

# More Universal than Catholicism?

## Mary Among Asian Religions

*Online Conference  
10-12 May 2023*



**ISAC**

Initiative for  
the Study of  
Asian Catholics



**The Centre for Marian Studies**

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# More Universal than Catholicism? Mary Among Asian Religions

10-12 May 2023  
Online

## PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

DATE	TIME (UK)	TIME (SINGAPORE)	PANEL SESSION
10 <sup>th</sup> May 2023 (Wed)	14:00 – 16:00	21:00 – 23:00	Opening Remarks & Panel 1
11 <sup>th</sup> May 2023 (Thurs)	07:00 – 8:30	14:00 – 15:30	Panel 2
	10:30 – 12:00	17:30 – 19:00	Panel 3
	15:00 – 16:30	22:00 – 23:30	Panel 4
12 <sup>th</sup> May 2023 (Fri)	04:00 – 6:30	11:00 – 12:30	Panel 5
	08:00 – 10:00	15:00 – 17:00	Panel 6 & Concluding Remarks

Co-organisers:

**The Centre for Marian Studies**  
St Mary's University, Twickenham, London, UK  
&  
**The Initiative for the Study of Asian Catholics**  
National University of Singapore

## CONFERENCE PANELS

**WEDNESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY**

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### Opening Remarks

**14:00 in UK; 21:00 in Singapore**

**Sarah Jane Boss** – Centre for Marian Studies  
**Michel Chambon** – Initiative for the Study of Asian Catholics

**&**

### PANEL 1

## The Worship of Mary by Non-Christian Asians

*This panel explores how Mary is worshipped by non-Christian Asians.*

Chair: **Sarah Jane Boss**

Respondent: **James Ponniah**

- **Jamil Akhtar** – “Muslim and Catholic Pilgrimage Practices: A Case Study of the Mariamabad Annual Gathering” (18:00 in Pakistan)
- **Michel Chambon** – “Mary and the Origin of the Self: A new Chinese Religious Movement and Christianity” (21:00 in Singapore)
- **Flynn M. Fernandes** – “Arrokiya Matha Vailankanni: Enduring Symbols and Ancient Rituals Offer New Possibilities for Interreligious Encounter” (09:00 in Boston, US)

**THURSDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> MAY**

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**PANEL 2**

**The Establishment's Mary**

**07:00 in UK; 14:00 in Singapore**

*This panel explores how Asian authorities turn Mary into an ally,  
a useful mediator to promote their agenda.*

Chair: **Song Gang**

Respondent: **Bernardo E. Brown**

- **Argene Águila Clasara** – “Regulating Marialis Cultus in Macau: A Re-reading of Msgr. Manuel Teixeira’s *O Culto de Maria em Macau*” (14:00 in China)
- **Rieyen Dizon Clemente** – “The Virgen de los Remedios and the Struggle against social Unrest in Pampanga, Philippines, 1950s” (14:00 in the Philippines)
- **Maksimus Regus** – “The Mother of Tourism: Mary in Flores Island, Eastern Indonesia” (14:00 in Indonesia)

### PANEL 3

## Mary and East Asian Buddhist Spiritualities

**10:30 in UK; 17:30 in Singapore**

*This panel explores the non-Christian spiritual roots  
of Asian perceptions of Mary.*

Chair: **Catherine O'Brien**

Respondent: **Michel Chambon**

- **Song Gang** and **Wang Xintong** – “Holy Mother or Bodhisattva? Syncretic Mary/Guanyin Imagery in Two Late Imperial Chinese Paintings” (17:30 in China)
- **Mideum Hong** – “Study of a Korean Catholic Sculptor” (18:30 in Korea)
- **Brian Reynolds** and **Marco Lazzarotti** – “Universal Belief and Local Apparition: Holy Mary and Inculturation in Taiwan” (17:30 in Taiwan and 11:30 in Germany)

### PANEL 4

## Marian Formations of Communal Identities

**15:00 in UK; 22:00 in Singapore**

*This panel explores how Mary can stand as a mirror  
to redefine Asian communal and ethnic identities.*

Chair: **Melanie Landman**

Respondent: **Sarah Jane Boss**

- **Shanthini Pillai** and **Angeline Wong Wei Wei** – “Marianism, Motherlands and the collective unconscious of Tamil and Chinese Catholics of the classical diasporas in nineteenth-century Malaya” (22:00 in Malaysia)
- **Tuan Hoang** – “Our Lady of Fatima in South Vietnam and the Postwar Diaspora” (07:00 in US PT)
- **R. Benedito Ferrão** – “Angelo da Fonseca’s South Asian Madonna in Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*” (15:00 in Portugal)

**FRIDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> MAY**

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**PANEL 5**

**On the Move with Mary**

**4:00 in UK; 11:00 in Singapore;**

*This panel explores forms of pilgrimage, migration,  
and tourism through which Asian people in motion relate to Mary.*

Chair: **Bubbles B. Asor**

Respondent: **Patrizia Granziera**

- **William Peterson** – “Mary as Mother: Gender and Devotion at the Peñafrancia Festival” (12:30 in Central Australia)
- **Janet Hoskins** – Three Faces of Mary in the Vietnamese Diaspora: Our Lady of Refugees, of Cold War Pilgrims, and of Transnational Ethnic Solidarity” (20:00 in US PT on Thursday)
- **Shakeel Ahmad** – “Meeting Mary: The Interreligious Encounter of Pilgrimage-tourism in Mary Cave Sendangsono and Kerep Ambarawa Indonesia” (10:00 in Indonesia)

## PANEL 6

# Mary and Asian Material Culture

**08:00 in UK; 15:00 in Singapore**

*This panel explores the material mediations  
to encounter Mary across Asia.*

Chair: **James Ponniah**

Respondent: **Song Gang**

- **Qi Wang** – “Familiar Stranger: The Rosary Meditation in Ming and Qing” (15:00 in China)
- **Teruyuki Tsuji** – “Dressing the Madonna: Race, Sexuality, and the Spirit of the Virgin Mary and/or ‘Indian Lady’ in Trinidad” (16:00 in Japan)
- **Mary Josefti C. Nito** – “Marian Devotion in Luzon, Philippines: Narratives of Identity and Place, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries” (15:00 in the Philippines)

&

## Concluding Remarks

**Catherine O’Brien**, Centre for Marian Studies

**Patrizia Granziera**, University of Morelos, Cuernavaca, Mexico

**Michel Chambon**, National University of Singapore

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## PANEL 1

### **Muslim and Catholic Pilgrimage Practices: A Case Study of the Mariamabad Annual Gathering**

**Jamil Akhtar**

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Among the many common values that Muslims and Christians share, the value of Mary's personality is the one that can be most helpful bringing Muslims and Christians closer to each other. A church of Mary in Mariamabad (city of Mary) in Pakistan will be chosen as a case study where Muslims also participate in the Catholic Christians' Annual gathering. Muslims do not like Christians because of their belief about Jesus, but the attitude of Muslims towards Christians on their belief about Mary goes to one 180 degrees of improvement. This is the reason why the participation of Muslims in Mariamabad is increasing every year. Through this research all the facts will be properly gathered such as whether Muslims really visit this place every year because of their pure devotion to Mary? This research will also reveal the other facts like what kind of facilities have the civil authorities been able to provide to the visitors in Mariamabad? Personal interests of civil authorities are also involved in providing these facilities? Opinions of visitors and local people will also be included in this research article. Result of this research may suggest establishing the Mary Churches in the Muslim-Christian tensions' and conflicts' areas to resolve it very quickly.

**Dr. Jamil** is an Assistant Professor at the University of the Punjab, Lahore – Pakistan, one of the oldest universities in Pakistan. He completed his MS thesis entitled, "Catholic and Muslim Perceptions on Mary" in 2012 at IIU Islamabad – Pakistan. After completing his Ph.D in Pakistan, he joined the University of Oxford, UK as a Post-Doctoral Fellow by winning a highly competitive International Post-Doctoral Scholarship award from the Punjab Higher Education Commission, Pakistan, in 2021, in order to do research respecting, "Interfaith Dialogue among the South-Asian religions in the Pakistani context". In 2022, he also won USA's Harvard Summer School (Religious Literacy for Educators Summer Institute)'s award.



## **Mary and the Origin of the Self: A new Chinese Religious Movement and Christianity**

**Michel Chambon**

The Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore  
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This paper presents the ways in which a new Chinese religious movement, the *Origin of the Self*, perceives and theorizes the role of the Virgin Mary in the process to achieve enlightenment. Established by Chinese Professor Zhang Bu Sheng in 2013 and headquartered in Singapore, this religious movement has established branches in Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom. Elaborating from Taoist and Buddhist traditions, but also Christian, Hindu, and Muslim elements, Professor Zhang has developed the “Wisdom of Life Three-Dimensional Evolution System” to achieve liberation of body, mind and soul and lead wise, healthy, successful lives.

Based on interviews and participant observations conducted in Singapore and online, this paper discusses the doctrinal and practical aspects of this diasporic religion while unfolding the role attributed to Mary - the one who meditated in silence to the point of giving birth to the divine.

**Michel Chambon** is a Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, coordinating the Initiative for the Study of Asian Catholics. He is a French Catholic theologian and a cultural anthropologist researching Chinese Christianities. Studying various Catholic and Protestant communities based in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, he has published research on the agency of Christian buildings, Chinese Pentecostalism, and Chinese Catholic nuns. His most recent book, *Actor-Network Theory and the Anthropology of Christianity*, examines the five Christian denominations of Nanping (Fujian Province) to question the ways social science theorizes the unity and diversity of Christianity.

**Arrokiya Matha Vailankanni:  
Enduring Symbols and Ancient Rituals  
Offer New Possibilities for Interreligious Encounter**

**Flynn M. Fernandes**

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The Coromandel Coast of southern India is dotted with temples, mosques, and churches presenting a hallowed, religiously plural landscape in the midst of which stands the Shrine Basilica of Vailankanni. Popularized by reported apparitions of Mother Mary to two Hindu boys and a manifestation to Portuguese sailors during a tempest in the 16<sup>th</sup> and mid-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Vailankanni today is a major Marian sanctuary to which millions of pilgrims converge annually. Claims of miraculous healings in large numbers have drawn pilgrims to the Mother of Health (*Arrokiya Matha*) leading to a belief in her particular power. Inside the shrine, a statue of Arrokiya Matha, European in appearance but draped in an Indian saree, holds the Christ Child in her arm. At Vailankanni, ancient ritual, bodily circumambulation, votive offerings, and the annual festival with palanquin processions have led to the emergence of a Marian cult. This paper will examine who Arrokiya Matha is to the Hindu pilgrim and how those perceptions differ from those of a Christian. What is the feminine dimension of divinity of the Hindu deity and how might that differ from Catholic conceptions of motherhood? What impact has interreligious encounter had on evangelization in sociocultural and religiously plural contexts such as Vailankanni? How has such encounter shaped new aspects of worship and bidirectional inculturation of faith practices especially in light of the spate of politically motivated religious persecutions against minorities (Muslims and Christians) in India? These are some initial questions this paper will attempt to address.

**Flynn Fernandes** is an adjunct lecturer of theology in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Emmanuel College in Boston. He also serves as the Director of Religious Education at Holy Trinity Parish, Quincy, in the Archdiocese of Boston. In 2019, Flynn earned the Doctor of Sacred Theology degree in the area of systematic theology from Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. His research interests include the intersection of ecclesiology, pneumatology, and Mariology, and its implications for ecumenism and interreligious encounter in a post-Vatican II world church. Besides being a professional member of the Mariological Society of America, he is also a member of the International Marian Association and the Hagiography Society. Flynn is the blessed husband of Gladys and proud dad of Aaron. They live in Quincy, Massachusetts.

## PANEL 2

### **Regulating Marialis Cultus in Macau: A Re-reading of Msgr. Manuel Teixeira's *O Culto de Maria em Macau***

**Argene Águila Clasara**

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*O Culto de Maria em Macau* was written by Msgr. Manuel Teixeira, the foremost church historian of Macau. It was published in 1969 as part of Fr. Teixeira's *Macau e a sua Diocese*—a series of books dedicated to the history of the Catholic Diocese of Macau, and due to its entanglements with the secular, has included Macau's local history. In this book rich in historical data, Fr. Teixeira chronicled the Marian devotion in Macau and its respective spaces (and other temporalities) in the city—the Marian churches, forts, confraternities, and feasts from the sixteenth century until the mid-twentieth century. Due to its chronicling nature, Teixeira's works may be considered wanting by contemporary historical and historiographical standards. However, its chronicling nature is also its strength—Teixeira's works, which aimed to present the past as it has been, are rich in primary and even raw data that would be useful to a contemporary historian.

In this essay, I am re-reading Teixeira's *O Culto de Maria em Macau* by considering how the Catholic Church—particularly the Macau clergy and the ecclesial hierarchy—had responded, regulated, and reinforced boundaries on the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the city that prides itself as *Cidade da Virgem*. In addition, this re-reading would attempt to narrate and analyse how Mary had been and is still being translated in Macau.

**Argene Águila Clasara** is currently studying History at the University of Saint Joseph in Macau SAR. He obtained his undergraduate degree in History at the University of Santo Tomás, Manila. As a student of history, his research interests are religious history, social history, and historiography.

## **The Virgen de los Remedios and the Struggle against social Unrest in Pampanga, Philippines, 1950s**

**Rieyen Dizon Clemente**

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In the 1950s, the historic province of Pampanga was a breeding ground of massive class conflicts and inequality, rural violence, and socialist and communist campaigns of rebels. The then Bishop of San Fernando, Pampanga Cesar Ma. Guerrero was filled with agony to see the chaotic reality of Kapampangans during his pastoral visits to different towns and parishes. As a response, he conceived the “Crusade of Charity and Goodwill” where an image of the Virgen de los Remedios (Our Lady of Remedies) is brought to all places, whether near or far/remote, in Pampanga to promote peace and charity. Particularly, people are asked to donate “lamak” (offering for the poor) which will be distributed to poor Kapampangans during the visit of the image to their place. The movement quelled social unrest in many places in Pampanga and Kapampangan that had developed a strong sense of devotion to the Virgen de los Remedios. Later, it became the province’s patroness. This paper aims to document the history of the crusade and its effect on the Catholics of Pampanga – care for the poor and the marginalized sectors of society in response to communist and socialist ideas flourishing in the province. In 1956, the image was canonically crowned under the Pontificate of Pope Pius XII - a recognition of the role of the Virgen de los Remedios who delivered Pampanga from the wrath of social discontents. Today, the Virgen de los Remedios stands by the image of “kapaldanan” (healing) and “tula” (joy) of Kapampangans.

**Rieyen Dizon Clemente** is a MA student of history at the University of the Philippines Diliman. His work “Public life and civic duty: Timeline” was published in *The Vargas collection: Art and Filipiniana*. He is the Editorial Assistant of the *Regional Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*. He is trained in various summer schools in historiography in Spain, the United States, and Indonesia. His research interests include historiography, local history of Pampanga, oral history, and history of Southeast Asia.

## The Mother of Tourism: Mary in Flores Island, Eastern Indonesia

**Maksimus Regus**

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Flores Island is known as a predominantly Catholic area in Indonesia. The Catholic Diocese in the western part of Flores Island is also known as the largest Catholic Diocese in Indonesia. The Marian devotion is one of the most popular devotions on the Island—with an extensive Catholic tradition in public spaces. In addition to the traditions that have long been known and practiced among Catholics on this Island, several new developments have surfaced in the public understanding and practice of Mary's presence in people's lives in various dimensions. One of the significant phenomena nowadays is presenting Mother Mary as a central figure in tourism development on this island.

Concerning this interest, Labuan Bajo in Flores Island is one of Indonesia's super-priority tourism areas and development. In developing this super-priority tourism area, the main stakeholders of tourism development, such as the government and related private sectors, place Maria as the tourism center in this region. In August 2022, the Ruteng Catholic Diocese and the West Manggarai Regency Government held the *Golo Koe Festival (the Small Hill Festival)* in Labuan Bajo. There was a procession of Mother Mary as the Lady of the Assumption of the Indonesian Archipelago on the occasion of this festival is the center of the week's activities.

There are several main intentions of this festival. *First*, tourism development in Labuan Bajo is dedicated to Mother Mary and makes her *the Mother of Tourism* in Labuan Bajo. *Second*, Mother Mary was appointed *Maria Assumpta Nusantara*, a Mother of Indonesia with social, cultural, and religious diversity. As a preliminary study of the position of Mother Mary in tourism discourse and practice, based on a qualitative exploration, this research is a *contemporary narrative* that refers to local—but also significant—experiences from Flores Island—Eastern Indonesia. The author strongly considers this research offers significant contributions to the current study on Mother Mary.

**Maksimus Regus:** MA in Sociology from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences—Universitas Indonesia (2009), Postgraduate Research Fellowship at the Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus Rotterdam University, Netherlands (2012—2014), Ph.D. Degree from the Graduate School of Humanities, University of Tilburg, Netherlands (December 2017); Dean of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Sciences, Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng (2019—2023). The author's research interest covers wide-ranging issues, including human rights, radicalism, violent extremism, local development, social resistance, religion, and politics in Indonesia and Southeast Asia.

## PANEL 3

### Holy Mother or Bodhisattva? Syncretic Mary/Guanyin Imagery in Two Late Imperial Chinese Paintings

**Song Gang**

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**Wang Xintong**

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This paper examines the artistic and religious integration of the Virgin Mary and the Guanyin Bodhisattva in late imperial China through two Chinese-style hanging scroll paintings allegedly by the mid-Ming artist Tang Yin. With reference to relevant visual and textual materials, we will analyze the stylish features, iconographic symbolisms, and localized adaptations of these paintings to highlight the mutual references of the two prominent figures from Christianity and Buddhism. In addition, the identity of the figures in the paintings and the authorship will be re-examined in light of the historical contexts. Considering the anti-Christian persecutions and prohibitions enforced by the imperial authorities, it was possible that the artists deliberately transformed Marian imagery by adapting a disguised image of Guanyin, which may be compared to the hybrid images of Maria Kannon among the hidden Christians in Tokugawa Japan. For survival and continuity of the Christian belief, Marian imagery and identity could have been consciously blurred and blended with Guanyin by underground Christians. The study of these two unusual and controversial paintings reveals a complex localization process of Mary in late imperial China. It further refreshes our understandings of the plural forms of Mary by way of boundary-crossing exchanges and negotiations between Christianity and other religions in history.

**Dr. Song, Gang** is Associate professor of Chinese History in the School of Chinese. He has broad interests in cultural exchanges between China and the West in history, Chinese religions, and Confucian intellectual history, while his research focuses on Catholic Christianity in late imperial China. He has published a monograph on Christian-Confucian dialogism in late Ming China, two edited volumes on the Christian intersection of China and the West in the modern era, and a number of academic articles on Chinese Marian devotions, Catholic Bible translations, and other related subjects.

**Ms. Wang, Xintong** is a second year Ph.D. student under the supervision of Dr. Song Gang in the School of Chinese at the University of Hong Kong. Before joining HKU, she got a bachelor's degree from Nanjing University in 2019 and a master's degree from the University of Warwick in 2020. Her interests lie broadly in the areas of Sino-European exchange of culture and visual arts in late imperial China, especially the images and beliefs of the Virgin Mary in the late Ming and early Qing periods.

## Study of a Korean Catholic Sculptor

**Mideum Hong**

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Choi Jong-Tae (1932- ) is a Korean sculptor and a Catholic layman. His works are mostly focused on Mary. Throughout Catholic churches in Korea, there are many Marian statues that Choi had made, representing the beauty of Korea. What is the beauty of Korea? What is its origin in terms of art? Choi says that his works were heavily influenced by the Buddhist art of Korea which marked a history of Korean art since the arrival of Buddhism in Korea in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. More importantly, he produced a statue of bodhisattva Guan-eum (Chinese Guanyin, Japanese Kannon) and it is placed in a Buddhist temple called Gil Sang Sa (길상사, 吉祥寺). This Guan-eum is often called “Guan-eum which resembles Mary.”

In this paper, I will first investigate Choi Jong-Tae’s view of Mary and his Marian statues. In what way were his works influenced by Korean Buddhist art? What is the significance of his Marian statues in forming Marian devotion to Korean Catholics? Then, I will examine his statue of Guan-eum. What did spark a Catholic who was dedicated to sculpting Marian statues to make a statue of the bodhisattva Guan-eum? What is his theological/religious view on making a statue of Guan-eum? Most importantly, in what way would his works contribute to the discourse on Mary in Korea? I argue that Choi’s Marian statues changed the Korean Catholics’ view of Mary which has been shaped by Western imagery. I also assert that Choi’s works cross boundaries between religions. Lastly, Choi’s statues of Mary and Guan-eum would suggest how comparative theology could be pursued through art objects.

**Mideum Hong** is a doctoral student at Georgetown University. I am interested in the history of the Catholic mission in Asia, mainly Jesuit encounters with Asian cultures and religions and their influence on the history of Korean Catholicism. I am also interested in Marian devotion, especially through visual and material culture. I recently published an article on Marian devotion in Japan and India in the *Journal of World Christianity*.

## **Universal Belief and Local Apparition: Holy Mary and Inculturation in Taiwan**

**Brian Reynolds**

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**Marco Lazzarotti**

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The image of the Virgin Mary is one of the most effective instances of inculturation to be found in the Taiwanese Catholic world. This is already evident from her iconographic representation which bears many similarities to Guanyin (and Mazu), who are sometimes depicted as young women in traditional Chinese dress holding a child. But the similarities between these feminine figures run deeper. Holy Mary, like Guanyin, serves as a bridge between the needs and hopes of human beings and the strength and majesty of a transcendental spiritual power. Both share the title "Gateway of Heaven," and both are characterized by mercy and compassion. All three are figures to be turned to in times of need. Mary is a universal Mother, similar to Guanyin, not physically associated with any one place like other Catholic saints (being assumed bodily into heaven, she left no relics), yet through her apparitions, she is also linked to specific shrines and even takes on national symbolisms, not unlike Mazu. Indeed, Holy Mary is unique in both her universality and her particularity (Lozada 2001:34).

This paper will consider the similarities between these figures which has allowed Taiwanese Catholics to embrace Mary as a figure who is integrated with a certain ease into preexisting cultic beliefs and practices. In this regard, we shall examine the well-known apparition of Mary who aided five non-Catholic men who got into trouble on a hike in the mountains. Trapped on a steep slope for several hours, they recognized her because of her similarity to a Marian statue placed on the mountaintop by the Camillian. Later, they embraced Catholicism and had a statue erected on the site, which has become a popular place of pilgrimage.

As this episode confirms, Mary is an approachable figure regardless of beliefs, far more so than the "sign of contradiction". As such, not only is she more easily accepted by Catholics of Chinese culture, but can also act as a bridge to those who revere the Buddhist Guanyin and the Eternal Mother.



**Marco Lazzarotti** is a Researcher and Lecturer at the Institute of Ethnology of the University of Heidelberg, where he obtained his PhD in Anthropology. Lazzarotti holds also a M.A. in Anthropology from the National Taiwan University. During 10 years of living in Taiwan, he did extensive fieldwork on the effect of Catholicism on the tradition of ancestor rites in Taiwan, on Inter-religious dialogue and on the Modernization of Funeral Rites in Taiwan. He was awarded The Phi Tau Phi Scholastic Honour Society of the Republic of China for achieving academic excellence. He is living in Germany with his family.

**Brian K. Reynolds** is Professor of Italian at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei. He graduated in Italian from University College Dublin and went on to carry out his postgraduate studies at Trinity College Dublin. Professor Reynolds' interests include Dante, medieval Italian literature, and Mariology (and their intersections). He has written a number of articles on the Virgin in the *Commedia*, as well as a major study on Mary, *Gateway to Heaven: Marian Doctrine and Devotion in the Patristic and Medieval Periods*. He is currently living in Taipei.

## PANEL 4

### **Marianism, Motherlands and the collective unconscious of Tamil and Chinese Catholics of the classical diasporas in nineteenth-century Malaya**

**Shanthini Pillai**

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**Angeline Wong Wei Wei**

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Between the 1850s and the 1930s, French missionaries from the Société des Missions étrangères de Paris (MEP) established numerous churches that catered to Catholics of the classical Chinese and Tamil diasporas spread across the Malay Peninsula. These pioneer parish settlements were primarily built near tin mining areas populated by early Chinese migrants, and the coffee and rubber plantations populated in turn by early Indian migrants. A number of these foundational churches were dedicated to Mary in her various manifestations, revealing close connections with the collective unconscious of Catholic Mariology. In this paper, we explore such intersections by firstly presenting a historical review of the prominent manifestations of Mary as gleaned from the dedicational patterns of the churches that were set up during the nineteenth century. We then pause to consider whether these intersect in turn with similar patterns of Hindu and Chinese temples dedicated to Mother goddesses that were built around the same era. Finally, we proceed to reflect on whether such patterns of devotional dedications to the maternal in the foundational churches built for Tamil and Chinese Catholics of the classical diaspora point to salient threads with the collective unconscious of the diasporic imaginary. In other words, did Mary become a form of replacement for the lost motherland for these communities as they settled in distant shores? By interrogating these aspects, the paper aims to contribute to the larger discourse of the anthropology of Catholicism in terms of the intersections between Mariology, classical diasporas, and the intimations of motherlands.

**Shanthini Pillai (PhD)** is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia (UKM). Her research interests are anchored primarily in diaspora and transnationalism, ethnic diversity, and religious mobilities, especially in the context of global South Asian communities. She has held Research Fellowships at the University of Queensland, Australia and the Asia Research Institute, Singapore and currently heads a research project on diaspora, religious mobilities and the French Missionaries in colonial Malaya. She is published widely in her area of expertise, with recent work included in *Social Sciences and Missions*, *SOJOURN* and *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*.

**Angeline Wong Wei Wei (PhD)** is a lecturer at Malaysia Immersion and Pathways, Monash University Malaysia. Her research interests include ethnic studies, inter-ethnic engagement and cultural studies. She is currently a coordinator of a bi-monthly webinar series on Global Chinese Catholicism organized by the Initiative for the Study of Asian Catholics (ISAC), and research team member of a project on traditional Chinese religions and conversion among the Malaysian Chinese community.

## **Our Lady of Fatima in South Vietnam and the Postwar Diaspora**

**Tuan Hoang**

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Although the devotion to Our Lady of Fatima began not long after the Fatima apparitions in 1917, it wasn't until the 1940s that it became a global devotion. This period coincided with the Second World War then decolonization in Vietnam, and a number of Vietnamese Catholics heartily welcomed this devotion. Their promotion led Our Lady of Fatima to be one of the most prominent Catholic devotions in South Vietnam and the postwar diaspora. Much of the popularity had to do with the experiences of warfare and national division as well as anticommunist beliefs among many Vietnamese Catholics. To flesh out the centrality of this devotion, this paper examines primary sources, especially from the South Vietnamese press and the diasporic press, to argue that the rise and the height of this devotion ran parallel to the rise of the Vietnamese Communist Party and its eventual victory over the Republic of Vietnam in 1975. The devotion continued to be significant in the diaspora until at least the 1990s. In particular, the paper examines the Congregation of Mother Co-Redemptrix (CMC), which was the most important promoter of this devotion in South Vietnam and the postwar diaspora. It argues that the devotion might have been an "import" of global Catholicism, but the CMC and other Vietnamese also shaped it to their own making as postcolonial Catholics in South Vietnam and exilic Catholics in the diaspora.

**Tuan Hoang** is Blanche E. Seaver Professor of Humanities and Teacher Education, and associate professor at Pepperdine University, teaching in the Great Books, history, and humanities programs. His current research focuses on the history of Catholicism in South Vietnam and the history of Vietnamese Catholics in the U.S. His publications include "Ultramontanist, Nationalism, and the Fall of Saigon: Historicizing the Vietnamese American Catholic Experience," *American Catholic Studies* (2019); "'Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Will Prevail': Vietnamese Marianism and Anticommunism, 1940–1975," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* (2022); and "The Post-1975 Vietnamese Diaspora," in *Cambridge History of the Vietnam War*, vol. 3, eds., Pierre Asselin and Lien-Hang Nguyen (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). He is currently serving as chair of the Vietnam Studies Group (Association for Asian Studies) and coordinator of the Global Vietnamese Catholicism project for the Initiative for the Study of Asian Catholics based at National University of Singapore.

## Angelo da Fonseca's South Asian Madonna in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

R. Benedito Ferrão

William & Mary University, Williamsburg, US  
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My paper reads Rushdie's novel, *Midnight's Children*, through art history, apprehending his portrayal of a South Asian Marian figure as a symbol representative of the birthing of a new nation. In the novel, Mary Pereira, named for Christ's mother, is responsible for a nativity of national significance, one unconcerned with race, religion, or class. Among the ironies here are that while Rushdie's tale of switched babies, Hindu and Muslim, centres around that quintessential moment of India's independence from the British, Goa – Mary's native land – was more than a decade away from its own freedom from the Portuguese. Through Mary, Rushdie's novel offers a way of reinserting Goan subjectivity into South Asian post/colonialism while still considering its differences due to its Lusophonic Catholic heritage.

The mid-twentieth century period of the setting of *Midnight's Children* coincides with a moment in Indian art history when Goan painter Angelo da Fonseca was creating what his biographer Savia Viegas describes as a new visual lexicon of South Asian Christian art. In effect, da Fonseca localizes the depiction of the Madonna as a woman with brown skin, clad in working class garb. The artist thus makes a poignant statement about the adoption of Mary and Catholicism in South Asia despite the European origins of the faith. Reading Mary Pereira through da Fonseca's brown Madonnas, my paper considers how the Marian character in Rushdie's novel not only subverts traditional concepts of the familial but does so to imagine the postcolonial nation as religiously hybrid.

**R. Benedito Ferrão** is an Assistant Professor of English and Asian & Pacific Islander American Studies at William & Mary. A former recipient of fellowships from the Fulbright, Mellon, Endeavour, and Rotary programs, he was also a Fellow of the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies and the American Institute of Indian Studies. Curator of the 2017-18 exhibition *Goa, Portugal, Mozambique: The Many Lives of Vamona Navelcar*, he edited a book of the same title (Fundação Oriente 2017) to accompany this retrospective of the artist's work.

## PANEL 5

### Mary as Mother: Gender and Devotion at the Peñafrancia Festival

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This paper will examine gendered practices around devotion and public rituals connected with the veneration of Our Lady of Peñafrancia at the Peñafrancia Festival in Naga City in the Philippines' Bicol region. Two signature events anchor the festival, the first of which is the *traslacion*, in which men transport the sacred effigy of Our Lady of Peñafrancia from her home in a purpose-built basilica to the city's main cathedral. A fluvial procession on the final Sunday of the nine-day novena marks its end, at which time *Ina* (or "Mother") is returned to her home three kilometers upriver via a fluvial procession on a pontoon-style boat, towed by *cofradias* of men rowing in smaller boats.

While the men, connected to *cofradias*, are responsible for Mary's safe passage, it is largely the women who wake up early every morning during the novena to connect with and honour both Mary and Christ with a mass and candlelight procession through the streets of town. During the event, as the region's Catholics seek her intercession and divine grace, the church hierarchy appears mindful that religious practices associated with it should not place Mother Mary alone as its central figure.

Drawing from personal experience at the Peñafrancia Festival and extensive interviews with local participants and observers in pre-Covid times, I seek to map out how Mother Mary or "*Ina*" functions at this festival, and how key ritual practices reflect local understandings and experiences with Mary as a touchstone to the divine.

**William Peterson** is Adjunct Associate Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies, Auckland University of Technology. Formerly Associate Professor at Flinders University, he has held academic appointments at Monash University, National University of Singapore, University of Waikato, California State University San Bernardino. Author of *Asian Self-Representation at World's Fairs* (Amsterdam University Press, 2020), *Places for Happiness: Community, Self, and Performance in the Philippines* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), and *Theatre and the Politics of Culture in Contemporary Singapore* (Wesleyan 2001). Current research focuses on religion and performance in the Philippines, Asian self-representation at World's Fairs, fashion and nationalism in SE Asia.

## Three Faces of Mary in the Vietnamese Diaspora: Our Lady of Refugees, of Cold War Pilgrims, and of Transnational Ethnic Solidarity

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Tens of thousands of pilgrims gather each steamy August in Carthage Missouri, in what is both the largest gathering of Catholics in the US and the largest gathering of Vietnamese Americans (Hoang 2018, 2021). Thousands circle a fountain crowned with a statue of “Our Lady of Refugees” (Đức Mẹ Di Cư)---a European woman holding baby Jesus on her shoulder and reaching down with her left hand to help a young Vietnamese boy, precariously balanced on top of a globe. They form into a candlelight procession to follow a statue of Our Lady of Fatima, depicted as European queen holding a rosary, the same “pilgrim statue” that toured southern Vietnam in 1965-66 when the fighting had intensified in the civil war that tore apart the country. The procession weaves its way past another statue of Our Lady of Lavang, featuring the Virgin Mary in Vietnamese dress with Asian features, holding the baby Jesus in her hands and surrounded by young girls and boys in Vietnamese tunics waving blue and pink flowers.

These three images of the Virgin Mary are all part of new, alternative pilgrimages that Vietnamese refugees have developed since the “loss of the country” in 1975. This paper examines the relationships between refugees and pilgrims---- displaced persons forced to leave their homeland and intentional travelers who seek a restored sense of religious purpose by traveling to a new destination. It explores the relationship between three purposes for pilgrimage---to show appreciation for refuge, to form political solidarities, and to forge new ties across overseas communities in different countries.

**Janet Alison Hoskins** is Professor of Anthropology and Religion at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Her books include *The Divine Eye and the Diaspora: Vietnamese Syncretism Becomes Transpacific Caodaism*, *The Play of Time* (1996 Benda Prize in Southeast Asian Studies, AAS), and *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People’s Lives*. She is the contributing editor of *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field* (with Viet Thanh Nguyen 2014), *Headhunting and the Social Imagination in Southeast Asia* (1996), *A Space Between Oneself and Oneself* (1999) and *Fragments from Forests and Libraries* (2001). She served as President of the Society for the Anthropology of Religion, a section of the American Anthropological Association, from 2011-13.

**Meeting Mary:  
The Interreligious Encounter of Pilgrimage-tourism  
in Mary Cave Sendangsono and Kerep Ambarawa Indonesia**

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In Indonesia, especially central Java, sites of Mary are well-known as 'Goa Maria', due to the presence of the statue of Mary. The focus of this paper is on two historically important sites: Goa Maria Sendangsono (GMS) in Kulon Progo and Goa Maria Kerep in Ambarawa (GMKA). Both Mary caves are inspired by the famous grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in France, in which Mary happened to appear. In these two Mary sites, this research conducted observations and in-depth interviews, examined the intentions and motives of visitors, and revisited discourses. The phenomenological reasoning, pilgrimage overview and religious tourism studies are critically engaged. In addition, the 'meeting' is taking into account the intersubjective relation between visitors and Mary, as well as the relationship between subjects in GMS and GMKA. The relationship is a form of personal perception, Mary and the sites. Thus, between the reflection of private towards the self, Mary and GMS & GMKA are the formulations of the outputs of the identification of the three classifications within pilgrim, tourist and pilgrim-tourist. This paper is going to argue that pilgrims, tourists and pilgrim-tourists will need Mary and the two sites to trace the dominant values that control their gestures, and that cannot be answered through the perspective between the subject associated as a human being and the object associated as an inanimate object.

**Shakeel Ahmad** graduated and got an MA degree in Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia. I am an enthusiast in Mariology, Pilgrimage studies, Religious tourism, Religion and public life.

## PANEL 6

### **Familiar Stranger: The Rosary Meditation in Ming and Qing**

**Qi Wang**

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The Rosary, focusing on the Mysteries of the Life of the Virgin Mary, has been the dominant form of Catholic devotion in Europe since the Middle Ages, and from the 16th to the 18th centuries, with the arrival of Catholic missionaries to China, the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans all propagated the Rosary in the new land.

It is important to note that they did not spread only the recitation of the Rosary, but also the meditation. For example, the Jesuits emphasized visual meditation, while the Dominicans emphasized doctrinal reflection.

This paper will investigate the propagation of Rosary meditation in Ming and Qing, and compare the Rosary meditation method with that of Chinese Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in order to examine the situation of Rosary meditation in Chinese culture: The techniques of visual meditation also exist in Buddhism and Taoism, but they do not use the lives of saints as meditation material; whereas Confucianism does not have the techniques of visual meditation, but recognizes that the lives of saints can be used as material for ethical reflection—thus the Rosary is both familiar and stranger to the Chinese.

This paper believes that an awareness of this situation will help us not only to assess the spread of Catholic practice in China, but also to consider how Marian devotion could develop in China from a contextualized perspective.

**Qi Wang** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Philosophy at Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China. He works on Chinese Catholicism in the Ming and Qing, with a particular focus on the propagation of Catholic spirituality and its reaction by Chinese intellectuals. He was a Malatesta Scholar at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University, Berkeley, USA for the calendar year 2022, and a 2022 Ricci Doctoral Fellow at the Ricci Institute for Chinese–Western Cultural History at Boston College, Boston, USA.



**Dressing the Madonna:  
Race, Sexuality, and the Spirit of the Virgin Mary  
and/or 'Indian Lady' in Trinidad**

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In the Catholic Church in Siparia, a southern parish in the southern Caribbean island of Trinidad, stands the La Divina Pastora, the dark-complexioned Madonna statue, affectionately known as “*La Divin*.” Reputed as a powerful medico-spiritual curer, she draws streams of daily supplicants and crowds of annual pilgrims, the most faithful and engaged of whom are South Asian diasporic Hindus as well as Catholics. This paper calls for renewed attention to the fact that *La Divin* is the *dressed* image of the Virgin Mary and argues that her dresses and dressed body, and female oblate’s “dress practice” have had broader and more substantial implications for the faith and devotion to this miracle-working Madonna beyond their symbolic and decorative functions acknowledged by previous studies. A welter of data from archival research and ethnographic observations that addresses the questions of what and how *La Divin* is dressed have engaged beliefs about the power and virtue of this Madonna and the spirituality and sociality of her faithful across religious traditions.

**Teruyuki Tsuji** is an Associate Professor at Hiroshima University in Japan. I received my PhD from Florida International University in 2006. My research has focused on immigrant faiths and their implications for social identity among the South Asian migrant/diaspora populations in the Caribbean and the United States. Among my publications are “The Politics of the Illegitimate: La Divina Pastora and the ‘Coolie Mission’ in Colonial Trinidad” in *New West Indian Guide* (2020), “They don’t do culture: Kali Mai as a Matrix of National Culture in Trinidad” in *Wadabagei: A Journal of the Caribbean and Its Diaspora* (2009), and “The Struggle for Civic Social Capital in West Indian Churches” (coauthored with A. Stepick and C. Ho) in *Charity and Churches in the Immigrant City* (Rutgers University Press, 2010).

**Marian Devotion in Luzon, Philippines:  
Narratives of Identity and Place,  
17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

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A survey of Marian hagiographies in the Philippines today indicates that many of the Marian shrines that continue to be popular among Filipino Catholics today were mostly in Luzon and that the majority of them were first established in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. This study looks at the early histories of these Marian shrines, the narratives of these Marian icons and the devotions to them in the context of the establishment of towns with the aim of shedding a deeper understanding on the role of religion and devotion in shaping the early histories of towns in Luzon during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In aiming to elucidate the converging process of conversion and colonization and the role of sacred landscape, the author explores the relationship of landscape and devotion as place-making and how that is recorded in hagiographies, missionary accounts, novenarios and inquiries into the miracles attributed to the Virgin Mary. The different narratives and records of the devotion to Mary in the early modern Philippines would indicate geographical patterns highlighting the significant role of place in the introduction and deepening of the devotion to the icon. Thus, the narratives of Mary appearing on trees and water, while geographical, are also treated in this study as narratives of historical identity coming into shape as the icon and the devotion become identified with the place and the local community.

**Mary Josefti C. Nito** finished her MA in Humanities from University of Asia and the Pacific and is currently pursuing a PhD in History from the University of the Philippines, Diliman. Her dissertation is about Marian devotions in Luzon in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. Her current research project revolves around hagiographies, local devotions, and local histories in the Philippines. She has shared her research findings in various national and international conferences. She is currently a board member of the Philippine Studies Association, Inc., an active member of the Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation, and an instructor on Philippine History with the University of Asia & the Pacific.