

Migration and Religiosity
The Filipino Seafarers Onboard Abroad

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between migration and religiosity with a focus on one specific type of a diasporic group, the Catholic Filipino seafarers on board ships in U.S. ports. Such a relationship will be explored by asking the question: what is the role of religiosity in the migration of Filipino seafarers? The enquiry is further deepened by asking: in what ways do Filipino seafarers' religious belief and practice influence their migration experience, what are the questions it raises and the answers it offers? Further questions will help to shed light such as: what are the religious support and networks offered by the transient receiving community that the seafarers avail of at their ship's ports of call? Do these spiritual support and networks reinforce or not the religious identity of the seafarers and therefore offer continuity or disjuncture of the faith life of Filipino seafarers?

In this study, the terms religion and religiosity are used broadly and intersect with each other where religious belief, experience and practice are visited to value Filipino seafarers' religiosity. The article should be seen as representative rather than exhaustive, given the complexity where migration and religiosity interphase.

Introduction

It is almost always inevitable that migration is linked to religion and consequently impinge on religious commitment or involvement. When people migrate, they bring with them their religious beliefs, ideas and tradition which impact daily living, work, social relationships, and the receiving Church in the new land. It is therefore inescapable that change takes place. Josef Barton, a sociologist and historian, points out that immigration, as a process of transformation, "is at once a sign of change and an agent of change". As a result of the journey from one cultural and social world to another, Barton argues, immigration produce radical change within the realms of the religious, the political, familial, and the personal.² Rúben Rumbaut points out "some of the ethnic groups created by the new immigration are in a clearly upward path, moving into society's mainstream in record time and enriching it in the process with their culture and energies."³ Given this premise of linkage between migration and religion or the religiosity of believers, numbers would suggest the shape and extent of the change that will ensue.

¹ The author, who also serves as National Director of the Apostleship of the Sea in the USA, highlights though this article one of the categories of people on the move- the seafarers and all those who work at sea. In writing, she hopes to shed light on the religiosity of Filipino seafarers in order to propose to pastoral workers who minister to the people of the sea, to develop further appropriate pastoral responses on behalf of the seafarers as they migrate.

² BARTON, Josef. *Religion and Cultural Change in Czech Immigrant Communities, 1850-1920*, p.3

³ RUMBAUT, Ruben and PORTES, Alejandro, Editors. *Ethnicities, Children of Immigrants in America*, p. 10

As the Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* points out, “nearly all countries are now faced with the eruption of the migration phenomenon in one aspect or another; it affects their social, economic, political and religious life and is becoming more and more a permanent structural phenomenon.”⁴

Global Trends

The past decade saw unprecedented movement of peoples across international borders, a consequence of globalization and byproduct of wars, civil conflicts, religious persecutions, natural disasters, poverty or of the search for better economic opportunities. The U.N. Population Division estimates there are now almost 200 million international migrants. In the area of development, the World Bank in its recently published *Global Economic Prospects 2006* reported that officially recorded worldwide remittances for 2005 was US \$232 billion which flowed from developed to developing countries and South to South transfers, and possibly the amount is twice for unofficial remittances. Given these staggering figures, migration is seen to saturate the stratum of life individually and collectively, in the country of origin, transit and destination, for those who migrate and for the families left behind. Migration and religion are critical, causal or consequential components of change.

The Filipino Diaspora

The Philippines has a long history of immigration. The journey of Filipinos to the United States was chronicled into four waves of migration, the first one was between 1903-1910 which was comprised of *pensionados* (scholars) sent to U.S. schools by the American Government. The second wave of migration, from 1909-1934 were those of large numbers of laborers contracted to work in Hawaii and California. There was no significant migration flow thereafter, until after the second world war, which saw the third wave in 1965, when the U.S. quota system was lifted and health professionals came.⁵ The U.S. State Department claims there were over 3 million Filipino Americans in 2006. According to the Migration Policy Institute, the foreign born from the Philippines represent the second largest immigrant group in the United States. In the home front, an estimated 8.1 million Filipinos – 10 percent of the Philippines’ population were working or residing in 200 countries in 2004.⁶ Translated into dollar remittances, in the year 2006 overseas Filipinos sent a record high of 12.8 billion US dollars, a 19 percent increase from the previous year.⁷

Filipino Seafarers

It is interesting to note that the first Filipinos to migrate to the United States in small groups or sporadically were seamen. In the year 1763, they boarded the Manila Galleon that plied the Manila, Acapulco, Mexico route and some of them jumped ship in Mexico, and eventually settled in the bayous and marshes outside the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. They were known as the Manila Men.⁸ J. Francisco adds that the

⁴ *The Instruction, Erga migrantes caritas Christi*. Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Vatican City, 2004.

⁵ QUAZI, Salam A.. *Filipino Catholics in New York City*.

⁶ ASIS, Maruja. *The Philippines’ Culture of Migration*.

⁷ DPA, German Press Agency. *Overseas Filipinos Remittances*.

⁸ BAUTISTA, Veltisezar, *The Filipino Americans*

group eventually grew into seven villages, with the central hub being the fishing village of St. Malo, in St. Bernard Parish.⁹

In 1789, 29 Filipino sailors were crews of two ships that went to Alaska: 24 of the 55 crew were on board the ship *Eleanora*, and 5 were on the ship *Fair American*, these ships sailed to Manila and there hired the crew. In the 1850's, Filipinos were crew members on whaling ships that operated in Alaska.¹⁰

Tracing the long history and experience of the Filipino seafarers' sojourn in foreign lands, it is not surprising to see that today, one of five seafarers in the world is a Filipino. In 2006, there were 260,084 Filipino seafarers deployed abroad, representing a 4.9 percent growth compared to 2005. During the first 10 months of 2006, Filipino seafarers sent a total of US\$ 1.589 billion as remittances.¹¹ Thanks to the aggressive marketing campaign of the Philippine Government, the Philippines still remains the leading supplier of seafarers. The Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) set up an integrated mobilization system through the establishment of the One-stop Center (PSOC). This center, created in 2003, provides a "more efficient and effective documentation service to Filipino seafarers".¹² The PSOC is composed of 14 cooperative government agencies housed in the POEA building.

Filipino seafarers like other seafarers, are often away from their families for many months because of the nature of their work. While there are advantages to working abroad in a ship such as better paying jobs as compared to jobs in the Philippines, yet there are drawbacks that have been mentioned on many instances,

Sometimes seafarers and fishworkers become victims of illegal recruitment. If he/she is deployed by a [manning] agency there is a possibility of a substitution of contract wherein the signed contract is substituted at the jobsite [and the seafarer] is given a lower position and salary. Abuses are also in the form of non payment of wages and benefits. Many times, seafarers and fishworkers are discriminated against onboard ship. The seafarers experience many forms of physical, psychological and spiritual deprivations. The deprivation takes its toll on familial relationships: the seafarers and family members have to cope with loneliness and at times there is a [perceived] threat of infidelity among married couples. For those left behind there are difficulties like solo parenting which have given rise to delinquency among children.¹³

Religion in the Philippines

The Philippines is the only country in Asia that has a predominantly Christian population. This reflected the Spanish colonization between the 16th to the 19th century. Today, Christians constitute about 94 percent, while Muslims are about 5 percent and the rest are Buddhists, animists or nonbelievers. Filipino Roman Catholics comprise 84 percent of the total population. The ten percent belong to other Christian denominations such as *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (Philippine

⁹ FRANCISCO, Johanna, *The First Filipino Americans*.

¹⁰ Op. cit

¹¹ UY, Veronica. *Filipino Seafarers Deployed in 2006*. Inquirer Express.

¹² *Deployment of Filipino Seafarers Projected to Increase*, OFW Guide.

¹³ TORDILLO, Sr. Myrna, *Ministry to Seafarers and their Families* in Primeiro Seminario Congregacional de Pastoral Migratoria, p. 426

Independent Church), Protestants groups, and another Filipino founded evangelical church, *Iglesia ni Kristo* (Church of Christ).¹⁴

While there is official separation between Church and State, the Roman Catholic Church continues to play a very influential role in civil and political life.¹⁵ One can only look back to the *EDSA Revolution* (also referred to as the People Power Revolution) in 1986 wherein the Catholic Archbishop of Manila, the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, exhorted the Filipinos to come to EDSA, a major road in the heart of the capital city, to support the defecting rebel leaders against President Marcos. The EDSA revolution was a nonviolent mass demonstration participated by millions of Filipinos, including civilians, nuns and priests, which saw the eventual topple of the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

Indeed, the Catholic seam is woven into the fabric of Philippine life. The following common occurrences would illustrate some examples. On Sundays, it is not unusual to see a chapel in the big shopping malls filled to overflowing with the faithful who are on their way or are done with shopping, to participate in the Eucharistic celebration. On big passenger ships that ply the route from Cebu to Manila, Holy Masses are held on board on Sundays, with passengers crowding a hall designated for the celebration. Public and civic inaugurations are often preceded by a Mass or an invocation by a Catholic priest. It is worthwhile mentioning that the *fiestas* (feasts) in local villages is first a religious observance because often it is a celebration of the feast day of the patron/patroness saint for a particular village, and second, it is also a gastronomical feast for the villagers and those invited to their homes regardless of their religious affiliation.

Finding a Common Ground

It would be dangerous to simply equate numbers of a certain population with their religious affiliation and practice as in the case of Filipino seafarers onboard foreign vessels. As this study unfolded, a difficulty encountered is finding available information nor is there substantial data on Filipino seafarers and their religiosity. Researches done are mostly focused on the social and economic impact of Filipino seafarers. The lack of data complicates theorizing the relationship between Filipino seafarers and religiosity. However, having outlined about statistics of Filipino seafarers abroad and having seen that majority of the Filipinos are Catholics, it is safe to postulate a correlate between migration, Filipino seafarers and their religiosity and/or Catholic practice. Moreover, gathered data in 2007 by the United States national office of the Apostleship of the Sea will help substantiate findings about the Catholic faith of seafarers majority of whom are Filipinos, while they are onboard ships in the U.S. ports.

A theoretical framework on religiosity will offer understanding on the process by which religious belief and practice of Filipino seafarers impact their migration experience and vice versa. To ground us in this investigation, it is important to have a common understanding of the word religiosity, which in social scientific use is “a

¹⁴ STEINBERG, David. *Republic of the Philippines*

¹⁵ Idem.

generic term for religious commitment”.¹⁶ It may help to narrow down from the broad, generic term by looking at the dimensions of religiosity, which, according to the European Values Study has two indicators, one is the softer side- “which include feelings, experience, and religious beliefs, alongside... hard indicators- those that measure religious orthodoxy, ritual participation and institutional attachment”.¹⁷ These indicators resonate with the four dimensions of religiosity outlined by Clark and Schellenberg which are: affiliation, attendance, personal practice and importance of religion.¹⁸ An extensive treatment on religiosity is developed by Glock and colleagues, which became known as the “5-D approach to religiosity. This was a multidimensional approach to religious involvement/commitment encompassing 5 areas”,

(1) ritual activities (including but not only, “church” attendance); (2) ideology or adherence to the principal beliefs of the religion; (3) experience or the “feeling” aspect of religion; (4) the intellectual side of religion, which involved religious “knowledge” and was frequently measured by such activities as reading religious publications (including, but not only, sacred texts); (5) the consequential dimension which attempted to measure the “effect” of an individual’s religion in its other dimensions upon his or her life.¹⁹

I thus propose to construct a framework on the religiosity of Filipino seafarers taking into consideration the: a) individual aspects of feelings, religious experience; and the b) communal aspects such as adherence to Catholic teaching/orthodoxy and participation in ‘ritual activities’. Since I am looking at the relationship between migration and Filipino seafarers’ religiosity, adding to the framework the dimension of religious belief and practice in the country of origin is relevant to the study.

Filipino seafarers and their Faith

Faith plays a significant role in everyday life for the believer. For those who migrate to foreign lands, uprootedness leads migrants to seek channels of connection, socialization and ties. For the seafarers, who by the nature of their work find themselves onboard ships for weeks and even months before they see land, the need for connectedness is even more acute. Noteworthy are the familial concerns that seafarers have especially about their loved ones back home. While seafarers “develop firm solidarity and close relations with their work companions on board, and create with them a temporary but intense life community”²⁰, yet adverse conditions on board ship, living and working with other seafarers of different nationalities day in and day out in the confines of space are among the catalysts for seafarers to come to port. Unfortunately, setting foot on shore does not always happen when a seafarer does not have shore leave, mostly for visa reasons. As one seafarer recounts, it is a lonely life at sea. He further adds, “we call it ‘prisoner of the sea’”.²¹

¹⁶ SWATOS, William Jr., *Religiosity*, in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, p. 406.

¹⁷ *Idem*.

¹⁸ CLARK Warren and SCHELLENBERG Grant, *A Study, the Dimension of Religiosity*.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ LE GALL, P. Francois. *The Apostleship of the Sea, The Pastoral Care of Seafarers*. p. 44
Apostolatus Maris, Leberit, Roma @ 2001.

²¹ *Spiritual Solace for Seafarers*, San Jose Mercury News.

Turning to religion offers the ordinary Filipino Catholic seafarer strength, hope and peace. There are trade offs and sacrifices for seafarers. Religious experience for him/her does not serve as an “opium for the vicissitudes in life”. On the contrary, religious experience

results in a living contact with God within the person’s historical context. Neither does it refer to the ways and means to arrive at ecstasy or intense concentration beyond what is normal. Rather, authentic religious experience has the effect of putting in their proper order all the levels of human experience.²²

What brings into sharp focus is the Filipino Catholic seafarer’s attempt at appropriating in his/her life the true value of sacrifice, to live out the faith. It is a fidelity that “summons any serious Christian to courageously follow Jesus Christ in his or her daily encounter at the crossroads of life”.²³ One ship cook comments about participating in the Mass after being at sea for two months, “Mass is very good. It gives a charge”.²⁴

Orthodoxy and Catholic practice pose a challenge for Filipino Catholic seafarers, for lack of opportunities to be in a regular parish community. To cite an example about the sacrament of the Eucharist, those who attend weekly Mass in the Philippines as in the case of the ship cook mentioned above will find it extremely difficult to be at Mass weekly while on board and at sea. The captain of a ship with an all Filipino crew whom I met during a ship visit in the Port of Houston which was occasioned by the celebration of the Eucharist by the port chaplain, lamented that he missed Mass for long period of times, but look forward when a port chaplain comes on board and celebrate the Mass for them. One crew member mentioned before the Mass started, that popular devotion through the praying of the rosary was done on board their ship once a week when many of the seafarers are not on duty. While it may not be common to have an all Filipino Catholic crew in one ship, nor can we assume that all Filipino Catholic seafarers are very religious, what is demonstrated here is the ordinary living expression and practice of the faith, that which has been referred to as an aspect of the dimension of ‘ritual activity’.

Here we are confronted with the question, what does it mean to be religious? To capture the sense of being religious is to go back to the identity of Filipino Catholics in the country of origin. Highlighting the country of origin of the seafarers has its own reason namely, seafarers, unlike immigrants who intend to settle in the adoptive country, go back to the Philippines after finishing their contract. Naturally, the seafarers maintain a renewed faith practice and religiosity each time he/she goes home.

Filipino Christian Identity

As “hearers and recipients of the Word”, the Filipino Christian’s response stresses three dimensions. First, “the response in terms of person as self and as a person in

²² TORDILLO, Sr. Myrna. *The Crucified Christ in the Asceticism of J.B. Scalabrini*. p.7.

²³ Op cit.

²⁴ Op cit.

community; second, the Filipino value system; and third, Filipino Christian values.”²⁵ The true search for Filipino Christian identity finds its ultimate answer in the source and end of our life-God.²⁶ Following Jesus means “an enduring and intimate commitment to Jesus, a love for him that does not count the cost”.²⁷ Discipleship demands “a properly formed and mature social conscience that can ‘bring its moral force to bear upon the social environment,’ and therefore will lead individuals to reject sinful social structures and put up in their stead those that allow and promote the flowering of fuller life”.²⁸ The communitarian dimension of the quest for self understanding should lead back to the model of the community of the first disciples, which is love of God in Christ through love for one another, and this must be the center of the Filipino Christian life in community. Self understanding needs also to look at the Filipino value system, which can be enriched by the Gospel. Social scientists pointed to the ambivalence of some Filipino values. However, when properly understood, appropriated in life and function for the good of the person and others, such values are potentials for the development and growth in the formation of mature Christians.²⁹ PCP II points out,

We must take a closer look at how values that we have from our Christian faith can strengthen the good of our cultural values or correct what is excessive in them and supply for their deficiencies.³⁰

Thus, some predominant Filipino cultural values such as *utang na loob* (which expresses a person’s deep sense of gratitude for help extended and implies a debt that can never be repaid but can only be reciprocated in a sacrificial manner on the part of the one returning the favor), can be an experience of undying gratitude of Christians to Jesus who died on the cross. What this value demands is a reciprocity from Christians, that is, to love God and neighbor in action. Another cultural value is “*bahala na*”, translated, it means ‘come what may’. Despite often being viewed as a fatalistic resignation, it can be seen positively as an attitude of courage in taking risks and of inspired fidelity when a person is put in a difficult situation. In a Christian perspective, ‘*bahala na*’ is an attitude of trust, to leave everything in God’s hands, trusting in Divine Providence that offers the Christian a sense of peace and serenity in times of adversity. “*Hiya*”, which literally means ‘shame’, is a potent means to safeguard morals and ethics in Philippine society.³¹ A Catholic understanding can be applied to the “workings of sin and grace in our lives”³² that will lead to Christian humility and modesty. The value of ‘*pakikisama*’ which implies getting along well with others, results in camaraderie and fosters closeness. In the context of Christian solidarity, this value can enhance the formation of an informed conscience which

²⁵ Op cit.

²⁶ Op cit.

²⁷ *Acts and Decrees*, Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (hereafter referred to as PCP II), p. 139

²⁸ Op cit.

²⁹ TORDILLO, Sr. Myrna. *The Crucified Christ in the Asceticism of J.B. Scalabrini*. p.146.

³⁰ Op cit.

³¹ Op cit.

³² *Maturing in Christian Faith*, National Catechetical Directory of the Philippines, St. Paul Publications, 1985, no. 30.

supports social justice. Filipino cultural values, when properly redirected will deepen authentic Christian living in a uniquely Filipino way.³³

Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation recognize that immigrants “often bring with them a cultural and religious heritage which is rich in Christian elements.”³⁴ Different cultural identities, as pointed out in the Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, “are thus to open up to a universal way of understanding, not abandoning their own positive elements but putting them at the service of the whole of humanity.”³⁵

The Filipino seafarers embody a rich heritage which they transmit as they practice the faith in the reality of life at sea and on port.

The Church’ Pastoral Concern

The Church, ever mindful of the human costs of migration and the consequences for those who migrate, is “committed to spare no effort in developing her own pastoral strategy among these immigrant people”.³⁶ The theological finding that grounds the pastoral lines of the Magisterium are,

the central position of the human person and the defense of the rights of migrants, both men and women, and their children; the ecclesial and missionary dimension of migration; the reappraisal of the apostolate of the laity; the value of cultures in the work of evangelisation; the protection and appreciation of minority groups in the Church; the importance of dialogue both inside and outside the Church; and the specific contribution of emigration to world peace.³⁷

The U.S. Catholic Bishops, in their Statement, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us*, reaffirmed the commitment of the Church citing the words of Pope John Paul II, to work

so that every person’s dignity is respected, the immigrant is welcomed as a brother or sister, and all humanity forms a united family which knows how to appreciate with discernment the different cultures which comprise it. (Message for World Migration Day 2000, no. 5).³⁸

The U.S. Catholic Bishops, emphasize that the “welcome and hospitality that we ask our parishes to extend to newcomers must include active efforts on the part of the pastor and parish staff, individuals and families...”³⁹

Pastoral Responses

Recognizing and reaffirming the contributions of many Catholics in their pastoral responses to the needs of migrants, Pope Benedict XVI, make mention of the,

generous response of many men and women, associations and organisations which, seeing the sufferings of countless persons caused by emigration, are

³³ Op cit.

³⁴ PAUL Pope Jonh II. *The Church in America*. p. 108. USCCB, Washington, DC @1999.

³⁵ Op cit.

³⁶ Ibidem. No. 65.

³⁷ Op cit. *The Instruction, Erga migrantes caritas Christi*. Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Vatican City, 2004

³⁸ U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us, Unity in Diversity*, p. 23

³⁹ Idem. p. 33.

struggling for the rights of migrants, forced or voluntary, and for their defence. The commitment of these people can be attributed above all to that *compassion* of Jesus, the Good Samaritan, that the Spirit stirs up everywhere in the hearts of men and women of good will and in the Church too, which “relives once more the mystery of her Divine Founder, the mystery of life and death”⁴⁰

One of those who responded to the challenges of migration and concretely put mechanisms for action was Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini (1839-1905), founder of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo and the Missionaries of St. Charles. Then Bishop of Piacenza, Italy, Blessed Scalabrini, in a century that was not fashionable to speak and defend about the dignity and rights of migrants formulated a plan for assistance:

- To wage implacable war against the traders in human flesh, i.e. against those who speculate upon the misery of the immigrants.
- To promote religious assistance during the journey, after disembarking and in the places where the migrants are accustomed to settle.⁴¹

These plans are carried out in many different ways up to the present time through the missionary activities of the Scalabrinian women and men religious who minister to migrants, immigrants, and refugees. Many more people, either individually or as belonging to an institution, have promoted and offered pastoral assistance on behalf of the migrants.

The Apostleship of the Sea

The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) or Apostolatus Maris in latin, is an international Catholic organization that began in 1899 in Glasgow, Scotland. Today, Stella Maris Centers around the world “offer pastoral care to all who live from seafaring and fishing, their dependents and communities”.⁴²

In the United States of America, the AOS “is active over 60 American sea ports; these include the ports along the Pacific Coast such as Alaska and Hawaii, the Gulf Coast and ports along the Great Lakes”.⁴³ The Apostleship of the Sea exists in 51 Arch/dioceses in the Unites States. There is a Bishop Promoter and a National Director. There are 96 chaplains and chaplaincy team members ministering in the American ports and providing pastoral care to the people of the sea and to port personnel: 55 priests, 22 deacons, 2 religious brothers, 1 religious woman, and 16 Catholic Laity. This committed team of dedicated men and women provide pastoral care to the people of the sea. The sacraments of the Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick are provided to the seafarers and fisherfolk. In one port alone, a total of 375 Masses were celebrated on board ship and 220 Masses celebrated in the local seafarers’ center in the year 2006. The number of communion services

⁴⁰ Op cit. Erga migrantes

⁴¹ TOMASI, Archbishop Silvano, c.s., ed. *For the Love of Immigrants, Migration Writings and Letters of Bishop John Baptist Salabrini*, pp. 154-155.

⁴² *Apostulatos Maris, An Agency of the Catholic Church*.

⁴³ AOS National Director’s Annual Report, 2007

on board ship ranged from a lowly 1 to 1,767. Sacramentals, such as ship blessing, blessing of religious articles and ship room were done. Besides the spiritual care, port chaplains and the team members also extend assistance by making available a) access to communications such as telephones, cell phones, phone cards, the internet; b) a place to relax in a seafarers' center by offering refreshments, or a choice of food in a snack bar or restaurant, game rooms and other recreational activities, a swimming pool and a basketball court; c) giving out reading materials either religious or secular; d) or managing a money transfer for a seafarer.⁴⁴

Thus, the Apostleship of the Sea in the U.S.A. provides for the spiritual and material welfare of seafarers and fisher folks.

In his concluding observations at the XXI AOS World Congress, Archbishop Marchetto reminds the participants,

I make an appeal from this Congress to all A. M. people around the world that they continue to welcome, serve and support all seafarers, whatever their differences of culture, nationality and religion, and stand by them and help them in solidarity in their struggles for justice. This will only be a small seed of a new world, more human and more fraternal, but an important seed.⁴⁵

Archbishop Marchetto also stressed the importance of working in a spirit of ecumenical cooperation.⁴⁶

In Search of a Synthesis

Filipino Catholic seafarers, as they come to U.S. ports on board ships, bring with them their religious and cultural identities. Expressions of faith, cultural and Christian values are embodiments of who they are as migrants, seafarers and Catholics from a different cultural milieu. By their numbers, they impact the local receiving Church, making vibrant the liturgical celebrations through their worship and popular devotions. The Apostleship of the Sea, through its chaplains and chaplaincy team members, make possible for seafarers regardless of color, religion or race, to find spiritual haven and social assistance, thus recognizing the dignity of persons and welcoming the newcomer, in a spirit of solidarity, in unity through diversity.

Migration then, is seen to impact the religiosity of seafarers while at the same time, their religiosity and faith practice mitigate difficult situations during their migration.

⁴⁴ Idem.

⁴⁵ MARCHETTO, Archbishop Agostino Marchetto. *Concluding Observations, XXI World Congress of Apostolatus Maris.*

⁴⁶ Idem.