

## LATINO/A THEOLOGY – CONSULTATION

- Topic: Intersecting Journeys and the Birthing Pangs of a New Civilization  
 Conveners: Elaine Padilla, University of La Verne  
 Melissa Pagán, Mount St. Mary's University  
 Leo Guardado, Fordham University  
 Moderator: Natalia Imperatori-Lee, Manhattan College  
 Presenters: Peter C. Phan, Georgetown University  
 Hosffman Ospino, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

The session had twenty-one attendants. It focused on theologies of migration. It highlighted the causes and effects of migration, in particular, the manner in which Latinx interact in their worlds and build relationships. One of the main purposes was to explore new methodologies in the development of theological discourse. The session sought to build spaces for dialogue and for voicing the variegated expressions of struggle among marginalized communities against the imbalance between their labor and the value assigned to it. Specifically, this panel explored some points of contact of migratory journeys in light of Asian and Latina/o liberative efforts in co-laboring in solidarity with migrant persons. The third paper, “The Wet Nurse and the Nanny: The Evolution of Work in the United States and the Other Mother,” by Shawnee Daniels-Sykes was not delivered due to unforeseen circumstances.

The session began with Peter C. Phan's paper “Theology of Migration: Asian Perspectives.” It investigated the need for an Asian theology of migration as he located the various types of Asian migration and analyzed the ways in which Asia has become a major sender and receiver of the global labor force. According to Phan, among the causes that have accelerated internal and external migrations of Asians around the globe, he listed: the end of colonial empires, protracted wars, and marriage-migration (e.g., countries with low fertility rate). Among those due to economic reasons (e.g., low skill level workers and a small number of high skill professionals), Phan highlighted the globalization of domestic work and feminization of migration (some prostitution, sex trafficking). Other key points were the increase in contracting labor from other Asian countries (e.g., Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan) and the reluctance of Asian countries to reduce migration since remittances contribute to their GDP. Lastly, Phan's presentation explored ways in which Catholic teaching can underscore the role that migration has played in the Christian imaginary such as the notion of *Deus Migrator*, Jesus the Stranger Migrant, and the church as the community of, by, and for migrants.

In the second presentation, “Latino Immigrant Labor in *lo Cotidiano*: A Theological Reading,” Hofsmann Ospino proposed a series of principles for a practical theology of labor in *lo cotidiano* of immigrants. Once confronted with the labor of Latinx, he asked, how are we compelled to reflect theologically? *Lo cotidiano* is the loci of sustenance for families and for the advancement of hope since that space is where immigrants face reality and negotiate their identities. Labor activities often actualize their vocation as human beings who continuously search for fulfillment. Ospino offered three examples of migrants as a way to illustrate that fresh lenses can be employed to read the Christian experience and to ask questions on the meaning of

being church for those living in between geographical markers and nowhere. Building upon these principles, this presentation delineated a call for action that privileges advocacy and affirmation of the dignity of all workers.

During the discussion, several points were refined and advanced. With regards to the call for action, Ospino argued that a theological reflection on migrant everydayness would entail reflecting also on the study of Latinx celebrations as a way to speak of *lo cotidiano* and on coalitions that are being built between Latinx and Asian migrants. Phan added that, theological studies on the intersections between Asian and Latin American indigenous sacred writings could prove beneficial in building coalitions since the majority of Asians do not practice the Christian faith but can interreligiously reflect on migration. Perspectives can also be more hospitable towards the migrant and coalitions can be built among these two groups since migration, rather than being viewed as a problem, is the lifeblood of humanity. The dialogue during the discussion also steered in the direction of Mayan spirituality and other types of worldviews that can be embraced by the church.

Several challenges to fulfilling the call were enumerated. Catholic institutions of higher education are not including the Latino worker-community in their strategic plans. The church has also become ineffective in disrupting and transforming policies and practices that promote and operate within the framework of nation states. One of the attendants asked, “The Roman Catholic Church of the United States, does it end at the border? How can theology help deconstruct the Catholic Church in the United States when it is being held hostage by its conservative constituency and has failed to impact the decisions made at the state level?”

The session ended with a brief business meeting. A topic that was brought forth was indigenous cosmologies, which could be developed in tandem with other religious traditions, the non-religiously affiliated, popular religious practices, decolonial aesthetics, and comparative spirituality. Because the audience preferred to emphasize rituals, prayers, songs, and feelings, it was suggested that rather than the focus being on the aspect of “thinking” interreligiously, this session could highlight the embodied ways in which Latinx/Latin Americans *live* interreligiously. Several speakers were mentioned: Cecilia Titizano (indigenous traditions), Mauricio Najarro (comparative spirituality and field work in India on addiction, recovery, and spirituality), Luis Valdez (playright), David Carrasco, Chris Tirres (nones), Jaime Lara, Antonio Sison, and practitioners. Another idea that floated around was representatives of each consultation of scholars of color could share sessions and participate as panelists in all three sessions.

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