



FOREWORD

It was exactly a year ago when the Philippines, together with so many places in the world, has been struck by a situation so alien that caused a literal stoppage of activities on a massive scale. Lockdowns, blockades, health protocols, curfews, and outbreaks are just some of the concepts that have penetrated man's everyday existence. In a world so engrossed with specializations, it becomes strange that in this situation, no one can rightfully claim expertise; actions are tentative, policies are constantly revisited and revised, and protocols become provisional.

This experience brings us back to the drawing board: it makes us question our fundamental beliefs and understanding of the world, it makes us rethink our practices and ways of life, it interrogated what were supposedly 'normal' in all aspects of our daily existence...it brings us back to our humanity with our vulnerabilities exposed and our backwardness highlighted. This is perhaps a natural and authentic response of man to the 'unknown'. As William Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice* through Shylock uttered: "If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh?" For what else could be more dreadful than facing occurrences full of uncertainties, bordering horizons never known to man, or indulging ideas and concepts so novel that even the fruits of modern technology cannot fully comprehend?

The circumstances we are into lead to a lot of contradictions let alone paradoxes. Our shadows have become our own ghosts, our experiences our barriers, and our consciousness an affirmation of the limits of our knowledge. In the midst of greater connections that the contemporary world brought into being, we are taught to be distant. Yet the same distance gives us ample space to develop deeper connections with others -- their sufferings, their experienced inequalities, and their marginalization. While distances, both physical and social were encouraged, responses can only be within the pretext of united action, milestones can only be achieved through coordinated undertakings, and efforts can only be truly effective if it is in unison with our *kapwa*, guided by *unawa*, imbued with *damay*, and exemplified in *karwang-gawa*, since we, like them, are also vulnerable, weak, and human. While the pandemic highlights concepts of isolation, quarantine, lockdowns and concepts that fundamentally presuppose barriers, it simultaneously opens-up new levels of understanding ourselves, new forms of social relationships, and new expressions of hope and love. Such characterize our past year.

Despite the challenges brought about by our current situation and the many usual demands of publications, this issue of *Scientia* has been made possible. This is a contribution, albeit modestly, of the College of Arts and Sciences to San Beda University's continued pursuit for academic excellence, a thrust that neither a pandemic nor the arrangements it fashioned can take away. Included in this issue are seven (7) well-thought-of and respectable peer-reviewed articles that exemplify man's attempt to understand his world. These are forms of expressions that lead to a better understanding of the world viewed from critical eyes and deployed with appropriate epistemic renditions.

Assessing the role and participation of youth ministries amid social and ideological transformations has been the main direction of the articles of Dave Capucao and Ryan Gasparillo. Through painstaking quantification of the participation of the youth in Catholic Religious Practices using the instruments





developed by *Sociaal culturele ontwikkelingen in Nederland*, Gasparillo measured the youth's 'secularization' consciousness. From the findings of the study, he then ventured to explicate the different challenges and the trajectory of Theology and Christianity in Asia and subsequently offered ways though in a very generic sense as to how the Church could respond to the challenges brought forth by secularization. In the same fashion and by traversing the basic principles and themes of St. Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Dilecti Amici*, Ryan Gasparillo explored concrete ways to improve the conduct of Youth Ministry towards the reinforcement of the youth's liturgical formation. Gasparillo hopes that by offering new ways of understanding the youth's vocation in light of their everyday experiences, this will further "equip them with the needed skills and values to make a positive impact on the Church and on the society both now and in the future."

Looking for deeper meanings out of everyday existence towards better rootedness has been the main point of contention of Rev. Fr. Sheldon Tabile. He explores, rather eloquently, the different nuances of the Catholic concept of 'holiness' in the Sacred Scriptures. By carefully examining the different connotations of the term 'holiness' in the Bible, Fr. Tabile provides avenues of understanding such term from the perspective of "nearness and concreteness" of daily lives, something that transcends the usual liturgical and ceremonial understanding usually associated with the same.

Philosophy and hermeneutics have also been areas reconnoitered in this issue. Ben Carlo Atim examines Heidegger's reading of Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Guided by the fundamental principle of hermeneutics i.e. inevitability of multiple meanings and interpretations, Atim argues that Heidegger's standpoint in understanding Kant falls trap to the interpreter's own dogmatic position. Hence Heidegger's position "to force Kant to admit something that he did not commit", exemplifies intellectual arrogance, which is an exercise that, to the author, runs counter to the basic principles of hermeneutics. On the other hand, Alden Reuben Luna, following the assumptions of the philosophy of law provided by Austinian Legal Positivism critically examined foundational doctrines and ethical nuances of the Philippine legal and jurisprudential systems. Though using a foreign epistemic lens; one that embodies an understanding of the law and legal principles strictly within the law's letters, Luna ultimately came to the view that there are peculiarities and specificities in the Philippine legal and jurisprudential systems that allow for "flexibility in recognizing the importance of customs, traditions, and even socio-ethical principles", realities that the systems cannot fully ignore.

The ethos of leadership and the principle of Care of the Self are Christian Bryan Bustamante's underlying perspectives in elucidating and understanding issues pertinent to the current health crisis. In his article, Bustamante presented the different challenges and the eventualities brought forth by the current COVID-19 crisis in the conduct of affairs of leaders in mitigating the effects of the situation. By offering some philosophical suppositions and underlying theoretical principles in the concept of leadership, the author suggests universal leadership templates, which he calls 'crisis leadership tasks', that can be utilized in the exercise of power in times of pandemic and crises.

Finally, Fame Pascua explored gastrodiploamcy by carefully analyzing the experiences of Taiwan in its 'Dim-Sum and Milk Tea' diplomacy. The analysis of the proliferation of Taiwanese cuisines in the Philippines leads to the conclusion that Taiwan's gastrodiploamtic approach foregrounded a better





understanding of Taiwan culture hence leading to world recognition of ‘Taiwan cuisine-consciousness’. Food-loving that we are, the author concluded, that the experience of Taiwan can inform the Philippines in the aspect of propagating global Philippine culture and taste. This can be done, as the author suggests, by enriching the potentials of people involved in the production of local Philippine cuisines.

Confronted by the handicaps, uncertainties, hardships, transformations, among other things that foreground our existence in the midst of this pandemic, the seven articles included herein are testaments that we will never acquiesce to the challenges of time. Whatever the circumstances might be, man will forever be in search for the meaning and purpose of his/her existence. There can always be solace in finding the nexus of individual meanings in social, cultural, religious, and political dimensions of our existence, something that will definitely bring us a step closer to self-realization.

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Luisito V. Dela Cruz
Associate Editor

