

Questioning Tourism

The role of Catholicism in Asian Tourism

Ruteng (Eastern Indonesia)

17-20 September 2025



SYNOPSIS

In the studies of tourism, many scholars will argue that pilgrimage is one of the earliest forms of touristic travel. Indeed, in recent years, increasing interest has returned to the issue of pilgrimage, both in terms of travellers' claims to identity as pilgrims, the intersection of religion and tourism and the spiritual and religious experiences of travel more generally (Collins-Kreiner 2020, Busatta 2018, Puşcaşu 2015, Margry 2008, Coleman, and Eade 2004, Badone and Roseman 2004).

On the other hand, there has been increasing alarm at the way tourism has developed globally, often without proper planning or inclusion of resident communities. This has led to detrimental and destructive environmental and social impacts often at total odds with community religious and spiritual sensibilities (Higgins-Desboilles et al, 2019, Higgins-Desboilles 2018, Mostafanezhad, and Hannam 2014, MacCannell 2011). This conference thus aims to focus on these various issues: the increasing interest in religious experiences of travel communities and the growing alarm at unplanned tourism development. We invite presentations reflecting on the overall question of the intersection between religion and tourism, with special reference to Catholicism in Asia.

We also welcome case studies or suggested models that showcase the promotion of environmentally and culturally sustainable tourism, the building of bridges between different religious communities through tourism, the enhancement of local economies and livelihoods through tourism projects, the safeguarding and promoting of cultural heritage in tourism destinations, explorations of the dynamics of the digital performance in the tourism sector, or effective policies and governance models for inclusive tourism development and the participation of local society/community in policy making, etc.

Thus, the specific aim of this conference is to explore a variety of topics and analyses on the ways in which tourism and Catholicism influence, impact, challenge or redefine each other especially within the context of Asia.

This conference is co-organized by *Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng* and the *Initiative for the Study of Asian Catholics* (ISAC, hosted at the National University of Singapore). It is scheduled to take place in Ruteng (Flores, Indonesia) on Sept. 17-20, 2025. For more information, please visit: <https://www.isac-research.org/tourism2025>

PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 17 September 2025 - DAY 1		
13:30	Registration	
14:30-16:00	Holy Mass	
16:00	Opening Session	
16:00	Welcome Speech	Rector of Unika St Paulus
16:10	Speech 2	A representative from the Local Government
16:20	Speech 3	Bishop of Pontianak (Mgr. Agustinus Agus)
16:30	Speech 4	Emeritus Bishop of Nagasaki (Online)
16:40	Final Speech	Michel Chambon, ISAC Coordinator
17:00 – 17:30	Break	
17:30 – 17:45	MoU	
17:45 – 18:00	Cultural Performance	Ruteng Art & Cultural Center/Unika St. Paulus
18:00 – 20:00	Welcoming Dinner	

Thursday, 18 September 2025 - DAY 2		
08:00 – 08:30	Registration & Brief Welcoming Remarks (Unika St. Paulus & ISAC)	
08:30 – 09:30	Keynote Speech 1 “ Religious and Spiritual Tourism in Asia: Socio-culturally sustainable futures ” (40 min) Q&A	Dr. Jaeyeon Choe, Lecturer Glasgow School for Business and Society (Online)
09:30 – 09:45	Short Break	
09:45 – 10:45	Panel 1.1 Tourists, pilgrims & Ecospirituality	Moderator: Unika St. Paulus
09:45 – 10:05	Performing Alay Lakad: A Phenomenological Understanding of Pilgrimage to Antipolo (Philippines)	Dr. Mark Inigo M. Tallara
10:05 – 10:25	Eco-Spirituality in Lembata, Indonesia: Transforming Bukit Doa for Sustainable Tourism	Dr. Justin Wejak (Online)
10:25 – 10:45	Q&A Session	
10:45 – 11:00	Short Break	
11:00 – 12:00	Panel 1.2 Tourists, pilgrims & Ecospirituality	Moderator: Unika St. Paulus
11:00 – 11:20	The Blessed Peace, its Chinese Pilgrims, and its political struggles (China)	Dr. Michel Chambon
11:20 – 11:40	Sustaining Heritage: Vettucadu Madre De Deus Church as a Beacon of Pilgrim Tourism (India)	Dr. Elsa Mary Jacob (Online)
11:40 – 12:00	Q&A Session	
12:00 – 13:00	Indonesian Session 1: Discussing Local Relevance	Dr. Maribeth Erb
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 – 15:00	Panel 2.1 Effects on Local Communities	Moderator: Unika St. Paulus
14:00 – 14:20	The Convent in the Community How Secular Use of Sacred Space Contributes to Catholic Nuns' Pursuit of the Good in Eastern Indonesia	Dr. Megan Rose Donelly
14:20 – 14:40	Questioning Child Migration: Violated Rights of Child Migrants Pursuing Life in Tourism Industry (Indonesia)	Mrs. Catharina Indirastuti
14:40 – 15:00	Q&A Session	
15:00 – 15:30	30 min Break	
15:30 – 16:30	Panel 2.2 Effects on Local Communities	Moderator: Unika St. Paulus
15:30 – 15:50	The Church that Never Closes: Religious Tourism in the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Philippines	Dr. Sarah Gail Ortiz Fr.
15:50 – 16:10	Crossing Borders Mean Changing Cultural Imagery: Tourism, Religion and Culture (Vietnam/South Korea)	Dr. Prof. Lin Hoang (Online)
16:10 – 16:30	Q&A Session	
16:30 – 17:30	Indonesian Session 2: Discussing Local Relevance	Dr. Hendrikus Paulus Kaunang
17:30 – 18:00	Deputy Minister of Tourism Presentation	Vincent Jemadu
18:00 – 21:00	Dinner & Cultural Performance	Unika St. Paulus/Local Art & Cultural Center

Friday, 19 September 2025 - DAY 3		
08:00 – 09:00	Welcome & Keynote Speech 2 “ Touching the Heavens: Geopolitics, Geopietty, and Indonesia's Gigantic Christian Monuments, a Preliminary Assessment ” (40 min) Q & A	Dr. Leonard Chrysostomos Epafras, UGM
09:00 – 10:00	Panel 3.1 Tensions & Interactions in Religious Tourism	Moderator: Bubbles B. Asor
09:00 – 09:20	Sacred Tourist Attractions: Catholic Churches and Catholic Missions in China	Mr. Junhao Huang
09:20 – 09:40	World Youth Days in South Korea	Mrs. Youngpa Kwon (Online)
09:20 – 10:00	Q&A Session	
10:00 – 10:30	Break	
10:30 – 11:30	Panel 3.2 Tensions & Interactions in Religious Tourism	Moderator: Unika St. Paulus
10:30 – 10:50	Strategizing Tourism to Counter Membership Decline in Japan	Dr. Toru Yamada
10:50 – 11:10	The Dynamics of the Eye of power and the power of Eye: The case of Tourism in Goa	Fr. Dr. Victor Ferrao (Online)
11:10 – 11:30	Q&A Session	
11:30 – 12:30	Indonesian Session 3: Discussing Local Relevance	Dr. Titi Susilowati Prabawa
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 15:00	Panel 4. Designing Religious Tourism	Moderator: Unika St. Paulus
13:30 – 13:50	Cultural Sensitivity in Enhancing Sustainable Catholic Religious Tourism Experiences: Case of Religious Tourism to Adam' Peak in Sri Lanka	Mrs. Shirani Hetti Arachchi
13:50 – 14:10	Faith and Festivity: Tourism, Religion and Identity in Flores, Eastern Indonesia	Dr. Fransiska Widyawati & Dr. Agustinus Manfred Habur
14:10 – 14:30	Sustainable Tourism Practices in South Korea, Integrating Ecological Spirituality	Dr. Kim Yejin (Online)
14:30 – 15:00	Q&A Session	
15:00 – 15:30	Break	
15:30 – 16:00	Concluding Remarks	Fr. Ino Sutam (Chair of the Cultural Commission of the Diocese of Ruteng) & Scientific Committee
16:00 – 17:00	Indonesian Session 4: Discussing Local Relevance	Dr. Maribeth Erb, Dr. Fransiska Widyawati, Dr. Hendrikus Paulus Kaunang
18:00 – 21:00	Closing Ceremony: Dinner & Cultural Performance	Unika St. Paulus/Local Art & Cultural Center

KN 1 - Religious and Spiritual Tourism in Asia: Socio-culturally sustainable futures

By Prof. Jaeyeon Choe, Lecturer Glasgow School for Business and Society

Using socio-cultural sustainability as a theoretical framework, this presentation explores case studies in Asia and Europe, including success stories, challenges, tensions among multiple stakeholders, conflicts, and sustainable future directions, etc.

1.A - Performing Alay Lakad: A Phenomenological Understanding of Pilgrimage to Antipolo

By Prof. Mark Inigo M. Tallara, De La Salle University Manila, Philippines

In this study of Catholicism, the discussion highlights how pilgrimage is intertwined with performance and tourism, reflecting the complex interplay of local traditions, colonial influences, and contemporary cultural expressions. This study explores how Alay Lakad to Antipolo as a form of pilgrimage in the Philippines serves as a space to negotiate religious identity and cultural hybridity. The current pilgrimage season in Antipolo begins on the first week of May and ends of the first week of July. It is the longest pilgrimage season in the Philippines dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The two ways pilgrims perform their pilgrimage in Antipolo are performative and meditative. Alay Lakad features theatrical elements, with rituals involving bodily movements highlighting religious practices' aesthetic and performative aspects (Schechner, 2002). This ethnohistorical and phenomenological study also considers the concept of liminality and communitas (Turner, 1969) to understand how performing pilgrimage creates a space where individuals transition from the mundane to the sacred, fostering a sense of unity and belonging among believers. Known also as Pag ahon sa Antipolo, the analysis explores how Alay Lakad is enacted and experienced by tourists. By attending to the embodied dimensions of pilgrimage, the study seeks to uncover the symbolic meanings imbued in tourism with religious significance.

1.B - Eco-Spirituality in Lembata, Indonesia: Transforming Bukit Doa for Sustainable Tourism

By Dr. Justin Wejak, University of Melbourne, Australia

Bukit Doa, literally 'Prayer Hill', in Lembata, Indonesia is a Catholic pilgrimage site that offers both spiritual enrichment and natural beauty. To ensure its long-term viability, a balance must be maintained between spiritual, environmental, cultural, and economic aspects. As religious tourism grows, concerns about environmental degradation and over-commercialization highlight the need for sustainable development. This paper explores how eco-spirituality—the integration of faith with environmental responsibility—can guide the transformation of Bukit Doa into a model for sustainable religious tourism. The key question explored in this study is thus: How can eco-spirituality be incorporated into the development of Bukit Doa to ensure both environmental conservation and meaningful pilgrimage experiences? The paper first examines the theological and cultural foundations of eco-spirituality within Catholic teachings and its relevance to sustainable tourism. It then

assesses the environmental and socio-economic challenges facing Bukit Doa, such as deforestation, inadequate infrastructure, and limited community involvement. Through a comparative analysis of best practices in faith-based eco-tourism, the study identifies strategies for integrating spiritual experiences with environmental sustainability. Proposed solutions include eco-friendly infrastructure, sustainable waste management, community-led conservation programs, and educational initiatives that encourage pilgrims to engage in responsible tourism. Additionally, the paper explores how the Catholic Church, local government, and tourism stakeholders can collaborate to implement policies that balance economic benefits with ecological preservation. By embracing eco-spirituality, Bukit Doa can become a sacred space where faith and environmental stewardship coexist, ensuring that its spiritual and natural heritage is preserved for future generations while benefiting the local community.

1.C - The Blessed Peace, its Chinese Pilgrims, and its political struggles

By Dr. Michel Chambon, National University of Singapore.

This paper explores the memorial efforts and political tensions surrounding Fuan, a major site of Catholicism in Southern China. Fuan—meaning "Blessed Peace"—is one of the oldest centers of Catholicism on the Chinese mainland and a significant pilgrimage destination. It was the birthplace of the Chinese Rites Controversy in the 17th century and the location where the first ethnically Chinese bishop was appointed in 1685. With its numerous churches and a large Catholic population, the local Church in Fuan boasts a long lineage of bishops, including China's first beatas.

Scattered along the main river, the graves of these figures have become pilgrimage sites, attracting Catholics from across the country. Since the 1980s, however, Fuan has also been a flashpoint of tension between the official (state-recognized) and unofficial (underground) Catholic communities. Between 2000 and 2018, the state-appointed bishop was excommunicated by the Vatican. When he was later reintegrated within the communion of the Church, the underground bishop was appointed as his auxiliary—according to the Vatican—although civil authorities never formally acknowledged this status. Eventually, the former underground bishop resigned and stepped away from his episcopal responsibilities, ceding full ecclesial leadership to the previously excommunicated bishop.

This paper examines how Fuan has remained a key site of pilgrimage to Catholic graves, underscoring the unique historical and spiritual importance of this valley in the narrative of Chinese Catholicism. I argue that, despite ongoing attempts by civil authorities to incorporate religious communities and their rituals into a broader state-controlled framework, pilgrimage to Fuan persists as a subtle form of political resistance—asserting the right to administrative autonomy and religious distinctiveness.

1.D - Sustaining Heritage: Vettucadu Madre De Deus Church as a Beacon of Pilgrim Tourism

By Prof. Elsa Mary Jacob, Bharat Mata College, India

Pilgrim tourism plays a crucial role in enhancing the local economy by promoting long-term growth that benefits both the community and the environment. It focuses on minimizing negative impacts on local ecosystems and cultures while supporting local businesses, creating jobs, and fostering a positive economic cycle. The Vettucadu Madre De Deus Church, located in Vettucaud, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, is a historical and spiritual landmark with over 500 years of tradition. Known for its annual Feast of Christ the King celebration, the church attracts thousands of pilgrims and tourists from various parts of the world. This paper explores the church's potential as a pilgrim tourism centre and its role in

promoting sustainable tourism. The church's strategic location near the international airport and popular tourist spots like Shankhumukham and Veli Beach enhances its accessibility and appeal. The recent inclusion of the church in Kerala's heritage tourism project and the establishment of a Pilgrim Amenity Centre further underscore its significance. Sustainable tourism promotion at the Vettucadu Madre De Deus Church involves several key strategies. First, the church's historical and cultural heritage is preserved and showcased through guided tours, informational plaques, and cultural events. This not only educates visitors about the church's rich history but also fosters a sense of respect and appreciation for the local culture. Second, the church collaborates with local communities and businesses to create a sustainable tourism ecosystem. This includes promoting local handicrafts, traditional cuisine, and eco-friendly accommodations. By involving the local community, the church ensures that tourism benefits are distributed equitably and that the economic impact is positive and long-lasting. Third, environmental sustainability is a priority. The church implements eco-friendly practices such as waste management, water conservation, and energy-efficient lighting. These measures help minimize the environmental footprint of tourism activities and promote a greener, more sustainable approach to tourism. Finally, the church engages in social responsibility initiatives, such as supporting local schools, healthcare facilities, and social welfare programs. These efforts not only enhance the church's reputation but also contribute to the overall well-being of the community. The Vettucadu Madre De Deus Church has immense potential as a pilgrim tourism centre and a promoter of sustainable tourism. By preserving its heritage, involving the local community, prioritizing environmental sustainability, and engaging in social responsibility, the church can create a model for sustainable tourism that lays a sustainable foundation for future economic growth.

2.A - The Convent in the Community How Secular Use of Sacred Space Contributes to Catholic Nuns' Pursuit of the Good in Eastern Indonesia

By Prof. Megan Rose Donnelly, The University of Manchester, UK

What good might come of using sacred spaces for secular purposes? Sisters of the Catholic religious order Puteri Reinha Rosari in eastern Indonesia's popular pilgrimage town of Larantuka, hire out their convent year-round to tourists and civil institutions. This generates income which they use to support their service work whilst providing necessary space and hospitality to visitors on their own 'good' paths. Because such hospitality forms a core pillar of this congregation's charism, the secular use of sacred convent space not only enables the order's public service, but also contributes to nuns' religious formation. In this paper, I reflect on the co-constructive nature of faith properties and public good through the lives of women whose religious mission requires them to 'be present among the people'. Ultimately, I argue that the seemingly secular might remain sacred through the religious curation of cosmopolitan hospitality. For the conference, I will coordinate with one of my interlocutors, Sr Maria Bernardine, PRR, who, during the two years of my ethnographic fieldwork, was regional vice-representative of eastern Indonesia, superior of her convent and principal of a Catholic school in Ruteng. Sr Bernardine and I will present on the PRR's connection to tourism in the region, through participation in education, development of tourism in Komodo National Park, and religious pilgrimage in Larantuka. We reflect on how patterns of embodied cultural adaptation, facilitated by religious organisation and cosmopolitan mission, shape tourism planning and experience.

2.B - Questioning Child Migration: Violated Rights of Child Migrants Pursuing Life in Tourism Industry By Mrs. Catharina Indirastuti, Yayasan Gembala Baik, Indonesia

This 2024 research examines the life experiences of child migrants who voluntarily leave their village in rural Manggarai, East Manggarai and West Manggarai regencies to pursue education in high school and vocational school in Ruteng. Despite having 75-years of educational migration history and with over 10,000 students enrolled in Ruteng in 2024, child migrants' existence remains unrecognized, and their living conditions are not assessed. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the study surveyed 671 students (419 female, 252 male), aged 15 to 20, from two high school and three vocational school in Ruteng. Half of the participants are tourism major. Findings reveal that nearly 80% of students are voluntary migrants, with over 60% under 18 years old. Most live in rented rooms with minimal adult supervision, resulting in violation of their fundamental rights. These students suffer from poor nutrition, limited healthcare access, social isolation, and lack of guidance from significant adults. They are often not invited to youth and religious activities, despite their desire for spiritual support. Vocational students, especially in tourism, express concerns about education quality, infrastructure, and lack of institutional support for internships program. Many report experiencing various forms of violence, including during internships in the tourism industry, and face risks of exploitation and trafficking. The study aims to raise awareness about the neglect and exploitation of child migrant students, prompting multi-stakeholder collaboration to establish community-based child protection mechanisms in Ruteng.

2.C - The Church that Never Closes: Religious Tourism in the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Philippines

By Prof. Sarah Gail Ortiz, University of Santo Thomas, Philippines

The National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, also known as Baclaran Church, is a popular pilgrimage site in the Philippines. Wednesdays are called "Baclaran Day" because it is the day of devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help, where novenas are said and have spread throughout the Philippines. Inside the Shrine can be found the reverend icon of Our Lady inspired by what is found in the Church of San Alfonso in Rome, Italy. The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer or the Redemptorist runs the Shrine. Since 1948, the first recitation of the Novena in the Shrine has never stopped until today, and people have continuously flocked to pray and ask for Our Lady's guidance. It should be noted that the transformation of the shrine from a local chapel made it a pilgrimage site of national proportions. Today, about 150,000 people visit and pray at the National Shrine weekly. This paper explores the impact of religious tourism caused by the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. In unfolding the said theme, the following topics are discussed: first, the History of Devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help in the Philippines by tracing its origin as a pilgrimage site; second, the Economic Impact of Religious Tourism in Baclaran how the influx of pilgrims supports the businesses and establishments around; third, the Challenges brought by Religious Tourism in Baclaran and what could be the possible response to this. This study will provide a holistic understanding of religious tourism in Baclaran.

2.D - Crossing Borders Mean Changing Cultural Imagery: Tourism, Religion and Culture

By Fr. Prof. Lin Hoang, Siena College, USA

Recent studies have examined how religious or sacred tourism have impacted countries, no study has examined how religious tourism may have transformed the physical features

of carved religious statues. The encounter of believers returning to a home country influence new creation of traditional statues and carved figures in places of worship. For instance, many carved statues in Vietnamese Catholic churches are of European looking saints and Marian figures. Some churches now have utilized Vietnamese images of Mary. In a similar way, in Korea, Churches have commissioned Korean images of Christ and Mary. These rendering of more ethnically appropriate images of Mary and saints are not completely embraced by all. Both of these countries have seen a rise in their expats coming back and influencing the way traditional images are being made over ethnically and culturally. This is a result of people touring their homeland and crossing borders then recapturing what is rendered culturally appropriate. The paper will explore the phenomenon of religious tourism effects on traditional imagery has an enduring effect on broader discussion of Catholicism and culture. It will go into detail about how many of these new ethnic images were fashioned in resettlement country rather than in home country. The conclusion will show that cultural and religious identities are reshaped in religious tourism, especially through the physical spaces.

KN2 - Touching the Heavens: Geopolitics, Geopietty, and Indonesia's Gigantic Christian Monuments, a Preliminary Assessment

By Prof. Leonard Chrysostomos Epafra, UGM, Indonesia

The presenter explores the rise of monumental Christian statues, primarily of Jesus, in Indonesia, particularly in predominantly Christian regions such as Minahasa (North Sulawesi), Toraja (South Sulawesi), Toba Lake (North Sumatra), and Sumba Island (West Nusa Tenggara). He will examine these monuments as intersections of geopietty aspirations, domestic and national geopolitics, and tourism politics.

3.A - Sacred Tourist Attractions: Catholic Churches and Catholic Missions in China

By Mr. Junhao Huang, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

Sacred Tourist Attractions: Catholic Churches and Catholic Missions in China

The church as a religious building occupies a special place in the context of Chinese history, serving as an outward manifestation of a cultural exchange between China and the West. During the Late Ming period, the Jesuits arrived in China as missionaries, and the churches they constructed attracted a considerable number of Chinese visitors. In the early decades of the twentieth century, churches played a significant role in the religious pilgrimages of devout individuals and contributed to the emergence of modern tourism in China. In contemporary China, numerous churches have evolved into local landmarks, assuming the roles of both religious edifices and tourist attractions. This has led to a certain degree of tension between these two functions, which requires resolution. In the current era of digital communication, a considerable number of tourists have taken to online platforms to express their grievances and even level criticism at church volunteers for what they perceive to be an unwelcoming and unaccommodating attitude towards visitors. However, the church volunteers also highlighted the challenges they face in maintaining the sanctity of the church's religious services, which are often disrupted by tourists. By examining a range of documentary sources, including missionary letters and religious journals, conducting field surveys of tourists and church volunteers, and incorporating information posted by tourists on social media, it is possible to analyse the functioning of the church in China from two different perspectives, both historical and contemporary. This enables the formulation of recommendations for churches to navigate the tensions inherent in their dual identities.

3.B - World Youth Days in South Korea

By Mrs. Youngpa Kwon, Haemi Research Institute, South Korea

In light of South Korea's selection as the host country for the 2027 World Youth Day, the government has actively supported the development of pilgrimage sites, particularly Haemi International Shrine, the country's only international Catholic shrine. However, this development has sparked significant debates surrounding religious conflicts, particularly between different faith communities, and tensions within the Catholic Church regarding the commercialization of sacred spaces. This paper examines the impact of the government's development policies on Haemi, analyzing the resulting interfaith and intra-Church conflicts and their broader effects on local communities' religious and cultural dynamics. Additionally, the paper critiques existing studies on pilgrimage motivations within the context of tourism, highlighting the erosion of religious significance due to the commercialization of pilgrimage sites. Based

on these findings, the paper proposes a framework for the development of pilgrimage sites that balances the preservation of their religious and spiritual meaning with the growth of tourism. Drawing on the Church's teachings on responsible tourism, this study reflects on the pastoral role of the Church and the government's responsibility in managing religious tourism sustainably and with cultural sensitivity. By offering practical recommendations, the paper aims to guide the Church's collaboration in pilgrimage site development, ensuring that the cultural and historical heritage of Korean pilgrimage is preserved, while also preparing for the upcoming World Youth Day. The ultimate goal is to propose a sustainable approach to religious tourism that balances economic, religious, and cultural interests, ensuring that the pilgrimage experience remains meaningful, respectful, and authentic for all involved.

3.C - Strategizing Tourism to Counter Membership Decline in Japan

By Prof. Toru Yamada, Meiji University, Japan

Given its reputation and the financial prospects tied to it, World Heritage certification not only attracts tourists, but also appeals to political leaders. What happens at the local level when leaders engage in nominating their communities for World Heritage? Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region were inscribed to UNESCO's World Heritage in 2018 over a decade-long preparation at the local level. As the duration of its preparation indicates, it has not been a dramatic process for the Churches to become official prospective World Heritage properties, but has rather been mundane and somewhat procedurally disjointed from local residents' perspectives and lived experiences. I argue that the World Heritage nomination project in Nagasaki represents how legal, political, and social negotiations take place in such a mundane world, and appears to bring a major change to local communities after getting publicity via the World Heritage program.

3.D - The Dynamics of the Eye of power and the power of Eye: The case of Tourism in Goa

By Fr. Dr. Victor Ferrao, Rachol Seminary, India

Tourism in many senses is a pilgrimage. Tourists come as pilgrims to a land, culture and people. No tourism works without an informed gaze (Michel Foucault) . Tourists are informed about the place, culture and the people they visit by Governments and other stakeholders in the tourism Industry. The informed gaze becomes the eye of power that gives power to the eye of the tourists. Unfortunately, when the host community is displaced and is unable to play host to the visiting tourist, the hosting community is, then, museumized by the gaze/ look of the visiting tourists (Jean Paul Satre). Hosting community is not a homo docilis . The hosting community nurtures a desire for a counter gaze (Emanuel Levinas and Jacques Lacan) of the hosting community that contests as well as calls for responsibility. This paper attempts to study the dynamics of the eye of power and power of the eye as it manifests in the context of tourism in Goa and strives to propose how the hosting community can truly become a welcome to the pilgrims who arrive as tourists in Goa .

4.A - Cultural Sensitivity in Enhancing Sustainable Catholic Religious Tourism Experiences: Case of Religious Tourism to Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka

By Shirani Hetti Arachchi, SDTI Campus, Sri Lanka

Adam's Peak, a revered pilgrimage site in Sri Lanka, holds thoughtful spiritual significance for Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians alike. This study investigates the role of cultural sensitivity in enhancing Catholic religious tourism experiences at Adam's Peak, with a focus on development of cultural harmony and solidarity between Catholicism and

Buddhism. By employing a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative research, the investigation aims to improve local and foreign Catholic tourist visitation while supporting local communities and minimizing any adverse environmental impact. Adam's Peak offers a unique opportunity for interfaith dialogue and exchange, underscored by its status as a UNESCO World Heritage natural site, attracting pilgrims and tourists worldwide. The research seeks to leverage Catholicism's global presence to promote Sri Lankan cultural heritage, enhancing mutual respect and understanding between Catholic and Buddhist communities through shared tourism experiences. The key objectives of this study are multifaceted. Firstly, it aims to promote mutual respect and understanding by fostering cultural exchange and understanding between Catholic and Buddhist communities through shared tourism experiences. Secondly, it seeks to develop sustainable tourism practices that economically and socially benefit local communities while reducing the environmental footprint of tourism. Lastly, it aims to showcase cultural heritage by utilizing Catholicism's global reach to highlight Sri Lanka's unique cultural heritage and foster international cultural exchange. By developing culturally sensitive tourism policies and practices. Finally this research aims to enhance the overall experience for Catholic pilgrims and other visitors while preserving the site's spiritual and environmental significance. Ultimately, Adam's Peak will serve as a model for interfaith harmony and responsible tourism practices worldwide, contributing to sustainable tourism development that respects and celebrates cultural diversity and shared heritage of diverse religious groups.

4.B - Faith and Festivity: Tourism, Religion and Identity in Flores, Eastern Indonesia

By Dr. Fransiska Widyawati & Dr. Agustinus Manfred Habur, Sauntu Paulus University, Indonesia

In response to the burgeoning tourism industry in Indonesia, the Catholic Church in Flores has initiated numerous pastoral programs aimed at bolstering tourism. These programs manifest through a diverse array of feasts, processions, and festivals that intricately weave religious elements with local cultural practices. This article delves into the strategic design, implementation, and underlying motivations of these pastoral initiatives. It provides a comprehensive analysis of how these activities serve as a conduit between the Church, indigenous customs, local society, governmental policies, and broader ideological frameworks concerning tourism and Catholic identity in Flores. The study critically examines the interplay of these elements and evaluates their impact on both the local community's cultural integrity and the broader tourism objectives. Furthermore, it explores the role of the Church in navigating and negotiating cultural authenticity and religious expression within the context of commercial tourism, thereby offering insights into the dual role of the Church as both a spiritual and socio-economic entity in Flores. The study advances theoretical frameworks on the role of religious institutions in tourism, contributing to broader discussions on the interplay between religion, culture, and economic development.

4.C - Sustainable Tourism Practices in South Korea, Integrating Ecological Spirituality

Prof. Kim Yejin, Catholic University of Pusan, South Korea.

*Sustainable tourism has become a crucial topic in South Korea, with efforts directed toward environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and community well-being. This paper explores notable cases of sustainable tourism in Busan and Jeju, aligning with Pope Francis' concept of ecological spirituality, as emphasized in *Laudato Si'*. His call for an integrated approach to human and environmental well-being resonates with these initiatives, which*

emphasize responsible tourism and community participation. The Busan Tourism Organization (BTO) promotes sustainable tourism through its ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) initiatives. A recent competition awarded 'Manmanhan Neoseokdeul', a project that developed eco-friendly event fixtures and minimized wood waste. This effort reflects the interconnectedness of environmental stewardship and social responsibility, a core principle of ecological spirituality. In Jeju, the 'Kareum Stay' program exemplifies community-driven tourism, involving 13 village communities and over 250 local businesses. By fostering meaningful engagement with local culture while preserving Jeju's natural environment, this initiative embodies the spiritual dimension of sustainability, where respect for nature enhances human solidarity. Additionally, South Korea's eco-tourism sites, such as the DMZ in Yanggu, Yongneup Wetland in Inje, and Donggang River in Pyeongchang, provide opportunities for ecological contemplation and responsible travel. These destinations align with Pope Francis' call for an "integral ecology", emphasizing that environmental protection is inseparable from human dignity and justice. These cases illustrate how sustainable tourism can harmonize economic development, ecological preservation, and spiritual renewal. By incorporating ecological spirituality, these initiatives foster a deeper awareness of our shared responsibility for the planet and future generations