 Sunday editions of the *L.A. Times* out of the window of a VW bus, trying to get them in driveways! That's one of my skills.

As I folded newspapers, I met a colleague, who also folded newspapers: He was a student at California State University, Northridge. He said, "You're a veteran: You can get money to go to college!" I grew up in a rigid, dysfunctional, working-class family, so education was not part of the picture. In my family, people with too much education got a bad rep—so education was something I had never thought about. I went to college, and that's how I got into higher education. I got my undergraduate degree in psychology, then

my MSW – my master’s degree in social work. I became a clinician, a therapist, so I’m a licensed mental health professional. And, as a result of being a clinical social worker and doing clinical work, I came in contact with people who taught, and they offered me a part-time job teaching a community college course on the sociology of social work. Ultimately, they liked my work, so, when a tenure-track position opened up, I was fortunate enough to get hired to renovate and coordinate a program dedicated to providing human services to other people. For 14 years, I taught and coordinated the Human Service Program at Pierce College, a very large, well-respected community college in the Puget Sound region of Washington State.

Then, one of the sociologists retired, and I thought I might like to teach sociology full-time. My friend, who was the chair of the department, said, “We think that you might do a good job for us, because you’re good with students.” And they hired me to teach. I taught sociology for 16 years, before retiring two years ago.

Why the hell would any of this be relevant to our talk today? It actually has something to do with GomBurZa and the IFI! I knew nothing about the IFI before Father Jayme asked me to do a presentation on the IFI from a sociological perspective – but what I bring to this gathering is a sociological way of looking at things. So, let’s look at the Aglipayan Church, the Philippine Independent Church, from a sociological perspective!

Sociology is the study of society and human interaction. After I retired, I went back to school for another graduate degree: in applied sociology. So, what do “applied sociologists” do? They teach, and they do research! I have written four textbooks that are used nationally and internationally. My primary area of specialization is abuse: abuse in the family, abuse in society, and even the abuse of children by priests. That’s one of my areas of expertise. One of my inspirations with respect to the priestly abuse of children is Richard Sipe, a Benedictine monk for 18 years and a priest for 11. Margaret Mead had suggested that Richard interview priests about their sex lives and experiences (Sipe 1990). As a result of a 25-year longitudinal study of 1,500 individuals, he concluded that only about half of (Latin Rite) priests and religious are more or less celibate (Sipe 2003, cited in Kemp 2017), and that 2% of vowed men can be said to have achieved true celibacy. By this, he means they have successfully negotiated each step of celibate development and are so firmly established in this

state that, for all intents and purposes, it is irreversible. Another 8% of priests and religious have sufficiently consolidated their celibate practice such that it is unlikely to be reversed despite lapses. Another 40% try to practice celibacy, more or less.

Human beings are sexual beings! And, if we don't find a way to express ourselves sexually, it comes out sideways—like in the abuse of children. Even some very well-educated priests have no clue about how to understand and integrate their own human sexuality. Because Jesus was fully human, I presume that he, too, had sexual feelings that he had to deal with—but when have you ever heard anyone talk about Jesus as a sexual being? These are some of the things that I think about as a sociologist and therapist!

Father Jayme, in his infinite energy and creativity and his interest in all manner of things, has a dream that we begin publishing articles about our movement in peer-reviewed academic journals. I'm very interested in the Independent Catholic movement, and I'm only aware of one person who has done any real research on us: Dr. Julie Byrne of Hofstra University. I realize that her book only deals with two groups: my group, the Ascension Alliance, and the group we split from. To my knowledge, she's the only person who has done real research on the Independent movement. So, those of us who are in the movement would like to have some understanding of what's going on in the movement!

This conference is a great way to start: So, let's take a look at the Independent movement by using the Philippine Independent Church as a model.

To start, let's get a little spiritual, recognizing that the words we're about to hear are not only spiritual; they're also sociology.

Our first reading: "To each individual, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given, through the Spirit, the expression of wisdom. To another, the expression of knowledge, according to the same Spirit. To another, faith by the same Spirit. To another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit. To another, mighty deeds. To another, prophecy. To another, discernment of spirits. To another, varieties of tongues. To another, interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as she wishes" (1Cor. 12:7-11).

Why would I put this reading near the beginning of this presentation? Because we're all part of the one Mystical Body of

Christ—and each of us has a different job to do! We don't all have Jayme's vision. We don't all have Mike's passion for the poor. We don't all have Marek's ability to pastorally relate to a diverse community. We don't all have expertise in sociology or psychology. But each of us has a part to play in something bigger than ourselves: We are part of the Mystical Body of Christ! If this movement is going to go anywhere, and if it's going to become credible, it will be as a result of our pooling of gifts.

Our second reading: "As the body is one, though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body: so also Christ. For in one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit" (1Cor. 12:12-13).

These words have to do with equality. If you're a Christian, you're equal to every other Christian. The priest is not superior to the person sitting in the pew. The bishop is not superior to the priest. The bishop's job is to be the servant of the servants of the servants of God. I have edited a book on bishops (Burns & Kemp 2016): The bishop should preach, teach, facilitate and liberate. The true charism of the bishop is not to be in charge, to be an authority figure, telling other people what to do. And, because we're equal, we need to be concerned with social justice—just as the Philippine Independent Church was!

Our third reading: "God has told you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? That you do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God" (Mic. 6:8).

Why would we hear these words during a presentation on the Philippine Independent Church as a social movement? We need to care. We need to be concerned with issues of social justice. We need to love. It all boils down to two great commandments: Love God with everything you've got, and love your neighbor as yourself. We also need to be humble, which means that we understand that we are mortal and that there's a power greater than ourselves that we need to be paying attention to.

Now, let's apply the sociological perspective to the Philippine Independent Church. Let's begin with a few concepts.

Social facts are a pattern, a way of thinking, feeling and behaving, that has influence over all of us, but that none of us is able to control.

There are social forces at work, that are beyond our control, and those things influence and shape our behavior.

The *sociological imagination* is the ability to make a connection between our lived experience and bigger social forces (or *social facts*). When we begin making a connection between our lived experience and larger social forces, we're starting to use our sociological imagination! In the case of the Philippine Independent Church, we use our sociological imagination to make the connection between what happened with the people in the Philippines, and bigger social forces, like colonialism and imperialism.

There are three basic, theoretical perspectives within sociology that are well-recognized and well-used by sociologists: functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. There's also a fourth theory, called postmodern theory, which has come about as a result of quantum science, globalization, consumerism and digital technology. The idea of the postmodern perspective is to forget the old rules. It suggests that these other three ways of looking at things may have made sense during an era of industrialization, but that they don't necessarily make sense today.

Functionalism says that all social institutions perform a specific task. Functionalism would investigate the social function of church or religion. These institutions meet basic social needs—like finding meaning and purpose in life. What is the social function of government? To control how people acquire and use power. Father Henry spoke of two factors of this: State and Church. Functionalism is about why society stays the same, and why we have stability in society.

Conflict theory helps us understand how things change. We have a need for stability, but we also have a need for change. Each situation requires a different degree of stability and change. Ibn Khaldun, an Arab philosopher, who was really a sociologist hundreds of years before modern sociology came into existence, said that we must maintain a balance between stability and change. The people of the Philippines had their way of life, and then the Spanish came in and forced their way of life on them, and then American forces came in and did the same. Conflict theory frames and interprets these symbolic interactions.

Symbolic interactionism is also important. In sociology, we say that all social reality is socially constructed. If we say that the GomBurZa

were martyrs, that's a frame, an interpretation. That's our sociological explanation of that experience.

Now that you've been introduced to the four sociological frames, which do you think best explains why the Philippine Independent Church came into existence?

Social movements are a specialty within sociology. I'm not a specialist in social movements, but I'm interested in social movements because I'm part of one: the Independent Catholic movement! I also argue that the Philippine Independent Church is a social movement.

According to one definition, social movements are "a clarion call, a counterweight to oppressive power, and a summons to popular or collective action against a wide range of injustices." The birth of the Philippine Independent Church has everything to do with injustices! Other examples of secular social movements include the American Revolution, the abolition of slavery, the French Revolution, opposition to the British Seditious Meetings Act, child welfare during industrialization, the Bolshevik revolution that brought the former Soviet Union into existence, Gandhi's non-violent resistance to British occupation, the civil rights movement, women's liberation, gay liberation, and Polish solidarity.

There are also examples of Catholic social movements. Dominique-Marie Varlet's confirmation of children and later consecration of independent bishops in Utrecht were steps within a social movement. The Philippine Independent Church is part of a Catholic social movement. A part of a social movement also resulted from Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum*, in which he was forced to take a look at child welfare and the labor movement. The Liberal Catholic Church was part of a social movement. Vatican II was a social movement. Roman Catholic Womenpriests is part of a social movement. The rent-a-priest movement of married Roman Catholic priests is part of a social movement.

Key themes within Catholic social thought include human dignity, the common good, solidarity, care, the option for the poor, peace, reconciliation, and the preservation of creation. These are all themes in Catholic social thought. The sources of Catholic social thought include scriptures, papal encyclicals, and the acts of various national Catholic bodies (including the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops), and the contributions of Catholic thinkers, movements and groups. Trish,

for example, is an example of a Catholic thinker and a contributor to Catholic social thought. Another source of Catholic social thought is theological reflection, our understanding of our own lived experience within the context of a religious tradition.

Another element from social movements theory that we'll apply to the Aglipayan Church comes from sociologist Charles Tilly, who speaks of the WUNC framework. The W is for worthiness: Did they have a worthy cause? Was it something that we can wrap our thoughts and feelings around? The U is for unity, which determines whether a movement will succeed or fail. The N is for numbers. Numbers matter. The fact that the Aglipayan Church has one to eight million people is significant and contributes to its credibility and viability. The C is for commitment: How committed are the people to the movement? Do they even recognize it as a movement?

Collective behavior theory says that movements come into existence for a reason. Inequality, for instance, was one of the reasons for the existence of the Aglipayan Church.

Resource mobilization theory is all about identifying and marshalling resources for a purpose.

The stages of social movements include emergence. When movements come into existence, they tend to be very tentative, and people don't even understand that they're part of a movement. They know that something is wrong, and that something has to change, but they often don't have a clear idea of what that change will look like. That occurred in the Philippines sometime after colonization.

Next comes coalescence. People become clear about the problem and who's to blame. What's the problem? Colonialization and imperialism! Who's to blame? The Spanish and the Americans!

Then comes bureaucratization, with its hierarchy of authority and its division of labor. People have different roles, and we start to define explicit rules and procedures. At this stage, the movement becomes impersonal.

Finally, social movements decline for a number of reasons. A chief reason for the decline of social movements is their success: They get what they want, then they're on the downhill slide! Social movements also disappear due to organizational failure — they can't get their sh*t together — or due to cooptation: The movement started for one reason, then someone else took over who didn't give a damn about the original purpose. Imagine what would happen if someone came into

Mike's ministry to the homeless and coopted it for political reasons, say, to get elected! You can also kill a movement through repression, through political power. If, during our next presidential election, we elect someone who doesn't care about freedom and democracy—something that the Philippine Independent Church cares about—we're up Sh*t Creek! Another danger to avoid is becoming mainstream: When we become mainstream, we are in danger of losing our revolutionary zeal.

Father Jayme and Father Henry spoke in detail about colonization. We heard about the Spanish conquest and *patronato real*. The clergy were divided into two classes: those with privilege and those without. Think back to the conflict theory! Marxist conflict theory speaks of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. That was the situation of the clergy in the Philippines!

Father Henry also spoke of the development of the Aglipayan Church as an Inclusive Catholic church with open sacraments—including the ordination of women and the acceptance of LGBTQ+ people.

From the perspective of sociology, there's a lot that we can learn from the Philippine Independent Church. They had a worthy cause, they are united, they have the numbers, and they are committed. Perhaps more importantly, they act justly, love kindness and walk humbly with our God (Mic. 6:8)!

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Reflections on the Philippine Independent Church as a Social Movement

Janiola: It's important to note that, when the Aglipayan Church separated from the Roman Church, there was a shortage of priests, and many rural churches had no priest, so Aglípay ordained lay people, including sacristans who knew a bit about the church and its liturgy. At that time, transportation was not what it is today, though, and he also ordained some lay people who had the ability to paddle a boat. He created a base plan, with doctrine and a liturgy, but it was not followed by all. We sometimes refer to this as Aglípay's "theological wandering." Greater unity resulted under the leadership of Supreme Bishop Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., who looked for allies and entered into an ecumenical relationship with the Episcopal Church. So, our "theological wandering" led us back to such mainstream ideas as Trinitarian theology, and we eventually received apostolic succession. His father, Isabelo de los Reyes, Sr., who published so many works for the early Aglipayan Church, was a layperson with little theological studies. Supreme Bishop Aglípay didn't have access to many priests and theologians, like you have here in the United States. From a sociological perspective, it might also be important to note that Aglípay had such a following that he even ran for President of the Philippines. He did not win, but he was the leader of a great movement!

Lopez: I think there's something to be said about "mission rot." As the director of a non-profit, it's something that I think about every day. How big do we want to get? How much do we want to grow? How corporate do we want to become? I fear that one day I won't know the names of all my parishioners and clients. We have journeyed together to create a more corporate structure. I like how the Aglipayan Church has kept that revolutionary spirit at the forefront of its mind and in its ministry. We definitely lose some "flavor" when we become too corporate, too much like the others!

Ecclesiological & Theological Considerations of the Philippine Independent Church

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To honor context, I begin by repenting of my place on this platform. I am not Filipino, nor am I a scholar of the Filipino experience or of the many peoples and saints that make up the experience of the archipelago. I am a Euro-American, who is grounded in Irish immigrant culture. In my own formation within an academic setting, nobody was allowed to work outside of their own cultural context. I want to honor that important, respectful formation. I come to the Philippine Independent Church as an outsider looking in. So, I particularly ask that Father Henry be patient with me, and chime in and correct or amplify anything that I say.

What I do have experience in is the study of the life of the Church, the 2,000 years of this amazing movement that broke forth on Pentecost. I hope that by situating this experience of the Philippines alongside and in dialogue with other events, we can cast some light on what upheld the IFI as it established itself, and that we can tease out some of the implications for our North American context.

I'm a student of ecclesiology. What does that mean? Ecclesiology is a fancy word for church history looked at through the lens of Christian faith.

My Christian lens is Catholic: I was trained in Roman Catholic settings, which perhaps is why I never heard the words "Utrecht" or "Old Catholic" despite 130 credits of graduate level theology.

The "Church" never exists outside of time, outside of its global setting, outside of the geopolitical forces afoot in the era, outside of cultural trends, outside of philosophical shifts in the way the human family is understanding the question of what it means to be a human being and what it means to relate to each other in particular cultures with their amazing complexity. In ecclesiology, we work to bring those many factors into play as we explore theological questions related to the Church.

While classical theology looked at God, the Church and the world as an “objective” science, drawing predominantly upon scripture and tradition, there’s a third strand of the braid that we bring in when we do ecclesiology from a contemporary standpoint: human experience. It’s that dance of the human subject with those countless other realities that gives us the perspective that I always hope to bring, which shapes ecclesiology.

This morning and afternoon, we’ve heard a lot of history. To frame that history let’s look at some of the themes from earlier talks through the lens of the life of the Church and the life of culture at the time, to see where the opportunities emerged for this particular form of Independent Catholicism and where the challenges to it were embedded.

We heard about landmark moments, including the conflict that led to the martyrdom of GomBurZa in 1872; the emergence of a secularly-generated, national church, in which Aglípay was consecrated the supreme bishop in 1903; the fallout of the suppression of religious orders and the vacating of Roman Catholic settings; and then the new, insidious, dangerous bedfellow of American imperialism coming onto the archipelago in the wake of the Spanish colonizers.

Let’s look at what was happening in the global, institutional Church at that time. All the concepts of Church that we hold dear – the Church as the People of God and the Body of Christ – are late-developing theologies, developed in my lifetime. There was a lead-up to it, but it wasn’t codified until the 1960s in the teaching of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (Vatican II).

At the time when these events were taking place in the Philippines, the understanding of “Church” was that of institution, of a global network comprised of dioceses. At that time, there were not the national or regional groupings of bishops that we have today. The “Church” was made up of religious orders and of secular clergy – or diocesan clergy, as we would call them here in the United States. Those who were enfranchised within the institution of the Church were the ordained: priests, bishops and cardinals. At this time there were no permanent deacons in the church.

What did the world of Catholicism look like in the 19th and 20th centuries? First, it was much smaller than it is today. There are now over 1.1 billion Catholics. In 1900, around the time that the Aglipayan Church emerged, there were 459 million Catholics, and 392 million of

them lived in Europe and North America. Catholicism was a new movement in South America, and it would gain momentum in Africa in the decades that followed. At that time, Catholicism was a reasonably small movement in the United States—a highly-oppressed, marginalized experience for the most part comprised of waves of immigrants arriving from European countries, many fleeing poverty and famine.

In the Philippine context that we're looking at during this gathering, from the time of the arrival of the friars, which was immediately after the Reformation, to the emergence of GomBurZa and later Aglipay, the perspective of the world Church was dramatically different than our perspective today. We bring many principles that have been shaped during the last 70 years, particularly around the question of mission and the salvation of souls. At the time of the colonization of the archipelago, Europeans roamed the world with the priority of claiming treasure and land, and to dominate cultures, but alongside that was another very strong trope: that souls needed to be saved. Church teaching profoundly influenced wealthy monarchs and asserted that all of the people in these lands who had not been touched by classical Christendom were going to hell! Salvation along with vicious avarice was a motivating—and perhaps justifying—factor.

During the 300 years leading up to the 19th century, the Church became increasingly defensive. Without question, this began with the split with the Orthodox Church in 1054, when we saw an increasing defensiveness between the two dominant flavors of Christianity. Catholic defensiveness escalated even more with the Reformation. We now had something to defend ourselves against! It's important for us to remember that the Reformation—that wake of the religious changes implemented by key reformers, including Luther, Zwingli and Calvin—was a sea of blood. Multiple nations experienced violent war, devastation and religious oppression meted out by the victors.

By the first third of the 19th century, when we were a few centuries into the experience of the Reformation and the Catholic Counter Reformation, the Church was experiencing pushback from Gallicanism, Romanticism, Febronianism, Josephism, Jansenism, nationalism, rationalism, liberalism, materialism and the Enlightenment. These were predominantly social trends. Some were theological, and others were sociological and cultural. All of these

worldviews converged in an assault on the claims of the Church, and, in particular, in an assault on the claims of the papacy.

As churches became increasingly nationalistic in the wake of the Reformation, and each national church was very much allied with the ruler of that country, the papacy was increasingly under siege and the Church lost much of the property that was traditionally part of the Roman system. The Roman Catholic Church became known as an unlanded church, and, in the 19th century, it would have to fight for the little, independently-governed “island” in Rome that we now know as Vatican City. The papacy was under siege.

In the midst of all those circumstances and trends, for the first time in 300 years, an ecumenical council was called in 1868. We know it as Vatican I, and it convened in 1869. One of the primary reasons that Vatican I was called was to correct a growing bishop-centered ecclesiology. The role of the local bishop, in tandem with the local ruler – the kaiser or the king – was being questioned. When Vatican I convened, it had two major items on its agenda: to ensure papal primacy for the Church (think papal infallibility!) and to deal with the role of the bishop.

Vatican I lasted less than two years before the council was suspended and the bishops headed home, dispersed by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War. Word came to Rome of the violence that threatened Europe, and all non-Roman participants exited Rome, leaving Roman bishops to exercise their muscle. It’s within that context that “infallibility” was passed, largely by a small cohort of Italian bishops. That’s why the Old Catholic movement built such momentum among non-Italian bishops and clergy who would have fought against “infallibility.” Following the likes of von Döllinger and others, we know that “papal infallibility” was such an affront to some that they actually left the Roman system over that teaching.

Because the council had dispersed, the revision of the theology of the episcopacy never was accomplished. An interesting factoid: Among the first items on the agenda of Vatican II was to declare Vatican I complete. And if you look at the documents of Vatican II, that’s where you’ll find *Christus Dominus*, an amazing new treatment of the episcopacy. That piece of the Vatican I agenda did get treated – but not until the 1960s.

All of this background set the stage for what would happen in the Philippines in subsequent decades. As the Philippine Independent

Church emerged, the worldwide Roman Catholic Church found itself in an environment where Rome was increasingly hostile to nationalism, to the alignment of bishops with state leaders, and to bishops not falling in line with Rome. I do want to note that there was one Filipino bishop—the Archbishop of Manila—at Vatican I: Gregorio Melitón Martínez Santa Cruz. However, he was born in Spain and ministered primarily in Toledo, Spain, before he was given the see of Manila.

Mariano Gómez, José Burgos and Jacinto Zamora served the Church during that climate of defensiveness against nationalism, the modern world, and bishops getting “too big for their britches,” and during that era of labor rights that spurred Leo XIII’s *Rerum novarum*.

Dr. Shawn Copeland, a marvelous ecclesial scholar, writes: “In that era, Christian religion and theology were ensnared deeply, dramatically, and destructively in colonial exploration and expropriation.” Stunningly, here in the U.S., Catholic religious orders were complicit with slavery. For example, the Healy Building, the main building of my *alma mater*, Georgetown University—a Jesuit university—was built by slaves.

Within that context, Church and Empire profoundly collided. Christianization was equated with Europeanisation. So, set aside your Vatican II “hat” —with its embrace of inculturation, its respect for culture in the way we do Catholic mission, and its interest in the restoration of the dignity of all people and their participation in the fruit of creation. There’s no better description of this than in Pope Francis’ beautiful encyclical, *Laudato Si*, an incredible recognition of indigenous cultures and their rights. That’s our contemporary worldview. That was not the worldview of the time.

At the end of the 19th century, the Christian worldview was that Christianization demanded the imposition of my European worldview, my model, my style, my church, etc., in every setting where the Spanish, Portuguese, English and French now expressed their Catholicism.

Admittedly, there were people who had better hearts than others, but they were a vast minority. When I studied for my Ph.D., I read some of the letters to Spain written by the Dominican friars in the islands. They were profoundly moving: Some of the friars desperately advocated for the rights of the indigenous people. Not all friars colluded with the oppression, decimation and land grab.

Overwhelmingly, though, the friars were “in bed” with the army. With political power and colonial oppression delivered side-by-side with Roman Catholicism, we see the destruction of culture, the destruction of native economies, and the reduction of indigenous communities to subservience and dependence – too often done under the banner of the gospel.

I am very familiar with the culture from which I come. My grandfather fought in the uprising in Ireland, so I know something of people trying to throw off colonial domination – but Ireland was not evangelized with the sword. No army entered Ireland with Patrick and Columba and the monks, so there was a peaceful appropriation of Christianity by the people. When the time came for colonization to be thrown off, the challenge was national and perhaps we might assert denominational: It was to throw off the Anglican Church and the British.

Let’s return to 19th-century Philippines. Vatican I dealt with issues of authority, represented by bishops who were under siege in relationship to their own national cultures, with some alliances and some rebellion. In the wake of Vatican I, which was in part a rejection of nationalism, it’s no surprise that Rome pushed back with everything it could on the rebellion in the Philippines. Roman Catholic Filipinos created propaganda that represented the friars as sexually abusive, and the phrase *anáak ni Padre Dámaso* (“child of Father Dámaso”) was used of the children of priests. The Spanish hierarchy doubled down in its suppression efforts. The Archbishop of Manila began labeling the rebels as false, unjust and ungrateful, and the Roman Church became an outspoken ally of the Spanish. In his book, Jayme shares a quote: “They have been lifted from savagery by Catholic teachers” – and they were, of course, ungrateful now. All this propaganda was designed to keep people cowed by deploying spiritual threat alongside military, economic and political threat.

It is also significant that nationalists in the Philippines were associated with Freemasonry. It is estimated that 20,000 of the 25,000 Freemasons in the Philippines joined the rebellion. The Roman Church had been opposing and condemning Freemasonry since it emerged in the early 18th century . A product of enlightenment thinking, Freemasonry had a strong influence on all of the independence movements. Nearly a third of our U.S. Presidents, including Washington, were Freemasons. So, fueling the rebellion in

a very visible way was a group that had been condemned by the Church. One author describes Freemasons in the Philippines as “a missionary movement with momentum of their own.” Because of their sheer numbers, that block of people had a profound influence.

The reformers of the Filipino church were therefore acting within a church that emphasized worldwide uniformity, centralized authority in Rome, and a profound suspicion of everything attached to modernity. The Roman Church literally had a worldview entirely its own, a worldview opposed to historical forces and trends that had already gained significant traction in Europe. As Joe Komonchak, one of the great church historians of the U.S., said, there was a romanticized, nostalgic longing among the leadership of the Church for the pre-Reformation era, and particularly that of the High Middle Ages—a time of feudal lords and their serfs! Church leaders wanted to return to a time that predated Protestantism, liberalism, secularization, and, oh my heavens, an emphasis on philosophy—to a time when the Church, as the primary cultural institution, held sway. In terms of mission, this Roman paradigm was to be imposed on all settings, and this romantic, bygone Christendom was presented as a standard!

A few things in the Philippine experience of raising up Independent Catholicism strike me as very distinct. I don’t have any answers, but I’ll throw out some questions and pull on some “threads.” Perhaps together, maybe we can weave them into something.

We know that the friars inflicted quite a few horrors. We heard this morning about the terrible land grab and the conscripted labor. However, another thing that happened, which took place over hundreds of years in the Philippines, was a really thorough and deep Catholic formation among the Filipino people. The Philippines became a fertile field for all of what was to later take place. John Schumaker, a Jesuit scholar of Filipino Catholicism, wrote a book called *Readings in Philippine History*. He writes of the very rigorous evangelization in the Philippines during the 16th and 17th centuries. He shares that there were stringent requirements for baptism, including the need to memorize the entirety of the *doctrina cristiana*, a collection of prayers, religious practice, and doctrines of the Church. Individuals had to memorize it, and had to be able to explain what they had memorized. People were catechized to the point where they

really understood what they were being asked to conform to! This came, I should add, in opposition to culture, since the Church's moral code renounced polygamy, ritual drinking and other practices.

Unlike in Europe, there were no mass baptisms in the Philippines. Baptism followed an individual, thoughtful and serious catechesis. After the baptism of the Frankish King Clovis, the first barbarian king to be baptized, it was typical that when a ruler converted, everybody got baptized – even if they didn't know what they were getting into. That's not what happened in the Philippines. People understood what they were buying into in a very deep and meaningful way. One of the things that we might consider as essential to the momentum that Aglipay gained was that it was a deeply converted and convicted Catholic population. There were other denominations in the islands: the United Methodist Church and the Unitarian Church were there, but they were a very small percentage of the population. I should add that the Muslim population experienced terrible discrimination at this time and was effectively driven off and isolated on particular islands.

To put into context the biases of these European colonists, what the friars did in the Philippines was not unique. They went island by island, trying to convert and bring people along. The European system that they imposed on the Philippines was imposed all over the globe and it was highly biased against indigenous leaders. The racial discrimination against and disempowerment of indigenous clergy – with native and *mestizo* clergy not being allowed to participate in leadership – was not specific to the Philippines. This was a time of simplex priests and second-class clergy. A similar phenomenon happened for women religious in the convents: If you didn't bring a sufficiently-large dowry to the convent, you were a scullery girl or laundry girl in the convent for the rest of your life! This system of first- and second-class clergy and religious was totally normalized and epically present in the European imposed experience.

The racialized discrimination in the Philippines is also entangled with terrible racialized discrimination against all indigenous people, who were considered less than human. Just think of all the terrible discrimination in this country against indigenous people, as Europeans and their Christian Churches gained traction. Consider for a moment the likely racist formation received by the former archbishop of New Orleans who served as the apostolic delegate to

the Philippines: He served in New Orleans, in the South, on the heels of slavery and the terrible oppression of African-American and indigenous people.

This was a period of revolutionary expression. The 18th century saw the revolutions in the United States and France. Jayme mentioned the revolutions that occurred in Spanish colonies throughout the 19th century. In all these revolutions, class and privilege were factors.

We might ask: What made the indigenous clergy of the Philippines so successful in rejecting a reality that was prevalent in so many other settings? Certainly, one aspect was the universally-held idea that so many serious abuses had to come to an end. In addition to the odious land grabs and labor abuses, some abuses in the Philippines were similar to the economic abuses that Luther wrote into the theses that he hammered in Wittenberg. Recall those abuses mentioned by Jayme: roughly two month wages for a chimney blessing, five months wages for the poll tax, six months wages for a marriage, and twelve months wages for a “death fee.” What an economic and spiritual abuse! You can imagine how aligned these people, completely well-formed in their faith, were in rebelling against the systemic abuses. Such stories remind me of Luther and the Augustinians and everyone who stepped out in Germany against indulgences and other abuses.

Another factor that I suspect contributed to the success of this new Independent Catholic church was the emergence of the church alongside the secular drive for independence. During a breakout session, Jayme mentioned the growth of this church. Really, though, we need to remember that they started out with millions of adherents. What happened in the Philippines was a split of a large, well-established Catholic community. Unlike Mike, who started a church by gathering four people in his living room, 80% of the Roman Catholic churches in the Philippines were empty after the friars were driven to Manila or off the archipelago. There were spaces in which to gather, and there were ample numbers of congregants. These were people who knew what the sacraments were and who wanted them.

The time and circumstances were ripe for the incredible affinity between the IFI and the revolutionaries and politicians of the Philippines to form “the religion of the *Katipunan*,” to cite the phrase penned by Isabelo de los Reyes, Sr. during his exile in Spain. In another book, de los Reyes, the leader of this spiritual revolution, wrote: “Enough of Rome! Let us now form without vacillation our

own congregation, a Filipino Church, conserving all that is good in the Roman Church and eliminating all the deceptions which the diabolical astuteness of the cunning Romanists had introduced to corrupt the moral purity and sacredness of the doctrines of Christ."

Ecclesiologically, why was the IFI so attractive? The formation of the people, and the fact that there was a locus for this church, were significant factors. The IFI had buildings and sacraments and catechized people with a common Catholic identity intermingled with a drive to independence.

The IFI remained very Roman Catholic, and nothing major emerged until Aglipay initiated a doctrinal, dogmatic move toward Unitarianism. The 1902 Constitution, though, says: "The dogma and the creed shall be the same as those professed by all apostolic Catholic Christians, with one exception [take a wild guess!]: Obedience to the pope." In effect, they said: "We're going to do everything the same; we're just not going to obey the pope!"

What I find interesting in the early Philippine Independent Church is the inculturation of the liturgy: with the mass in Spanish and Tagalog; with expressions of Filipino culture in the IFI liturgy. They were 50 years ahead of the global Catholic community! I'd like to learn more about the liturgical thinking and who spearheaded that exciting movement. Who influenced that? It may have been Aglipay, but I suspect there were others.

Here are some of the questions that I'm left with.

What does it mean, ecclesiologically-speaking, to announce the formation of a new church? What does it mean to have a "declaration of independence" in the Church, when unity is fundamental to the self-identity of the Church? It's a question that we haven't begun to resolve since the split in the Church with the Orthodox in 1054. Think of the "marks" of the Church. The Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic—and the "one" is professed by all of us despite our fragmentation.

What does it mean for a person to say, "We're going to start a church." And, in the context of the Philippine Independent Church, what does it mean for the leader of a revolution to announce the start of a Church, and to decide who the first supreme bishop will be? This is outside of our self-understanding. It would be like Joe Biden saying, "I pick Marek Bożek to be the head of the church!" That's not how bishops are chosen.

Based on what I've read, I suspect that there was some confabbing between Aglípay and de los Reyes, and that Aglípay knew what was coming. He hesitated to take the office, but I have a feeling it had a lot to do with his Roman Catholic drive for unity. As Father Henry said, Aglípay did not really want the Church to split. Luther didn't want the Church to split either. Aglípay wanted the Church to give up its onerous practices and establish a Filipino identity and respect the dignity of all the clergy. In fact, Aglípay didn't marry until his 26-year-old daughter died. Why did he not marry? He was clearly partnered, and he acknowledged his daughter. In fact, his partner was a real intellectual partner and translator for him. I wonder if it had to do with the longing in his heart for unity with Rome. Did it have something to do with this deeply-embedded Roman formation that he had?

Another question: What do we think of Independent Catholic churches that espouse nationalist values? I viscerally reacted to Father Henry's suggestion that the Philippine national anthem is sung at liturgy: The importance of the separation of Church and State in this country is so embedded in me, and it's a value that I uphold. I'm suspicious of nationalism, particularly here in the United States where "Manifest Destiny" produces the likes of Theodore Roosevelt and the idea that the United States is ordained by God to take over and democratize the world. That trope is right underneath the surface of American culture: Just think of the "Make America Great Again" movement.

How entangled with nationalism should the Church be? Was the concern of Rome in the post-Reformation era totally misguided, or was there also a problem to be addressed? We see how nationalism is expressed in the patriotic ways of the IFI, with the canonization of national martyrs, with vestments of national colors, and with the singing of national hymns. Here in the United States, the separation of Church and State is a deeply-held Catholic value, because the Catholic Church was profoundly oppressed by the dominant, Protestant culture of the United States. Catholics were largely poor and marginalized.

I love Alan's phrase: our "revolutionary zeal." What should that "revolutionary zeal" be about? Is it about our democratic values? I'm suspicious of the shadow of American imperialism on the Philippines. I was intrigued by Father Henry's story of how Aglípay

said no to becoming supreme bishop, but then was so offended during a visit to the White House that he accepted the position. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the anti-Catholicism in this country was epic. It was as the U.S. government maneuvered Aglípay to reject Roman Catholicism and embrace the idea of an independent church. I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall during that meeting in D.C.!

Yesterday I spoke of our Roman Catholic DNA. The Catholic DNA of the story of the Philippine Independent Church is so beautiful: the formation of the people, the deep commitment of the clergy, the upholding by Aglípay of a dream of an indigenous clergy, fully dignified and respected under the leadership of Rome. It's all so incredibly beautiful – but there comes a point where, until the Roman system changes, there are inevitable “line crossings,” where there's no going back for those who “cross the line.” When Pope Francis assumed his role, he spoke of his desire for increased dialogue between Old Catholics and Roman Catholics. He pointed out two enormous, almost insurmountable obstacles to unity: women clergy, and sacramental marriage for the gay community. We have stepped over that line, and, as a result, it's hard for us to go back to Rome.

Aglípay recognized that reconciliation with Rome was going to be very difficult, and he could not have been surprised that a very formed Catholic community would reject his Unitarianism. A Trinitarian understanding of God is fundamental to Catholicism! As much as he wanted to steer people toward something else – perhaps with a desire for support or alliances, or due to other motivations, as Father Henry pointed out – the Trinitarian faith had to be maintained. And even with all that the IFI retained, it still “crossed the line,” making it very difficult for the church ever to return to Rome. Perhaps the learning is that we'll just have to wait for our brothers and sisters of the Roman Church to come to us!

Roman Catholic Perspectives on the Philippine Independent Church

Rev. Libardo Rocha

San Judas Tadeo Iglesia Católica Independiente

Niederwald, Texas

Father Jayme Mathias conducted the following interview of Father Libardo Rocha in English and provided simultaneous translation of Father Libardo's Spanish words, which are shared in both languages below.

Mathias: Today we have with us our “Vatican insider,” Father Libardo Rocha, who will provide us a Roman Catholic perspective on the Philippine Independent Church. The IFI resulted as a schism, we might say, within the Roman Catholic Church—something that the Roman Catholic Church likely does not smile upon. We’ll begin with an easy question: Tell us, Father Libardo, about your experiences within the Roman Church and of working inside the Vatican. What did you do for the Church? What did you do for the Vatican? And did you ever meet Papa Ratzinger?

Rocha: *Hablo en español porque creo que es necesario también que se sienta la voz en español en la Iglesia Católica Independiente de los Estados Unidos. Y los que no entienden en español, lo lamento en el alma. Los invito a que aprendan el español. Entre más lenguas hablemos, sea más universal la Iglesia universal, y somos más católicos, palabra griega que me gusta siempre, porque en realidad es lo que teológicamente nos identifica a nosotros: ser católicos.*

I’ll speak in Spanish because I believe that it is also necessary for Spanish voices to be heard in the Independent Catholic Church of the United States. To those of you who don’t understand Spanish, I apologize. I invite you to learn Spanish. The more languages we speak, the more universal we become as a Church. We become more “catholic,” a Greek word that I’ve always liked, because, in reality, it identifies us theologically as Catholic.

En cuanto a la Iglesia de Roma, yo pienso que es una gran riqueza haber estado en Roma. De alguna forma u otra, aunque lo

queramos reconocer o no, aunque estemos de acuerdo, no es un crimen: Roma siempre se ha constituido como el centro de nuestra realidad. Por tanto, desde la Iglesia primitiva, siempre Roma fue como el centro por donde todos querían ir. No es invención mía. La historia nos lo manifiesta con toda la veracidad del caso. En cuanto a Ratzinger, la pregunta yo no sé si es capciosa. Qué pena que este grande personaje nunca fue entendido, pero lo considero el mejor teólogo que ha tenido la Iglesia Católica Romana moderna. Era profesor de teología, y es la teología que nos hace libres y que nos invita constantemente a una reflexión, porque se puede constatar que hay sacerdotes de nuestra Iglesia Católica Independiente que ni siquiera saben distinguir la materia y la forma de los sacramentos. Desafortunadamente de eso está llena la Iglesia Católica Independiente, y es una vergüenza que cualquiera lo hagan sacerdote solamente porque sabe rezar. Eso me recuerda al tiempo del medioevo. Y cuidado con el grande peligro de la falta de formación teológica de los futuros sacerdotes a las órdenes, porque estaríamos regresando no sólo tanto a la época medieval, sino que peor podríamos constituir un alto clero y un bajo clero. Es feísimo decirlo, pero los intelectuales arriba y los ignorantes abajo. Pero eso es culpa de ustedes, y de nosotros que no vigilamos la verdadera formación teológica de los futuros candidatos a la vida sacerdotal. Ratzinger, en realidad, con todas las fallas que nosotros podamos adjudicarle, un grande teólogo lo considero.

As for the Church of Rome, it was a great experience to have been in Rome. In one way or another, whether we want to admit it or not, even if we disagree (which is not a crime): Rome has always been the center of our reality. Since the early Church, Rome has always been the center, where everyone wants to go. This is nothing that I'm making up: History shows us this in all truth. As for Ratzinger, I don't know if this is a trick question. What a shame that this great man was never understood. I consider him the best theologian that the modern Roman Catholic Church has ever had. He was a professor of theology, and it is theology that frees us and that constantly invites us to think. There are priests within our Independent Catholic Church who cannot even distinguish between the matter and the form of the sacraments. Unfortunately, the Independent Catholic

Church is full of priests. We shouldn't be ordaining people priests just because they know how to pray. That happened in the Middle Ages. Beware of the great danger of a lack of theological training of future priests, which would return us to the Middle Ages, and, worse, would lead us back to a model of "high clergy" and "low clergy," as terrible as it sounds, with the "intellectuals" above and the "ignorant" below. That is your fault; it's the fault of all of us who do not monitor the true theological formation of future candidates for priestly life. So, with all the faults that we might attribute to Ratzinger, I consider him a great theologian.

Mathias: What do you most miss about the Roman Catholic Church?

Rocha: *Dice un filósofo griego que tú nunca debes extrañar lo que pasó, porque lo que pasó, pasó. Vive el presente con las bellísimas experiencias que has tenido, pero la nostalgia envenena el corazón en las personas que sufren de soledad, y yo no creo que sufrimos de esa patología. Por lo tanto, no extraño casi nada de Roma, porque aquí también estoy bien. Se sigue viviendo la misma estructura. Se sigue siendo católico. Se sigue siendo sacerdote. La teología de Santo Tomás nos enseña que tenemos el orden para siempre. Entonces Roma ya, y yo acá. Roma allá, nosotros acá. En realidad, Roma alguien lo llamaba la ciudad eterna, y un profesor de teología dogmática se atrevió a decir en una ocasión en la universidad que era la Nueva Jerusalén. Eso es casi más que una blasfemia, porque la Nueva Jerusalén la tenemos en nuestros corazones ustedes, yo y todos nosotros, los que somos sacerdotes. Entonces no es Roma la nueva Jerusalén. Es un sofisma de distracción, filosóficamente hablando.*

A Greek philosopher suggested that we should never neglect what happened in the past, because what happened, happened. Live in the present with the beautiful experiences you have, but beware that nostalgia poisons the hearts of people who suffer from loneliness. I don't think that we suffer from that pathology. For this reason, I hardly miss anything about Rome, because I'm fine right here where I am. In this movement, we continue with similar structures. We are still Catholic. We are still priests. The theology of St. Thomas teaches us that we are priests

forever. So, it's okay for Rome to be over there, and for me to be over here. Rome over there, and us over here. Some refer to Rome as the Eternal City, and a professor of dogmatic theology once dared to suggest that Rome is the New Jerusalem. A blasphemy! The New Jerusalem is in our hearts: It's inside you, me, and all of us who are priests. Rome is not the new Jerusalem. Philosophically speaking, that's a distracting sophism.

Mathias: How would you describe or characterize the Roman Church?

Rocha: *Yo pienso que la Iglesia Católica Romana se quedó en una burbuja. No se ha abierto todavía y los intentos de apertura con este nuevo papa jesuita no son más que una farsa, una mentira que ni ellos mismos se creen. Pero evidentemente, sí hay cosas increíbles e interesantes. La internacionalidad de Roma. Las universidades católicas. Sí, y también, ¿por qué no decir toda la estructura que todavía hace mella en cada uno de ustedes? Me extraña que ustedes, siendo católicos independientes, parecen pajarracos vestidos de negros. Por favor, tanto que le critican a Roma, son unos copiones de Roma. Tanto que se creen independientes, ustedes son más papistas que los mismos papas, y son más sacerdotes que los mismos sacerdotes de Roma. Todos vestidos de negro, pareciendo pajarracos. Por favor, no sean ridículos.*

I think that the Roman Catholic Church remains in a bubble. It remains closed, and any suggestions that it is opening with this new Jesuit pope are nothing more than a farce, a lie that clergy in Rome themselves do not believe. Obviously, there are incredible and interesting things in Rome. Its internationality. Its Catholic universities. We might even say that its entire structure still leaves an impression on each of us in this movement. You call yourselves Independent Catholics, but you look like crows, all dressed in black here! Please, as much as we criticize Rome, we are copycats of Rome! We think that we are "independent," yet we are more papist than the pope himself, and we are more priestly than the priests of Rome themselves. All dressed in black, looking like crows: Please, don't be ridiculous!

Mathias: What should we know or understand about the Roman Church, its history, its leaders and its structures?

Rocha: *Eso sí es importante, y creo que vale la pena que nosotros, los sacerdotes de la Iglesia Católica Independiente, podamos imitar el liderazgo que en 2000 años la Iglesia Católica Romana ha llevado adelante. Se llama cohesión. Se llama fraternidad. Se llama autoridad apostólica. Y al mismo tiempo hay una defensa entre los mismos miembros porque creen en su iglesia, aman a su iglesia, y al mismo tiempo trabajan para su iglesia. Preguntémosnos nosotros: ¿Realmente nos identificamos como Iglesia Católica Independiente, si realmente amamos a la Iglesia Católica Independiente, y si realmente estamos muy bien organizados como Iglesia Católica Independiente? La pregunta no es un eufemismo. Es un llamado a la reflexión, y vale la pena que lo reflexionemos. Por tanto, sí vale la pena mirar a Roma en su estructura organizativa y jerárquica.*

That's an important question. It's worthwhile for us, as priests of the Independent Catholic Church, to imitate the leadership that the Roman Catholic Church has exercised for 2,000 years. It's called unity. It's called brotherhood and sisterhood. It's called apostolic authority. There's also a certain defensive mechanism among the members themselves: They believe in their church, they love their church, and they work for their church. We do well to ask ourselves: To what extent do we really identify ourselves as the Independent Catholic Church? How much do we really love the Independent Catholic Church? How well are we organized as the Independent Catholic Church? This question is not rhetorical. It is a call to reflection, and it is worth reflecting on it. It's worth looking at Rome and its organizational and hierarchical structures.

Mathias: What are the primary motivations of the Roman Church?

Rocha: *La principal motivación de la Iglesia Católica Romana, yo pienso, es mantener la supremacía como lo del primado de Pedro, que es otro detalle que valdría la pena reflexionar. Y que quede bien claro: Yo no estoy de acuerdo. En segundo lugar, lo de la indisolubilidad del matrimonio, otro tema manejado y manipulado por Roma. Y eso de cabeza visible de la Iglesia universal en la persona del papa llama a la reflexión, porque en realidad no creo que sea así. El*

dogma de que el papa nunca se equivoca en cuestiones de fe y de dogma, la infalibilidad. Por favor, ni ellos mismos se lo creen. Pero todavía la Iglesia Católica subraya esa realidad, manifestando siempre que el papa es el papa. Yo diría más bien que es un obispo, un hermano obispo del colegio episcopal. Ni siquiera Pedro sabía que era papa, y ni siquiera cuando murió se dio cuenta que lo era. Otro sofisma de distracción.

The main motivation of the Roman Catholic Church, I think, is to maintain supremacy, like the primacy of Peter, which is another detail worth reflecting on. To be clear: I do not agree with the primacy of Peter. The Roman Church has also insisted on the indissolubility of marriage, another issue managed and manipulated by Rome. The thought of the visible head of the universal Church in the person of the pope also calls for reflection. I don't believe that to be true. The dogma that the pope is never wrong in matters of faith and dogma? "Infallibility?" Please! Not even Roman Catholic clergy believe that! But the Catholic Church still underlines this reality, always stating that the pope is the pope. I prefer to say that he is a bishop, a brother bishop within the episcopal college. Not even Peter recognized himself as "pope," nor did he even think about this during his lifetime. It's another distracting act of sophistry.

Mathias: This morning we spoke about colonization and how the Church had aligned itself with colonizing forces that were primarily interested in power and money. How much do leaders of the Roman Church think about such things as power, hierarchy and control?

Rocha: *Eso me recuerda la Iglesia primitiva: el control por encima de todas las cosas, el poder por encima de todas las cosas. Y la jerarquía siempre es jerarquía. ¡Dios mío! ¿Cuándo se romperá ese paradigma de sentirnos no solamente jerarquía, sino potentes y poderosos? Ustedes saben que de alguna forma u otra, la psicología nos enseña que cuando nos identificamos con algo especial, es para creernos especiales. Y ese es el clérigima y los hábitos, porque nos sentimos distinto a los demás, porque nosotros somos consagrados, y, como decía en una ocasión alguien, "Somos los bellos".*

This reminds me of the early Church: control and power over all things! Hierarchy is always hierarchy. My word, when will we break this paradigm of being potent, powerful parts of a hierarchy? Psychology teaches us that we identify with “special” things in order to believe that we ourselves are “special.” We see it in clerical collars and habits: We are different from others! We are consecrated! As someone once said, “We are the beautiful ones!”

Mathias: Father Libardo, in the instance of the Philippine Independent Church, we’re talking about a schism from the Roman Catholic Church. I’m imagining that the Roman Church doesn’t smile upon such schisms. In general, what does the Roman Church say about separated churches?

Rocha: *No le interesa, Padre. Eso es absurdo. La pregunta es casi necia. ¿Cómo le puede importar a Roma una minúscula porción de personas independientemente cuando ni siquiera somos capaces de estar unidos? Por favor, no seamos necios.*

Father, the Roman Church has no interest whatsoever in schismatics. It’s absurd. The question is almost silly. Why would Rome care about a miniscule portion of “independent” people when we are not even capable of uniting ourselves? Please, let’s not be foolish!

Mathias: Because we’re talking about the Philippine Independent Church during this gathering, what might the Roman Church likely think about the Philippine Independent Church?

Rocha: *Hay un detalle que vale la pena aclarar. En un dialogo contigo, te diste la luz de la pregunta que yo tenía con respecto a la Iglesia Independiente Filipina. ¿Y cuál era? ¿Por qué la Iglesia Filipina Independiente no se llama la Iglesia Católica Filipina Independiente? La pregunta llama a la reflexión porque teológicamente hablando hay un error. Se llamaría en teología un vicio de procedura, y eso lo enseña la teología sistemática. La universalidad de la Iglesia universal es una de sus notas características. Entonces me llama la atención que los fundadores de la Iglesia Filipina Independiente hayan puesto de lado lo de católico. Podemos discutir el tema, y estoy disponible para darles algunas lecciones sin pecar de presunción, pero en realidad me llama mucho la atención. ¿Cómo podría yo llamar a la Iglesia*

Filipina Independiente mi hermana, cuando en realidad no son católicos? Lo dejo a la reflexión de ustedes.

There is a detail that is worth clarifying. In a previous conversation with you, you noted that the word “Catholic” is not part of the name of the Philippine Independent Church. Why is that? Why is the Philippine Independent Church not called the Philippine Independent Catholic Church? The question calls for reflection. Theologically speaking, it’s a mistake. In systematic theology, we might call it a procedural error. The universality of the Catholic Church is one of its characteristic notes. It strikes me that the founders of the Philippine Independent Church have put “Catholic” aside. This really grabs my attention, and we can discuss the subject, and, I don’t want to be presumptuous, but I’m happy to provide a few lessons on this. How can I call the Philippine Independent Church my “sister,” if in fact they are not “Catholic”? I leave that to your reflection.

Mathias: You indicate how the Roman Catholic Church might look at the Philippine Independent Church. How might the Roman Church likely look at us, as Independent or Inclusive Catholics here in the Unites States?

Rocha: *Sí, piensa, y es fácil declararnos heréticos y cismáticos y un poco desadaptados en el tiempo y en el espacio. Basta pensar en un grupo que tenga buena fe, en un grupo de sacerdotes estudiosos de la teología y, por qué no decirlo, también de la filosofía. ¿Pero qué dice Roma? “Fácil liquidarlo. Son heréticos, cismáticos y no vale la pena.” Ejemplo de esa realidad de la separación de la Iglesia Católica de Oriente con la de Occidente. Eso hace más de mil años. ¿Y por qué no se han unido todavía? Y aquella sí que realmente es Iglesia. Los ortodoxos son Iglesia, y conservan notas, características de la Iglesia primitiva. Uno de los detalles importantes es la famosa sucesión apostólica. ¿Y por qué todavía no se han unido las dos iglesias? Imagínense: En la Iglesia Católica Independiente, somos grupos de islas que a veces están rodeadas de agua putrefacta. Yo escribí un libro que se llama Islas y Puentes. Hay más de mil sacerdotes de la Iglesia Católica Independiente en los Estados Unidos. ¿Y cuántos están aquí? ¿No*

les parece eso que llama la atención? Entonces seguimos siendo islas desgraciadamente.

The Roman Church does think about us—and it easily declares us heretics and schismatics, little misfits in time and space. Sure, we're a group of faithful priests who have studied philosophy and theology, but what does Rome say about us? "It's easy to get rid of them, and those heretics and schismatics are hardly worth our time!" Consider this reality: The separation of the Catholic Church of the East with that of the West occurred nearly a thousand years ago. Why haven't they reunited? The Orthodox Church is recognized as Church! It retain characteristic notes of the early Church, like apostolic succession! So, why haven't these two churches reunited yet? In the Independent Catholic Church, we are mere "islands," sometimes surrounded by putrid water. I wrote of this in my book, *Islands and Bridges*. There are more than a thousand priests of the Independent Catholic Church in the United States—and how many are here? Doesn't that strike you? Unfortunately, we remain "islands."

Mathias: How would you characterize the theology and ecclesiology of the Roman Church, which thinks and says such things about the Philippine Independent Church and about us?

Rocha: *La Iglesia Católica Romana, en lo que tiene que ver con la teología, ha gozado de una gran realidad porque a Roma llega lo mejor de lo mejor de diferentes países del mundo. Y tenemos escuelas teológicas de grandísimo espesor intelectual. Asomémonos a la ventana de lo que está pasando en Alemania. Es fantástico. Entonces podríamos decir que lo que está pasando en Alemania es lo que debería pasar también en los Estados Unidos, pero si estuviéramos. La teología y la eclesiología de la Iglesia Católica Romana no solamente vale la pena estudiarla, sino también ponerla en práctica. Una verdadera teología nos lleva a una verdadera eclesiología de comunión y de fraternidad, sin olvidarnos de la caridad, por la cual hay mucha tela que cortar aquí entre nosotros, los de la Iglesia Católica Independiente.*

With respect to theology, the Roman Catholic Church has enjoyed a great advantage: The best of the best from countries throughout the world come to Rome. It has

theological schools of great intellectual acumen. And look at the synod that's occurring in Germany: It's fantastic, and it's what should be happening here in the U.S. The theology and ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic Church are not only worth studying, but are also worth putting into practice. A true theology leads us to a true and charitable *communio* ecclesiology. There's a lot that we could discuss here with respect to the Independent Catholic Church.

Mathias: In the Roman Catholic Church, we saw two very conservative popes in John Paul II and Benedict XVI. We see a different vision in Pope Francis. Is there anything that will outlive his papacy, or will conservative forces undo all that he has sought to do with his emphasis on God's love and mercy?

Rocha: *No digamos mentiras. ¿Que el Papa Francisco es un gran renovador? ¿De qué? Lo que escribe con la mano derecha en el día, lo borra en la noche con la mano izquierda. ¡Mentira! No hay ninguna renovación. ¿Recuerdan ustedes cuando regresó del Brasil, qué le preguntaron? “¿Qué opina usted de los homosexuales?” ¿Y qué respondió el papa? “Son hijos de Dios, ¿y quién soy yo para juzgarlos?” Existe un documento casi secreto, y yo tengo la copia, que envió a todos los seminarios del mundo y a todos los obispos en donde decía que ningún joven con tendencias homosexuales o al menos con algo de apariencia podía ser recibido en los seminarios. Y hace dos semanas, de nuevo, casi el mismo documento ahora sí se propaga públicamente en los seminarios, que los de tendencias homosexuales no pueden ser sacerdotes, porque en ellos hay un “desorden moral”, como dice el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica Romana. Entonces, ¿qué me venga usted a decir que el papa es un gran reformador? ¡Eso es una farsa! No es verdad. La única cosa que ha hecho es cambiarle las oficinas y a los departamentos en Roma. Ahora no se llaman “congregaciones”. Ahora se llaman “dicasterios”. Ridículo. Si esos son los cambios, me quedo en la Iglesia Católica Independiente.*

Let's not lie to ourselves! That Pope Francis is a great innovator? Of what? What he writes with his right hand during the day, he erases at night with his left hand. It's a lie! There is no "renewal." Do you remember when he came

back from Brazil, what did the reporters ask him? “What do you think about homosexuals?” And what did the pope reply? “They are children of God, and who am I to judge them?” There is an almost secret document – and I have a copy – that he sent to all the seminaries in the world and to all the bishops, where he wrote that no young man with homosexual tendencies or aspects of appearance should be received into Roman Catholic seminaries. Then, two weeks ago, almost the exact same document was publicly propagated in seminaries: that those with homosexual tendencies cannot be priests because there is a “moral disorder” in them, as the *Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church* says. How can you suggest that the pope is a great reformer? That’s a farce! It is not true. The only thing he has done is to change the offices and departments in Rome. They are no longer called “congregations.” They are now “dicasteries.” It’s ridiculous. If those are the changes he’s bringing to the Roman Catholic Church, I’ll remain with the Independent Catholic Church!

Mathias: Father Libardo, you saw the news last year. The Philippine Independent Church was born in 1902. In 2021, the Philippine Independent Church and the Roman Church signed a concordat recognizing the baptisms of both churches. Why did it take the Roman Church 119 years to recognize the baptisms of the Philippine Independent Church? And why did the Roman Church recognize the baptisms of the Philippine Independent Church after 119 years of not doing so?

Rocha: *En la teología fundamental, el bautismo puede ser administrado por cualquier persona, ni siquiera se necesita que sea católica. Un obispo arriano presuntamente bautizó a Constantino, y que estoy seguro de que nunca fue bautizado, según las fuentes históricas. Entonces. ¿por qué esta polémica de reconocer o no reconocer los bautismos? Es ridícula. Y diría mucho más, es cruel de parte de los sacerdotes y obispos católicos que no admiten el bautismo de los sacerdotes de la Iglesia Católica Independiente hacia los niños o a las personas que se nos presentan. Escribí otro libro, Sacerdote para siempre, que lo pueden comprar porque está en inglés. No sé si la traducción es buena, porque la tradujo el Padre*

Jayme, pero ahí dijo en la época que somos sacerdotes para siempre y sí, somos sacerdotes para siempre. El bautismo que nosotros administramos se menciona en el capítulo 28 del evangelio según San Mateo, así que bíblicamente hablando, es válido.

In fundamental theology, baptism can be administered by anyone, the minister of the sacrament doesn't even need to be Catholic! An Arian bishop allegedly baptized Constantine, though, according to historical sources, I am sure he was never baptized. Why then this controversy of recognizing—or not recognizing—baptisms? It's ridiculous! Moreso, it is cruel for Roman Catholic priests and bishops to not admit the validity of the baptisms that we, in the Independent Catholic Church, perform for the people who come to us. I wrote another book, *A Priest Forever*, which you can purchase in English. I don't know if the translation is any good—because Father Jayme translated it!—but I speak of how we are priests forever. The baptism that we administer traces to chapter 28 of the gospel according to Saint Matthew, so, biblically speaking, it is valid.

Mathias: Now that the Roman Catholic Church recognizes the baptisms of the Philippine Independent Church, is there any hope for a deeper relationship between the IFI and the Roman Church?

Rocha: *Si yo hubiera sabido cuando salí de Roma que existía la Iglesia Filipina Independiente, les aseguro que me hubiera ido a las Filipinas, no con la esperanza de que Roma lo reconozca, porque eso nunca va a suceder. No va a suceder. O al menos tendremos que esperar hasta la parusía.*

If I had known when I left Rome that the Philippine Independent Church existed, I assure you that I would have gone to the Philippines—not hoping that Rome would recognize it, since that will never happen. It's simply not going to happen—at least on this side of the parousia.

Mathias: Any thoughts on the relationship that we, here in the U.S., might have with the Philippine Independent Church? What obstacles remain for communion between us?

Rocha: *Pienso que sí. Vale la pena. Sería fantástico crear puentes. No veo la hora de ir a las Filipinas, y cuando a usted lo hagan obispo, yo*

lo acompaño. Debemos construir puentes comunionales. Un simple ejemplo: Qué bonito sería que un sacerdote de la Iglesia Filipina se quedara por un tiempo en mi parroquia, mientras yo voy a las Filipinas a tener la experiencia de fraternidad y de comunión con ellos. De tales cosas pequeñas está hecho el mundo, y el amor se comienza siempre en el espíritu de fraternidad y de la caridad.

The thought of such unity is worth pursuing. It would be great to create bridges. I can't wait to go to the Philippines, and when they make you a bishop, I'll go with you! We must build bridges of communion. A simple example: How nice it would be for a priest of the Philippine Church to stay for a while in my parish, while I go to the Philippines to have the experience of fraternity and communion with them. The world is made of such small acts, and love begins with acts of fraternity and charity.

Mathias: Here in the U.S., we recognize the disunity within our movement. We are "islands," you might say. In your estimation, what does the lack of unity and communion within our movement mean for our future?

Rocha: *Hay un detalle que creo que vale la pena, y que entre los hermanos nosotros siempre le hemos hablado. Nuestras iglesias no son inclusivas. Nuestras iglesias son exclusivas, de acuerdo a los caprichos nuestros, y de acuerdo a los caprichos del obispo, que es peor. Y cuando no saben nada de teología, se inventan los peores caprichos monstruosos. Entonces eso de hablar de comunión entre nosotros, comencemos a quitarnos los vestidos de superioridad y tratemos simplemente como hermanos. Y verán que cambiará. Y la Iglesia Católica Independiente en los Estados Unidos tendrá futuro.*

There is a detail that I think is worthwhile mentioning, something that we've spoken about as brothers. Our churches are *not* inclusive. Our churches are exclusive, according to our whims, and according to the whims of our bishops, which can be worse! When bishops know nothing of theology, they invent and act upon the most monstrous whims. If we want to talk about communion between us, we must remove all superiority and treat one another as sisters and brothers. Only then will we see a change, and

only then will the Independent Catholic Church in the United States have a future.

Mathias: We just published a 1.5-page ad in *The National Catholic Reporter* on the Synod of Synodality. What, if anything, should we do about our relationship with the Roman Church? Do you advise against “poking the bear”? Is it better to let the “bear” lie?

Rocha: *Los árboles frondosos no se remecen, porque tenemos el riesgo que lo que caen son las frutas podridas y las hojas secas. ¿Dónde está la teología de Juan? ¿Quién es la vid? Y las ramas, ¿quiénes son? Somos también una rama, y que algún teólogo me demuestre lo contrario si no es así. La Iglesia Católica Romana es mi hermana. También le daría un poquito de título especial: la Santa Madre. Pero eso no quiere decir que yo tenga que tener nostalgia o deseos. Estudiemos la teología de Juan, que tiene un fundamento sumamente profundo desde el punto de vista de la comunionalidad. No es un caso que sea distinto a los otros tres evangelios. Entonces no nos engañemos. Primero trabajemos juntos, y vivamos juntos como hermanos.*

Be careful about shaking leaf-filled trees: What falls from them may be rotten fruit and dry leaves! Consider John’s theology: Who is the Vine? And who are the branches? We are a branch in the Vine of Christ, and I dare any theologian to tell me otherwise. The Roman Catholic Church is our sister, but I’ll dare to give her another title: Holy Mother. Don’t get me wrong: There’s no nostalgia or desire on my behalf, but Johannine theology, which is very different from the other three gospels, suggests a very deep foundation for a *communio* ecclesiology. Rather than fool ourselves, let’s work together and live together as sisters and brothers.

Mathias: Before we open up for questions from others, what lessons might we and the IFI learn from the Roman Church, our “Mother”?

Rocha: *Ese es precisamente el error de nosotros: que nos preocupamos por el vecino y por hacerle creer al vecino, que queremos unirnos con él. Primero, unámonos nosotros. Es mucho más importante, porque la unión hace la fuerza. Un obispo católico independiente en una ocasión me decía que si el papa lo llama esta tarde, inmediatamente regresaría a Roma para unirse a ella. Yo le*

respondí, "Excelencia Reverendísima, se va a morir esperando, porque nunca lo van a llamar".

That is precisely our mistake: that we are more interested in what our neighbors believe, than in being in unity with them. First, let's come together ourselves, which is more important, because there's strength in unity. An Independent Catholic bishop once told me that if the pope were to call him today, he would immediately return to Rome. I replied, "Your Excellency, you will die waiting for that call, because they'll never call you!"

Mathias: Let's open up this conversation for questions and insights.

López: *Quiero aclarar un poquito lo que usted dijo al comienzo acerca de la Iglesia Filipina Independiente y de cómo es que no tiene la palabra "católica" en su nombre. ¿Estaba usted bromeando?*

I want to clarify what you said at the start, about how the Philippine Independent Church doesn't have the word "catholic" in its name. Were you kidding?

Rocha: *La Iglesia Católica Romana, por el hecho de que la Iglesia Filipina Independiente no tenga el título de "católica", eso disminuye la preocupación de la Iglesia de Roma por la Iglesia Católica Filipina. By the very fact that the Philippine Independent Church does not have "Catholic" in its title, that lessens the concern of the Church of Rome for the Philippine Catholic Church.*

Lopez: *¿No fue que usted, en su opinión, estaba diciendo que no son católicos?*

You're not saying, then, that, in your opinion, they are not Catholic?

Rocha: *Es que no lo dicen. Es sólo que su nombre no nos dice que son católicos. Si no se usa el adjetivo "católico" de algo, ¿cómo vamos a saber que es católico? ¿Y cómo me voy a preocupar por algo que no es católico?*

It's just that their name doesn't tell you that they're Catholic. If the adjective "Catholic" is not used of something, how will people know that it's Catholic? And why would I care about something that is not Catholic?

López: *Entonces, ¿qué hacemos con la Iglesia Episcopal y la Iglesia Anglicana, que son comuniones católicas, y que tienen la teología católica?*

So, what are we to do with the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church, which are Catholic communions, and which have Catholic theology?

Rocha: *Esa pregunta es una trampa. Lo sabemos por la historia que los anglicanos y los episcopales son "anglicanos" y son "episcopales" por el problema de Enrique VIII, pero todos sabemos que en realidad son católicos. No se necesita un curso de teología fundamental para saber que esa iglesia intrínsecamente es católica. Sí, podría usted decirme que los fundadores de la Iglesia Filipina Independiente eran sacerdotes, pero no se le olvide que el problema de Enrique VIII fue en el 1500, y la Iglesia Filipina Independiente tiene solamente 120 años. ¿Por qué deberíamos referir a nosotros mismos de otra manera que no sean los católicos que somos?*

That question is a trap. We know from history that Anglicans and Episcopalians are "Anglicans" and "Episcopalians" because of the problem of Henry VIII. We all know that they're really Catholic. You don't need a course in fundamental theology to know that these churches are intrinsically Catholic. Sure, the founders of the Philippine Independent Church were priests, but don't forget that the problem of Henry VIII was in the 1500s, and the Philippine Independent Church is only 120 years old. Why should we choose to call ourselves anything other than the Catholics we are?

López: *La Iglesia Filipina Independiente está conectado a la Iglesia Veterocatólica de Utrecht y la Comunión Anglicana. ¿Qué dirá de eso?*

The Philippine Independent Church is connected to the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht and the Anglican Communion. What do you say about that?

Rocha: *Les hago una pregunta: ¿Hay comunión entre la Iglesia Filipina y la Iglesia Católica Romana? Ahí está la respuesta.*

I ask you a question: Is there communion between the Philippine Church and the Roman Catholic Church? There lies the answer.

Vanni: What Mike is saying is important because the Anglicans, Episcopalians and the Lutherans would all claim catholicity, and the IFI is in communion with the Anglican

Church. I appreciate the technicality of avoiding that word. What I question is our fixation on unity with Utrecht and not striving for unity among our jurisdictions. Every jurisdiction has its eye on the Netherlands, but won't look at the Independent church that's two counties away. I really challenge that.

Rocha: *Perdone. ¿Cómo se llama usted?*

Pardon me. What is your name.

Mathias: Reverend Trish.

Vanni: Reverend Doctor!

Rocha: *A ustedes, los de la Iglesia Católica Independiente, ¡les fascinan los títulos! Yo los voy a llevar a los manicomios para que hagan una terapia y se quiten esos títulos que no sirven para la evangelización, porque nos hacen superior a los que nosotros creemos ignorantes. Yo no tengo ningún doctorado; yo soy un simple ignorante, y me declaro ignorante, pero lo que usted dice es verdad, eso no es que sea doctora, sino que es verdad. ¿Por qué miramos siempre a Roma? ¿Por qué miramos siempre a Utrecht? ¿Y por qué no nos unimos mejor entre nosotros, que estamos mucho más cerca que Roma o Utrecht? Ese es el problema. El problema es aquí, y no allá. Y es que la figura artística y plástica de las "islas" que yo escribí en mi libro tiene muchísima verdad. Y peor todavía, somos islas rodeadas de agua putrefacta y sucia, que no genera vida. El agua limpia, como decía San Juan de la Cruz en sus bellísimos poemas, genera vida.*

You of the Independent Catholic Church love titles! I'm happy to take you to an asylum for therapy to remove all those titles that are not helpful in evangelization: They make us superior to those whom we believe to be ignorant. No, I don't have a doctorate; I declare myself ignorant, but what you say is true, and I say that, not because you are a doctor, but because what you say is true. Why do we always look to Rome? Why do we always look to Utrecht? Better yet, why don't we unite with each other, since we are much closer than Rome or Utrecht? That's the problem. The problem is here, not there. That's why the metaphor of "islands" in my book possesses a lot of truth. Worse still, we can be islands surrounded by putrid and dirty waters,

which do not generate life. Clean water generates life, as Saint John of the Cross said in his beautiful poems.

Luft: *Entonces, ¿qué piensa usted de lo que está pasando en Alemania? ¿Van a salir de la Iglesia Romana, como lo hicieron los filipinos, o nada más están participando en un proceso de hablar sobre sus preocupaciones? ¿Realmente van a mostrarse progresistas?*

So, what do you think of what is happening in Germany? Are they going to leave the Roman Church, as the Filipinos did, or are they just participating in a process of speaking out about their concerns? Are they really going to be progressive?

Rocha: *Una premisa: Los grandes teólogos de la Iglesia Católica Romana siempre han tenido su origen en Alemania. Yo no creo que la intención del sínodo en curso actualmente en Alemania es separarse de Roma. Aunque sí, el Obispo Schneider, el obispo auxiliar de Astana ha dicho que son heréticos. El Cardenal Pell, que lo admiro tanto, después de estar inocentemente más de un año en la cárcel, también dijo que Roma tenía que darse cuenta de esa problemática. Lo que yo pienso más bien es que Alemania está haciéndole a Roma un grandísimo favor. Los obispos alemanes se han despertado y están queriendo donarle perlas a Roma, pero se necesita un papa que tenga pantalones y no simplemente sotanas blancas.*

A premise: The great theologians of the Roman Catholic Church have always had their origin in Germany. I do not think that the intention of the current synod in Germany is to separate from Rome. Yes, Bishop Schneider, the auxiliary bishop of Astana has said that they are heretics. Yes, Cardinal Pell, whom I admire, even after “innocently” spending more than a year in jail, has also said that Rome has to become aware of this problem. What I think, rather, is that Germany is doing Rome a great favor. The German bishops have awakened and are wanting to donate “pearls” to Rome, but a pope is needed who wears pants and not just a white cassock!

Muchas gracias. Si alguno ha perdido la fe o se está escandalizado, lo lamento en el alma, pero yo amo la teología y estudio la teología. Mi pasión es la teología, y estoy siempre abierto al diálogo, a la discusión que nos enriquece muchísimo y, sobre todo, a compartir

lo que hemos estudiado, porque vale la pena donarlo también a mis hermanos, hoy como hoy, ¡de la Iglesia Católica Independiente en los Estados Unidos y en cualquier lugar del mundo!

Thank you very much. If anyone has lost faith or is scandalized by this presentation, I am sorry, but I love theology, and I study theology. My passion is theology, and I am always open to dialogue. Discussion greatly enriches us and allows us to share what we have studied with our sisters and brothers of the Independent Catholic Church today in these United States and throughout the world!

**Reflections on
Roman Catholic Perspectives
on the Philippine Independent Church**

- Vanni: One of Libardo's opening salvos was a critique of the lack of education and formation in our movement, but then he proceeded to lambaste me for having a doctorate. On the one hand, he was saying, "You guys need to shape up and get trained," and, on the other hand, "Don't lord your training over anybody!" I also really take issue with the thought that the word "catholic" has to be in your name to demonstrate your catholicity. ELCA Lutherans will firmly insist that they are catholic. I know Anglicans and Episcopalians who would firmly say that they're catholic. There's a deep urge in this movement to be legitimated by Utrecht. What is our obsession with the authority that comes from Utrecht? It's a papal mindset! It turns the Union of Utrecht into some validating body akin to the Roman system, particularly when we're so fragmented here.
- Mathias: Father Libardo drew our attention to the clericalism within our movement, with all of us dressed in black, even when we're just among ourselves.
- Vanni: Everyone in our movement should read *Clericalism: The Death of the Priesthood*, which is published by Liturgical Press. It outlines some seven major themes on the dysfunction and sinfulness of clericalism. Our collars are actually one of them. I almost never wear a collar. I put the collar on today because I knew that it's a thing for just about everybody here. I don't like it when we gather in collars during our ECC synod. We distinguish ourselves from others, rather than stand in the fullness of our baptism. I also recognize that when Mike walks down the street in his habit, something happens for people. I have a sea of questions, with no answers.
- Lopez: I come from the school of the missionary Vincentian priests, who seldom wear a color. I think it's a loss of witness and opportunity to minister to people. I seldom fly without a collar. It's an opportunity to minister to others.

- Vanni: My colleagues in the ECC really leaned on me: "Put the collar on! Put the collar on!"
- Lopez: It's a helpful witness. Sister Mary Ruth wears her habit every single day, seven days a week, and she works at Fordham University, where she goes to mass. She's a witness for the people there. Especially for those of us who have smaller ministries, it's a witness in the world that allows people to come to us, if they need us. I don't see the collar as being so clerical. If you're going "old boy" style with 24-karat gold cufflinks, then I might worry. One of the reasons that the Church is so screwed is that priests have stopped being priests. They have stopped acting like priests, and people no longer invite them to dinner. People don't have personal relationships with their priests. I really don't think that the collar is such a limitation or that the collar connotes clericalism.
- Banks: There's life in the tension. One of the reasons I became Independent Catholic was my disdain for clericalism and the whole structure of the Church as a whole. I think that the resources and training of the New Catholic Community will be important. We need to look to a body to connect with the larger Church.
- Luft: It's interesting that Father Libardo exercised the agency that characterized the diversity of the early Church. He felt the complete agency to come and speak his piece, and then leave. He could have chosen to engage and participate with us, but he took his leave. It's a natural consequence of the type of fluid religion that we're engaging in. He ruffled our feathers and left, giving us a taste of what we want in the Church: a Church that provides people agency without feeling that they must stay and be obedient!
- Vanni: I don't think that I interpret it the same way. I loved and agreed with so much of what he said, but the "pronounce-and-leave" should be questioned. We don't have a chance to clarify and engage, think through questions, maybe even move hearts. Dialogue is mutually transformative. In dialogue, you move "through the word" to a new mutual understanding. I take issue only with his "hit-and-run."

Luft: It sounds like you had an expectation for dialogue. He obviously did not have that expectation.

Mathias: For me, the question becomes: How do we build communion among ourselves in light of this great diversity, among people of varying personalities and gifts and challenges?

Vanni: We bicker over all sorts of things!

Božek: Each community will express itself in its own way. What works for one community may not work for another. The ancient Church knew that the church of Jerusalem would be different from the church of Antioch, which would be different from the church of Milan. Yet these churches had some cohesive unity among themselves.

Vanni: We bicker about such small things. At my ordination, we were going to use a creed written by a very important group of core leaders in our community, and there was concern by some that we weren't going to use the Nicene creed. Even in our little mob, we bicker over these things!

Božek: We should expect every community to have its own expression. If Bishop Alan's community doesn't say the Nicene creed, they are doing what works for them. If a parish wants to chant the entire mass, let them chant the mass. That's where diversity and unity come together. Each local community needs to find and express the way of praying that works for them. It may not work for others, but they can still be in union with one another. They can still love and respect one another.

Vanni: Here in the U.S. church, we are formed by one of the most legalistic forms of Catholicism on the planet. We are an outgrowth of British common law, not Roman law. Even the Roman Catholic Church in Italy is looser than we are. We tend to be very rigid in this country, and that was also impacted by our marginalization as a church. How do we deconstruct this legalistic mentality in our movement, so that we don't get hung up on the small things?

Janiola: I want to share the experience of the IFI. There are Roman Catholics who don't recognize us as Catholics; they believe that all Catholics must be under the Vatican. They monopolize the word "catholic." Our referring to ourselves

as the Philippine Independent Church in no way suggests that we are independent from catholicity. We are independent from Rome and its administration. When we separated from the Roman Catholic Church, which was run by the clergy, we adopted a new form of polity. The IFI has always empowered lay people to be part of the governing structure of the Church. The highest decision-making body in the IFI is the General Assembly, which is composed of all bishops, two clergy representatives from each diocese, and with lay representatives for youth, women and men. That General Assembly convenes every three years. Between General Assemblies, the Executive Committee meets quarterly and is comprised of five bishops, five clergy and six lay people. Each diocese is governed by an annual diocesan convention. Laity are also active in the parish councils of our communities. At all levels, laity are given the chance to be part of decision-making. That is our counter to clericalism.

Lessons from the Philippine Independent Church for U.S. Inclusive Catholics

Rev. Dr. Marek Bożek
St. Stanislaus Polish Catholic Church
St. Louis, Missouri

My first graduate studies were in canon law, so please forgive me if I sound a bit legalistic. I then studied systematic and pastoral theology, so I intend for this to be primarily a pastoral reflection on what we can learn from the Philippine Independent Church here in our U.S. context.

Father Henry suggested yesterday that the Aglipayan Church may number some six to eight million people. Many of them live in the northern part of the Luzon province, especially in the Ilocos region. Aglipayan congregations are also found throughout the Philippine diaspora in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. The church is the second-largest single Christian denomination in the Philippines, after the Roman Catholic Church, which comprises about 80% of the Filipino population at present. The IFI is currently about 6.7% of the population of the Philippines. As is true with the Independent Catholic movement here in the U.S., it's difficult to arrive at exact numbers, since we baptize, marry and bury hundreds of thousands of people, but not all of them come to our Sunday services. In contrast with the numbers shared in the sacramental records of the IFI, the 2010 Philippine census suggested that only about 1% of Filipinos are Aglipayan.

The IFI has two colleges: one in Manila, and one in southern Leyte. It has three theological seminaries, 13 primary or secondary schools, and many kindergartens. Even if we use the more conservative numbers, say, of about one million faithful, theirs is still a very impressive story, and the IFI is bigger than the Episcopal Church in the U.S. today!

During lunch, Father Henry told me that the IFI celebrates mass each weekend in more than ten languages. The Church nurtures its people in countless ways, and we are envious of the success story of the Philippine Independent Church.

We ask ourselves: How do they succeed, while we, in North America, continue to fail? What are they doing that we are not? What's their "secret sauce"?

Some of you heard my presentation in Las Vegas, where multiple "tomatoes" were thrown at me. I spoke about the characteristics of the church that I would like to see in our North American context. Before I proceed with my very personal reflection on the strengths of the Aglipayan Church, I invite you to think about the one thing that you would like your church to possess? What is the one quality or characteristic of a church that is most important to you?

Many such qualities are found in the Philippine Independent Church, which is a prophetic church. Any of you who have taken any biblical studies or who have listened to Father Jayme's Wednesday bible study know that being a prophet does not mean seeing into the future; it means speaking with God's voice, speaking for justice, and being a voice for the voiceless. Since day one, the Aglipayan Church has been a prophetic voice for justice and liberation. It has been a voice for the voiceless. Its very existence was tied closely to the national and social liberation of the Philippine people. It spoke for the people for whom no one spoke, and it sought to achieve racial justice, linguistic justice and gender justice.

The message of the prophets—"do justice!"—sums up the *raison d'être* of the Philippine Independent Church, which embodies what it means to be a prophetic church. The Aglipayan Church stands for something, which is the first part of being a successful and vibrant church. A church that does not stand for justice is merely a dying, establishment church. We see this in so many mainline churches in America, like our hosting church here, which was once a vibrant Lutheran community for German immigrants. Many mainline churches are dying, and one of the reasons for this, in my estimation, is that they have stopped being prophetic. They are mere social clubs that don't stand for anything, and they are no longer churches. The Aglipayan Church, in contrast, has not been afraid to take a stand on issues, even on controversial issues through which they have placed their lives in danger. They are not afraid to lead!

Consider some of the important ways in which the IFI is a prophetic church. It came into existence as part of a national struggle for liberation and independence—from Spain, Japan and the U.S. I don't gloss over the collaboration between IFI leadership and the

occupying forces of Japan during World War II, but even then most IFI clergy and lay leaders continued an underground movement to oppose Japanese occupation. The message of Jesus *par excellence* was liberation. A church that is not liberating is not a Jesus church. If you are not a voice for the voiceless, you are not a follower of Christ. In this particular context, the IFI struggled for the liberation of the Filipino people.

I see so many parallels between the Aglipayan Church and the Polish National Catholic Church (PNCC). They came to exist at almost exactly the same time. The first Polish National Catholic bishop was consecrated in Utrecht in 1907, and the very reason for the existence of the PNCC was the liberation of the Polish people in the U.S. and Poland. Poland did not exist on the European map from 1791 to 1918: It was partitioned between Russia, Prussia (Germany), and the Habsburg Austro-Hungarian empire. The Polish National Catholic Church came into existence for the very same reason as the Philippine Independent Church: It was a force for national liberation!

For 120 years, the Aglipayan Church has continued to be a prophetic church on countless social justice issues. From the beginning, it condemned the semi-feudal, semi-colonial conditions of the Philippine society. The way in which colonizers used and abused the Filipino people was the original social justice issue of the church. During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the Aglipayan Church supported labor union strikes and the hunger strikes of the teachers' unions. They critiqued the terrible practice of the so-called "Filipina mail-order brides," the modern-day slavery of Filipina women. IFI bishops and church leaders were very strong voices on this social justice issue. The church was involved in peace negotiations between the regime and the opposition, not only during the Marcos years, but even during the last several years of the Duterte regime. Since their independence, Filipinos have suffered under various governments, and just two weeks ago they elected Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. as their next president, which has led to protest and the insistence that he not be proclaimed president. With this election, the son of the former dictator will be president, and Duterte's daughter will be vice president: It's like the Belarusian election, where everyone knew the result of last year's election before they voted! The Aglipayan Church continues to speak for political justice in that context as well.

The Aglipayan Church has continued to empower youth, and its youth movement stood up against the Marcos regime, even when the Supreme Bishop was silent. There were moments when the Supreme Bishop thought that the IFI's national youth organization was too leftist or radical, but, for most of the time, the IFI's national youth movement has been charting the direction of the church's growth and leading the charge on social justice issues. The fact that old men in fancy colors take young people seriously is impressive. What would happen in our context if we took our youth seriously and allowed them to chart our direction for the years to come? It's a great quality of the IFI that many of the initiatives it creates and issues it tackles are brought forth by young people, rather than bishops.

The IFI continues to work on the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ persons. The IFI's 2017 statement, "Our Common Humanity, Our Shared Dignity" is nothing less than revolutionary in the context of their geographical location and the stronghold that the Roman Catholic Church has on the minds and souls of the Filipino people. From a U.S. perspective, we have enjoyed marriage equality for seven years, since 2015, so we think that everyone should get "on the same page" with us already – but not everybody lives in North American or Western European cultural circles. I am truly in awe that IFI bishops published this document.

While the Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches has yet to have a woman bishop, the IFI has been on the leading edge of this issue, consecrating its first woman bishop in 2019. The Union of Utrecht has approved all three orders – deacon, priest and bishop – for women, but has yet to consecrate a single woman bishop. When Bernd Wallet was elected Archbishop of Utrecht, there was a woman in the running: She would have been the first woman bishop in the Old Catholic universe. The IFI has its first woman bishop.

Being prophetic is part of who the IFI is and what they do. They are not afraid to touch on, speak about, and publish on sensitive issues. They are not afraid to be controversial. When the 2012 Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Bill was introduced in the Philippines, the Roman Catholic Church went on the offensive, lobbying lawmakers to reject the bill. The Philippine Independent Church was a strong proponent of the bill, which protects the health and rights of women in the Philippines. The IFI took a controversial position on a hot-button issue that many of us

would have tiptoed around so as not to offend any major donors to our ministries, thus showing themselves prophetic in an area where we might be tempted to compromise our integrity! It certainly seems that one element of the “secret sauce” of the IFI is their prophetic nature and their courage to take stands and speak with a clear voice.

The websites of many Independent Catholic churches here in North America suggest that we are super-progressive and super inclusive. Some bishops publish statements on beautiful stationery with their beautiful coats of arms, letters that only their spouses read, but speaking prophetically is not enough—which leads to another possible ingredient in the Aglipayan “secret sauce.” The Aglipayan Church is a populist church. I mean that not in a political sense—like the populism of the Nazi regime or the MAGA movement—but in the sense of not discounting “popular” things—things that are of the people! After all our seminary education and after ordination, we sometimes think that we are better than all those poor mothers in the pew who daily pray their rosaries and who know nothing of the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith. We become intellectuals who scorn devotion to the saints. And we give in to the temptation to create an elite Church. We are no longer the Church of rosaries, incense and holy water. We are the Church of the smart people! It’s important to be well-trained and educated—and I’m the first to advocate that we require education of anyone who wants to be ordained—but I also believe that the Church needs to be a populist Church.

The Aglipayan Church retains popular devotions and the popular religiosity of its people. It doesn’t tell people, “You can’t do Pachamama!” Do you recall the scandal with the Pachamama during the Synod on the Family at the Vatican two years ago? The Pachamama is a depiction of Mary imaged as an ancient Peruvian and Bolivian goddess, not unlike Our Lady of Guadalupe, and she is important in the popular religiosity of South American Catholics, so Pope Francis invited a delegation to bring the statue of Pachamama to the Vatican and to place it on one of the altars. A rightwing YouTuber stole the statue, tore into a discourse on the “idolatry” that Pope Francis was encouraging through the worship of pagan idols, and he recorded himself throwing the statue of Pachamama into the Tiber River in Rome. This is a great example of an elitist Church, of a Church that thinks it knows better and does not respect the popular piety and religiosity of its people.

There was a short and, in my opinion, disastrous experiment when Supreme Bishop Aglípáy was strongly influenced by rationalism and Unitarianism. You can read of this misadventure with rationalism in Father Jayme's book. Rationalism was a late 19th-century movement that disregarded anything that was not explainable through the lens of 19th-century reason. It totally disregarded the possibility of miracles. There were even early attempts within the IFI to create a gospel that would be free of any supernatural elements. Most people, though, looked at Supreme Bishop Aglípáy and the "founding fathers" and said, "What the heck are you doing? This is not what we believe!" As a result, there was a return to the IFI's populist roots and popular piety. If you look at the websites and Facebook pages of many IFI parishes, they look like "normal" Catholic parishes, with all the Eucharistic adorations, devotions, rosaries, stations of the cross, candles and statues. I believe that this populist element of the church is the second important ingredient of its "secret sauce." It's the *sensus fidelium*, as theologians would say, the "sense of the faith" of the people in the pews: Their ways of praying and worshiping are valid and true, and we can nurture those ways.

I would be remiss if I didn't speak of these two main ingredients of the PIC "recipe" – of being prophetic and populist. The PIC came to exist not by that planning and genius of its clergy. It came to exist at a labor union meeting. It was a church that people cried for, and wanted to have. So many of our Independent Catholic churches have been created by ambitious, smart clergy. Many of us have decided that we can start our own church! Then we look to the people. It should be the other way around. It should be the people who say, "Gosh dang, I cannot go to my Roman Catholic Church because of x! If I want to keep my integrity, I cannot keep going there!" When the people build and start a church, your chance of succeeding is much higher than when you try to bring people to the church. I don't want to pat myself on the back, but I often speak of myself as an "accidental heretic." I didn't plan to be excommunicated. I didn't plan to be part of the Independent Catholic movement. I was ordained a Roman Catholic priest, and I would have happily died a Roman Catholic priest. It was the people of St. Stanislaus who annoyed me for ten months, who called me and insisted that they needed me to come and help them. Eventually, after ten months of suffering from their insistence, I said, "Okay, let's do it." That's the only reason that my parish, St. Stanislaus, still exists today, 130 years later. It is because

the people want their church to exist. After 17 years, I'm about to move on, and I am doing so with a clean conscience, knowing that the people have found another priest, and they'll be fine. The people will take care of the church and continue the beautiful, prophetic and populist traditions that we have nurtured during the past 17 years. In our movement, we often do it upside-down, with clergy looking for lay people, rather than the other way around. We're doing something that the Philippine Church and the PNCC haven't done! Perhaps the Church needs to start with people looking for a priest and a church!

**Reflections on
Lessons from the Philippine Independent Church
for U.S. Inclusive Catholics**

Vanni: I question in my heart the language of “we,” and how Marek characterizes that “we” do certain things. We all use the language of “we,” but we’re not a “we” yet! We need to be very thoughtful in settings like this about how we honor the incredible differences in this movement. There’s a lot of collective “we” that we do. I’m left in a quandary after this conversation: I’m left with a lot of a deep appreciation for the courage of the IFI for its longevity, for its ability to keep its numbers for a long time, but I’ve also wrapped a lot of thought and prayer around unity and the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue. In my communion, you don’t get to go off and start a church. That possibility does not exist in the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. There has to be a solid community of people who call a person into ministry – and we were without a priest for two years. So, it’s not a “we” thing; it’s a pocketed thing, here and there. There’s also a justice issue embedded here, since guys like you received Roman training and came into this movement ordained. Lay men and women in our movement have a higher bar in this movement, since we have to be called.

Božek: In the apostolic times, the people called their leaders. That’s how a healthy church functions.

Vanni: The New Catholic Community insists that bishops check their miters at the door. Why don’t we all have to check our ordination at the door?

Mathias: Let’s massage Reverend Trish’s observation concerning the “we” of our movement. There is an ecclesiological – and perhaps even sociological and psychological – phenomenon wherein we want to be able to speak on behalf of a movement much larger than ourselves. Here in Austin, I characterize us not as “Independent Catholics,” but as “Inclusive Catholics” – all the while knowing that I am *excluding* others within our movement by my words: those who are not open to the ordination of women, or who are not open to LGBTQIA+ persons, for instance. I don’t

characterize them as “Inclusive Catholics.” Here in Austin, I have to be able to talk to people about a Church that’s larger than Holy Family, so I speak in the first-person plural, “we,” all the while knowing that I’m not exactly sure what I mean by this “we” – or what it is that “we” believe as a movement. As a movement, we’ve never had gatherings where we sit down and say, “This is who we are, and this is what we believe. This is what we do, and this is what we don’t do.” How can “we” speak of something larger than ourselves and our local communities?

Vanni: During our last gathering in Vegas, I spoke about a video on the ecology of a canyon. There’s unbelievable diversity in any canyon—until the triumph of the great conifers. When the conifers get to a certain size, though, their root systems are insufficient, and they fall, and what emerges is unbelievable diversity again. The Church of the first 100 years was very pluriform. It was unbelievably diverse. They didn’t get caught up in all the things we do: who’s praying which prayers, and in which direction do you put your hand? The Church was chaotic! It was chaotic from place to place, and it was fractious at times. But people didn’t say, “We, in Smyrna, are not the church of Macedonia.” They were all people of “The Way.” They were Christians. They were part of a diverse movement of emerging and highly-diverse communities. Could we have that kind of generosity among jurisdictions? I adore my buddy, Alan. His spirituality moves and inspires me. We share common threads, particularly our 12-step spirituality. We also diverge, but that doesn’t mean that I can’t be in complete harmony and relationship with him. I don’t have to “fix” him, to fit some picture that I have. What would it look like if our “molecules” and “atoms” could dance in harmony and interrelatedness, without us having to arm wrestle each other?

Honoring the Aglipayan Legacy

As we concluded our time together in Austin, Father Jayme led a discussion on the key take-aways from our time together.

Waterhouse: This experience has opened my eyes to the international strength of our movement. We have an existing movement here in the United States that has been prodded: Through Jayme's actions we're all here now. And we can now say that this movement is international, since many of our jurisdictions have clergy in other countries. Now we just need to wrap our heads around how to formalize this and create the necessary structures to keep drawing us together – just as the Philippine Independent Church has. People need us. They're drowning at sea, and they need something to hang on to that doesn't have all the rules and requirements that Roman Catholics have. We need to reach out to people and say, "Come, get in our boat!" We are not necessarily the boogie church. We are not armed revolutionaries, but we are revolutionaries for Christ. We need to hold out our hand to those in the "water," and have that "gun" ready for those who are shooting at us!

Vanni: We all interpret Church in so many ways – which is why we have to be careful when we speak of the "early Church." We are incredibly diverse, even with people who are completely encumbered with the attire of the Middle Ages. One of my learnings is that we need new language for new paradigms. The word "schism" has to go: It has too many negative valances, and it has been used like a club. Vatican II even revisited the word. We can say that we have "separated," but, perhaps more positively, in the same way that we launch our kids to college, we can say that we have been "launched" from our family of origin. Last night I was thinking about power in reformation movements like the IFI. Why did Luther gain traction? There was an alignment with political power – which is what we see in the IFI as

well. In some ways, we, here in the United States, are a peaceful revolution. How does a peaceful revolution gain traction? We weren't born of a split, with thousands of people getting into our "boat." We are built organically, from the bottom-up. What we have in common with the early Church is that the early Church was not in a culture that was receptive to it at all. The Church was profoundly countercultural. As a rabbi friend says, it is quickly becoming countercultural here in the United States to be religious. Imagine if TOCCUSA – though we saw a split in that group – and the ECC were to set aside our bickering and take steps toward becoming one church. When I was in Utrecht, Joris Vercammen lamented so many bishops in the same geographical area: There's a Roman Catholic bishop and an Old Catholic bishop and a Lutheran bishop – all in the same area. This challenge is exacerbated in our movement. A thousand questions are bubbling in my head, with no answers.

Mathias: With the 15 minutes that we have Father Henry with us, before he heads to the airport, I'm wondering if we might invite him to share with us his perspective on whether any possibilities might exist for closer collaboration between us, here in the U.S., and the Philippine Independent Church. I'm not aware of any relationship between the IFI and the clergy of our movement here in the U.S. – outside of Father Mike Lopez opening his doors to Father Henry and the IFI in New York, which has begun to create some relationship at the local level. Certainly, this conference is a step in the direction of a relationship between us and Father Henry and the church he represents. Father Henry, what possibilities, if any, might exist for a closer relationship between us?

Janiola: I have spoken with our two IFI bishops here in the United States. I asked permission of my bishop to come here, and I asked permission of Bishop Tobias to be here in his diocese. Both are looking forward to my update and to the proceedings of this conference. I

sense an openness to discussion on behalf of both bishops. I enjoyed learning of your journey here in the United States, and I pray for the unity of which you've spoken. What you are experiencing is normal: The IFI struggled for some 30 years before it became the stable church that it is today! Presuming that such unity is possible, I can envision the possibility of intercommunion between us as Independent Catholics who have separated from the Roman Church. In addition to the IFI, I would want you to be aware of other groups of Filipinos who have separated from the Roman Catholic Church, like Holy Child in Brooklyn.

Kemp: And maybe we could start by being friends! You have to have a relationship before you can be part of something with somebody else. Communicating and talking and getting to know each other is so important in the relationship of friendship.

Mathias: I'm hearing that the door may be open for a conversation. Let's pray about this experience and see where the Spirit leads as a result of our learning about GomBurZa and the IFI.

Janiola: Supreme Bishop Timbang plans to attend the general convention of the Episcopal Church in Maryland in July, so perhaps some of you could meet him and enjoy a conversation with him.

Bożek: I would want the IFI here in the U.S. to know that our churches are very much open for your congregations. We would be happy for a Filipino congregation in St. Louis to use our space. That would be my first offer to you and your bishop. If you ever have a need for a space for a local Filipino congregation, please let us know, and we are more than happy to help make that happen!

Luft: In Fort Worth as well.

Mathias: If I were honest, in the same way that Holy Family brought Father Libardo from Rome to the United States on an R1 religious visa, I've often thought that, if we were to do something like that again, it would be a delight to have some of the well-formed clergy of the

Philippine Independent Church. I've certainly been impressed with the members of the IFI whom I've met. It would be cool to have such a collaboration between us here in the United States and our friends from the Philippines.

Quintana: I'd like to share my perspective, from 47 years in the Independent movement. We didn't have the kind of organization 47 years ago that we have today. Now we're standing on the threshold of a new evolution within our movement, where we're looking to come together, rather than start a new thing. We ought to exploit this idea of coming together as friends, perhaps in some sort of congress of Independent Catholics. We need to break down the barriers that separate us – and the biggest barrier is ego.

Kemp: I have a question for Father Henry: If I were to visit your national cathedral in the Philippines, just as an American visitor, could I receive communion?

Janiola: Sure!

Kemp: You already have open communion?

Janiola: We do not refuse or deny the Eucharist to anyone.

Kemp: We're already in communion!

Nachefski: I'd like to share two comments from social media. Father June Mark Yañez, an IFI priest who studied with us in Utrecht, says, "Nice encounter with fellow clergy from our church!" And Ursus Urbanus says, "There is a new book with articles about the IFI by Eleuterio Revollido, Mariefe Revollido, Peter-Ben Smit and Joris Vercammen: *The Iglesia Filipina Independiente: Being Church "Pro Deo et Patria"*, by the Old Catholic Seminary Foundation, Amersfoort, No. 65, 2022. Warmly recommended."

Mathias: Father Peter-Ben spread word of that work some two weeks ago, and I ordered a copy. I regret that it didn't arrive in time for us to pass it around the room! The remaining pages of the handout that I prepared might be thought of as concentric circles: Each of us finds ourselves serving local communities, many of which are part of jurisdictions, which are, in turn, part of this

larger movement of Independent Catholicism or Inclusive Catholicism of which we are all part. As we go forth today, we do well to reflect on the implications of what we've learned for ourselves, for our local communities, for our jurisdictions, and for our movement. I leave it to you to reflect on the implications of this gathering for you, your local community and your jurisdiction. Any thoughts on the implications of this gathering for our movement?

Bożek: I'm thinking about what Bishop John said: that each birth involves a "death." Until we, here in the United States, die to our egos, our ambitions, and our jurisdictional pride, we will experience no new birth. Father Henry suggested that the IFI is comprised of 880 clergy. Imagine what would happen if 880 of us here in the U.S. were able to come together and say, "What we were yesterday no longer matters. Today we start as one, new community! We leave behind our 'hats' and miters, our acronyms and websites, to be born anew today!" The seed must fall to the ground and die, in order to bear fruit. Until we come to that prophetic realization, we will simply continue to die without experiencing rebirth.

Luft: Fortunately or unfortunately, in the Independent Sacramental Movement, we have progressives who are too progressive, and conservatives who are too conservative. This leaves little room for a middle ground. If we want to get anywhere, we have to be willing to give something up. Growth doesn't happen if you're already 100%. We have "growing edges" that we live into and work out of, and that we're continually working on. Death will occur if we remain where we are!

Vanni: So, let's plan a constitutional convention two years from now, for the creation of a "Declaration of Independence," where we all drop at the door our labels and the temporary identities that we've lived into, all for the sake of the larger whole.

Božek: That's why I like the metaphor of the seed: There will be no rebirth in our movement until we allow our egos and labels to die. If we can allow that to happen, the resurrection may just be with us!

Vanni: We're going to have to be willing to negotiate the differences. Marek, you and I have had conversations about education. What a tough conversation when we check our resources, our age, our experience, our education—everything—at the doorstep and walk into the room!

Božek: That's what dying means: We leave our old selves on the doorstep!

Quintana: We need some sort of conference to negotiate these issues. If we have to become, God forbid, like lay people—the ultimate humiliation for clergy!—to come together as equals, to come together as one, to form some kind of congress or confraternity, and to talk about our demise as we exist now.

Božek: The Old Catholic movement was the result of Old Catholic Congresses organized by Ignaz von Dollinger. Perhaps we need to invite all who are willing to come into the same Zoom room to leave their "hats" outside the door and dream together.

Quintana: I saw so much silliness and paradox in our movement—which is why I was so quick to jump into the ECC! I would very much love to become part of this kind of gathering to discuss some of our issues!

Concluding Words

Before concluding this gathering, all present were invited to share a “check-out.” Below are the concluding thoughts that were shared.

- Dang: This gathering has been an affirmation for me. It’s good to know that I’m no longer alone. Because we are Independents and rebels, we sometimes find ourselves surrounded by bullies, but we are real, we are authentic, and what we’re doing for people is real. I look forward to seeing how the Holy Spirit will continue to work through us!
- Gomez: This is the third interjurisdictional conference I’ve attended, and I have observed the difficulty of bringing us together as a movement. I wonder: At what point do we draw the line and say, “This isn’t going to work”? At what point do we say, “We need to follow a new path”? At some point, we need to recognize that we won’t be able to bring everyone together—and we’ll just need to create a new path!
- Božek: I am inspired and impressed with the Philippine Independent Church. My Filipino siblings have impressed me and inspired me!
- Vanni: My love to everyone at Holy Family for your epic hospitality. You always make us feel cherished and welcomed, like out-of-town family that has come in. I so deeply appreciate that. I cherish all these conversation partners, and I look forward to seeing where this continues to go—because I do believe that the Holy Spirit is working in all of it!
- Nelligan: I appreciate all of you who came from far away to share your knowledge and your spirit. I’m trying to process all the information I’ve received. I feel like we are making history!
- Quintana: I’m grateful for these past days. We’re on the threshold of something. I see the genesis of something grand here, if we’re humble enough to put aside our egos. I hope it doesn’t sound egotistical, but I hope that those

of us who have been excluded from past efforts can be included going forward.

Buffone: I envision this movement as a wheel with spokes, around the center cog, which is God. Each spoke is a manifestation or expression of that which we cannot really name. I see the expressions of all these independent groups, and that excites me. With that wheel, we move forward together, rather than being assimilated or absorbed into another circle—into a larger concentric circle, to use Jayme’s analogy. I feel blessed to know that there are so many inclusive Independent Catholic communities out there. I joined this movement 14 or 15 years ago, and it’s been a true joy along the way—especially these last few years, since I met Jayme and Holy Family at our first conference in 2019. Knowing you all has blown open and expanded my experience, to a bigger, better, deeper, wider experience of God. I just want to thank you all for that. I feel blessed, and I look forward to the future!

Luft: Truth be told, I was excited just to come to the pre-conference. My key takeaway is: Growth is possible. Growth is possible in my local community of St. Anne’s in Fort Worth, and growth is possible for our movement. The Spirit is moving, even if slowly, in the ISM, and, as my mother says, “The bend in the road is not the end of the road. It’s how we take the turn!” I’m willing to take that turn, and I look forward to seeing what that turn will be. I’m very optimistic. For the past five years, I have pastored alone, so I’m thirsting for community. And I’m optimistic and looking forward to the bend in the road!

Banks: Bishop John and I have been wanting more—and are finally finding it. To think that there was a conference three years ago, in 2019, that we never heard of! We’re just happy to find other people and functioning communities that can help us with knowledge and growth!

Waterhouse: I don't know the future, but I believe that God has a bigger and better plan. I think our job is to come to trust and love, and to be available to be used for God's bigger and better plan!

Nachefski: It's been a journey of 17 years since we first became independent at St. Stanislaus, and we were the Lone Ranger for many years. Then we met Bishop Frank and the ECC. Then we were introduced to Father Lawman and the Rabbouni Community in Kentucky. Then we met Father Mike and started having retreats together. It was sort of like being a foreigner in a different country, saying, "There's an American!" We've been finding people we can identify with, and that has been a wonderful feeling. But our efforts seemed stagnant and limited to a small group. Then we went to Las Vegas, and I was blown away: You could definitely see that the Spirit was working tremendously. Now, it seems like things are gelling, calming and coming together. We know it won't be fast. In fact, Father Henry told us it took them 30 years to come together. But I'm happy to see the Spirit blowing us forward. We're moving with the wind, it's calm, and it feels good!

Hayes: I'm grateful for the opportunity for networking. Where I am, in Houston, there are not very many of us, and the closest congregation to me is Holy Family in Austin—which is almost a three hour drive. So, I appreciate the opportunity to network with others in our community!

Caballero: As the only lay person here for this last session, I am absolutely humbled by the amount of knowledge that comes out of these conferences. This is my third interjurisdictional conference, and I'm just fascinated by the information that we've heard. When I first started coming to Holy Family, it was a breath of fresh air to find a loving, inclusive church where everyone is welcomed, no matter who you are or where you come from. That really spoke to me. I had no idea until recently that we are actually part of a movement. These

conferences are absolutely wonderful, and we need to spread the word as quickly as we can, to as many people as we can!

Mathias: I appreciate your willingness to be with us through three conferences now: here in Austin in 2019, in Las Vegas in 2021, and now back here in Austin in 2022. Let's see where the Spirit continues to blow. Since first learning of the Philippine Independent Church in 2019, I'm a big fan of what our sisters and brothers are doing there! I admittedly have mixed feelings: I can't believe that I passed so much of my life without ever hearing about Old Catholicism or Independent Catholicism or the Philippine Independent Church—even after 20 years of seminary studies and ministry in the Roman Church—but I'm also excited that I'm discovering these things so late in life. I see the Philippine Independent Church as a model of growth and unity for us here in the United States. It's an example of strength in numbers and how churches can succeed if they are able to bring together people and resources in a way that makes a difference. I pray for the day when we, here in the United States, might, to cite the image of Father Libardo, overcome our "island" mentality through the building of bridges. Last weekend, as we celebrated my husband's graduation from Penn, we visited Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Our nation's founding fathers came together around a common purpose. Since our friends of the IFI enjoy some 880 clergy, let's dream together about what it would take for 900 clergy here in the United States to sign onto something and to be part of something larger than ourselves and our communities and jurisdictions. It'll take time. It'll involve more conversations than any of us can imagine. But it seems something worth working toward. So, let's come together as cogs of the same wheel! Let's move forward! And, yes, let's plan a "constitutional convention"!

Appendix A

Resources on GomBurZa

The following websites provide information on the people and events related to the martyrdom of GomBurZa.

Wikipedia pages

- Spanish colonial rule of the Philippines bit.ly/3P25KXY
- GomBurZa bit.ly/3P0EY1O
- Mariano Gómez de los Ángeles bit.ly/3MLvZj6
- José Apolonio Burgos y García bit.ly/3yd69k2
- Jacinto Zamora bit.ly/3FdvsKR
- The First Propaganda Movement (1860-1872) bit.ly/3MSFVHG
- The 1872 Cavite Mutiny bit.ly/3scd4X6
- Execution of José Rizal (1896) bit.ly/39qY1SH
- Philippine Revolution of 1896 bit.ly/3Fga15g
- *La Liga Filipina* (The Philippine League) bit.ly/3MSFVHG
- Katipunan bit.ly/3kHiQf8
- Revolutionary Government of the Philippines (1898-1899) bit.ly/3MSGdyg
- First Philippine Republic (1899) bit.ly/3LQwit1
- Philippine-American War (1899-1902) bit.ly/3kDFBAz
- Revolutionary, 1st President of the Philippines & prominent Independent Catholic Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy bit.ly/3kDFCED
- “Mother of the Revolution” & prominent Independent Catholic Melchora Aquino bit.ly/3Fekm1O
- Author of Malolos Constitution, 1st Primer Minister of the Philippines & prominent Independent Catholic Apolinario Mabini bit.ly/37fb5tF
- Co-author of Malolos Constitution & IFI co-founder Felipe Buencamino, Sr. bit.ly/3vJAYeC
- Filipino Nationalism bit.ly/3vZBpQW

Other GomBurZa Resources

- Simple, brief history of GomBurZa bit.ly/3ycdm43
- A History of GomBurZa bit.ly/3FeTf6P
- Video: GomBurZa & the Rise of Filipino Nationalism bit.ly/3FgbvfQ
- Video: Rebellious Priests bit.ly/37jzvCs
- Video: History of GomBurZa bit.ly/3LQxCMv
- Visualizing the GomBurZa bit.ly/3OXaxJU
- Editorial: First Spark of Revolution bit.ly/3KXSuAp
- A columnist reflects on the death of GomBurZa bit.ly/38LPLfP
- GomBurZa sesquicentennial penitential walk in Manila bit.ly/3kE2mV2
- GomBurZa trivia bit.ly/3MNe5g0
- Social media carelessness: RC cathedral shares Freemason Mabini's words in infographic that "implies that it was evil Catholic Spain that should be blamed for the execution of the GomBurZa priests" bit.ly/3FezzzY
- Upcoming Jesuit movie on GomBurZa (filming soon) bit.ly/3LMdb3k
- GomBurZa featured on Philippine currency (1949-1974) bit.ly/3LXIZ5a
- GomBurZa (1977 film) imdb.to/3kLv8Ty
- GomBurZa (social justice organization) bit.ly/3FicmNh
- Facebook profile pic frame with GomBurZa bit.ly/37g8Whx

Appendix B

Resources on the Philippine Independent Church

The following websites provide information on the Philippine Independent Church.

Wikipedia pages

- Philippine Independent Church bit.ly/3FewxLS
- *Unión Obrera Democrática Filipina* (Democratic Workers Union of the Philippines; UODF members proclaimed the IFI in 1902) bit.ly/3vKNKK3
- IFI Co-founder Isabelo de los Reyes, Sr. bit.ly/3s9SW84
- 1st IFI Supreme Bishop Gregorio Aglipay Cruz y Labayán bit.ly/37lpFjy
- IFI Cathedral of the Holy Child in Manila bit.ly/3MSIh9u
- Current IFI Supreme Bishop Rhee Millena Timbang bit.ly/3vIPAob

Other Resources on the Philippine Independent Church

- An introduction to the IFI, by an IFI priest bit.ly/37tojTS
- Encyclopedia Britannica entry on the IFI bit.ly/3KOJ8qh
- Encyclopedia.com entry on the IFI bit.ly/39KJstv
- World Council of Churches summary of the IFI bit.ly/3PhQx5d
- Episcopal Church summary of the IFI bit.ly/3MYxue5
- Harvard Divinity School summary of the IFI bit.ly/3LXf9Oi
- Mathias & de Uriarte, *Aglipayan: The Flourishing of Independent Catholicism in the Philippines* amzn.to/3ForJns
- Video: The Birth & Development of the IFI bit.ly/3MZjbG5
- Video: History of the IFI bit.ly/3P4JaO6
- Video: History of the IFI (in Tagalog, but with tremendous images) bit.ly/3P4hg4U
- IFI Facebook page bit.ly/3KSXXbx
- IFI Gallery Facebook page bit.ly/3vV2KVM

- IFI Supreme Bishop Facebook page bit.ly/3sl8W7a
- IFI National Cathedral Facebook page bit.ly/3vQcJeT
- The Icon of Our Lady of Balintawak bit.ly/3ForQ2m
- Peasant attire of & devotion to Our Lady of Balintawak
bit.ly/3LXfuk2
- IFI Centennial Song bit.ly/3sHmPgj
- 2021 joint statement of IFI & Roman Church bit.ly/3L1BE3C
- News story on 2021 joint statement bit.ly/3vRbv32

Appendix C

Participants in “Revolutionary Church”

Rev. Brett M. Banks

St. Anne Independent Catholic Church
 Church
 Independent Catholic Ordinariate
 Dallas, Texas

Rev. Dr. Marek Bożek

Saint Stanislaus Kostka Polish
 Catholic Church
 Saint Louis, Missouri

Terry Ann Caballero

Holy Family Catholic Church
 Austin, Texas

Rev. Joseph Dang

Catholic Apostolic Church
 International
 Denver, Colorado

Jordan Dickenson

Holy Family Catholic Church
 Austin, Texas

Rev. Roy Gómez

Holy Family Catholic Church
 Austin, Texas

Sr. Laura Hayes Marsh

Chapel of the Angel Presence
 Ascension Alliance
 Montgomery, Texas

Rev. Henry Casanova Janiola

Philippine Independent Church
 New York, New York

Most Rev. Dr. Alan Kemp

Ascension Alliance
 Gig Harbor, Washington

Sr. Juliana Loong

Missionary Benedictines of the
 Poor
 All Saints Priory
 Ridgewood, New York

Rev. Mike López

Missionary Benedictines of the
 Poor
 All Saints Priory
 Ridgewood, New York

Most Rev. John Paul Luft, StSA

St. Anne Independent Catholic
 Church
 Independent Catholic Ordinariate
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Holy Family Catholic Church
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Rev. Donna Nachefski

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Rev. Libardo Rocha
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Virtual Participants in “Revolutionary Church”
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Rev. Francis Quintana
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