

## CATHOLICITY AND MISSION TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Catholicity and Mission  
Convener: Gemma Tulud Cruz, Australian Catholic University  
Moderator: Neomi DeAnda, DePaul University  
Presenters: Margaret Eletta Guider, Boston College  
Edmund Chia, Australian Catholic University  
Cyril Orji, University of Dayton

This session addressed various themes indicated in the Topic Session's Call for Papers. The presentations, however, converged on the themes of global Catholicism and inculturation and their potential to contribute to Catholic theological scholarship through their exploration of contemporary ways of forging a relationship with the sacred. The presentations all pointed to a less than accurate claim of ahistorical innocence on the part of the Catholic Church, especially in regard to inculturation. Margaret Eletta Guider in "Sacramental Imagination and World Youth Day (WYD) 2011: Quo vadis, Global Catholicism?" led the audience through imagining theological thinking in 3D. She proposed that WYD is a competitive ecclesial arena for informing and influencing the sacramental imaginations of young Catholics and, by extension, global Catholicism. Edmund Chia, in "Inculturation in Asia: The Church as Sacrament of Dialogue," convincingly proposed that inculturation is not a specific program of action or mere adaptation of Christian sacramental systems to enable the Church to fit into the local context. It is a by-product of the Christian communities' engagement with the local peoples and cultures. Cyril Orji, in his extensive "How Might the Church's Catholicity and Mission be truly African?" articulates that, although the praxis of Christian faith implies that Christianity can and should be a World Church, official Catholicism's realization of this ideal, to use Rahner's words, has at best been "diffident." In various ways, each of these papers blurred boundaries between the binaries of the secular and the sacred.

The lively discussion of questions and challenges followed. One question concerned the continued engagement with the tensions surrounding the need for universal understandings of Asian, African, Youth, and other theologies while maintaining and giving proper attention to significances of diversities within each of these populations. At one point the discussion centered on who are involved, included, and excluded in WYD and approaches to inculturation. Last but not the least, there was also an animated exchange regarding the roles, relationships, and tensions surrounding spectacular and sacred spaces, especially in relation to World Youth Day rituals or celebrations.

NEOMI DEANDA  
De Paul University  
Chicago