

SPIRITUALITY

Topic: Spirituality of Inculturation: The U.S. Hispanic Challenge
Convener: Mary Frohlich, Catholic Theological Union at Chicago
Presenter: Gilberto Cavazos-Gonzalez, Catholic Theological Union at Chicago
Respondent: Michel Andraos, Catholic Theological Union at Chicago

How does a culture's spirituality both animate and challenge those who engage it in daily life, in encounters with other cultures, and in evangelization? In his presentation, Gilberto Cavazos-Gonzalez drew upon the resources of his Mexican-American heritage to address these questions. The ancient Nahuatl peoples of Mesoamerica believed that it is only through interaction with family and community that the newborn human being receives a face (*cara*) and a heart (*corazón*). Cavazos developed these ideas into Latino definitions of culture as *cara* and spirituality as *corazon*. He noted that when Latinos are asked to define spirituality, they do not refer to "spirit" but rather to "relationship, serenity, and purpose." It is in relationship that human beings are formed to a deeply rooted and purposeful human life. Thus, gaining a spirituality is itself a formative process of inculturation.

"Inculturation" combines enculturation with incarnation. At its best, inculturation is a dialogue animated by the Holy Spirit. In an authentic and sincere encounter of cultures, people sit down *cara-a-cara* and converse with one another's *corazones*. If this dialogue is really a mutual exchange, it will change each one's spirituality since spirituality has to do with being in relationship. This is an essential process in the dissemination of the gospel, as cultures engage in mutual invitation and challenge.

As a graphic expression of the Hispanic challenge to the dominant Anglo U.S. culture and to the institutional church, Cavazos recounted a dream in which the Pope was attempting to bless a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe with holy water. As he ran after her, she flew over the Latino people and melted into them so that all the blessing fell upon the people. Guadalupe, the *corazón* of the Mexican and Mexican-American people, is a wild woman who hangs out in bars and on the tattooed flesh of those who are disregarded. She challenges those who attempt to tame her to come out of the center of power and to join the people at the margins. She also challenges the people, however, to discover her within themselves, the *corazón* that is the gift they are privileged to offer to others.

Thus, the mission of U.S. Latinos is twofold. First, they are invited to accept and cultivate their own communal *corazón*, overcoming superficiality as well as the disunity resulting from having many different national origins. Second, they can invite the dominant culture to self-reflection (in search of its own *corazón*) and to the humble realization of the mutual need of cultures for one another in the great work of the gospel.

Respondent Michel Andraos, a Lebanese-Canadian, reflected on how Cavazos's perspective can assist others who find themselves in the position of being a minority race or culture. As an Arab newly residing in the U.S., he has seen how the difficulty of survival can lead to either a "rigidification" or a fragmentation of one's native culture. Cavazos's presentation provides an example of the benefits when a minority culture can articulate its own "heart" and bring that as a challenging gift into dialogue with the dominant culture. One cannot avoid being changed, but it can be a change guided by the priorities of one's own heart rather than by those of a hostile environment.

In the lively discussion that ensued, it was pointed out that in reality these processes of dialogue and inculturation are more often than not marked by pain and violence. Inculturation is costly, and requires great courage and forgiveness—especially on the part of the poor and marginalized who in fact do not enter the dialogue on an equal basis. Another comment was that in the U.S. all cultures are massively "colonized" by the consumeristic values promoted in media and advertising. How can we develop a spirituality that effectively inoculates people (especially children and youth) against this insidious cultural disease? The "dialogue of cultures" model may be one piece of this, but by itself it may not be sufficient to meet the gigantic challenge that presently faces Christian mission in the U.S.

MARY FROHLICH

*Catholic Theological Union
Chicago, Illinois*

MISSIONOLOGY AND MISSION THEOLOGY

- Topic: *Missio ad Gentes*: The Interfaith Dialogue—
Beliefs Articulated and Lived
- Convener: Lou McNeil, Georgian Court College
- Moderator: Jeanne Evans, Marymount Manhattan College
- Presenters: Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Boston College
Angelyn Dries, O.S.F., Cardinal Stritch University

Francis X. Clooney's paper was entitled "*Mission ad Gentes*: Reason, Rhetoric, and Revelation in Roberto de Nobili." Roberto de Nobili was, like Mateo Ricci, one of the most influential of the early Jesuit missionaries; like Ricci, he showed great sensitivity to and respect for the culture of south India, and he believed in working for the greatest possible adaptation of the Gospel to that culture. De Nobili adapted the lifestyle and dress of an Indian holy man, and studied as well some of the classics of the Hindu tradition. Like Ricci, he also remained a steadfast missionary dedicated to the conversion of Hindus to Christianity. He enacted his missionary agenda in part by positing a sharp distinction between "Indian culture" and the "Hindu tradition," arguing that the