Inclusion and Religious Engagement in a Multicultural Church: A Multi-Case Study of the Experience of Immigrant Filipino Volunteer Church Workers in Select Parishes in the Archdiocese of Seattle

Frank Dennis B. Savadera

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INCLUSION AND RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH: A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF IMMIGRANT FILIPINO VOLUNTEER CHURCH WORKERS IN SELECT CATHOLIC PARISHES IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE

BY

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A Written Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Thank you, God, country, and family!

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam!
DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Filipinos in the diaspora, and the many immigrant citizens of the world who all virtuously struggle to keep and evolve in the practice of their faith.
ABSTRACT

INCLUSION AND RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH: A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF IMMIGRANT FILIPINO VOLUNTEER CHURCH WORKERS IN SELECT PARISHES IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE

Chair: Taylor, Mark Lloyd, PhD

This qualitative study investigates the relevant descriptions that first-generation immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers use to characterize their adopted multicultural parish. Further, it investigates how these descriptions influence their views on inclusion and religious engagement in their communities. The study hopes to generate faith and encourage theological reflections on: (1) persons’ capacities to encounter and embrace the “other”; (2) capacities for multiple-mindedness and recognition of a multiplicity of gifts; and (3) the call to embody and participate in the Trinitarian communion.

The central research questions asked are as follows: (1) How do first-generation immigrant Filipino volunteer parish workers in the Archdiocese of Seattle describe their experience of a multicultural context and how it affects their faith life and their view(s) of the church as an organization (i.e., in terms of church leadership, decision making, community dynamics, perspectives about the faith, programs/activities, etc.); (2) What personal values and dispositions do these immigrants believe positively/negatively affect their views of their parish as a multicultural organization; and (3) What does it mean for them to practice their religious culture in a multicultural setting? The research also asks
these related questions: What recommendations would they suggest to members of organizations such as their respective parishes and the Seattle Archdiocese to help sustain involvement and participation in such multicultural contexts?

To study a phenomenon, i.e., a multicultural church, within multiple, bounded systems, this study uses a multi-case study design. Our cases consist of three groups, one representing each parish under study. The research employs a non-probability purposive sampling procedure, an interview protocol prescribed by Creswell (2006, 132), methods of field observation, archival documents, and relevant demographics.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

According to the 2011 Georgetown University study published by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), much of the growth in the U.S. Catholic population since the latter half of the twentieth century was due to immigrant Catholic populations from around the world (Zech, 2017, 11). The study indicates that the influx of Catholics from Latin America, Vietnam, the Philippines, southern India, and the French and English-speaking countries of Africa, has made the U.S. Catholic population today quite ethnically and racially diverse. The CARA report shows that some 6,332 parishes, or 35.9 percent of all U.S. parishes, are “known to serve a particular racial, ethnic, cultural, and/or linguistic community” (Zech 2017, 108). Accordingly, this diversity “represents the future of the Church in the United States, and the culturally diverse parish is a window into that emerging social context” (Zech 2017, 107).

While the demographics provide valuable insights into the changing social landscape, in-depth descriptions of how Catholic parishioners are actually impacted by the phenomenon of cultural diversity also needs to be further investigated. This research project considers the perspective of immigrant Catholic groups specifically—particularly first-generation immigrants from the Philippines. The focus is placed on describing their experienced dynamics of living their Catholic faith life in multicultural organizational settings. For this study, we refer to the definition by the Pew Research Center of “first-generation immigrants” as those “who came to live in the United States from another country, not that person’s native-born offspring” (http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/demographic-research/definitions/).
Statement of the Problem

Given the growing cultural diversity in U.S. Catholic Churches, Catholic immigrants identified as “Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander,” comprise, on average, only around three percent of Catholics in the U.S. and eleven percent live on the West Coast (Gray, Gautier, and Cidade 2011, 39–40). The experiences of Filipino immigrants, coming from a nation with a dominant 83 percent Catholic population (Index Mundi, 2018), can offer a valuable perspective to questions about how peoples engage and integrate into more culturally diverse environments. Crucial questions that arise when integrating into culturally diverse church communities include the following: (1) How do we live and acknowledge the fact that our parish churches have indeed become interracial and intercultural? (2) What are the gifts and challenges of living one’s faith in an intercultural church organization? (3) What are our evolving Christian responses to the reality of multicultural church contexts?

Purpose and Significance of the Study

This study hopes not only to contribute to ongoing research on cultural diversity, as experienced in parishes and churches today, but also to evoke theological reflections on how believers are urged to pray and work for greater unity and participation in their ecclesial life. By examining the themes of cultural pluralism, inculturation, cross-cultural fluency, and dialogue, we also ask how churches think of themselves as organizations in need of helpful tools to assure their sustained engagement in and across groups. Another inquiry needs to determine overall institutional effectiveness.
Research Questions

Realizing that immigrants enter a rapidly globalizing and multicultural world assures that inclusion and sustained religious engagement are critically important, and hence they are an underlying theme for this research project. The study focuses on the central research questions: How do first-generation immigrant Filipinos, who volunteer as parish workers in the Archdiocese of Seattle, describe their experience of living in a multicultural context and how it influences their faith life and their view of the church as an organization (i.e., in terms of church leadership, decision making, community dynamics, perspectives about the faith, programs/activities, etc.). What does it mean for them to practice their unique religious culture but now in a multicultural setting? In corollary fashion, it is necessary to ask the following subset of questions: What personal values and dispositions do these immigrants believe are positively and/or negatively affecting their views of their current parish as a multicultural organization? What recommendations can they make to other members of such organizations to help sustain their own and others’ involvement and participation in such multicultural contexts?

Theological and Conceptual Frameworks

To objectively describe the phenomena of diversity and multiculturality, as experienced by an immigrant community, this study primarily appropriates Edward Farley’s mode of reflection. His theological portraiture method begs us to constantly redefine the meanings of ecclesial realities. This mode of understanding, or learning, Farley suggests, becomes “theological only as its reflection works from the theologically given, that set of realities presented and appresented in conjunction with ecclesial redemptive existence” (Farley, 1982, 195). From the researcher’s point of view,
therefore, a theme on ‘multiculturality,’ no matter how secular sounding it may be, when investigated from the point of view of church operations, becomes for believers, a vehicle and source of reflection both about personal and collective spiritual gains. Farley, however, in determining what is theologically given avoids appropriating both dogma, which he calls “units of relatively precise, discrete and officially churchly affirmations” (1982, 196) and the “vague feeling of well-being, an experience of freedom” (1982, 196) that we commonly associate with relativist movements. Apparently, Farley was in search of a new metaphor with which to ground his epistemology. He begins by introducing metaphors of a picture, photograph, or an impressionistic painting because each is reflective of some form(s) of existence. When a human being, he says, is “shaped in redemptive existence, participating thus in the determinacy, the social world of that existence, some picture of that existence forms” (1982, 196). A limitation to this metaphor, Farley acknowledges, is the fact that it does not indicate the “temporal mode in which the ‘picture’ occurs” and much like a photograph, depicts merely a portion of reality that is framed and frozen in a particular context of space and time (1982, 196). Farley’s mode of theological portraiture, therefore, represents a shift in focus from the metaphor of a picture or photograph to a process that recognizes a reality that is “in perpetual change, being reformed as the individual’s worldly and ecclesial discernments and experiences occur” (1982, 196). In defining his portraiture process as an activity of understanding, Farley notes how this mode of theologizing becomes an effort of “building up by inquiry of various sorts a portrait of ecclesiality as a type of historical existence” (1982, 197). Farley accepts that the ultimate object of this portraiture process is much harder to define since “only global, comprehensive and unifying terms can
express it” (1982, 197). Since the only palpable elements of the ultimate object of portraiture are the innumerable events and details, the material-historical references that are easily accessed, Farley points to the important aim of envisioning a “total corporate historical existence” for all, an ideal reality of sorts that factors in the common redemptive and eschatological aspects of ecclesial existence (1982, 198). Given this study’s point of view, the phenomenon of multiculturality—investigated in the context of church life—has a redemptive and eschatological element to it, a final object that is more vividly discerned through participation in ecclesial history and existence.

This encouragement to participate in an ecclesial existence informs the three theological frameworks that we present here: The frameworks acknowledge that while believers themselves (1) act as agents of change and carriers of a unique collective history and traditions, they are also (2) endowed with the capacities to derive knowledge from their encounters with the other, and (3) to recognize a polyphony of voices around and within them and their own response to a call toward communion with others.

Tackling our theological framework of encountering the other, we refer primarily to Miroslav Volf’s perspective that our failings to engage in communal existence or our knowing or unknowing participation in conflicts around us, root themselves in the larger problems of identity and otherness (1996, 12). Citing the past experiences of conflicts in many places around the world, Volf notes how history is full of the worst of violence committed in the name of identity (1996, 13). He proposes the notion that our will for identity fuels a good deal of the conflicts around the world and in our communities (1996, 13). Most solutions to such societal challenges, Volf remarks, emphasize the setting up of social arrangements; that is, the “proposals on how society (or all humanity) ought to be
arranged in order to accommodate individuals and groups with diverse identities living together” (1996, 15). While affirming the importance of working for positive social arrangements, Volf suggests how theologians must focus instead on “fostering the kind of social agents capable of envisioning and creating just, truthful and peaceful societies and on shaping a cultural climate in which such agents will thrive” (1996, 15). These tasks, alongside any Christian reflection on societal issues hounding the world today, Volf adds, need to be rooted in acts of self-giving and self-donation (1996, 18) that allow persons to be more open to the other, and more welcoming of the other. Volf refers to this operation as our capacity to “embrace” the other (1996, 21).

Participation in the realities of our life world relates to our second theological framework, i.e., the capacity to recognize and live with the multiplicity and polyphony of voices that surround us or even make us as persons. Pastor and theologian Cynthia Lindner grounds her notions of multiplicity and multiple mindedness from a view that “rather than having a single distinct and uniform ‘self,’ each of us consists of multiple characters, constructions or self-perceptions which correspond to the various settings and relationships in which we find ourselves (2016, xiv). This multiple-mindedness or the ability to hold multiple understandings and emotions simultaneously, Lindner notes, is important to enable individuals to function in a variety of roles they each inhabit (2016, xiv). This construct of multiple-mindedness, from the point of view of this study, complements Volf’s mode of personal flexibility, a capacity to embrace and be more tolerant of plurality. Consequently, this capacity supports life and living in a multicultural and polyphonic world.
On the other hand, acknowledging multiplicity and multi-mindedness, from the point of view of Yves Congar is about recognizing how the work of the spirit is “limited in each person and even in each group of peoples” (1982, 41). Recognizing these limitations, suggests Congar, impels us to order operations in our communities toward acts of giving and receiving, interdependence, dialogue, and welcome (1982, 41), that assure for us the enhancement of mutual and communal life.

Keeping true to the objective of portraiture as a way to envision a “total corporate historical existence,” as proposed by Farley, our third theological framework references an image of Trinitarian communion, a state of living in which all believers, as an expression of their ultimate vocation, are asked to participate. We refer to religious leaders, Pope Francis (2018) and John H. Thomas’ (1997) sharing a notion of individuals never completely being themselves unless they belong to a people. For Christian Orthodox and for Patriarch John Zizioulas (1985), this belongingness to a community is an ontological thing. We live the essence of who we are by sharing a life of communion. This hope for ‘koinonia,’ therefore, is an ecclesial operation and not merely an individual campaign. It entails the unravelling of distinctions and differences from which, Leonardo Boff suggests, community members can nevertheless derive shared values and claims. This is made possible only through the process of “communing,” a way of “mutual acceptance and giving,” being present to one another, sharing an expectation and hope of being heard and accepted while simultaneously hearing and receiving the reality of another (Boff 1988, 128–129).

In summary, the frameworks presented here are proposed to support our deeper understanding of the phenomenon of multiculturality in our church communities today.
Despite both the positive and negative experiences we may derive from such an inescapable reality, our theological perspectives call us to find greater meaning in our continued participation in our collective ecclesial existence. These theological and conceptual frameworks, therefore, while supporting a faith perspective of our multicultural organizations also pose a formative call for community members to adopt a shared mindset, a mode of encountering and embracing the other, recognizing the multiplicity of gifts that we can tap into while reaching for our most daring hopes for a telos of communion.

**Context of the Study**

Owing to the current global scope and the prevalence of multiculturality, we found it expedient to observe its operations in the context of religious institutions, particularly in three select Catholic parishes in the Archdiocese of Seattle, Washington. The city of Seattle in itself, is an interesting laboratory of multiculturality, the dynamics of which extend to the unique diversity of cultures in Catholic parishes. In the early 1900s, Bishop Edward O’Dea while recognizing a great opportunity to more deeply plant the flag of Catholicism in a fast progressing and diversifying city, sought the transfer of Catholic diocesan operations from Nesqually, Washington to the city of Seattle (Avella, 2011). This prompted the establishment of more Catholic lay institutes in the city, namely: the Knights of Columbus (1902); the Seattle Council of Catholic Women (1919); the St. Vincent de Paul Society (1920); and the Serra Club (1935) among others (http://www.seattlearchdiocese.org). Interestingly, this early period of the twentieth century, ushered in the second wave of Filipino migration into the United States (the first one occurring as early as 1763 and continuing until the end of the Spanish era in the
Philippines). Filipino-American writer and journalist Fred Cordova notes that while the largest group of arrivals consisted of 16–22-year-old male laborers, this second wave of arrivals also saw Filipinos coming as “pensionados” (students) whose education was subsidized by the Philippine-American colonial government (1983, 14). Other reasons for immigration, Cordova notes, include the Filipinos’ natural desire for adventure, the lack of employment in the Philippines, the encouragement to come to the United States by American teachers and, of course, the lure and promise of a better life in America (1983, 14). Thus, by the time of the 1930 U.S. census, a conservative count of Filipinos on the U.S. mainland (this excludes Guam and Hawaii) totalled more than 45,000 people, most of whom settled along the Pacific west coast (1983, 17). Freshly reeling from the influence of their Spanish colonizers, it would be safe to assume that most of these Filipino immigrants (as in the present case) were Catholics. At the time of the 1930 census, Filipinos in Washington state accounted for the second largest number of Filipino immigrants in the US mainland ranking only after that of California’s immigrants (Cordova 1983, 18).

As of the 2018 US census, the Filipino population in the United States was more than 4 million, the third largest number of Asian immigrants after the immigrants from China and India (https://usa.inquirer.net/15493/new-census-data-4-million-filipinos-us). Filipinos in Washington State now account for the fourth largest population in the United States. States ranking higher than Washington are California, Hawaii, and Texas, respectively.

Now exposed to cultures and religious practices that differ from the accustomed practices in their native land, first-generation Filipino immigrants to the United States,
the researcher believes, can offer a unique perspective on the phenomenon of multiculturality. This study offers a glimpse of Filipino immigrants living their lives of faith. The process of portraiture continues to evolve amid unique expressions of community, even as immigrants live in a multicultural context.

Subscribing to the methods governing our multi-case study, we note that the specific contexts of the three parishes included in our survey, are separately described in Chapter 4.

**Overview of Methodology**

Employing a qualitative research method, this study relies primarily on human perception and experiential understanding in a described situation (Stake 2010, 11). Among the many characteristics of qualitative researches listed by Robert Stake (2010, 15–16), this study adopts approaches that are necessarily interpretative (meanings are derived from different views), experiential (empirical and field-oriented), situational (contextual), and personalistic (emphatic and respectful of diversity). These approaches help to provide a rich description of personal action and the complex environment affected by a particular phenomenon, which in our case is multiculturality.

Determining research design has much to do with the kind of questions asked in a study. Because this project primarily poses a “how” question (How do first-generation immigrant Filipinos, who contribute as volunteer church workers, describe their experience of a multicultural church?), a case-study approach becomes a preferred method of research (Yin, 2003, 7). According to M. Patton, cases are “units of analysis” and can be “individuals, groups, neighborhoods, programs, organizations, cultures, regions or nation states” (2002, 447), Yin, on the other hand, points out that case studies
are favoured research designs in “examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated” (2003, 7). Yin adds that the two main sources of evidence available for case studies are usually the researcher’s (1) direct observation of an event or phenomenon, and (2) interviews of persons involved in the said events (2003, 8). Yin explains, however, that a research project qualifies as an exploratory case study (a case-study, nevertheless) because it asks “what” questions; that is, having as a goal to “develop pertinent hypotheses and propositions for further inquiry” (2003, 6). The questions listed in our “research questions” section, affirm our use of an exploratory case study design.

Specific to our qualitative research is the use of a multi-case study, which is defined as having a variety of parts or members, a collection of activities, policies, strengths or problems and relationships that are studied in more detail (Stake 2006, vi). While an individual case represents a common characteristic or condition, or has a specific story to tell, all the cases in a multi-case study form a collection somehow categorically bound together (Stake 2006, 6). Thus, Stake reinforces the fact that in a multi-case study our “official interest is in the collection of these cases or in the phenomenon exhibited in those cases” (2006, vi). We study what is similar and different about the cases, Stake says, to understand the phenomenon of our concern (2006, 6). Different from a single-case study, therefore, a multi-case report shifts focus from ‘What helps us understand the case?’ toward ‘What helps us understand the phenomenon?’ (Stake 2006, 6).

For this study, sample selection used a non-probability sampling procedure; specifically, a snowball sampling method that mainly accesses the researcher’s current
network. We refer as well to Patton’s method of asking “well-situated people” whom they can refer to be interviewed for the study (2002, 237). Research data were collected primarily from interviews with selected respondents, field observation notes, archival documents, and demographic/population data. An interview protocol was used during the data collection phase alongside securing necessary site permissions and consent forms.

Concrete protocols were also set in place to assure that research reliability and ethical standards were met. The multi-case study design serves as a means to triangulate, wherein each important finding was verified by at least three confirmations and assurances from other separate cases. This process, says Stake, gains for the study greater credibility and offers assurances that key meanings are not being overlooked (Stake 2006, 33. This method of triangulation—defined by R.C. Lewonton (cited in Stake 2006, 34) as a “process of repetitious data gathering and critical review of what is being said”—was practiced and maintained in the several phases of validating data and methods, referencing the work of other analysts and theorists and securing concurrence from advisers and readers. Such efforts at triangulation, Stake suggests, reflect an “urgent need for researchers to assure that their sense of situation, their observation, their reporting and their writing have an ‘accurate’ aim” and [are] not lacking in confirmation (2006, 35). An Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was secured from Seattle University prior to the data collection phase of this study (See Appendix B for IRB’s Letter of Approval).

The data coding process subscribed to Saldana’s (2013) method of keeping an eye on patterns that are similar or different, appearing frequently or seldom, following an order or sequence, corresponding to some event or referring to some cause/effect (2013, 5). The study also provides conceptual maps that can specify relations and interactions
between and among themes generated from the clustering of codes. These conceptual maps, according to Creswell (2016, 162) are meant to tell an over-all story about the phenomenon under study. For this study specifically, the researcher made use of the NVivo12 Data Analysis software supplied by QRS International. NVivo12 provides ways of managing, sorting, and presenting data that support analysis and interpretation. The software provided helpful tools such as graphs, word clouds, tree maps, and cluster analyses among others.

**Background and Role of Researcher**

Filipinos are an adventurously mobile people. Much like most who have had relatives, friends, or significant others who have travelled outside the Philippines, at an early age the researcher experienced a variety of foreign cultures and influences. Owing perhaps to the geographical location of the Philippines and the influx of foreign nationals to its shores, Filipinos themselves are a multicultural people, some tracing their roots to many other places in Asia, Europe, and North America. Most Filipinos would typically speak at the least three languages.

In his primary school years, the researcher belonged to a class that welcomed Vietnamese refugee classmates whose families took perilous trips by boat reaching the Philippines across the South China Sea. Most were escaping religious persecution and seeking hospitable places to live and practice their faith. This mind-broadening experience caused him to take an interest in getting to know those newly found friends and observing their unique brand of piety, devotion, and eagerness to talk openly about their faith. Their being churchgoers apparently allowed them to somehow integrate well into their newly found home. It was almost natural to learn that the language of religion
and faith had the power to hold peoples of varying cultural backgrounds together. The researcher further affirmed this fact as he encountered Filipinos flocking to churches, in even the most unexpected places around the world. As an international exchange student in college, he was able to meet overseas Filipino workers (OFWs): domestic helpers, seafarers, nurses, teachers, sales representatives, entertainers, etc., who maintained their connection with home through their involvement in a local church. As an ordained Catholic priest, opportunities arose that allowed him to meet more OFWs in many overseas church settings. Quite amazingly, some engage in active church ministries as volunteer lectors, mass servers, eucharistic ministers, choir masters, singers, and sometimes as church administrators who work even while engaging the intricacies of numerous cultures in their adopted lands.

In his own backyard, the researcher had also experienced bidding goodbye to family members who had permanently immigrated to another place. For a variety of reasons, some aunts, uncles, and cousins had moved either to Canada or California. One sister now works as a nurse and resides in Baltimore, Maryland. In 2015, upon his arrival in Seattle, Washington, as a temporary resident, he was surprised to meet an aunt (a first cousin of his mom) who had been residing in the city for the past 45 years. The world indeed is getting smaller for “pinoys” (an informal tag for “Filipinos”).

The researcher’s further encounters with Filipino immigrants in the Archdiocese of Seattle also piqued his interest in investigating people’s motivations and experiences in practicing their faith in a less-than-homogeneous church context. His background in psychology, human formation, organization behavior, and theology reinforce this inclination to explore the dynamics of persons in organizations with a religious twist.
This project, therefore, is an attempt to describe how themes on cross-cultural fluency contribute to the evolution of religious identities, the thriving of faith, and people’s sustained involvement in multicultural church environments.

**Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

As with most research efforts that initiate protocols to assure the reliability of its data, certain variables may fall outside the researcher’s control. Some Filipinos, especially those working as volunteers in religious organizations, may be overly zealous to support a church project—and more so a clergy-organized endeavour. This may sometimes influence the data-gathering phase of the research. While mechanisms were set in place to communicate and follow through with a formal interview protocol (e.g., interview time limits, an organized set of questions, appropriate interview venues, confidentiality, etc.), the religious temperaments of respondents, and their close relation to the church, may naturally result in an added ‘spiritualized’ flavour to the interviews.

Also, as a study limitation, the cases selected do not aim to represent the varying waves of Filipino immigration into the Seattle Archdiocese. The researcher acknowledges that accounting for these different waves of immigration may well be a topic for a more extensive survey, the results of which would hopefully be more expansive than those presented here.

Research delimitations include deliberate attempts by the researcher to limit the scope and boundaries of the study. These include the clear identification of sites and cases, the number and profiles of respondents to be interviewed, and the strict timetable for the data gathering process.
Definition of Terms

Two terms widely used in this research report are defined here because they underpin the discussion that follows:

Multiculturalism

In general, multiculturalism refers to a “variety of strategies for dealing with the cultural diversity and social heterogeneity of modern societies” (Lahdesmaki, 2010, 5). Lahdesmaki suggests that multiculturalism can be understood as a “cultural condition in which several distinguished cultural collectivities exist side by side, but not as merged to each other” (2010, 5). Used almost synonymously with terms such as ‘cultural diversity,’ ‘interculturalism,’ ‘cross-culturalism,’ ‘transculturalism,’ ‘cultural dialogue,’ etc., multiculturalism embodies a variety of discussions and meaning-making processes that stress heterogeneous cultural interactions (2010, 4).

Theological Portraiture

A mode of understanding, proposed by phenomenological theologian Edward Farley, that distinguishes itself from operations that derive knowledge from dogma (which he calls the “units of relatively precise, discrete and official churchly affirmations”) or the “vague feeling of well-being, and experience of freedom, and the like” (1982, 196). The focus of theological portraiture, Farley notes, is on “contours, interrelationships, unity—in brief, ecclesiality—and one finds ecclesiality in the depth of the sociality of the community” (1982, 200). This community, he suggests, participates in the creation of a “picture” that is in a state of “perpetually being transformed as the individual’s worldly and ecclesial discernments and experiences occur” (1982, 196). This
method of reflection, Farley prescribes, appropriates a compounded understanding of ecclesial historicity, shared norms, and the ever-evolving situational present.

**Summary**

The foregoing sections of this chapter introduce the way we have organized the salient elements that make up our investigation covering the experiences of first-generation Filipino immigrants’ inclusion and engagement in a multicultural church. The statement of the research problem, the purpose and significance of the study, and the research questions raised, prompt the initial themes that we aim to evoke to support our understanding of the phenomenon under study. The brief overview of both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks as well as the methodology/research design, point to the modes of reflection, the principles that ground our investigation, and the system of operations pursued to assure reliability and a more logical flow for deriving and interpreting data. As background support for the aims and objective of this research, we provided (1) a context to our study, (2) the background of the researcher, and (3) the limitations and delimitations of the research.

The succeeding chapters explicate in more detail the discussions on the research’s theoretical and conceptual frameworks (Chapter 2) and methodology (Chapter 3). The results and findings of the study are presented in Chapter 4, while conclusions drawn from the research comprise Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 2
THEOLOGICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical perspective through which the researcher describes and assesses a people’s experience of their multicultural organization. For this study, we situate the global phenomena—diversity and multiculturality—in the context of a religious institution. Accordingly, the study appropriates theological perspectives that facilitate deeper reflections on the communal, cognitive, transformative, and critical aspects of a people’s faith life (Sensing, 2011, xix).

Owing to the institutional flavor that we wish to bring into the study, this chapter references the work of Vanderbilt Divinity School professor Edward Farley (1982), from whom we borrow our overarching method of theological reflection. Writing on philosophical theology, phenomenology, and theological method, Farley introduces his ecclesial reflections through “theological portraiture” a method that investigates a religious phenomenon through the compounded lenses of historical reality, established norms, and evolving contexts. This chapter explains how theological portraiture is a theologizing method that emphasizes continuing reflection rather than fixation on a portrait (outcome or product).

An ecclesial perspective, however, would not be enough without the complementary frameworks that attempt also to describe the actual hopes and experiences of persons who comprise the ecclesial reality that we plan to investigate. The three theological frameworks: (1) encounter and embrace, (2) multi-mindedness and the multiplicity of gifts, and (3) the call to Trinitarian communion, all of which we also cover
in this chapter, represent foundational knowledge that aims to support praxis or personal-level practices/modes of living in a multicultural life-world.

Through our discussion, we hope to reinforce ecclesial perspectives that are necessarily informed by person-level experiences and vice-versa. Chapter 5 of this project synthesizes these ecclesial realities and practical experiences.

E. Farley’s Theological Portraiture: An Overarching Mode of Reflection

To achieve an overarching method for theological reflection, we appropriate the theological portraiture method, developed by ecclesiologist and phenomenological theologian Edward Farley (1982). In his book about ecclesial reflection, Farley describes this reflection and theological portraiture as a means of understanding that necessarily compounds the three dimensions of theological inquiry.

The first among these dimensions, Farley notes, is a depiction of a paramount reality, an ecclesial existence that is experienced and garbed in historical determinacy, its ecclesiality (1982, 186). Much like the setting for stories in the scriptures, says Farley, ecclesiality “refers to an actual historical community pervaded by a dominant story.” This story possesses a distinctive sociality, such as space, time, and duration (1982, 186). Farley’s theological portraiture of ecclesial reality conveniently complements our efforts to paint a picture of the dynamics of a multicultural church—as directly experienced by a people in space and time. In support of our research methodology, theological reflection also gives weight and importance to data culled from various fields of evidence; it is a way of asserting an image of a life-world, an ecclesial life characterized as faith-affirming, i.e., “positive and real rather than negative and fictional” (1982, 187). This first dimension of theological inquiry qualifies whether a focus of study is ecclesial
in nature. Our depiction of an immigrant people asserting their life of faith in an evolving and ever-diversifying community, in our assessment, is ecclesial.

According to Farley, the second necessary dimension of ecclesial reflection and theological portraiture is a description of the ecclesial experience that begs to expose normative and universal realities that are supposedly offshoots of being human and not simply restricted to a certain race, nation, epoch, or subculture (1982, 188). While our methodology does not permit us to impose our findings on a universal scale, this limitation, Farley suggests, “does not release the theologian from the task and responsibility of making judgments” (1982, 181) about how the world is, about shared human possibilities, and actualities. Farley notes that insofar as conclusions are based on fields of evidences, and the genre of theology is reflective inquiry, judgments acquire the character of evidential claims (1982, 182). Thus, while our qualitative method exposes merely what is true for a limited number of samples and cases, our reflections on human activities, values, hopes, and longings (in our case, the desires for prayer, generosity, belonging, peace, expressions of faith, etc.) allow us some space for theologically judging how such human operations are in fact, in a larger scale, shared and normative. Theologians are tasked, we believe, to risk making a value judgment by affirming the possibility of such similar human operations and tendencies as indeed are communally desired and experienced.

The third dimension of theological portraiture has to do with depicting what Farley notes as the “concreteness of individual and social, contemporary situations” (1982, 189). This “leap into some situational present” (1982, 191), Farley suggests, is crucial to avoid being trapped merely in the historical and normative conditions of the
first two reflection modes. As in the case of a picture or a painting, Farley illustrates, a subject of a portrait is understandably brought to a complete stop (1982, 196), as if frozen in time. Reality, he says doesn’t stop, and in fact that which “attends the ecclesial human being is in perpetual change, being transformed as the individual’s worldly ecclesial discernments and experiences occur” (1982, 196). This focus on the situational present, says Farley, allows a theologian to regularly interrogate fields of manifesting realities which, in turn, gives him a more “insightful grasp of both current problematics and possibilities of situations” in view of a telos (1982, 189). According to Farley, this third dimension of theological portraiture recognizes a telos, a goal, in mind which involves the “transformative illumination of everyday social and individual life” (1982, 191). This theological portraiture, as we understand it from Farley, is a process and never simply just about the portrait that it produces. A portrait, as we know, informs us of a world other than what we experience in the present. In our acknowledged limited understanding, we get to also claim that the subject and context of a portrait manifest themselves to us in some ways but still not completely. Yet that same portrait, we also affirm, carries norms, narratives, and deeper life meanings from which—despite a variety of their expressions—our communities still derive some identity. The practice of seeing beyond the portrait, even while being informed by the portrait itself, we learn from Farley, is of utmost importance. The three dimensions of theological portraiture (see Figure 2.1) need to be held closely together to keep in check the possible tyranny of a past context and the threats of relativity posed by our situational present.

To complement Farley’s theological portraiture for understanding ecclesial realities, we must reinforce his reflection method using supporting theological
frameworks that ground the experiences of the persons who make up our multicultural churches today. The discussion that follows recognizes operations in multicultural religious institutions, the acknowledgement of which can engender deeper feelings of inclusion and engagement among community members.

**Theological Frameworks**

These theoretical frameworks are as follows: (1) the faith expressed through an encounter with the other; (2) the empowering recognition of persons’ multi-mindedness and the multiplicity of gifts in our communities; and (3) the call to embody and participate in Trinitarian communion.

**Theology of Encounter and Embrace**

Reflecting on his experience of ethnic and religious conflicts in his native Croatia, theologian Miroslav Volf asks crucial questions: What kind of selves do we need to be to live in harmony with others? How should we think of our own identity? How should we go about making peace with the other? (1996, 15). As Volf emphasizes, his perspective of addressing multicultural dynamics presents a shift from efforts to recreate a society

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Figure 2.1 E. Farley’s “theological portraiture” of ecclesial reflection

These theoretical frameworks are as follows: (1) the faith expressed through an encounter with the other; (2) the empowering recognition of persons’ multi-mindedness and the multiplicity of gifts in our communities; and (3) the call to embody and participate in Trinitarian communion.
that accommodates heterogeneity to that of instilling necessary and helpful dispositions among social agents. Our research, which aims to describe the experience of Filipino immigrants replanting themselves in new and less familiar cultural settings, shares Volf’s framework of evoking faith-appropriate human responses to the evolving multiculturality in our communities today. Members of our church communities may well fit Volf’s description of social agents who possess “hybrid identities” and are “migrating from one identity to another” (1996, 15). Theologians, Volf interjects, must take on the important role of fostering “the kind of social agents capable of envisioning and creating just, truthful, and peaceful societies, and on shaping a cultural climate in which such agents will thrive” (1996, 15).

A drawback to the reality of multiculturality in our societies, Volf notes, is the rise of a “new tribalism,” which he defines as a “captivity to our own culture, coupled so often with blind self-righteousness” (1996, 27). A ‘shadow’ or dark side to life in our Christian communities today, this “new tribalism,” becomes a cause of “fracturing our societies, separating peoples and cultural groups, and fomenting vicious conflicts” (1996, 27). This is not difficult to observe in churches that have over time formed many subcommunities and subcultures. It will not be too much to claim, adds Volf, that the future of our communities will indeed depend greatly on how we deal with the issues of identity and difference (1996, 14).

Coming from someone who had been an object of social exclusion himself, Volf’s theological perspective on cultural pluralism seems worth our deeper ponderings. While referencing Saint Paul’s exhortation to “Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you” (Romans 15:7), Volf uses his own metaphor of “embrace” to
represent our will and capacity to give ourselves to others and to “readjust our identities to make space for them” (1996, 21). His framework relates this expression of embrace to the “mutuality of self-giving love in the Trinity,” “the outstretched arms of Christ on the cross for the ‘godless’,” and the open arms of the father in receiving the prodigal (1996, 21). This will to embrace and welcome the other, Volf says, must come “prior to any judgment about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity” (1996, 29).

We find sufficient support for Volf’s principle of “welcome and embrace” in Emmanuel Levinas’s philosophical reflections on the “Other.” Appropriating Levinas in defining the role of religious communities in an intercultural world, pastoral theologian Emmanuel Lartey affirms the need to “respectfully maintain the otherness of the Other and the integrity of the Self, while also working out an ethical way of being in relation with the Other” (Lartey, 2006, 131). In his work to emphasize the need for greater engagement across racial, gender, class, cultural, and religious boundaries, Lartey notes Levinas’s insistence on the need for “real life encounters with real people as the only true means of genuine knowledge” (2006, 134). Intercultural encounter, he notes, is a “means of real growth, knowledge and care.” Seeing this applied and made operational in our multicultural church contexts can indeed evoke great consolation. We can learn much from the variety of peoples and persuasions around us, but only if we learn to be more open to the reality of the other.

Much like Volf’s focus on the social agent, Lartey also assumes the role of theologian to “examine and explore the nature of humanity precisely because in the human we believe we catch glimpses of the divine Creator” (2006, 115). We affirm that we are made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26), yet in our actual
encounters with those whom we perceive as different from us, we tend toward a forgetfulness of God’s presence in others. As a result, in our communities we can also foster self-preservation among our peers, seek isolation and comfort in the familiar, and develop a grave unmindfulness for those outside our circles. Can this also be a reality in our churches today? Lartey exposes that this is becoming a serious dilemma of our age, especially in our multicultural world, and as such calls for a renewed recognition that “humans are by their very nature related to God” and “we discover reflections of God through encounter with the human in all its complexity and danger” (2006, 115).

Our theme of encountering, including, and embracing the “other,” roots itself in an image of God who is “relational” and to be “encountered within the relational matrices of our human life” (2006, 117). We note Lartey’s descriptions of God as an image of love, whose being is “being-with” and “relational” and “other-directed” (2006, 116). This explains, he says, our anthropological terms for God as father, mother, son, spirit and Creator, images which become meaningless, Lartey explains, in the absence of a concept of relations (2006, 117).

A more serious block to our efforts to encounter and embrace the other is what Levinas and Lartey indicate is the reality and tendency to suppress the other (cited in Lartey 2006, 131). “Otherness,” in this sense, as British scholar Colin Davis explains, appears as a “temporary interruption to be eliminated as it is incorporated into or reduced to sameness” (Davis, 1996 as cited in Lartey 2006, 131). Understandably, we would be very outspoken in denouncing clear and obvious expressions of suppressing the “other” in our communities today. Our wish, of course, is for our churches to naturally and openly disavow any serious instances of inhibiting or restraining members. Our greater
concern, however, has to do with the more subtle, subliminal, and oftentimes unconscious suppression of the other in our midst. This subtle suppression, comes by way of an image of the other that can transition into our own self-image and that given time, education, or development, can come to be as ourselves (2006, 131). Our image of God as the “Other,” therefore, becomes very useful with reference to the reality of the other as a “mystery,” lying “absolutely beyond my comprehension and should be preserved in all its irreducible strangeness” (2006, 131). Levinas and Lartey add that the other is in no way another myself, yet one consistently participating with me in a common existence. As such, we can almost expect that the relationship with the other will not be completely idyllic and harmonious since it reveals not only how the other resists being possessed but also how my powers and freedom are limited (2006, 135). This framework of encounter and embrace thus challenges and confronts us, says Lartey, with “real choices between responsibility and obligation towards the other, or hatred and violent repudiation.” (2006, 135). It confronts each of us and our Christian communities in very real encounters with the other, and it constantly calls us to embrace the utter uniqueness and mystery of those other than us.

Lartey’s and Levinas’s drive to counter the tendencies to suppress the other gets to be seriously tested, and in fact encounters more recent challenges in the many border experiences of migrant peoples. In her effort to re-image negative border experiences, Filipino theologian Gemma Tulud Cruz, while acknowledging how borders remain to represent a gaping wound, a testament to the violence of difference and widening gap between the haves and the have-nots (2008, 370), considers authentic borders to be actual meeting points that “exist not to separate but to connect and reveal.” They are “not meant
to ward off or drive away,” but rather are “places where people meet halfway” (2008, 371). Tulud Cruz, a former fellow at the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at DePaul University in Chicago, defines an authentic border as a “place of encounter,” where we may choose to lay our bodies bare, where(in) we may choose to tell the truth of our lives” (Melanie May, 1995 as cited in Tulud Cruz, 2008, 371). For Tulud Cruz, redefining borders as “places of encounter,” means acknowledging space as creating presence and empowering presence where “our bodies are the primary mediators of this presence”; where one is considered somebody and not a nobody and is, therefore, made present; where one counts (2008, 371). Multicultural places of worship, particularly our parishes under study, may therefore well fit Tulud Cruz’s vision of transforming a “bordered” or marginalized existence into spaces of presence, into a new kind of home not as a place “but a movement, a quality of relationship, a state where people seek to be ‘their own,’ and (be) increasingly responsible for the world” (Nelle Morton, 1987 as cited in Tulud Cruz, 2008, 371).

Tulud Cruz’s attempt to redefine and reimage border experiences fits David Tracy’s discourse on plurality and the need for conversations and reinterpretations of phenomena (Tracy 1987). Tracy raises questions about how we can better interpret an event, a set of texts, new symbols, the rise of movements, individuals, rituals, and so on. Clearly, in our multicultural settings today, the tools we use for interpreting and reinterpreting events around us matter greatly in determining the depth of our encounters and conversations with others and situations. Tracy notes that there is “no intellectual, cultural, political or religious tradition of interpretation that does not ultimately live by the quality of its conversation” (1987, ix). Therefore, much like Volf’s and Lartey’s
emphases on equipping the social agent, Tracy—in presenting his dynamics of interpretation-conversation—seems to contribute much to enriching human experience through unique and helpful tools for engaging the other.

Intercultural communities can benefit by subscribing to Tracy’s mode of interpreting phenomena. We need to reflect on what it means to interpret; Tracy remarks, “in order to understand at all we must interpret” (1987, 7). Opportunities come in our lives, Tracy suggests, when persons find themselves “impelled to find new ways to interpret an experience that their culture or tradition seemed unable to interpret well or even at all” (1987, 7). Migrants, who find themselves in new lands and cultures are faced with such a dilemma; that is, finding new meanings and interpretations in the unique situations in which they find themselves. Shouldn't we, who try to engage others in conversation, be always looking to understand the symbols and meanings that are constantly being revealed to us? Our capacities to engage and encounter the other rely on our renewed openness to interpret and reinterpret new events and phenomena around us.

Multiple-Mindedness and the Multiplicity of Gifts

To encounter and embrace the other, to recognize that we cannot subsume the other into ourselves, and to be more open to the reality of the other as “mystery,” conditions us to easily acknowledge the multiplicity of persons and variety of gifts within and around us. Scripture is replete with narratives of a God intending such a multiplicity. From the story of creation, we read about a God who created the waters to teem with living creatures, and a variety of birds flying above in the sky (Genesis 1:21). Upon seeing all of God’s creation as good, God commissions man and woman to “be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). The story of the
Tower of Babel introduces a variety of languages in Genesis 11:6 and caused initial confusion among the people of God, whereas the story of Pentecost (Acts 2:4) welcomes this multiplicity of languages and gifts with much joy: “We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” (Acts 2:11). Anticipating hearing the mystery and wonders of God in the tongues of many cultures becomes perhaps the goal of our theology, a way of more deeply understanding our faith through multiple mindedness and a more global and pluralistic perspective.

Cynthia Lindner, from the University of Chicago Divinity School, notes how multiple mindedness our capacity to understand and recognize the multiplicity of voices even within us—equips us to “occupy many roles simultaneously, both in our daily lives and in our minds” and to “hold powerfully contradictory opinions and allegiances at the same time” (Lindner 2016, 5). This principle of multiple mindedness, she posits, may serve useful in understanding and negotiating the complexity of Christian ministry today (2016, 6). The theme of multiple mindedness, Lindner explains, is not something new and aligns itself with the postmodern skepticism against a single point of view. It promotes an awareness that each of us is more than a single, solitary self (2016, 30). While pursuing this point, Lindner affirms the insights of psychologist-philosophers William James and Russian Mikhail Bakhtin, that over time we have learned to suppress our “multiple” and “several selves” in favour of the emergence of our “empirical self” (2016, 31). Lindner appropriates Bakhtin’s assertion that truth is “polyphonic” and cannot be held in a single statement and thus must be co-created by a variety of competing voices through forms of dialogue even within ourselves. In this sense, we need multiple-minded religious leaders, Lindner suggest, those capable of discernment and the
ability to engage in ministry with a polyphony of ideas as a help to serving and making more sense and meaning of our complex context (2016, 32).

Yves Congar, Dominican priest and theologian, suggests that navigating our complex context and acknowledging the reality of polyphonic ideas/voices in our communities presents at least two consequences: Congar notes that Christianity, being subject to geography and history, is inevitably impacted by tensions and conflicts (Congar, 1982, 41). If these conflicts and tensions, says Congar, are “brought out into the open and worked through,” they become beneficial (1982, 41). Congar points to crucial needs to overcome traditional perspectives about being church; namely, a faulty notion of disagreements due to sin and the uniform-hierarchical conception of unity, of a military kind (1982, 41). Quoting French writer Robert de Montvalon, Congar affirms that agreeing to “recognize our solidarity with different people” means agreeing “to be changed by them” (Montvalon cited in Congar, 1982, 41). Montvalon, who wrote in 1976, emphasized the necessity for peoples learning to “live with rejection, polemic, tension, isolation, the devouring and impotent desire not to owe anything to anyone” (1982, 41). Simply put, intercultural communities that are marked by multiple-mindedness and the multiplicity of gifts need to allow and acknowledge certain discomforts associated with expected differences. These differences, suggests Congar, can be resolved only, by a power and principle that transcends us all (Montvalon cited in Congar, 1982, 41).

Another consequence of living in a polyphonic world of ideas, suggests Congar, is the necessary acknowledgment that the work of the spirit is “limited in each person and even in each group of peoples” (1982, 41). While the spirit is ordered and open to the
totality of truth, each group, says Congar, has only a certain number of experiences and realizes only a part or certain aspect of the truth. In consideration of this fact, it behooves intercultural communities to subscribe to Congar’s notion of the spirit of truth as “structurally in need of giving and taking,” that is “directed towards dialogue, towards welcoming the other, towards what is different” (1982, 41). Similarly, Pope John Paul II, while speaking about ecumenism, shares Congar’s thrust toward greater and deeper dialogue. It is vital for this dialogue, says John Paul (1979), that we recognize the richness of a unity of faith and spiritual life that is “expressed in a diversity of forms” (cited in Congar, 41). It is at the service of all groups, he says to “help one another to give better expression to the gifts which have been received from the spirit of God” (cited in Congar, 42).

Systematic theologian George Newlands references Kathryn Tanner’s view that multiplicity of thought can indeed serve a beneficial purpose. Newlands notes how Tanner, in forwarding her own theories of culture and multiplicity, calls us to further rethink our theological methods. Particularly, Newlands appreciates Tanner’s bringing up the value of differences and conflicts, those that allow communities to break up their insularity, make possible and desirable engagements between cultures to seek common human values and practices (Newlands, 2004, 47). Tanner posits that “diversity is a salutary reminder that Christians cannot control the movements of the God they hope to serve” (cited in Newlands, 47). Acknowledging diversity, says Tanner, helps Christians “remain open to the Word”…“God’s free and uncontrollable Word, which respect for Christian diversity spreads.” Clearly, a multiplicity and variety of gifts—though at the
onset may present forms of conflicts—might, in fact, serve positive and useful ends for multicultural church communities.

As a help to expanding our theological reflection, at this point, it may also be worthwhile to juxtapose Levinas’s, Lartey’s and Volf’s conceptions of the “other” with those notions of multiplicity and polyphony from Lindner, Tanner, Newlands, Bakhtin and Congar. The “other” which is utterly mysterious and beyond us, ingrains in us the analogical elusiveness of God, the ultimate “Other,” whose movements we cannot predict and control. In our polyphonic, multicultural communities, therefore, can we be made aware of the ever-present, all pervading Word of God who begs to be heard in the variety of voices around us? A reverence for God’s “free and uncontrollable Word,” notes Newlands, not only allows us to be more respectful of multiplicity and polyphony but also develops in us a “renewed attention to the Word” (2004, 47). What does this entail in terms of truths/beliefs that we so firmly hold and justify?

Our impetus to hear the other, and polyphonic expressions, confronts us with the reality of our own fallibility. This stance and the possibility of being proven wrong, suggests Newlands, is appropriate for a theology that purports to be eschatologically open and which “does not pretend to finality in its present apprehension” but nevertheless maintains “specific commitments, positive and negative” (Newlands 2004, 31). While we affirm these notions of fallibility and openness to the eschaton, we are reminded as well of humanity’s understandable fear of diversity. Oftentimes, posits Newlands, an “understandable” and “justified fear” (2004, 49). Humanity, in its evolution, suggests Newlands, had since time immemorial been exposed to issues of survival, uncertainty, wars, and redefinition of its values and identity. Thus, it was for a time convenient for
communities to rely on a “fixed structure of the nature of things,” and a “single system of truth and value” (2004, 49). Newlands nevertheless forewarns that this new predisposition to fallibility and a polyphony of ideas can also represent “a systematic mirror image” of the old fixations (2004, 49). A new normal can as well mean an over reference for disparate and fragmentary life themes that treats all things as relative. As this research affirms, nothing beats a paradigm that is grounded in constant dialogue and interaction among different subcultures. We are to contribute purposefully, says Newlands, to the work of an intelligent and interactive intercultural theology without flagrantly restricting its polyphonic voice (2004, 40). We are asked as well to be self-critical, respectful of contexts and particularities, and fully engaged in mutually enriching dialogue with cultures and the multiplicity of gifts around us (2004, 41).

In recognizing a multiplicity of gifts and the polyphony of ideas in our communities, the attainment of reconciliation and the relative resolution of conflicts in multicultural contexts become most desired outcomes. The Society of Jesus, the religious order to which the researcher belongs, has long referred to the ministry of reconciliation as a defining characteristic of its congregational charism (i.e., gift) especially in these contemporary times. The necessary elements of reconciliation, says former Jesuit Superior Adolfo Nicolas, must progress from forgiveness and healing to empowerment and mission (Nicolas as cited in W. Woody 2017). Grounded in the Spiritual Exercises of Jesuit founder Ignatius of Loyola, these necessary elements of reconciliation, come primarily from “a personal experience of forgiveness,” a moment that liberates us “so as not to remain helplessly fixed on past offenses” (Woody 2017, 7). This encounter with the Other—which facilitates an intense personal experience of forgiveness granted by the
God who loves us first—flows into healing, which leads to empowerment that allows persons to eventually “establish filial bonds that recreate God’s family around a common table” (2017, 8). Concretely, and in anticipation of conflict in our multicultural communities, resulting from the polyphony and multiplicity of thoughts and ideologies, our experiences of personal healing and forgiveness by the Other, can indeed engender our own expressions of mercy, forgiveness, compassion, and reconciliation, any or all of which may be required by the complexity of our times.

**Called to Embody and Participate in Trinitarian Communion**

Echoing the Pauline exhortation that all of creation will eventually be reconciled in Christ (Colossians 1:20), John H. Thomas, President and General Minister of the United Church of Christ (UCC) envisions a church that seeks always “to portray in its life and witness the unity and koinonia of the diverse persons of the Holy Trinity” (Thomas 1997, 2). As an icon of unity and diversity, the Trinity of divine persons, Thomas suggests, must remind us to veer from our tendencies to “deny the rich vision of God’s future” each time we revert to our “monochromatic, monolingual or monocultural configurations.”

In his recent papal exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis (2018) affirms Thomas’ image of the church as koinonia. In salvation history, Pope Francis says, the Lord saved one people and, therefore, “we are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual.” As a community of believers, therefore, we are called not only to respect and embrace the Other and acknowledge the multiplicity of gifts (given to persons, but likewise to our communities) but also to embody and participate in God’s Trinitarian unity.
In support of J. H. Thomas and Pope Francis, Eastern Orthodox theologian and patriarch John Zizioulas posits how our participation in Trinitarian communion is for us, an ontological matter. It is communion that makes beings “be,” Zizioulas says, and “nothing exists without it not even God” (1985, 17). From the fact that a human being is a member of the Church, Zizioulas adds, “he [sic] becomes an ‘image of God,’ he exists as God Himself [sic] exists, he takes on God’s “way of being” (1985, 15). This reality, Zizioulas points out, is not a matter that a person can accomplish alone but rather “a way of relationship with the world, with other people and with God.” It is an event of communion, Zizioulas says, that cannot be realized as an achievement of an individual but only as an ecclesial fact.” (1985, 15)

Supplementing his support for the patristic thought of “communion” as “an ontological category,” Zizioulas also reaffirms that communion which “does not come from a “hypostasis,” that is, a concrete and free person, and which does not lead to hypostases, that is, concrete and free persons, is not an “image” of the being of God” (1985, 18). While a person cannot exist without communion, Zizioulas affirms, “every form of communion, which denies or suppresses the person, is inadmissible” (1985, 18).

As it applies to our study, we also acknowledge that not all forms of communion are positive. It will benefit us to be more aware that our drives toward unity can also take the form of domination and suppression of the other. To prevent this, New Testament scholar Charles Cousar, in describing Saint Paul’s missionary exploits, reintroduces us to an image of the apostle who recognized ethnic differences. As a Jew moving back and forth between communities of mixed backgrounds, Paul “could hardly fail to appreciate the force of identities shaped by racial and cultural heritages” (Cousar, 1998, 49). Paul’s
letters, Cousar suggests, were a means to negotiating these recognized cultural differences. Cousar explains that Paul’s quest for unity among the earlier Christians roots itself not on the fundamental question about how ethnic and cultural distinctions can be suppressed but instead, on the discovery of what they signify and what claims are attached to them (1998, 49).

Liberation theologian Leonardo Boff also suggests how the theme of Trinitarian communion evokes real inspiration for men and women immersed in social and pastoral ministries. Boff translates the Trinitarian concept of “persons” to what he calls the three “Differents,” who themselves are not simply unique from each other but more so engaged in upholding and giving themselves totally to one another (Boff 1988, 151). In describing the Trinity as “Differents” in communion, Boff emphasises how the Trinitarian inner-life poses no domination by one side but a “convergence of the Three in mutual acceptance and giving” (1988, 151). If we apply this model to the way we view society in general, and the dynamics of intercultural organizations in particular, the Trinitarian models can serve for us as an inspiration to work for societies of “fellowship” (Boff 1988, 151).

Boff also suggests that sharing in Trinitarian fellowship “exist[s] only in practice, through being performed” (1988, 129). In this regard, Boff favors the use of the more active word “communing” which he equates with “living-with, living for and being in the presence of others” (1988, 128). The dynamics of “communing,” Boff suggests involves, among others, the characteristic of persons and communities being present one to another. Being present, Boff suggests is “being open, sending a message to another in the expectation and hope of being heard and accepted while at the same time hearing and receiving a message from the other” (1988, 129). Communing, for Boff, also involves the
value of “reciprocity” which not only presupposes a certain “con-naturality between the elements that commune” but also the natural “attraction to one another” (1988, 129). In such a relationship there will be no fusion since each retains its own identity. The attraction to one another, the natural desire for fusion and reciprocity, that is “to become one with the other, marks the depth of the communing relationship” (1988, 129).

Communing, says Boff, also involves being present to the other through its own presence and without intermediaries. “Immediacy,” as a characteristic of Trinitarian relations, according to Boff, means “intimacy, transparency of intention, union of hearts, convergence of interests” (1988, 129).

Boff was echoing the position of German Reformed theologian Jürgen Moltman who presents an image of a Christian community that is “whole, united and unifying” (cited in Boff, 1988, 151). Anchoring his view of society upon his “theology of hope,” Moltman posits that only a community whose social fabric is woven out of participation and communion can “justifiably claim to be an image and likeness (albeit pale) of the Trinity, the foundation and final resting place of the universe” (Moltman cited in Boff 1988, 151). A community that shares in the life of the Trinity, according to Moltman, is that in which “human beings are characterised by their social relationships and not by their power or possessions,” in which they “hold everything in common and share everything, except their personal characteristics” (cited in Boff 1988, 151).

The work toward communion brings with it sincere efforts at healing. In this regard, British theologian and missiologist Lesslie Newbigin calls for a movement for “unity that embraces the diversity while healing the alienation and the breaches which manifest themselves at the points of our cultural difference” (cited in Hunsberger, 1998,
Our research resonates with Newbigin’s theology of cultural plurality, which recognizes how cultures of Christian communities are “extremely complex” and marked by “constantly changing patterns of relationships” (1998, 259). These changing patterns of relationships, explains Newbigin, are oftentimes paradoxically a “discontinuity” yet simultaneously “continuous,” an “identification” yet as well a “separation” (1998, 258). This suggests how identities and religious cultures of peoples who move from one influence to another can understandably come into conflict with other persuasions. It makes sense that interactions of peoples be constantly matched, as Newbigin suggests, with a kind of fellowship of “mutual learning and of mutual correction” that seeks to make faith confessions more challengingly relevant in their new and several situations (1998, 258). This theological agenda that communicates one overarching message of the Gospel amidst the varying expressions of culture, Newbigin suggests, supports our quest for a spirituality of oneness, our efforts to embody and participate in Trinitarian communion.

We need to understand that this move toward unity is a principle that is not so much humanly propelled as it is Spirit driven. Hegelian theologian Peter C. Hodgson notes how God indeed is “efficaciously present in the world” and “present in specific shapes or patterns of praxis that have a configuring, transformative power within historical praxis” (cited in Newlands 2004, 171). This presence of the Spirit in history, suggests Hodgson, is that which makes possible “creative unification of a multiplicity of elements into new wholes, into creative syntheses that build human solidarity, enhance freedom, break systemic oppression, heal the injured and broken, and care for the natural” (2004, 171). While this invites our church communities to be more hopeful
amidst our differences, this project of unity as we know, finds completeness in the final events of human history. The challenge for us, in living our faith in multicultural contexts is to constantly be keener and more conscious of what Newlands calls our “eschatological completeness,” through our unity, the residual mystery found in fragments, parables, icons of our faith, and life lived in our Christian communities (2004, 12).

**Summary**

To support our objective to investigate the phenomenon of multiculturality in our churches today, we have appropriated theological tools and concepts to help ground our understanding of the evolving nature of our religious institutions. The appropriate theological tools exist to anchor community members as they assess their experiences of inclusion and engagement. To help us understand the phenomenon of multiculturality at the level of organizations, we refer to a mode of ecclesial reflection, theological portraiture, as prescribed by theologian Edward Farley. Farley presents a method for viewing church organizations as fluid and ever evolving while also referencing the undivided influences of historicity/ecclesial realities, and the shared norms and experiences of the situational present. Farley’s method of ecclesial reflection, we believe, needs to be complemented by a response from the living persons who make up our organizations. We present these responses using the following theological frameworks: (1) the theology of encounter and embrace; (2) acknowledgement of multiple-mindedness and the multiplicity of gifts; and (3) the call to embody and share in the Trinitarian communion.

To understand the “other,” Miroslav Volf guided us to a clearer vision of ourselves as social agents of “hybrid identities” who must constantly be on guard against
a “new tribalism” that fosters conflicts. Volf uses the metaphor of embrace to symbolise our capacities to give ourselves to others and “readjust our identities to make space” (Volf 1996, 21) for those we deem to be different from us. Similarly, focusing on the importance of engaging the ‘other,’ Emmanuel Lartey emphasizes the need to assure the otherness of the other and veer from any tendency to suppress the other. Finding inspiration in the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, Lartey notes how real-life encounters with real people are the only true means of genuine knowledge. Our encounters with the other, he says, provide us with a glimpse into the nature of the divine Creator, who is the absolute Other. Filipino theologian Gemma Tulud Cruz concretely situates this encounter with the other in the border experiences of migrant peoples. She redefines “borders” as opportunities to meet people(s) halfway and create spaces for empowered presences. This more positive redefinition of border experiences, suggests Tulud Cruz, seeks to promote a new kind of home, that is, a movement for quality relations where peoples can seek to be their own true self.

In support of Tulud Cruz’s efforts to positively redefine experiences of encounter, David Tracy reflects on helpful tools that facilitate embracing the other through new modes of conversation and interpretation of phenomena. The way we interpret things and presences around us, according to Tracy, determines the depth of conversation and the encounter we have with the other.

When we acknowledge our own multiple-mindedness and the multiplicity of gifts in our communities, we are equipped to deal appropriately with powerfully contradictory opinions and allegiances. Cynthia Lindner, while acknowledging persons’ capacities for multiple mindedness, also appropriates psychological tools from William James and
Mikhail Bakhtin, who forward a notion of truth, as “polyphonic,” that needs to be co-created by a variety of competing voices through forms of dialogue. These opportunities for dialogue, says Yves Congar, naturally bring about tensions and conflicts, which when “brought out into the open and worked through,” can become beneficial. George Newlands and Kathryn Tanner affirm Congar’s observation about the beneficial effects of conflicts in communities. To acknowledge diversity, Newlands and Tanner add, helps us to “remain open to the Word,” to God’s “free and uncontrollable Word” that is best spread via diversity. Finally, situating ourselves amidst the polyphony of ideas around us and engendering dialogue facilitates our communitarian resolve toward greater reconciliation. The Jesuit reconciliation ministry, as William Woody, SJ, explains (2017) primarily imparts a spirituality of being loved and forgiven that translates to mercy, sympathy, and compassion for those who are different from us.

Amidst diversity and the multiplicity of gifts, our communities will do well to refer to an image of the church as ‘koinonia.” As Pope Francis and John Thomas believe, we are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. Koinonia says John Zizioulas, is an ontological reality. We are who we claim we are, by living life in communion, an event not realized as a personal achievement but an ecclesial fact. Charles Cousar suggests that Saint Paul journeyed toward koinonia not only by recognizing ethnic differences but also by discovering shared claims and values that are imbedded in these differences. Leonardo Boff, likewise, thought of Trinitarian communion as a convergence in “mutual acceptance and giving” which exists only in praxis, i.e., through being performed. Communing with the other, suggests Boff, is also about being present one to another, being open, sending a message to another in the
expectation and hope of being heard and accepted, while at the same time hearing and receiving a message from the other. Boff’s communitarian principle, is anchored in Jürgen Moltman’s theology of hope that sharing in the life of the Trinity is the “final resting place of the universe.” Sharing in Trinitarian communion, says Moltman, is about holding everything in common and sharing everything, except our personal characteristics. This communion, suggests Lesslie Newbigin, works to heal breaches and experiences of alienation through “mutual learning and mutual correction.” Finally, our capacities for communion, as Peter C. Hodgson notes, reflect God’s efficacious presence in the world that makes possible the unification and the flourishing of communities—a valuable and grace-filled work that we can only ascribe to the absolute Other.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This qualitative multi-case study set out to investigate how the multicultural experiences of first-generation, immigrant Filipinos, who are volunteer church workers in Seattle, view multicultural parishes as organizations. The study gathered data from 12 immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers who belong to 3 Catholic parishes in the Archdiocese of Seattle. These parishes are known for their multicultural population.

The study focuses on the central research question: How do first-generation immigrant Filipinos, who serve as volunteer parish workers in Seattle, describe their experience of working and worshipping in a multicultural context and how does it affect their views of the church as an organization (i.e., in terms of church leadership, decision making, community dynamics, perspectives about the faith, programs/activities, etc.).

The study also asks a subset of questions: What personal values and dispositions do these immigrants believe positively or negatively affect their views of their parish as a multicultural organization? How do these values and dispositions help or diminish their involvement and participation in their multicultural church? How do these values and dispositions translate to worthy recommendations that respondents can make to help sustain inclusivity and engagement in the organization?

Research Method and Appropriateness

A qualitative research method was deemed appropriate for this study because it begins with what Creswell (2007, 37) termed “assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning
individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” For our purposes we refer to three themes, which researchers commonly use to describe a qualitative study, namely: that it is contextual, interpretative, and action-research based. We note the contextual nature of research from Yin’s (2011, 7) notion of qualitative research as “studying the meaning of people’s lives, under real world conditions.” Creswell (2007, 37) affirms this approach with his description of qualitative research as an approach to investigating a specific social phenomenon in its natural setting or the “field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study.” Such a contextual approach, suggests Sensing (2011, 13), matches the “incarnational” perspective (a notion of a God embedding Himself “into the messiness and complexity of our lives” that practical theologians and Doctor of Ministry candidates are asked to demonstrate. Hoping to delve into the “contextual conditions within which people live,” as Yin (2011, 8) suggests, we set out to investigate the growing multicultural contexts found in U.S. parishes today as a fertile ground to understand unique organizational/church dynamics especially from the viewpoint of first-generation Filipino immigrants.

Subscribing to the notion of qualitative research as “interpretative,” the study recognizes the crucial role of the “researcher as key instrument” (Creswell, 2007, 38). Acting as the primary data gatherer “through examining documents, observing behaviour, and interviewing participants” (Creswell, 2007, 38), the researcher must tap into his capacities for reflection and interpretation. Subscribing to a commonly held notion that “all research is interpretative,” Sensing points out that researchers “possess theories, common sense, and presuppositions that predispose them to interpret” a phenomenon (2011, 43). This “interpretative framework,” Sensing interjects, must allow researchers to
recognize their “reflexivity” or “process of critical self-reflection” which he carries throughout the research process (Swinton and Mowat as cited in Sensing, 43). Although reflexivity factors in emotions as affecting the research process, the challenge to understand and depict the world authentically in all its complexity remains alongside “being self-analytical, politically aware, and reflexive in consciousness” (Patton as cited in Sensing, 43). Thus, as the researcher is “expected to be emotionally affected by the research process” (Gilbert, 2001, 4), there can apparently be a functional and worthy purpose for drawing on the elements of one’s personal subjectivities. In this case, the researcher is able to recognize his own intentionality, his unique social status, and social location. The researcher in this case is a Filipino and first-time traveller to the United States who is grappling with the reality of peoples moving from a monocultural context to a multicultural context. The researcher also wishes to investigate how this shift in context impacts one’s view of the church as an organization. The research itself is an acknowledgement that this specific subjectivity of the researcher is an underlying motivation behind the questions asked in this study.

The active, research-based (“active-research” is a form of research) component of our qualitative study also emphasizes the researcher’s role as a “co-participant with the community in the process of gathering and interpreting data to enable new and transformative modes of action” (Sensing 2011, 63). This recalls Creswell’s (2007, 21) notion of qualitative research as a form of advocacy for, and participation toward, the possible resolution of a social problem. Creswell, in this regard, emphasizes the quality of a research project to advocate for an action agenda that may “change the lives of
participants, the institutions in which they live and work, or even the researchers’ lives” (Creswell, 2007, 21).

By evoking from respondents the challenges of living one’s faith in a multicultural context, the researcher hopes to provide them not only a voice to share their experiences but also to help raise their consciousness to recommend options that can address perceived social difficulties in multicultural church contexts. Creswell (2007, 22) cites Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) in affirming the role of researchers to “advance an action agenda for change.” This role, Kemmis and Wilkinson note, must be emancipatory in that it must help “unshackle people from the constraints of irrational and unjust structures that limit self-development and self-determination” (Kemmis and Wilkinson, cited in Creswell 2007, 22).

**Research Design**

This research project appropriates the use of a multi-case study design. It may help to subscribe to Stake’s (2006, 1) definition of a “case” as “a noun, a thing, an entity; it is seldom a verb, a participle, a functioning.” Yin (2018, 11) prescribes a case study research “in situations when (1) the main research questions are ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions; (2) a research has little or no control over behavioral events; and (3) the focus of study is a contemporary (as opposed to entirely historical) phenomenon.”

Stake (2006, 2) further describes the case as “dynamic,” operating in real time, acting purposively, possessing a strong sense of self, and constantly interacting with other cases, “playing different roles, vying and complying.” Also referring to Stake’s description of cases as “real things that are easy to visualize,” we name our focus cases as the three identified Seattle-area parishes where interviews of first-generation immigrant
Filipinos, who are volunteer church workers, were conducted. The total number of interviewees was limited to 12 respondents.

We also note Creswell’s definition of a case study as a “qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (2007, 73). These information sources may include, among others, the following: observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents, and reports. A case study, says Stake “requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its contexts and in its particular situation” (2006, 2). We identify the phenomenon of “cultural diversity” or the experience of a multicultural church as the situation that impacts the activity of our cases. Stake adds that every situation is “expected to shape the activity, as well as the experiencing and the interpretation of the activity” (2006, 2). In choosing a case, he says, “we almost always choose to study its situation” (2006, 2).

Our emphasis on the phenomenon of multiculturality and diversity (situation) as impacting cases (three parishes from the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle), necessitates, as Stake (2006, 23) suggests, a multi-case study. An important reason for doing the multi-case study is to “examine how the program or phenomenon performs in different environments” (Stake 2006, 23) and as influenced by the phenomenon under study. For this study, the researcher’s choice of targeted parishes (cases) is based on the observed diversity of communities visited during the past 2 years. Specifically, the researcher focused on locations where Filipino immigrants have actively invested themselves in parish work and ministry without being overly dominant or influential. As a way of
assessing responses to a multicultural leadership style, the researcher deliberately chose parishes with non-Filipino parish priests/pastors.

The Seattle archdiocese in western Washington State is large and contains the highest percentage of Catholics in the state. According to the 2016 census, the state overall has 863,000 Catholics, which represents 15.7 percent of the entire state population (http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/sweat.html). Although 146 parishes are listed in the archdiocesan directory, this research project focuses on only three communities; these three communities represent select geographical areas in the archdiocese: (1) Immaculate Conception Parish situated on Capitol Hill (Seattle area); (2) St. Thomas More Parish, Lynnwood (North Seattle); and (3) St. Anthony Parish, Renton (South Seattle). From the researcher’s observation, these parishes are home as well to other ethnic groups (e.g., Hispanics, Vietnamese, Samoans/Fijians, Ethiopians, etc.); this contributes to a sense of diversity in these parish communities. The choice of the three parishes sets the scope and limit of the research.

Each single case in a multi-case design, notes Stake, is of interest insofar as each belongs to a collection of cases, and each shares “a common characteristic or condition” (2006, 4). We have identified some of these shared characteristics among the cases as follows: a multicultural Catholic parish in the Archdiocese of Seattle that engages first-generation immigrant Filipinos as volunteer church workers (for at least 3–10 years). Subscribing to Stake’s description of a multi-case study, the common characteristics already mentioned, conform to the requirement that “cases in the collection are somehow categorically bound together” (2006, 5).
The researcher finds it important to reinforce the need for a multi-case research study rather than a single-case study. Having been employed more frequently in recent years, multi-case studies, and evidence derived from their use, are “often considered more compelling” (Yin 2018, 78) and the overall study is regarded as more robust. A multi-case study follows a replication logic that approximates the conduct of “multiple experiments whose findings can be replicated (literal replication) or contrasted (theoretical replication)” (Yin 2018, 87). Emphasizing that single-case designs are more vulnerable since researchers “put all their eggs in one basket,” Yin notes that the “analytic benefits from having two (or more) cases may be substantial” (Yin, 2018, 88). Since results of qualitative studies are often not “generalizable” to an entire population, opportunities for comparative data analysis, as offered by a multi-case study design, seem to lend additional strength and validity to our research findings.

For this research project, data from several intermediary units within a single case were gathered to build a thick description of the phenomenon under study. Yin refers to this as an embedded case study design; such a design seeks to investigate subunits within the same case (e.g., leader interviews, shop records, groups histories, archives data, etc.) (2018, 74). These subunits, Yin notes, “add significant opportunities for extensive analysis enhancing insights into a single-case” (Yin 2018, 77).

**Data collection**

**Interviews**

The research relied primarily on interviews with prequalified respondents. Invitation letters were sent to targeted respondents and specified, among other types, the following information: the topic being studied, the time and venue of the
meeting/interview, a copy of the informed consent form, and the researcher’s contact
details. Pastor-administrators of the parishes were also sent request letters of permission
(See Appendix A). Person-to-person interviews were conducted and generally took place
in the parish setting. These one-on-one interviews inquired about “personal perspectives
of participants,” which they normally are not likely to share in group settings (Creswell,
2016, 127). This study also subscribes to Patton’s assumption that the “perspective of
others is meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit” through interviews (2002,
341). Follow-up conversations were made via phone and Skype. Respondents were also
informed that interviews were recorded. Each interview ran from 45 minutes to an hour.
For the research project’s Interview Protocol, this study referred to the format prescribed
by Creswell (2016, 132). The protocol included the following elements:

- Basic information about the interview (recording time, date, venue, name of
  interviewee, mode of recording interview, etc.);

- Introductions (provide short discussion about the study, structure of the
  interview, space for questions and definition of terms, if any);

- Interview Content Questions (with provisions for probes); and

- Closing Instructions (e.g., thanks, assurances of confidentiality, requests for
  possible additional interviews and validation of interview transcripts).

To minimize the possible “imposition of predetermined responses when gathering
data” (Patton, 2002, 353), open-ended questions were asked during the interviews. Not
only did open-ended questions encourage interviewees to respond in their own words, the
process was a way of welcoming emergent themes that surfaced. Questions were
formulated in the English language, but, if necessary, respondents were also encouraged to express themselves in Pilipino (Tagalog) or Bisayan—the language of the Southern Philippines (the researcher can speak conversational Bisayan). While almost everyone can express themselves in English and Pilipino, many dialects are used in the Philippines. As the need arose, the researcher encouraged respondents to describe crucial experiences in their native dialects and requested them, as they are normally able, to translate these into English. The conduct of the interviews was semi-structured, wherein themes, issues, and questions though predetermined, were open to further probes and follow-up questions (Sensing, 2011, 107). In addition to the research questions mentioned in the research proposal, a more thorough list of interview items/questions is provided in Appendix D.

The researcher was mindful of the influence he may have unknowingly exerted as a priest interviewer. To avoid unduly influencing the outcome of the interviews, the researcher provided a brief overview of the interview and emphasized that the activity was being undertaken in support of academic and research purposes. The researcher made efforts to establish initial rapport prior to the interview proper and stressed the benefits of answering the protocols as honestly as possible. The researcher avoided reinforcing answers by supplementing extra-interview anecdotes and instead used tactful probes to elicit a more complete answer such as “Is there anything else you would like to add?”, “How do you explain that?”, and “Can you explain a little more?” To maintain objectivity during the interview, researchers are advised to be more conscious of possible coercive content in their line of questioning and must seek to “maintain neutrality in question wording and in affect” (Patten 2018, 163). At the beginning of the interview, the
researcher was also mindful of referring closely to the interview protocol (e.g., the list of questions) and reminding the interviewee of the 45-minute to an hour time limit.

Since this study does not intend to gather data from a representative sample of a larger population, nor to use statistical analysis nor numerical data to prove its findings, a non-probability sampling mode was used. To select individuals believed to be good sources of information (Patten 2018, 100), the researcher used a purposive sampling procedure (non-probability) that depended on his knowledge of the population

As a non-probability sampling method, snowball sampling was likewise used to reach out to possible respondents outside the researcher’s network. Used to “locate participants who are difficult to find” (Patten 2018, 102), snowball sampling allowed the researcher to tap into his current network of initial respondents for referrals and then select “new data collection units as an offshoot of existing ones” (Yin 2011, 89). The technique is likely based on the trust engendered among initial respondents who believed in the researcher/study, who in turn, were given a hand at “convincing” more interview respondents to take part in the research. Snowball or chain sampling, according to M. Patton (2002, 237), begins by asking “well-situated people” the following: Whom should I talk to about the study topic? By asking several people who else should be spoken to, Patton says, the snowball gets bigger and bigger, until a chain of recommended interviewees forms a kind of a shortlist. For this study, “well-situated people,” from whom names of possible interviewees may be asked, included the pastor/administrator of the parish together with two or more non-Filipino full-time parish staff workers (who were not included as targeted respondents). It was assumed that the noted informants had an accurate sense of which possible interviewees were active Filipino volunteer workers
in the parish. From a shortlist of five to eight names per parish, the researcher took note of what Patton refers to as the “few key names (that) get mentioned over and over” (2002, 237). The researcher then sent an invitation to participate in the study to the top 3 to 5 people on the list. The letter introduced the study topic and invited respondents, who fit the following pre-set qualifications for interviewees, namely: first-generation Philippine-born, volunteer church workers who are duly registered parish members. The letter also included the informed consent form, the interview protocol, information on the venue for the meeting/interview, and the researcher’s contact email address. Specific interview schedules were set for those who responded to the invitation letters.

**Field Observation Notes**

In addition to the interviews, the researcher also referred to his notes and observations while immersed in the environments under study, whether during the interviews or in casual conversations. As a non-participant observer, the researcher acts as an outsider to the group “watching and taking field notes from a distance” (Creswell 2016, 121). Following Creswell’s Model of Observational Protocol (2016, 119), the researcher listed both “descriptive” notes (about what happened) and “reflective” notes (about observer’s experiences, hunches, and learnings). Descriptive notes, adds Creswell, include observations related to the five senses (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling or tasting); a chronology of what transpired or a picture of the setting. These correspond to the same observation technique used in most ethnographic studies that allow the researcher to employ the “train your gaze” approach (Sensing 2011, 98). This approach uses one’s senses in noticing interactions, gestures, and behaviors, contexts, and
interjections, etc. Reflective observation notes, on the other hand, included preliminary themes observed or any problems, issues, and concerns about transpiring events.

Archival Documents

The researcher was also looking for relevant and valuable archival documents to build the profile of the case studies. The artifacts, or extra archival documents, “become sources of data that can either substantiate or contradict the way participants” portrayed themselves in the interviews (Sensing 2011, 134). Among the helpful artifacts that the researcher was able to collect were the following: histories of the first Filipino immigrants in the parishes and the U.S. in general; appointments to ministries; narratives about parish priests and elders; cultural programs introduced; milestones; church bulletins; and photographs. The researcher also surveyed for cultural, such as the practice of specific devotions, the display of images, unique crafts, music, scripts, and costumes used during presentations. Some local parishes have websites and social-media networks to help facilitate communications. The researcher was constantly looking for such new and emerging artifacts.

Demographics/Organizational Structure

To help interpret data collected from the field, this research referred to important demographics about the organizations under study. A recently published work on Catholic parishes (Zech et al., 2017) proved an important resource for this research project. Reference was also made to the latest census data on migration and archdiocesan/parish demographics, as available. Likewise, to trace the involvement of Filipino volunteer workers in the parishes, descriptions of organizational structures were also noted and analyzed.
Strategies for Maintaining Trustworthiness

To assure the trustworthiness of any research, certain standards must be maintained. Because this study required dealing with human subjects immersed in their contexts and institutions, certain required permissions to assure their protection were secured. Creswell notes the importance of multi-permissions from “gatekeepers,” where “access is required to gather information” (2011, 106). The researcher secured accreditation from, and abided by, the conditions demanded by the Seattle University Institutional Review Board (IRB), for a more creditable conduct of the study. The researcher likewise completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program as a prerequisite for the IRB application.

Informed consent

This study acknowledges the need for research subjects to give approval of the data collection process and to be guaranteed of their rights (Creswell 2011, 106). Informed consent letters/forms were initialled and affirmed by the pre-selected respondents prior to their interviews. Among the elements stipulated by Creswell (2011, 106) on the consent letters/forms include the following: the right of participants to withdraw from the study, assurances of confidentiality and minimal risks, acknowledged benefits for the subject and the organization, information about questions to be asked during the interviews, etc. The interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis, and the respondents received no material compensation. Similar letters of permission were sent to the parish priests of the subject-communities and/or the relevant Archdiocesan offices for approval (see Appendix A.1).
Privacy and Confidentiality

The dominant presumption of most researchers is that respondents’ privacy and data confidentiality will be protected. Patton notes, however, that recent trends also acknowledge the insistence of some subjects to be named, as a way of advancing an advocacy or “owning their own stories” (2002, 411). Unless otherwise requested to be identified, the interviewees’ anonymity was maintained using pseudonyms or simply alpha/numeric representations. In no instance has the researcher discussed, in any formal or informal conservations with other members of the community, the identities of respondents. Interviewees, as well, were strongly encouraged not to disclose information about the study (e.g., questionnaire items, names of participants, etc.) to community members—at least not during the data collection and transcription phases of the research. Although Filipino communities can effortlessly transmit messages through informal networks, the researcher assured respondents that no information or data about the interviews or research process during the data gathering stage would be discussed from his end.

As part of efforts to assure confidence in the study, the researcher arranged to conduct the interviews in a safe and neutral place that allowed for privacy. Audio-recorded data and transcripts of the interviews are stored in password-protected files and set for disposal 5 years after completion of the research. These efforts follow Patten’s (2018, 36) assertion that researchers have an obligation to collect the information in such a way that confidentiality is protected.
Validity and Reliability

For qualitative researchers the challenge is to prove the credibility of their research, i.e., that it is unaffected by extreme biases and subjectivities. This is a critical issue for qualitative researchers. More than simply manifesting tendencies for biases, qualitative researchers are challenged to engage is a “systematic search for alternative themes, divergent patterns and rival explanations” to enhance the credibility of the study (Patton 2006, 553). Using divergent patterns and themes to ensure credibility, a researcher may choose to use triangulation as a tool. For this project, the researcher subscribes to Sensing’s definition of “triangulation” as follows:

a way of cross-checking the existence of certain phenomena and the veracity of individual accounts by gathering data from a number of informants and a number of sources and subsequently comparing and contrasting one account with another in order to produce as full and balanced a study as possible. (Sensing 2011, 72)

Yin (2011, 81) suggests that researchers seek “at least three ways of verifying or corroborating a particular event, description, or fact being reported by a study.” For this research, the researcher referred to the types of triangulations proposed by both Denzin and Sensing (2011, 73) and Patton (2002, 556ff) as described in the text that follows.

Data and Methods Triangulation. The researcher compared and contrasted data coming from censuses and demographics, archival documents, field observation notes, historical and organizational inputs and the interview narratives. Transcripts of interviews were sent to the interviewees for their validation. This opportunity to collect data from many sources, says Yin (2018, 167), allows researchers to be “rated more highly, in terms of their overall quality, than those that relied on only single sourced information.”
**Analyst/Investigator Triangulation.** The study also referred to previously peer-assessed and approved research efforts on the themes of “diversity,” “cultural pluralism” in church settings, and “migration.” The researcher worked in close coordination with the project chair and/or other identified experts in the field to validate the methodologies pursued. Having a peer, a colleague or an adviser to provide feedback, Yin suggests, allows a researcher possibilities to revise or rethink one’s composition and, as a result, inevitably strengthen the research (2011, 275).

**Theory triangulation.** The use of theological and organizational theoretical frameworks for this research project provided a “thicker” and more valid description of the phenomenon being investigated. Consequently, data collection and analysis were pursued to derive concepts and meanings that were generated from objective responses and occurrences. One strength of qualitative research, according to Yin, is “its ability to capture these meanings” or to “search for concepts—ideas that are more abstract than the actual data in an empirical study” (2011, 93). This collection of concepts, says Yin may be “assembled in some logical fashion that then might represent a theory about the events that have been studied” (2011, 93). Thus, other than the discussion of theological frameworks in Chapter 2, it served the research to bring in sociological or organizational theories to reinforce the validity of concepts derived from the research. Further discussions on this subject can be found in Chapter 4.
Other Ethical Issues

Prior to undertaking this project, the researcher had contact with the parishes in this study, when asked, to provide occasional ministerial support to the parish priest, (i.e., saying masses, administration of some sacraments, etc.). These ministries are normally performed upon the invitation of communities. While stipends and allowances were received by the researcher for these services, compensations did not come directly from individuals and were sent directly to the researcher’s religious community as mandated by his congregational way of proceeding. These stipends and allowances were not meant for the researcher’s personal use, the receipt of which did not, to his knowledge, represent any conflict of interest with the study to be conducted.

Data Encoding and Processing

The researcher anticipated that the narratives and other data collected either from the interviews, demographics, censuses, and other archival documents would have consisted of an array of words and figures that needed to be encoded, clustered, and interpreted. In the initial data analyzing process, the researcher found it crucial to maintain a central database of all information culled from the data-gathering phase. This process, described by Creswell as the ‘coding’ phase involves “aggregating qualitative data into a small number of units of information” (2016, 169).

For Saldana, a “code” in qualitative inquiry suggests “most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana 2013, 3). This code is a “researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization,
theory building, and other analytic processes” (Saldana, 2013, 4). Owing to the researcher’s subjective role of assigning codes, the coding process, Saldana notes, is never a precise science but rather and primarily an interpretive act. Researchers, suggests Saldana, use “coding filters,” or the researcher’s personal constructs, concepts, language, models, and theories that structure the study (Saldana 2013, 8). Citing Sipe and Ghiso (2004, in Saldana 2013, 8), Saldana remarks that “all coding is a ‘judgment call’ since we bring our subjectivities, our personalities, our predispositions, [and] our quirks” to the process (2013, 8). The researcher, therefore, did not discount the possibility that personal involvement in the study as a participant observer, and one’s use of subjective filters, formed some part of the process of generating concepts and gleaning meanings from the data.

During encoding, the researcher noted codes that were used repeatedly throughout. This follows from Saldana’s description of a coder’s primary goal of finding “repetitive patterns of action and consistencies in human affairs as documented in the data” (Saldana, 2013, 5). As suggested by Saldana, the researcher was constantly watching for patterns that were (1) similar or different, (2) appearing frequently or seldom, (3) following an order or sequence, (4) corresponding to some event, or (5) referring to some cause/effect.

Codes, patterns, and units were assigned meaningful labels and then further grouped into “broader units of information” or “themes.” This coding process is intended to create conceptual maps revealing how the various emergent themes are interrelated and to “tell an overall story about the phenomenon under study” (Creswell 2016, 162). Since this research is a multi-case study, theme coding enables the researcher to cluster...
responses by contexts/parish setting. Using this process, the researcher was able to compare and contrast themes across different clusters.

To refine this process, the researcher also explored using qualitative data analysis (QDA) software as a means to store databases, find relevant evidence for codes and themes, and analyze how participants responded to questions asked in the interviews (Creswell 2016, 181). Specifically, this study used NVivo12 data analysis software supplied by QRS International.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Patton suggests that one aim of data analysis and interpretation is to “transform data into findings” (2002, 432). This process can be pursued through any combination of procedures; for example “by examining, categorising, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining (narrative and numeric) evidence” (Yin, 2018, 208). In support of the foregoing, the research project followed modes of content and thematic analysis, that the researcher adopted to develop “pattern recognition” (Boyatzis 1998 cited in Patton, 2002, 452) for “recurring words or themes.” Yin also suggests developing an analytic strategy that begins by “playing” with available data (Yin, 2018, 212) in view of “watching for patterns, insights, or concepts that seem promising.” For this purpose, Yin (2018, 212) appropriates M. Miles and M. Huberman’s (1994) modes of manipulating data, as follows:

- Putting information into different arrays reflecting different themes and subthemes;
- Making a matrix of contrasting categories and placing the evidence within such a matrix;
• Creating visual displays—flowcharts and other graphics—for examining the data;
• Tabulating the frequency of different events; and
• Putting information into chronological order or some other sequence.

Yin proposes at least four strategies that the researcher can adopt as possible modes
for analysing data. First, the researcher found it helpful to subscribe to the strategy of
“relying on theoretical propositions” (Yin 2018, 213) that analyze data with reference to
the sets of research questions, reviews of literature, and/or theoretical and theological
frameworks. The researcher also kept in mind the use of collected data and ascertained
whether these data were addressing the initial questions raised in the study. At this stage
of data analysis and interpretation reference should be made to the questions asked and
generated “during the conceptual and design phases” of the research, as well the insights
that “emerged during data collection” (Patton 2002, 437).

Second, the research also subscribed to Yin’s strategy of “working data from the
‘ground up’” (Yin 2018, 214). This inductive method of sorts begins by recognizing how
one useful concept, or two, can jumpstart an “analytic path” and possibly suggest
additional relationships and/or support the formulation of a “grounded theory” (Yin 2018,
214–215).

Third, the researcher made efforts to develop relevant case descriptions as an
alternative mode for analyzing a wide array of generated field data. Providing
descriptions for collected data, may “appear trivial” and “not seem very insightful” (Yin
2011, 208) and classifying relevant descriptions and categories of data is not necessarily
easy. Yin notes that researchers will need to overcome the tendency to generate a
“mundane description that wanders all over the place with no apparent aim” (Yin 2011,
208). For this research project, the researcher referred to Yin’s suggestion to describe case study data according to certain categories. These could include, routine functions, diversity of peoples/social groups, nature of social institutions and structures, processes over time, etc. especially as these complement our understanding of a multicultural church context. A special interest of this research effort was data generation with descriptions that “promote some subsequent action—typically calling for changes in public policy or in policy agendas” (Yin 2011, 214). As a way of interpreting data, the researcher also subscribed to Yin’s proposal to analyse data as a way of “explaining how or why events came about, or alternatively how or why people were able to pursue particular courses of action” (Yin 2011, 216).

Finally, the technical quality of data analysis can be further improved by attending to alternative or rival explanations (Yin, 2011, 218). The research, Yin suggests, should be able to “formulate and present evidence related to realistic or plausible rivals, seeking to show how the evidence might favor the rival” (2011, 218), as if it were our primary explanation. The compiled evidence, Yin proposes, “should of its own weight then dispel the rival” (2011, 218)

Since research respondents belonged to a racial group (Asian/ Filippino), the researcher also watching for what Patton terms “indigenous categories” or the word/units used by groups to “make sense of their world” (Patton 2002, 454).

**Summary**

The measures described in this chapter are a means to manifest the researcher’s aim to assure the truthfulness, validity, and credibility of the study. Throughout, the researcher attempted to impart degrees of transparency and honest disclosure of methods
and principles undertaken to assure the validity of the research. The salient parts of this chapter included: (1) A discussion on the use of qualitative rather than quantitative research; (2) the benefits of using a multi-case study design over a single-case study; (3) modes of data collection, (4) strategies for maintaining study trustworthiness; and (5) data encoding, analysis, and interpretation steps. Relevant documents are included as part of the appendices.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3, the research methodology for this qualitative multi-case study set out to investigate relevant descriptions from first-generation immigrant Filipinos who serve as volunteer church workers in their adopted multicultural church. We asked how their descriptions influence their views on inclusion and religious engagement in their faith communities. The study asked the following questions:

- How do first-generation, immigrant Filipinos who serve as volunteer parish workers—in select communities of the Archdiocese of Seattle—describe their experience of a multicultural context as it affects their faith life and their view of the church as an organization?
- What does it mean for them to practice their religious culture in a multicultural setting?
- What personal values and dispositions do the respondents believe positively and/or negatively affect their views of their parish as a multicultural organization?
- What recommendations can they make to members of such organizations to help sustain involvement and participation in such multicultural contexts?

Another objective of this multi-case study was to compare and differentiate interviewee impressions of their multicultural environment as influenced specifically by their unique parish contexts. The three parishes (cases) selected for this research represent multicultural communities that are undergoing varying stages of transitions and development. The unique situational differences of each parish are described separately.
in the site profiles section of this research report and, unless otherwise stated, the presentation and analysis of themes cover commonalities shared across parishes. Indeed, the noticeable involvement of volunteer immigrant Filipino church workers in these parishes and their responses to our research queries provided a valuable clue to our understanding regarding the dynamics in these multicultural contexts.

The presentation that follows contains the following: (1) a description of each case (site profiles); (2) a general profile of research samples/respondents; (3) research methodology as applied to data collection and analysis; (4) the presentation and analysis of themes; and (5) a summary. Chapter 5 synthesizes the results and the theological themes in the research project, and discusses the significance and implications of the study, its continuing questions, and some opportunities for further research.

**Description of Each Case/Site Profiles**

The site profiles that follow introduce the three churches studied as ethnically multicultural communities. We note with interest the 2016 U.S. Census Bureau (Data USA 2016) report about the Philippines as the second most common birthplace for foreign-born residents (71,953 residents) of Washington State that follow numbers for Mexico’s foreign-born U.S. residents (240,928 residents). These data affirm the presence of Filipino immigrants. The Filipino population is predominantly Catholic.

*St. Anthony Catholic Church (SACC) – Renton, Washington*

St. Anthony Catholic Church (SACC) in downtown Renton, Washington, began as a mission church in 1901; it was dedicated as a full-fledged parish in 1905. Its website describes the church as “a culturally rich, engaged parish that evangelizes and forms disciples by nurturing an encounter with Christ.” Known as one of the oldest and largest
parishes in the Archdiocese of Seattle, SACC counts as its members some 7,000 registered parishioners. Demographically, it represents one of the most ethnically diverse parishes in the archdiocese. The parish consists predominantly of Hispanics, Filipinos, and Vietnamese, alongside the longstanding Italian, German, Irish, and Polish communities. Respondent interviewees for this research also mentioned the recent influx of Indian and African parishioners and note the community’s attempts to appropriate some 15 languages into the ‘Prayers of the Faithful’ during services. The parish’s ethnic diversity reflects the larger Renton population which, as of 2017, consists predominantly of 45.8 percent White (non-Hispanic), 24.2 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 13.7 percent Hispanic and 10.1 percent Black residents (Census, Renton, 2017).

SACC is a vibrant parish which holds 6 regular masses on weekends (inclusive of the Saturday vigil and a Spanish mass). Regular morning masses are Monday through to Saturdays. Currently, the pastor is supported by: a parochial vicar from India, two permanent deacons, eight regularly paid staff who serve as pastoral assistants for administration, the apostolate to the Hispanic and Vietnamese communities, children’s faith formation and sacraments, catechism, music, bookkeeping and the Called to Protect and Maintain a Safe Environment program (Website, Seattle Archdiocese 2019).

SACC involves its parishioners in a variety of multicultural engagements/events. In 2012, the parish felt the need to reach out beyond its borders and set up the “Standing with Haiti” program which specifically supports the temporal needs of its adopted sister-parish: Ste. Anne de Hyacynthe Parish in Port au Prince. The community’s covenant with it twin parish includes a commitment to the “ongoing dialogue between our two peoples and to assure that this covenant grows in meaning and effectiveness.”
SACC holds the Annual Fundraiser Dinner to solicit financial help for Ste. Anne’s various needs, namely, salaries for teachers and staff of its parish and school, a feeding program, book requirements for students, and facilities improvements, among other needs. The community also offers prayers for its sister parish during the ‘prayers of the faithful’ during Sunday masses. Another major multicultural event in the community is the “Taste of Saint Anthony” (TOSA) which is dubbed as “one of the crowning events of the whole parish” held in the spring (Website, St. Anthony Parish 2019). TOSA provides opportunities for the diverse cultures in the parish to showcase their ethnic food, music, dance, and singing in a day-long event. The interviews with respondents revealed the current pastor’s efforts to reinforce commonalities among the involved groups to showcase the many local ethnic images of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This effort, remarked one interview respondent, allows members to “see the beauty of a multicultural” community.

**Parish Situational Distinctives**

Of the three parishes included in this study, SACC is the most ably staffed. The parish office resembles a regular, professionally run organization with each staff person having their own room or workstation.

**Field observations/perceptions of respondents**

All the respondents agreed to be interviewed in the parish office. There’s an observed air of formality with the way parishioners carry themselves (even for the Filipino interviewees whom the researcher had previously informally encountered). Judging from the number and diversity of parishioners who attend masses and parish-organized reconciliation services, SACC operations are extensive. Reportedly, the
pastor conducts regular retreats and recollection days alongside active involvement in the many multicultural activities. The pastor likewise issues weekly letters to the community and his homilies together with the weekly parish bulletins are posted online. The parish website is updated regularly. The number of regular programs initiated by the parish generate a great deal of support. Lately, SACC is also known to have produced a stream of vocations to the priesthood. Given the extent of its operations, the parish will indeed need to be run professionally. From the specific responses from the interviewees, the more joyful, celebratory, and informal aspect of parish life can still be further reinforced.

Immaculate Conception Church (ICC) – Seattle Central District

According to an account by the Filipino-American National Historical Society (FANHS) Executive Director, Dorothy Laigo Cordova, Immaculate Conception Church (ICC) is the oldest standing Catholic church in the Seattle area. FANHS considers ICC its home parish.

Parish Situational Distinctives

ICC was founded by the Jesuits on September 12, 1891 and was turned over to the archdiocese in 1929. During the late ‘40s and ‘50s, says Cordova, parish demographics started to shift from a predominantly white membership to a more diverse African American, Filipino, Japanese and Native American membership. ICC’s ever-changing demographics cannot be detached from the bigger population issues affecting Seattle’s Central District, to which the parish belongs. Richard Morrill, University of Washington geography professor (2013) notes how demographics in the area had been impacted most dramatically by local economic, social restructuring, and planning policies. Even in self-proclaimed “liberal” Seattle, Morrill notes, current policies have resulted in “the
gentrification of most of the original Central District core, and in the displacement or relocation” of minority communities (Morrill 2013). Because of the historical tug-of-war among the district’s diverse population, ICC was once known as the “civil rights” parish especially under the leadership of its late pastor Rev. D. Harvey McIntyre (Website, Immaculate Conception Chapel, 2019). Long-time ICC parishioner Fred Cordova described Father McIntyre as a priest who “stuck his neck out many, many times for people of color” (Seattle Times, January 30, 1992).

In 2012, the Cordovas together with the Filipino Council for Pastoral Affairs of the archdiocese worked to enshrine the images of the two Filipino saints and patrons of migrants, Sts. Lorenzo Ruiz and Pedro Calungsod in the parish. Owing to the large number of Filipino parishioners who called ICC their church, in the past some Filipino priests were also assigned to the community, namely: Frs. Jaime Tolang, Manuel Ocana, and Vic Olvida, among others.

Its official website describes ICC as “a dynamic, welcoming, multicultural, Catholic community of believers who work together honoring and serving the Lord through our gifts, talents and abilities” (Website, Immaculate Conception Parish, 2019). The current pastor hails from the Democratic Republic of Congo and is supported by a very lean staff of two deacons, one director of Faith Formation and Evangelization, and one office manager. Some of the staff also assist in some capacity at St. Therese Parish—which is also administered by the pastor. ICC holds two masses on weekends (including the Saturday vigil mass) and opens its doors to other non-parish events such as Seattle University’s annual mass of the Holy Spirit and the inter-parish Santo Niño Feast organized by Aklanon Association of Central Philippines, among others.
Field observations/perceptions of respondents

ICC is a large church with few parishioners. Owing to its history, it is quite evident that ICC had lost membership through the years. Most of its loyal patrons no longer reside in the neighborhood and some attend from as far away as north or south Seattle. Operations have stabilized lately after years of being on the edge of financial bankruptcy. Filipino respondents had expressed their wish for the archdiocese not to close the parish. Filipinos and African-Americans, the two largest groups in the parish, find themselves quietly competing for greater influence. Filipinos believe that the African Americans have the stronger influence since the parish priest and a deacon are ethnic blacks. Filipino respondents reminisce about the past when Filipino priests were assigned to the parish to minister to them. Parishioners are also not getting any younger and there are not many second-in-line church workers who can take on future parish ministries. Recently, to the surprise of some parishioners, the parish hired a non-Catholic music director. There are also fewer parish programs in which one can become involved. Most Filipinos are focused mainly on the work of the Legion of Mary. This group meets regularly but seems to have a life relatively detached from the bigger parish operations. Some Filipinos also distinguish themselves from long-time Filipino community leaders whom they perceive as “more Americanized” and whom they feel project themselves as more “educated” and “knowledgeable.” Filipinos console themselves by doing other volunteer work outside the parish and quietly declining offers to step up involvement at ICC. The observed demographics of ICC do not correspond to the general demographics of Seattle or the Central District (https://www.areavibes.com/seattle-wa/central+district/demographics/). The white population of Seattle and the Central district (64–66
percent) are not perceptible in the ICC population. Likewise, the black population of the Central District (15 percent), which is much higher than the Seattle average (7 percent) explains the more noticeable number of black ICC parishioners (https://www.seattle.gov/opcd/population-and-demographics/about-seattle#raceethnicity). Difficulties in recruiting new parishioners continue, and ICC’s aging demographic will continue to pose challenges for innovating new programs and assuring smooth integration for other members.

St. Thomas More Parish (STMP) – Lynnwood, Washington

Parish Situational Distinctives

St. Thomas More Parish in Lynnwood, Washington, was founded in 1962 with a mission to “invite all to discover and to share the love of God through prayer, education, worship and service” (Website, St. Thomas More Parish, 2019). In 2006, citing the ethnic diversity of the parish, then newly appointed pastor, Rev. Fr. Bob Camuso, gratefully acknowledged the “multicultural makeup of this community” (The Catholic Northwest Progress, 2006). Rev. Fr. William Treacy, known for his ecumenical and interreligious, interfaith outreach was also a one-time resident of the parish (The Catholic Northwest Progress, 2006).

Data from the 2017 U.S. Census show Lynnwood as a community consisting of 54.6 percent White, 17.7 percent Asian, 14 percent Hispanic and 7.7 percent Black residents. Affirming the presence of various ethnicities in the parish, some of our interview-respondents noted that “we are diverse here” and “We are all different. The whole body works. We have to appreciate the difference.” Since the last three pastors (including the current one) are of African descent, research interviewees note that the
“Africans have started to come. They come because they feel more comfortable coming here.” True enough, the researcher through his interactions with parishioners noted the influx of African families from Kenya, Uganda, Congo, Eritrea, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, and Cameroon, among others.

Three masses are celebrated every weekend (including the Saturday vigil) while morning services are also held from Tuesdays to Saturdays. The current pastor, who is from Kenya and holds a doctoral degree in Social and Cultural Studies is assisted by a total of eight paid staff who include a deacon, and pastoral assistants for administration, youth ministry, finance and bookkeeping, faith formation and RCIA, community involvement, music, and maintenance.

The parish also maintains a school that welcomes pre-school to 8th grade students, the families of whom live mostly around the neighborhood. According to the Archdiocese of Seattle website, the St. Thomas More Parish School gives high priority to its Catholic identity and academic excellence when planning for programs for their students who are reportedly 92 percent Catholics (Website, Archdiocese of Seattle, 2019). The involvement of the school in the life of the parish (and vice versa) is very apparent and provides a family appeal to the parish community. Sunday school sessions offer Gospel reflections for young members of the congregation, and these are mostly well attended.

Field observations/perceptions of respondents

STMP is a family-oriented parish. Adult parishioners attend with their children. Consequently, the Sunday school for children regularly enjoys a strong attendance. A steady stream of young sacristans who assist during the liturgies. On at least two
occasions the researcher was approached and informed that the parish was once a ‘white-dominated’ parish. Older parishioners get to say now more in jest: “We built this parish. Now, we are the minority.” Reportedly, tensions between the “white” and immigrant populations (particularly Filipinos) have dramatically eased through the years as more immigrant groups are welcomed in the parish. The firing of two “white” parish staff and the retention of two Filipino staff members caused a stir a few years back. Filipinos feel that they have proven themselves well, in terms of forging cooperation over the past years; in time they earned the trust of other parishioners. Due to the large number of Filipinos in the parish, second-in-line volunteers are more than willing to step in. Leadership transitions among Filipinos will be critical in the coming years. Respect for elders alongside giving free and unobstructed rein for the younger generation to bring in more innovation and creativity will be crucial.

**General Profile of Samples/Respondents**

Following the scope and delimitation of the study, respondents were qualified according to the following basic profile: Philippine-born immigrants (first-generation) to the United States who are also volunteer church/parish workers. Twelve respondents were interviewed between November 28 and December 27, 2018. Four people, for each of the three parishes, participated. The respondents’ ages ranged from 38 to 80 years; all noticeably belonged to families that have been active in church activities or some form of service/socio-civic involvement even before immigrating to the United States. All respondents have also occupied several key leadership and supervisory positions in their many involvements. Their professional backgrounds cover the following fields: Administration and management, human resources, accounting and finance, pharmacy,
nursing and medical field, business/computer technology, engineering and architecture. One respondent is a third-order lay person; another, once seriously considered life as a monastic. More than half of the interviewees are retired or semi-retired from their professions. Table 4.1 summarizes select biographical information about the respondents and their ministry involvements.

Table 4.1 data indicate that the average age of respondent church volunteer workers is 65 years—a time when most had retired from work or were freed from child-rearing responsibilities. Four respondents (a third) of the total number are below retirement age. As one might expect, their responses to interview questions (as further discussed in the “Role of Parish Leadership” section) reflect some views that deviate from those of the “older guards.” Most of the respondents’ arrival dates in the United States coincided with the “martial law” period in the Philippines (1969–1986). This was a time marked by civil unrest and economic downturn. While two respondents immigrated during the post-martial law period, the weight of their responses does not seem to reflect a significant split (except for the age gap issue) from the rest of those interviewed. As indicated in Chapter 1, relating to the limitations and delimitations of the study, it would have been ideal to account for more responses representing the different waves Filipino immigration into the United States. Other considerations might include some background explaining the dearth of younger and newer waves of volunteers in the parishes. In which areas in the whole of Washington State do possible new waves of Filipino immigrants choose to settle? What preoccupations do new immigrants confront that may possibly prevent them from engaging more actively in church activities? These questions deserve further study through expanded research.
Table 4.1 Biographical data of interview participants and their ministries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARISH/ CODE NAME</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT</th>
<th>PLACE OF ORIGIN</th>
<th>ARRIVAL USA</th>
<th>PARISH ARRIVAL</th>
<th>MINISTRIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SACC-01</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Chemical Engineer</td>
<td>Laoag, Ilocos Norte</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Multicultural Commission; St. Vincent de Paul; Eucharistic Minister; charismatic renewal;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACC-02</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Medicine/ Counseling</td>
<td>Laoag, Ilocos Norte</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Eucharistic Minister; Simbang Gabi Chair; charismatic renewal;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACC-03</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Business/ Info Technology</td>
<td>Paranaque, Manila</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Sacristan; Eucharistic Minister; charismatic renewal; faith formation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACC-04</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Catechism/3rd Order Religious</td>
<td>Lipa, Batangas</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Sacristan; Eucharistic Minister; adoration committee; Filipino committee;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC-05</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Accounting/ Finance</td>
<td>Digam, Leyte</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Legion of Mary; choir; pastoral council; liturgical com; socials com;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC-06</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Chemistry/ Pharmacy</td>
<td>Caloocan, Manila</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Legion of Mary; faith formation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC-07</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Manila</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Legion of Mary; choir; dance troupe;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC-08</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Accounting/ Administration</td>
<td>Caloocan, Manila</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Legion of Mary; Filipino community of Seattle;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STMP-09</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Registered Nurse</td>
<td>Cebu City</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Pastoral council; choir; faith formation; health/ wellness; eucharistic minister; multicultural commission; Serra club; Bible study group;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STMP-10</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Procurement/ Management</td>
<td>Tondo, Manila</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Stewardship/ hospitality commission; choir; multicultural commission; school volunteer;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STMP-11</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Journalism/ Human Resources</td>
<td>Bacon, Sorsogon</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Pastoral council; choir; faith formation; multicultural commission; eucharistic minister; Serra club;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STMP-12</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Registered Nurse</td>
<td>Kalibo, Aklan</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Multicultural Commission; Serra club; eucharistic minister; social services; Simbang Gabi chair;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The respondents also come from these culturally diverse regions in the Philippines (5 - Metro Manila; 2 – Northern Luzon; 2 – Southern Luzon; 3 – Central Visayas). There is diversity even among Filipinos in a multicultural church. Reasons for immigrating to the U.S. are noted in Table 4.2

Table 4.2 Primary reasons for respondent Filipinos immigrating to the USA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work and Economic (3)</td>
<td>“The company has corporate offices in New York. I was given a chance to go to New York for six months to attend those ins and outs of operations ...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I applied for a 3rd preference professional visa to go to the US. The visa was for professionals like engineers, nurses, teachers, and pharmacists, etc.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We wanted to go to the US for better opportunities.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Reasons (3)</td>
<td>“I moved in here because of my parents. My grandfather was an American citizen.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Both my aunt and uncle got sick. No one was there to take care of them. They had no children. So, I tried to come.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“My mom was a registered nurse and our journey to the US started with her.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiancée Arrangements (2)</td>
<td>“We never met. He flew to San Diego and we got married. It was a whirlwind thing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“When I was finishing school, he started calling again to follow up on me. I told him to wait for me until I graduated.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change and Renewal of Life (2)</td>
<td>“A priest-friend told me: Don’t think that Jesus is only in the Philippines. He is also in the US.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“He (spiritual director) told me to convert my energies into spiritual meditation. It was the time for me, he said, to come back (to the faith).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political (1)</td>
<td>“I got to work in the Philippines, but the situation was getting more political...I flew out of Manila in the evening to escape. I came here with a suitcase of summer clothes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism (1)</td>
<td>“I was only visiting with 3 other friends. We were supposed to stay for only 3 days...I found a job right away.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than half of the respondents have had experiences in multicultural environments prior to their arrival in the United States. Some of their coded statements are listed in Table 4.3.
Table 4.3 Interviewees’ multicultural exposures prior to USA arrival

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior Multicultural Exposures</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Work Abroad (4)               | “I was coming from Saudi Arabia. I was there doing office work for five years in the Engineering Department.”  
  “I was even sent to China when the company opened a branch there.”  
  “I was in Saudi Arabia. I learned a lot from Filipinos staying together.”  
  “I went to Switzerland twice for trainings.” |
| Work in the Philippines (2)   | “I however adapted easily because…I dealt with a lot of foreigners and tourists every day.”  
  “My boss was an American. He was a very dynamic and encouraging boss. I liked him very much.” |
| Philippine Church (1)        | “(Our) Church in Manila was run by Americans. We were able to deal with them well. I saw how the American priests worked.” |

Although others may not have had initial multicultural exposures prior to their arrival in the United States, most have had parish contacts in other locations (Hawaii, Minnesota, Maryland, Illinois, and California) before finally settling in Seattle. Some had also expressed familiarity with American culture by way of the books and magazines they’ve read, stories from their immigrant family members and movies from Hollywood, among other types of exposure. The collective respondents’ profile points to their relative predispositions for immigrating to the United States and adjusting to new, foreign, and multicultural environments. Filipinos are predominantly English speakers, which allows them to integrate into the American milieu more easily than other Asian counterparts.

However, despite their prior exposures to American or multicultural situations, Filipinos actual experiences and initial impressions upon arrival in the United States, still speak to the very real challenges immigrants face in their new environments.

Documenting stress-related and mental health issues among Filipino immigrants in the
United States, public health practitioners A.B. de Castro, G.C. Gee and D.T. Takeuchi classify immigrants as belonging to vulnerable groups that “often face considerable challenges as they learn and adjust to the norms and values of the host culture” (2008, 551). Citing incidences of acculturative stress, de Castro et al., count as legitimate stressors among immigrants the lack of English skills, economic status, and immigration status (2008, 552). For our specific respondents, adjustments to the climate, the fast-paced life, experiences of direct discrimination, and the sense of being physically and culturally different added to the challenges of initial acculturation as Table 4.4 reveals.

Affirming our respondents’ initial acculturation challenges, Professor Elaine H. Kim, University of California, at Berkeley, in her studies on the persistence of phobic attitudes and discriminatory policies against Asian Americans, cites comments made by white people which remained stubbornly in her memory, namely: “At least you are not black” and “You should be grateful that you are not black” (1998, 4). These statements, Kim notes, convey a particular kind of racism that on one hand encourages Asian Americans to feel superior to African Americans, yet positions them in a “racial hierarchy meant to perpetuate white privilege at the expense of both Asian and African Americans” (1998, 4). The superiority of everything American, which for many is coded as “white,” notes Kim, has been an outcome of “colonial mentality” (1998, 7), a reason to explain why Asian Americans can tend to quietly tolerate racial slurs or hold back in questioning injustices against them. To add to this somehow inhibited attitude toward forms of racism and discrimination, Asian Americans apparently have a peculiar view of what is “America.” As Kim explains, Asian American immigrants came to the United
States to escape wars, political upheavals, and barriers to political and economic mobility in their homeland (1998, 8).

Table 4.4 Respondents’ initial experiences upon immigration to the USA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Immigration Experiences</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Impressions and Initial Adjustments to the New Environment | “It was just my second week and I realized that America is not the best place; not like what we see in the movies. There was nothing grand about it; not even the best.”
| | “Life in the US is very fast paced. I observed the busy schedule of persons living here.”
| | “Coming here to look for a job was difficult.”
| | “We moved in the Fall. It was very cold.”
| | “In the Philippines, life is simpler. Here, everything will need to be arranged (de numero).”
| | “When we came here, we just went straight to work. We were doing double jobs. When you’re coming here as a new immigrant, you have nothing. We had to start from scratch. We had to build our finances. It was a big adjustment.”
| The Reality of being Different | “My job was to call people (on the phone). They would listen to me and ask me where I was from. They would tell me to go back to the Philippines.”
| | “It’s a challenge when people don’t understand how we speak. We don’t talk the same way as them.”
| | “At that time, there were not many Asians in the ‘80s. I felt different.”
| | “There was a mother with two kids. The younger kid was holding her mother’s hand while looking at me. She (the kid) asked: Is he an alien?”
| | “In the Philippines, we are respectful especially of our teachers. We follow the rules. Here, as I experienced it, some even yell at teachers. They have no respect.”
| | “Students my age were into public displays of affection. We didn’t have that back home. We are more discrete in the Philippines.”
| | “People laugh at you because you’re different. You don’t look like them. You are different from them.”
| Actual Experiences of Discrimination | “When I first arrived at the airport, I asked an old lady where I can get a map to help me around. ‘I don’t think you can interpret a map,’ she told me. I was angry but wouldn’t want to get into an argument.”
| | “You cannot avoid being discriminated (against) because of your color. Some think that you don’t know anything. They think you don’t speak English well ... because you are brown and not white.”

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“There were a lot of bullies. When I came to school, I was mocked. They giggled and pointed at me.”
“I went to KFC. I looked at the menu. Someone asked me: Are you sure you’re in right place?
“Every night I would remember crying. People were a bit rude.”

“America” for them, Kim suggests, is regarded as a “promised land,” a “dream country” and a place of refuge which ideally must stir in them a sense of gratitude and uncomplaining obedience (1998, 8).

The foregoing data from study respondents affirms the general challenges immigrants face as they move into a new environment. De Castro et al., (2008), acknowledging the delicate conditions that influence the life of immigrants, affirm how these challenges impact their mental health. Kim (1998), on the other hand, reinforces the subliminal effects of colonial mentality and a notion of “white” America, to which standards Asian immigrants can unknowingly comply. We take note of these general conditions and make efforts to observe how the particular contexts of religious organizations and parishes, with their evolving demographics and an emphasis on the life of faith, may actually offer an alternative to secular living, that is, a more welcoming space for the freer expressions of immigrant identities.

**Research Methodology as Applied to Data Collection and Analysis**

As described in the methodology section, semi-structured interviews were the primary data sources collected for this study. Other than the use of an interview protocol, the study also referred to available archival documents, demographics, and field observation notes. While clearances had been secured from the individual pastors to access official parish demographics, the researcher also felt the parish staff’s unease in
divulging ethnic identities of parishioners. Understandably due to current immigration policies, some parishes apparently no longer, for safety and security reasons, inquire about the ethnic backgrounds of those who register in their parishes.

Respondents’ interviews took place mainly in their parishes or in suitable venues that the interviewees preferred. Informed consent forms were sent prior to the interviews and the respondents’ signed forms were submitted immediately prior to the actual start of each interview. For a verified health reason, one interview was conducted via phone patch. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Since most of the interviewees responded to questions partly in their native language, the researcher needed to translate some responses from Pilipino (Tagalog) to English. Names of any parishioners mentioned in the interviews were recorded in codes to maintain anonymity. The transcribed interviews, which covered some 6 to 8 pages each, were sent back to the concerned interviewees for validation. No major corrections of the transcripts were sent long after the deadline had lapsed. As stated previously, 12 respondents (4 from each parish) were interviewed for the study.

As the coding and analysis process began, the researcher took note of Saldana’s description of coding as a means to “arrange things in a systematic order, to make something part of a system or classification, to categorize” (2013, 7). Thus, the researcher first subscribed to a method of “research question alignment” which deliberately noted the study’s central and related research questions (2013, 60) and relevant answers to those specific inquiries. Thus, the data presentation and analysis follow the sequence of the questions asked in our study.
The researcher made primary use of the In Vivo Coding technique which relies on the “direct language of participants as codes” (Saldana 2013, 61). The researcher relied on direct quotations from respondents to closely express their sentiments. The NVivo12 data analysis software supplied by QRS International was also employed to code interviewees’ descriptions of their immigration experiences, their parishes, their priests, their multicultural environment, volunteer work, ministries, Filipino culture and values, suggestions etc. In total 25 primary codes were developed from the interviewees’ responses. These primary codes were then further grouped into four major clusters to distinguish the variety of experiences, namely: pre-immigration, impressions on arrival in the U.S., actual involvement in a multicultural church and others (i.e., Filipino culture at work, life as an immigrant and volunteer worker, faith and religious practices, suggestions, etc.). Appendix E.2 lists the primary codes used in the database. The software automatically clustered interview responses around the programmed codes and recorded major themes covered per cluster.

As the coding process progressed, the researcher noted evolving and emergent themes. The researcher used NVivo12 tools to observe and analyze word count, frequencies, and their clustering into themes. As an additional aid to analyzing data, the researcher also referred to NVivo12’s suggested cluster presentations of responses (e.g. word clouds, tree maps, and cluster analyses) to help determine not only emergent themes but also to verify connections among topics. Interestingly, NVivo12 also allows a measurement of respondents’ sentiments. The researcher notes that this coding type refers to Saldana’s description of “magnitude coding” that describes codes in terms of intensity and adds “adjectival or statistical texture to qualitative data” (Saldana 2013, 69). Encoded
responses to the interview questions, for instance, were gauged in terms of how statements were constructed (e.g., very positive, moderately positive, moderately negative, and very negative). This tool allows the researcher to access shared sentiments about certain topics.

The next greatest research challenge, as Patton suggests “lies in making sense of massive amounts of data” and entails “reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal” (Patton 2002, 432). It helped to be reminded of Patton’s claim about the researcher as the “instrument of qualitative methods,” the real, live person who makes observations, takes field notes, asks interview questions, and interprets responses (2002, 64).

As a guide to analyzing the data, the researcher also referred to Yin’s approach, which relies on focusing on the “meaning of real-life events, not just the occurrence of the events” and capturing these meanings by searching for concepts, the “ideas that are more abstract than the actual data in an empirical study” (Yin 2011, 93). True enough, this collection of concepts, as Yin also proposed, can “be assembled in some logical fashion that then might represent a theory” (2011, 93) about the phenomenon that the researcher intends to study.

Since this study employs a multi-case approach, the researcher also recognized how a collection of concepts are geared toward understanding a phenomenon as exhibited in a variety of specific contexts or cases (Stake 2006, vi). For our data analysis and presentation, we refer to Stake’s emphasis on the importance of examining both “common characteristics” of the phenomenon across cases and the “situational
uniqueness” of those data as possible outcomes in specific contexts (Stake 2006, ix–x). Establishing shared characteristics across cases, for the researcher, becomes an effort at triangulation. As Stake himself emphasized, “each important finding needs to have at least three (often more) confirmations and assurances” to assure that “key meanings are not being overlooked” (Stake 2006, 33). The presentations that follow primarily reflect these shared (and triangulated) characteristics. The situational uniqueness of each case is discussed earlier in the site profiles or description of cases. We refer to these guideposts as we proceed with our presentation and data analysis.

**Presentation and Analysis of Themes based on Research Questions**

The study’s findings presentation is organized according to the main research questions posted earlier. Responses to each question were clustered according to the emergent themes presented here:

**Q.1 How do first-generation Filipino immigrants, who are volunteer parish workers in select communities in the Archdiocese of Seattle, describe their experience and involvement in a multicultural church?**

Responses to this question were coded under the general heading: “Involvement in a Multicultural Parish” and yielded the following general codes:

| Table 4.5  Involvement in a multicultural parish–general codes (coded responses) |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Initial Contact with Parishes (59) | Descriptions of Parish Priests (77) |
| Parish Description/Church Programs (101) | Descriptions of Fellow Filipinos (119) |
| Primary Involvements/Ministries (63) | Challenges/Limitations (143) |
| Description of Parishioners in General (116) | Gifts/Opportunities (29) |

A general clustering of all words used to describe each of the themes in Table 4.5 allowed the researcher to note and target the most commonly used terms. The top word
frequencies across all the clusters that were used to describe multicultural parishes, according to our respondents, are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6  Involvement in a multicultural parish–top words used (number of coded responses)

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People (172)</td>
<td>Filipinos (166)</td>
<td>Priests/Pastors (122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish (134)</td>
<td>Church (99)</td>
<td>Group/Community (109)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This top word frequency did not initially make sense, until a close analysis of the full interview transcripts revealed how the terms “parish,” “church,” “group/community” were used alongside, or interchangeably with, the top three frequently used terms “people,” “Filipinos” and “priests/pastors.” Apparently, our respondent Filipino immigrant volunteer church workers, were describing their multicultural parishes in their own terms primarily as “people,” “Filipinos” and “priest/pastors.” We discuss these three terms in succeeding discussions.

**Multiculturality: Foremost a Description of a People**

Clustering responses from interview respondents, the NVivo12 software does objectively present the unexpected. Asked to describe their context, immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers think primarily of their multicultural church, in terms of People. Over and above the variety of descriptions about multiculturality, whether positive or negative, Filipino parishioners chose the term “people” when speaking about their adopted communities (see Figure 4.1).

While some cultures may define subjects or phenomena in terms of concepts and operations, Filipinos primarily tend to think of multiculturality in terms of those with whom
they interact. Thus, for our Filipino respondents, a multicultural church is ‘people.’ This people-orientation among Filipino respondents fits well the definition of a “collectivist culture” posited by cross-cultural psychologists Harry Triandis and Eunkook M. Suh (2002). A defining character of people in collectivist cultures, say Triandis and Suh, is their notable concern with relationships (2002, 139). Triandis and Suh also suggest that collectivist cultural members, are “strongly influenced by the behaviors and thoughts of other people” (2002, 143). While we also agree that both collectivist and individualist character traits exist simultaneously in all cultures, the frequency with which our respondents referenced the word “people” in our interviews, points to the necessary social and relational lens with which we are asked to view multiculturality as a theme.

Alongside the way they described the diversity of ethnicities in their communities (i.e., they use the words “white,” “black,” “Hispanic,” “Vietnamese,” “Eritreans,” “Nigerians,” and so on), our immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers seem to have a generally positive view of their multicultural parishes.
Immigrant volunteer participants describe their multicultural organizations in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Positive view of multicultural parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendly and Welcoming</td>
<td>“People here are warm.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People are friendly. You hear them saying ‘hi’ and ‘hello.’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People are very welcoming here.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The parish here had been very accommodating to the Filipino community.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I admire those who deliberately make people feel included.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The people may be different but I get the same feel. (It’s) like any other Filipino church.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“They are open and easy to approach. They are a very friendly people.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciative Community</td>
<td>“People get to appreciate what we are doing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The whites recognize the presence of Filipinos. They like our celebrations.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“They want more from the Filipino community.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I get ‘thank you’ cards saying that people are grateful because I’m sincere.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I don’t hear anything negative from the whites. People are very appreciative.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“They love our food.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Faith Life</td>
<td>“People are very close to the church.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People say that they are praying for me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People say, our liturgy (Filipino) is beautiful.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“They have different ways of expressing their faith, different ways of showing their love and devotion for God.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People are more into the liturgy. Everyone picks up the song book. Everyone participates in the mass.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People here really dig the liturgy. They listen to the homily.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“They’re interested in talks that can revive their faith.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved and Supportive</td>
<td>“People are supportive of all activities.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People are so happy when you invite them to perform a role.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People want to be asked to participate.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You see how people help each other.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“If we have celebrations, people like to attend.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understandably, immigrant Filipino parish workers also seem to recognize the value of integrating well into the bigger and more racially mixed host culture. Alongside practicing and living out their own ethnic cultures in their new environments, Filipino
immigrants seem to have well mastered the necessity of anticipating reactions from their host communities and fine-tuning their engagements. The relatively favorable impressions our respondents have of their multicultural church provide a sense that they are indeed doing well. In so saying, the researcher wishes to relate this seeming semblance of ease in integrating into a new environment, to studies about Filipino immigrants’ somewhat convenient proclivity to imbibe things American as compared to their other Asian counterparts. Filipino-American Eric J. Pido (2012, 69–104), a professor of Asian Studies at the San Francisco State University, talks about Filipinos practicing a cultural logic of “being American” as informed by a conception of the American Dream (2012, 70). Pido, who focused on Californian-Filipinos’ practices of homeownership, spoke about efforts at “performing citizenship” and “appearing to be an American in the face of dogged views that see them as foreigners regardless of their official legal statuses” (2012, 70). Further, Pido talks about this mode of “performing citizenship” as a way of describing the strategic practices used by Filipinos against a backdrop of differential citizenship (2012, 71). Is this mode of “performing citizenship” spilling over to Filipinos’ desires to be more acceptable to others and be more integrated into their adopted church settings? While review responses noted how Filipinos can distinguish cultural differences in their parishes, much can still be asked about any undercurrents to their expressed optimism. Integrating and adjusting well, manifesting efforts to work things out, performing citizenship roles or in our case perhaps, embodying positive church duties, all seem to fit notions of living and fulfilling an opted successful life—a view of the immigrant’s American Dream.
Consequently, we note with much interest Table 4.6 which enumerates some of the coded statements around efforts at adjustments and Filipinos’ marked sensitivities to how they are perceived by others.

Table 4.8 Levels of adjustment in a multicultural church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Acknowledged Differences | “People are all different.”  
  “Different people have different ways of valuing.”  
  “People want to know if there’s pig’s blood in the food.”  
  “People were surprised to see them (dancers) half-naked and dancing in the altar.”  
  “People were raising their eyebrows.”  
  “You hear people talking.”  
  “People also complain a lot.”  
  “(In planning for activities), we choose (to recruit) a mixed group of people.”  
  “(Some) are not challenged to do more than the regular.”  
  “There are differences in communication. We have different accents.”  
  “Each community has internal conflicts.”  
  “I’ve grown in my understanding, in my knowledge and experiences. I’ve realized that there are different points of view.” |
| Sensitivity to Responses from the Community | “When we started our own programs, people get to ask: What’s going on?  
  “People get to ask what is happening.”  
  “I want to know what’s on people’s mind. I don’t want people getting bitter.”  
  “When people don’t know what’s going on, they complain. It’s all about communication.”  
  “It takes a lot of energy to bring people together.”  
  “I’ve also learned that when you go out with friends, you go Dutch. We share the bill.” |
| Efforts at Integration  | “The more you associate with people, the more you are comfortable, the more you can involve.”  
  “By being with them, we learn more about other people’s cultures.”  
  “Eventually, I decided that I need to meet other people.”  
  “I don’t complain about other people’s music.”  
  “You have to communicate well. Have good social interaction.”  
  “Americans are very frank. You will have to tell them in a nice way if you don’t feel that things are not right. That works.”  
  “We need to be honest and not be scared to express what’s on our mind.”  
  “It can be difficult to understand others because of the language barrier. I just have to listen closely to others.” |
The foregoing table speaks about Filipinos’ heightened sensitivity to the questions and needs of others in their own communities. The level with which they make efforts to anticipate and address possible community concerns speaks considerably about their emphasis on being collectivists, on being accepted by and integrated into their newly found communities.

**Multiculturality Among Filipinos**

While Filipinos seem to be integrating well into the general life of their adopted communities, multiculturality for them appears to be more than simply about differences in ethnicity. Our NVivo12 data analysis software points to the term “Filipino” (with a 166 word count) as our respondents’ second most predominantly used description for multiculturality (see the Word Cloud, Figure 4.1). Filipinos are a diverse mix. The diverse profile of the above-mentioned respondents represents a microcosm of the Philippine population in each of the parishes.

Regions in the Philippines are culturally different. If one goes to a local church in the Philippines, one can almost expect to meet parishioners who come from the same region or perhaps even the same status in life. Often, regional churches use their regional dialects in local liturgies. From field observations in the Archdiocese of Seattle, the researcher notes how Filipinos coming from diverse regions in the Philippines are forced-clustered into a single parish. Also, the phenomenon of “being registered in one parish”—hardly a regular practice in the Philippines—adds to the uniqueness of being
compulsory members of a church and community. Without such an arrangement, parishioners can comfortably come and go unnoticed much as they would in their regular parishes in the Philippines. In their new contexts, however, Filipino immigrants are obliged to be more involved in the life of their parishes by being registered members and this, despite their possibly being different from each other due to regional or professional backgrounds.

Being collectivists, Filipinos naturally gravitate to one another alongside the institutional demands of their newly found parishes. Church communities provide them the space to congregate where they can express their culture of faith. Table 4.9 shows how our respondents view the presence of fellow Filipinos in their multicultural space.

The data affirm the role of Filipino immigrant communities in enriching the multiculturality of their adopted parishes. Interestingly, the Subcommittee of Asian and Pacific Affairs of the US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) had recently issued a statement to the same effect. In its document “Encountering Christ in Harmony: A Pastoral Response to Our Asian and Pacific Island Brothers and Sisters,” the USCCB acknowledges how Asian and Pacific Island immigrants “embody a rich and deep history of Catholicism, a synthesis of traditional Catholic practices infused with the unique cultural characteristics particular to each of the various ethnic groups” (USCCB, 2012). The document also notes the eagerness of Asian and Pacific Island Catholics “to share their experiences and gifts as well as to receive support from the wider Catholic Church in the United States” (USCCB, 2012). From the interviews, therefore, Filipino volunteer church workers manifest this same affinity and ownership of their adopted communities as they hope to bring in their own positive cultural-religious influences.
Also, from our interview responses, we affirm that Filipino immigrants practicing a common faith and belonging to the select parishes under study are far from being mono-cultural. Their own multiculturality is expressed both in descriptions about how they perceive fellow-Filipinos as different and through their approaches to

Table 4.9 Filipino Presence in their Multicultural Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close Relations with the Church</td>
<td>“Anywhere you go in the world, Filipinos are involved in the Church.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Filipinos are diehards. We come regularly. We like being in the church.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The church is like family.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Filipinos are very close to our mothers. That’s why we are close to the Blessed Mother.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Inherently, we are Catholics and we get to bring that wherever we go in the world.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“They are very supportive of the priests and the church. I go with them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We always pledge to give back to the church.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Bond of Unity/Familism</td>
<td>“Filipinos go together.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We (Filipinos) have a strong bond. We are like a family.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Filipinos are close. We are all doing good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We tend to stick together. We are not too aware that we speak in Pilipino without minding the others around us. We are always happy that way.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I’m happy to be with fellow Filipinos. We joke around. We use our same language.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We are easy to adapt (to new environments) but we keep the Philippine culture alive.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s easy to deal with Filipinos. We fight but we know how to deal with each other.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts and Talents Shared</td>
<td>“We sing Filipino songs. We feel at home because of the songs.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Filipinos love celebrations.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Filipinos like organizing events. We are very social and devotional.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Filipinos are a gem. We are a generous, happy and giving people even through adversity and poverty.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“They (the Filipino Community Center) would come to sing Filipino songs, the “harana” (serenade). (We have) folk dancing too.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Filipinos are organizers (themselves).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“When given a task, Filipinos work. We are reliable. We don’t just say yes. We work.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Filipinos adapt to everything. We’ve learned to adapt to the American culture, but we still keep our own.”

acknowledging and easing conflicts and disputes among themselves. It is most interesting to see how a tightly and closely-knit community, on one hand, openly offers genuine support for one another, and on the other hand, can be very quietly conflicted. Gauging from our NVivo12 analysis of coded statements, immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers seem to have more positive sentiments for non-Filipino parishioners than fellow-Filipinos with whom they supposedly more closely associate.

Figure 4.2 Comparative sentiments of fellow Filipinos vs. non-Filipino parishioners

Tables 4.10 and 4.11 present the most revealing sets of data gathered from our select respondents. Note how multiculturalism exists even within a common ethnicity. Future programs addressing multicultural issues would do well to determine differences ad-intra (i.e., from within the same ethnic groups).

From all of our respondents’ coded descriptions of Filipino and non-Filipino parishioners, NVivo12 assessed either a positive or negative sentiment for each of the
statements posted. The total of 57.64 percent (12.91 percent + 44.73 percent) downbeat sentiments gleaned from respondents’ descriptions of fellow Filipinos can hardly be ignored. Surprisingly, the field data, suggest that Filipinos work closely together even while unenthusiastic impressions about one another are left unexpressed, at least publicly.

Table 4.10 Immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers’ description of fellow Filipinos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturality of Filipinos</td>
<td>“There are many types of Filipinos here.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Filipinos have sub-groups. We also have different groups.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Not everyone in the parish was born in the Philippines. Filipinos come from all walks of life.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Even among Filipinos, we have our own different ways.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Some Filipinos are also more Americanized. They’ve been here longer.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s natural for Filipinos to have peers. Being accepted (by them) is a different thing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The older ones they get to fight with each other. They have their own ways of doing things.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Old timers have hardened hearts. Some are not open to the suggestions from the younger ones.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior and Sources of Conflicts</td>
<td>“Why are people jealous?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I hope that they realize that they can be hurtful to other people. I don’t know if they understand the way they talk.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I get angry when people accuse me; are suspicious of me; or do not trust me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sometimes I just say that’s how Filipinos are. We get to hurt each other.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“There was a Filipino lady ... who was just staring at me as if sizing me up.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“But with some Filipinos, we have jealousy, envy. The whites do not have that.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It doesn’t help to think, as professor of social work Pauline Agbayani-Siewert (1994) posited, that Filipinos are “highly sensitive to criticism and are easily humiliated.” Criticisms, Agbayani-Siewert says “maybe taken as a personal insult” while “confrontation and directness as rude and impolite” (Agbayani-Siewert 1994, 429). Consequently, Agbayani-Siewert affirms previous studies about the Filipinos’ more popular approach of keeping smooth interpersonal relationships—that is, getting along
with others without creating open conflicts, discouraging open displays of anger or aggression while encouraging passive and cooperative behaviors. As seen, Table 4.10 enumerates how immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers describe multiculturality ad-intra (amongst themselves) and the accompanying challenges that go with that specific context. As immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers wish to fully immerse themselves in the life of their parishes, they also come to realize how diversity amongst themselves and doing ministry with their compatriots can pose specific challenges. We do not wish to imply that ad-intra diversity is unique to Filipino immigrant communities only. Our field-observations point to how other immigrant communities (i.e., the Vietnamese, Hispanics, Indian, and African parishioners) in the same parishes surveyed, also have their share of ad-intra conflicts and challenges. Table 4.11 reveals how Filipino immigrant communities, while adjusting to and involving themselves in cross-national settings, also need to address unique diversity challenges among themselves.

Table 4.11  Impact of ad-intra diversity on respondents’ ministry in the parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry Implications</td>
<td>“It’s a challenge to work with fellow Filipinos. We try to undermine others sometimes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People are fighting during meetings.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People have their own way of pushing and asserting themselves.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People think they can do better than others. It’s an attitude concern.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The negative part is when people only think about me, me me.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“People resent feedbacks sometimes. Eventually, they will do as they want.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sometimes, I have more problems with Filipinos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Even Filipinos sometimes complain about our Tagalog singing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sometimes, there’s even more resistance among the Filipino community.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“If you don’t get to greet them, they can spread bad things about you. They can ruin you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“For the Filipinos, we have two factions. We cannot reach this one particular group.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Conflicts</td>
<td>“With some Filipinos, it can be difficult. I avoid working with some.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I move away. That’s why I don’t work with Filipinos in committees.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Our way of thinking is different. We follow only whomever we like.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We size up each other. We discriminate against each other.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I’ve learned to be careful with fellow Filipinos when I came here.”
“I don’t think I want to work with people with that same personality. I’ve never encountered that in other cultures except from Filipinos.”
“We have to defer to Filipinos who had been here longer.”
“When I go to church I get to avoid fellow Filipinos.
“I don’t like to be in conflict with anyone. It’s some kind of passive aggression. I don’t want conflicts. I just move away.”

Statements gathered from the interviews plainly suggest that readjustment of our views on multiculturality need to address ad-intra dynamics, especially among our Filipino immigrant communities.

The researcher describes these foregoing descriptions of ad-intra relations among Filipino immigrant church workers as “tightly fused and conflicted.” There’s an acknowledged need to gather and work together—from which they derive their joy, celebration, and rootedness to country—but navigating the difficult work of addressing diversity and conflicts among themselves remain hardly a venture anyone dares to negotiate. The above-mentioned descriptions of a collectivist culture by Triandis and Suh (2002) and Agbayani-Siewert (1994), specifically on interdependence and conflict avoidance, are indeed at work here.

Likewise, in a study entitled “The Darkside of Possessing Power,” Filipinos Jesus Alfonso Datu and Jose Alberto Reyes affirm that collectivist cultures are prone “to espouse an interdependent self-construal since they have greater inclinations to establish and maintain harmonious relationships” as a way of achieving common cultural tasks (2015, 983). Datu and Reyes, in support of the earlier works of sociologists Hazel Markus and Shinobu Kitayama (1991), assert that people of a collectivist culture, in efforts to conserve interdependence “would likely emphasize relationship harmony more than authenticity” (Datu and Reyes, 892). Notably, there’s a lot of sweeping things under the carpet transpiring here and from the statements of respondents, harmony is
maintained through flight and avoidance, extreme caution, and even passive aggression. And we ask: Authenticity is compromised? While the researcher gets to acknowledge previous studies about the nature of collectivist cultures, hearing the dilemma Filipino volunteer church workers face while dealing with ad-intra multiculturality, makes us ask the more crucial question: Where do we go from here?

While we distinguish cultures of peoples, can we also affirm that a collectivist culture does not make everyone a total collectivist; an individualist culture does not make everyone a total individualist? University of Hawaii educator and sociologist Kyrssia Mossakowski (2007) affirms that indeed, values of “collectivism and individualism may not be part of a single continuum of cultural values, but rather they may be two dimensions that can coexist” (2007, 292). Delving into themes on “bicultural adaptation,” Mossakowski points to how Filipino-Americans, and any immigrants to the United States for that matter, have indeed adopted local cultural expressions “without completely abandoning one's original cultural values” (2007, 292). Filipinos, being exposed to a variety of cultures over and above their own diversity as a people, presents for us an example of a culture described not in terms of “either this or that” but a combination of the gifts of all (and perhaps also a combination of the challenges of all). Can authenticity or independent mindedness or simply happiness be worthwhile values to pursue alongside achieving interdependence and collectivist goals?

**Impressions of Parish Leadership**

Leadership themes and relations with their priests/pastors also figure prominently into respondents’ descriptions of elements in their multicultural parishes. In view of above-mentioned predispositions to subscribe to conflict-avoidance with fellows,
Filipinos also tend to look up to their religious leaders as a way of contracting the assistance of “go-betweens” or conflict mediators.

Figure 4.3 Data analysis rankings showing Filipino immigrants’ view of current pastors

In most cases, however, this role as mediator may perhaps be rare or even hard to find in their new settings. In a typical Philippine church setting, the priest or pastor stands as the default go-between. This role of priest-mediator, suggests professor of cultural history Katherine Moran, seems to have survived even the staunchest anti-Catholic movements in history. Moran cites a 1904 narrative by former Philippine governor general William Howard Taft (eventually elected US president) that acknowledged the involvement of Catholic missionaries to transform “Spain’s project in the Philippines from one potentially motivated by greed to one dedicated to the uplift of the human condition” (Moran 2013, 435). Despite the growing secularist movement of his time, Taft
seemed to have surprised his audience by saying that most missionaries treated Filipinos “with kindness and consideration.” The priests, he said, “exerted efforts to conciliate
them,” Moran reports (2013, 435). This image of priests, which appears to have been carried over to contemporary times, may also explain our respondents’ general positive regard for pastors in their communities, even as the Catholic church struggles through new and difficult challenges. Filipinos love their pastors and Table 4.12 illustrates this general positive regard.

Table 4.12  Attitudes toward and expectations from their priests and pastors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Regard for Priests/Pastors</td>
<td>“We like our priests. We are always at home with priests.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“My relations with priests here are good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s also a joy always working with the priests.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Whoever is the priest, we Filipinos have the capacity to always adjust to them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Our relations with the parish priest have always [been] very good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I would invite the parish priest for lunch or dinner all the time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It will not be difficult for Filipinos to speak to the parish priest.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I am very comfortable with most of the priests. We can talk to them like a friend.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The priests here had been very supportive of our group.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We listen to the priests and the teachings.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I take seriously what priests teach much likes an advice or counsel.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reactions of priests to such positive regard from their Filipino parishioners are mixed. From field observations, some non-Filipino priests either ignore Filipinos’ offer of affection outright, while others tend to over-indulge and even perhaps solicit more from Filipinos’ generosity.

While Filipinos will tend to adjust to the needs and personalities of priests and will avoid possible conflicts with their pastors at all costs, it will serve parish leadership to be more aware of cultural cues from their multicultural communities.

Thus, in search of role-models and mediators, Filipinos tend to value the leadership roles that priests and pastors play in the parishes. Table 4.13 lists respondents’
coded statements about their priests and the parishioners’ expressed expectations about priestly roles. They speak about their priests regardless of the pastors’ ethnicity.

Table 4.13. Filipinos’ expectations of their priests/pastors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community/Group Orientation</td>
<td>The ideal pastor is (always) around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The priest will have to be present. He needs to be close to the people.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It helps (for priests) not to be too identified with only one group especially in a multicultural parish.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s good to think that you share something in common with the priest.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal/Relational</td>
<td>“To be a parish priest means to listen to everyone. You must lend a listening ear. Being heard is important.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“He is a people-person. He talks to everyone.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s helpful that priests are open.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person of Authority</td>
<td>“Parish priests would need to make difficult decisions. If he doesn’t make those decisions, it would be difficult also for the parish.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspires Joy</td>
<td>“People are very happy about him.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s important that we can laugh with others. Life is not always serious.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Even sharing a big laugh, sharing his concerns, we appreciate those in a priest.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the positive regard for priests have bases in the actual encounters with and experiences of parishioners, the same can be said for observed negative encounters with them. Table 4.14 narrates both reported actual positive and challenging experiences with local priests/pastors.

We affirm, of course, that Filipinos’ impressions of their priests and pastors are culture bound. Cross-cultural management practitioner Christian Linder tells us that any “assumption or expectation of how a good leader should lead has a subjective nature” (2015, 246). Linder further explains that this subjective nature is very much linked to the “unique cognitive history, tacit cognitive commonalities and cultural understanding of symbolic actions” (2015, 246) both by a leader or anyone making a leadership assessment. Expectedly, in the case of Filipinos, impressions of their priests and pastors will need to be decoded having as a guiding idea that, as Linder expressed,
Table 4.14 Actual positive and challenging experiences with priests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual Positive</td>
<td>“Our priest is very appreciative. He says: ‘You make all things easy for me. Everything is well arranged because of you.’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encounters</td>
<td>“I had clothes made for the feast of the Blessed Mother. Father (X) was very happy with me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I only feel love for that priest.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Voluntarily, we give to the priest so long as it’s not so expensive. We give because we respect and honor the priest.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People are very happy about him.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>“I’ve never seen a priest who is unfriendly (as he). I felt ignored.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encounters</td>
<td>“Sometimes I feel that he treats people differently.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Priests</td>
<td>“It is very difficult for a parish priest to give time to everyone.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s the first time that I’ve met a priest who is a snub.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sometimes priests can also go out of line. We cannot tell that to the priest of course.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Some are just so serious. You cannot joke around with some priests.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We should not spoil our priests. We like spoiling our priests. It may also be not good for them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Priests also have different personalities.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A Filipina once made a comment that our priest was favoring the Hispanics. It was understandable.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s negative that a priest is not supportive.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“He is however overworked. He needs more time for himself.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

cultural elements “influence the sense-making processes of individuals and, thus, the way they judge the role of others” (2015, 264). From their experience of priests in their multicultural context, therefore, Filipinos reveal their cultural impressions of what authority is for them ideally. A pastor is present and available to the community, appreciative and relatable, fair and just, supportive and decisive. As a way of expounding on these cultural needs for and expectations of priests, our interview respondents referenced their previous positive encounters with their Filipino pastors. Table 4.15 expresses not only volunteer Filipino church workers’ appreciation for Filipino priests who were once assigned in their parishes but also reveals a subtle expression of their expectations from their current parish leadership.
Table 4.15 Respondents’ impressions of Filipino priests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impressions of Filipino priests in their parishes</td>
<td>“When the Filipino priest was here, I felt very much at home.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Since the priest was Filipino, we’ve always had Filipino celebrations.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Filipinos ask: Why don’t they (Filipino priests) stay here longer?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Before, Filipinos loved to come here because there was a Filipino priest. Now, we don’t see them anymore.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I’m used to Filipino priests who are friendly and open.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surprisingly, community elders, who traditionally also function as go-betweens, have seemingly rendered their mediator-roles as less pronounced. Some of our younger respondents speak of the older generation as having their own biased personal agenda to advance in community. Having to deal with priests who may not share the cultural “go-between” role that Filipinos expect, and the dearth of elders who involve themselves in the work of mediation, Filipino immigrant communities find themselves with the dilemma of maintaining both their collectivist character alongside easing tensions among themselves as brought about by their ad-intra diversity.

Q.2 What does it mean for first-generation immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers to practice their religious culture in a multicultural setting?

The clustering of responses to this inquiry, emphasized at least five major themes. Immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers describe the practice of their religious culture in a multicultural setting in terms of their learnings about their faith; the importance of “church” as a space of worship; their experience of continually being blessed and being on the receiving end of graces; their observed growth in their life of prayer and devotion; and their newly discovered capacities for changed perspectives. The word cloud presented in Figure 4.4 depicts the major themes mined from the interviews; they are arranged in terms of their weight and emphasis.
Consequently, Table 4.16 presents for us a numerical count of how the themes were mentioned in the interviews.

Table 4.16. Practice of religious culture: top themes clustered (number of coded responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learnings about the Life of Faith (46)</th>
<th>Church as a Space of Belonging and Worship (22)</th>
<th>Experience of being Blessed (43)</th>
<th>Growth in Life of Prayer/Devotion (52)</th>
<th>Change in Perspectives (21)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Religious Culture as an Expression of a Life of Faith**

In describing how they live their religious culture in a multicultural setting, immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers speak primarily about their needs to express their life of faith. The practice of their religious culture in an adopted home and parish apparently instills in them a strengthening and deepening of their faith; an assurance of hope and wellness; a greater trust and knowledge of God; and a kind of faith that inspires greater commitment and generosity. Understanding these expressions of a religious
culture in increasingly multicultural settings can offer deeper theological reflections about global phenomena such as migration.

Scalabrinian theologian and missiologist Gioacchino Campese—in acknowledging the pastoral needs of church workers for more spiritual and theological resources that can sustain religious life in multicultural settings—noted how immigrants themselves are “trying to read their experiences in the light of faith and to give theological answers to the numerous challenges they face” (Campese 2012, 7). In a 2012 article, Campese emphasized how the human and faith experiences of migrants have become one of the “privilege sources or loci theologici” of contemporary theological reflection (2012, 6). According to Campese, focus on these faith experiences can offer deeper pastoral-practical understanding of the phenomenon of migration, and perhaps even for our purposes, a way to explain how parishioners volunteer their services for the church. Table 4.17 shows how the theme “faith” is central to efforts at being more engaged in parish life. By being more involved in parish life, our respondents report how they are helped to deepen their faith, how they’ve come to believe in greater hope and wellness, how they’ve learned to trust and have an expanded knowledge of God, and how faith inspires them to greater commitment and generosity.

**Church as a Spatial Element of Belonging and Worship**

Filipinos have a special attachment to a physical church. A place of worship is a sacred space, worthy of their respect and reverence. Theology Professor Gemma Tulud Cruz notes that for immigrants, local churches not only help them to “live their faith but also adjust to and mitigate the troubling conditions of migration” (2008, 364). Similarly, Wheaton College Professor Susan Dunns-Hensley, in a 2018 article affirms how persons
Table 4.17 Perspectives of faith while engaging the life of a multicultural parish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Strengthening and Deepening of Faith | “My faith has deepened much.”  
“This ministry is helping me deepen my faith.”  
“It helps me deepen my faith. He (God) takes care of us.”  
“I’ve been thrown in many circumstances wherein my religious faith had been strengthened.”  
“When I’m in trouble, He (God) gives me the strength to face life difficulties. I keep my faith.” |
| Source of Hope and Wellness    | “She (a cousin) was holding on to her faith. She was really religious and that gave her a lot of hope.”  
“Our faith is like our medicine to homesickness and being alone.”  
“We believe that for a person to be well, they need to have some form of faith.”  
“I was expecting to be laid off, but it didn’t happen. I think of that as Divine Providence.”  
“I would like to believe that God the Father appeared to me. I was sick then.”  
“I cannot be confined in a wheel chair because I was taking care of my parents. I look at that experience as a miracle.” |
| Trust and Knowledge of God     | “My faith was not this way before. I’ve realized what is more important. I realize I need to know God more.”  
“I told myself: You didn’t trust much. I know now that God provides. Now, I’m more relaxed. What happens will happen.”  
“Trusting God is something I slowly learned.”  
“I get to depend on people. I depend on God. It takes a while to trust that God will provide for you.”  
“I know that You (God) know what’s happening in my heart today. Nothing will happen to me without You.” |
| Inspires Commitment and Generosity | “God doesn’t require great minds but great hearts. Not great knowledge but dedication and commitment; not great power but great faith.”  
“I’m very strong in my faith especially in terms of stewardship.”  
“What is satisfying? Seeing Christ in each person. I believe in the body of Christ. When one part of the body hurts, every part suffers.”  
“We learn new things about the Church. For example: we need to be generous to people in need. This is why I help with the homeless.” |

of faith not only long for tradition and ritual but also as “connectedness to physical manifestations of the sacred” (2018, 4). Entering a separate space of ritual, adds Dunns-Hensley allows the worshipper “to move beyond the mundane world,” to “connect with the divine” and likewise to the “community of believers to each other and to the ‘great cloud of witnesses’ that came before them” (2018, 4). Affirming these observations by Tulud Cruz and Dunns-Hensley, our respondents expressed the importance of the
physical church in their life of faith. Table 4.18 shows how a concept of the physical church connects with immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers’ expression of their faith. At least one person expressed being baffled as to why doors of churches in Seattle are locked. The church (doors) in the Philippines, she says, are “always open.” Evidently, Filipinos long to belong to a church, to encounter the Divine in places of worship, to participate in liturgy, to attend church services with friends and family, and to express their material support for the church.

Table 4.18 affirms that Filipinos are close to the church. Seeking to be in church and feeling at home in church somehow approximate the security of being home in a familiar place, of being safe from the anxieties of a foreign world. Participation in the liturgy and encountering the Divine are thus taken more seriously, to derive greater strength and courage for the challenges that lie ahead. Likewise, the church is an extension of the family. Not only do Filipinos meet worthwhile relations in church, they also wish the younger generations would find meaning in being in church. Finally, the church is a place where they can also exercise generosity either through service or gifts in kind that they can share.

Positive Confessions of Being Blessed

First-generation Filipinos who are volunteer church workers find themselves helping in their parishes as an expression of gratitude for gifts and blessings received in life. In acknowledging their blessings, our respondents express what professor of religious studies at the University of Johannesburg, Maria Frahm-Arp, calls a “positive confession” or a “name it and claim it” (2018, 7) mindset that are similarly practiced among members of the Pentecostal movement. The positive confession elaborated by
Table 4:18  Practice of religious culture as connected to a concept of a church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belonging to/Longing to be in Church</td>
<td>“I make sure I look firstly for a church.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The first thing we ask: Where is the nearest church?”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“We are people of the church. We want to belong to the church.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“We are church-goers. We want to live in the church.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I prayed for three things: I wanted to be close to a church. God knew my disabilities. I prayed for good transportation. I prayed to get a good apartment close to church. God gave me everything.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“When I am homesick, I go to church.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Some come from very far away. They have the willingness to come.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I’m married to the church.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I get to spend a lot of my time in church. I go to church because of those many events”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“People think I’m living in church.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encountering the Divine</td>
<td>“People ask me why I wear a suit to church. I say: I came to meet my Lord. That’s true.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“This is where you get to know God.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I get to clean the cross on the upper altar. I climb the ladder and pray that I don’t fall. It’s so satisfying that you’ve done something for God.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“God has placed me here.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in the Liturgy</td>
<td>“I don’t want to miss masses.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like to participate in the mass. This is why I go to a church that I identify with.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I go to church every morning.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I pray that through our celebrations (liturgy), we may glorify God more. May He sanctify us more.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Churches here are more solemn. People here really dig the liturgy. They listen to the homily.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships/Family Involvement in the Church</td>
<td>“My grandson has not been baptized. I learned that if a baby is sick, anyone can do the baptism. I brought him to church, sprinkled holy water on him. I baptized him.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“My grandparents also helped finance the building of a church.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“My entire family has always come to church during most liturgical seasons.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“We come to church as a family. They see that our families live together. Grandparents and grandchildren still know each other. They say: What a big a family.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“My wife knows I’m always here for the church. She knows I’m here always.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“The church is like family. We are hospitable and friendly.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s important to serve the church and surround oneself with friends who are deep and strong in the faith.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I work to make my church viable for my children and grandchildren.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“My kids came to church for their faith formation. Parishes here identify the sacramental needs of your family and your children.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A church becomes a parish and becomes vibrant if people participate and get involved in all events. A parish is like a house. Everyone should be involved.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for the Church</td>
<td>“God has a plan for me. Perhaps it’s about supporting the church financially.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I don’t fall short. He’s a wondrous God. I am able to give back to church.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We get to do everything. It can be tiring but God gives us more strength. That’s the motivation. We have love for the church and the community.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“We organize even to clean the church. The parish cannot afford a major clean up. We organize a clean-up twice a year.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s not good that we don’t participate. In the church, we like to do something new.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A church becomes a parish and becomes vibrant if people participate and get involved in all events.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Most of our times are spent in church. We do a lot of community work.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I think in terms of giving back of gifts received from God.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Frahm-Arp roots itself in the belief that when people are in a right relationship with God, “then they begin to see all the ways in which God is blessing them” (2018, 9). This manner of acknowledging God’s blessing anchors itself in what are known as “prosperity theologies,” which emphasize the values of “conversion and spiritual gifts, faith in God’s desire to bless his followers with wealth and health, and some form of life improvement strategies” (2018, 14). According to such prosperity theologies, says Frahn-Arp, believers are continuously encouraged to “find God’s purpose for their lives and claim their blessings” (2018, 7). From our interview results, these blessings come in the form of perceived miracles, granted prayers, God’s forgiveness and expressions of love, enlightenment and strength in times of difficulties. Evidently, our respondents’ positive confessions of being blessed, translate to their expressed desires to give back to the community through tithing and various types of volunteer work. Table 4.19 enumerates these positive confessions of blessings.

Table 4.19 Confessions of blessings among immigrant Filipino church volunteers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Confessions of Personal Blessing</td>
<td>“I think of miracles in my life as real. I feel blessed already by God.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“There has been a lot of blessings. I don’t fall short. He’s a wondrous God.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You’ll be happy to know eventually that your requests had been granted.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“God has given me everything. He has answered my prayers. God loves me. It feels good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“He gives you all the people that you need.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“God is giving, forgiving and loving. I’ve experienced that myself.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“When I’m in trouble he gives me the strength to face life difficulties.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“He enlightens your mind. It’s not that you have asked, and He gives you immediately. Often, it (the blessing) takes time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“In terms of giving, I don’t back off. God has taken care of my own personal life.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s about giving back. We feel that we’ve been blessed. I cannot be a priest, but I serve God in other ways.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I believe that the more one gives, the more one receives. I have received a lot.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Growth in Experiences of Prayer and Devotion

Most respondents’ responses regarding how they express their religious culture in a multicultural church relate to their experiences of prayer and devotions, which are integral components of doing ministry for volunteer church workers. More than as an expression of worship and offering, for our volunteer church workers, it is prayer that sustains them in their dealings with others. Interestingly, the themes of prayers they listed are aligned to their desires to be of more effective service to community. Their supplications speak about their wishes to be more supportive of others, to rise above their anxieties and hurts, to be stronger amid the difficulties and realities of being disliked by others etc. As professor of spirituality and missiology, Dirk G. van der Merwe, aptly remarks, “people are tangled up with the divine in everyday life,” (2018, 1).

Notwithstanding the challenges they face as volunteer church workers, Filipinos always connect with the Divine to seek guidance. Table 4.20 illustrates the specific content of our immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers’ prayers.

Our chief focus, however, brings us to ask: How do prayers and devotions help our volunteers address their observed differences with others in a multicultural community? Zambian sociology and political science professor Isaac Phiri—who has written extensively on political pluralism—talks about religion as the missing dimension in efforts at conflict analysis and resolution (2000, 800). It will benefit movements that endeavor peacemaking and conflict resolution, suggests Phiri, to closely inquire into the practice of prayer (2000, 799). Citing the works of Malawian theologian Harvey Sindima (1998), Phiri notes how prayer necessitates social impact (2000, 800).
Table 4.20  Practice of prayer and devotions in a multicultural parish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Worship and Offering**  | “Before I start (my work), I pray before the Blessed Sacrament. I make an offering always to God. I ask the Holy Spirit to always guide me.”  
“I pray that through this celebration (liturgy), we may glorify (God) more and that He may sanctify us more.” |
| **Supplication and Thanksgiving** | “We have a prayer for protection. I get to tell the Lord many times: Lord, help me be supportive of others.”  
“When I get hurt, I just tell the Lord that I don’t like the feeling. I ask Him for help to rise above my anxieties. Prayer is very important.”  
“I thank God in my prayers.”  
“We all have our devotions. We call on the saints. He (God) answers our prayers.” |
| **Source of Strength, Protection and Guidance** | “I pray for those who do not like me. Because of them, I am made stronger.”  
“I couldn’t give up. I easily react. I lose heart easily. I lose strength and courage. I address that through prayers.”  
“My devotion has always been strong.”  
“If my pain becomes difficult, if this is what I can sacrifice, I can accept all the pains and aches. I make an offering of myself.”  
“We may not talk to our spouse or a family member, but we can always get to talk to God.” |

Prayer, in a sense, says Phiri is a “private and public declaration of a preference for and a commitment to a cause” and a “powerful statement to oneself, to God, and to the community reiterating one’s position in a conflict situation” (2000, 801). Thus, it will serve our multicultural communities well to discover how prayer and devotions can serve as powerful means to being fully involved in the world and by the Spirit’s guidance, enacting positive social changes.

**Inspiring Change and Conversion**

Practicing their religious culture in a multicultural community facilitates for first-generation immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers degrees of conversion and positive changes in outlook. This religious outlook inspires them not only to personal conversion but also hopes for communal change. Writing about spiritual awakening and religious conversion, law professor Tim Bakken affirms that there must “exists a
metaphysical presence—or God—who is infallible and who is the basis of the conversion experience” (2007, 102). Bakken references William James (1902) in defining this conversion experience as having “religious ideas, previously peripheral in his consciousness,” yet now taking a central place (Bakken, 109). In the case of our Filipino volunteer church workers, this new consciousness can take the form of a new teaching, a new direction in life or ministry, a sense of contentment and reverence for things that can no longer be changed. Hopes for communal change, on the other hand, include drumbeating efforts against forms of social evil, improved relations with others, recreating the world for the better, and a campaign for people’s generosity. Affirming this new consciousness as brought about by the practice of one’s religious culture, Bakken also references social science theories in “presupposing at least the possibility of some type of causal relationship between religion and spiritual awakening” (2007, 103). Table 4.21 traces expressions of both personal conversion and hopes for communal change as Filipino immigrants’ expressions of practicing their religious culture.

Table 4.21 Practice of religious culture as engendering change and conversion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Personal Conversion    | “God is teaching me. I don’t need to carry all the burden. It changes you as a volunteer. I get to depend on people.”  
                          | “He (priest) told me to convert my energies into spiritual meditation.”  
                          | “I just pray that I can accept the things I cannot change.”  
                          | “I get to forgive everyone. I cannot move on with all those angers.”  
                          | “In time, our eyes were opened about the things we can do.” |
| Hopes for Communal Change | “We are fighting evil. I hope people change.”  
                          | “I’m praying for him to have a change of heart. I’m praying that he changes his attitude toward my mom.”  
                          | “Hatred must be replaced [by] love; disunity by community; selfishness by generosity and service; vengeance by forgiveness; retribution by mercy. Make the world what God want it to be. I have to remind myself of all these.”  
                          | “We need more capacities to give and be able to forgive and continue to give.” |
Q.3 What personal values and dispositions do the respondents believe positively/negatively affect their views of their parish as a multicultural organization?

In addressing this question, we refer to our respondents’ expressed acknowledgement of their personal gifts and limitations. Therefore, among those gifts that positively impact their views of their multicultural organization are the following: the capacities to learn something new and the patience to educate others about their own culture; the eagerness to build community and to recognize the gifts and talents of others.

Figure 4.5 A database-generated ‘word cloud’ summarizes respondents’ values related to their multicultural church contexts. Each word depicted (in varying dimensions), represents respondents’ collective emphasis for a particular theme over other themes.

Our respondents’ self-reported capacities for learning are very meaningful for ascertaining their abilities to easily adapt to their multicultural environment. In a 2015 article, management and international studies scholars Natalie Mihkaylov and Isidro Fierro cite social learning theories to affirm that individuals apply a “sense making” process that allows them to revise their role identity and realize personal and professional growth based on their experiences (2015, 61). A simple openness to social interactions
and feedback, the authors suggest is beneficial for cultural knowledge creation (2015, 61). Evidently, Filipino volunteer church workers who opted to regularly expose themselves to the multicultural dynamics in their organizations are picking up helpful learnings from their experiences.

Whereas Table 4.22 summarizes top themes that positively/negatively influence our respondents’ view about their multicultural environment, Table 4.23, illustrates how their openness to learning can positively impact their views of their multicultural organization and their capacities to educate others about their own culture.

Table 4.22 Dispositions that affect one’s views of a multicultural community: Top themes (number of coded responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Factors</th>
<th>Learning/Education (19)</th>
<th>Community/Cooperation (8)</th>
<th>Sharing of Talents/Gifts (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>Set Perspectives/ Confidence Issues (16)</td>
<td>Negative Emotions (5)</td>
<td>Age/Tiredness (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Citing other classic social interaction theories, Mihkaylov and Fierro also assert that “when the conditions of equal status, common goals, cooperation and personal interactions are satisfied, the prejudice is likely to be reduced” and thus “enhance cultural knowledge, reduce anxiety concerning intercultural contact and increase empathy and perspective taking” (2015, 61). Thus, from Table 4.23 we see respondents engaged in promoting greater cultural learning and openness have themselves become proponents of an enriched and collaborative community.
Table 4.23 Dispositions that positively impact views of a multicultural organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Capacities for Learning and Educating about Cultures | “We got exposed to a lot of teachings and retreats. It opened our eyes about the gifts we have and what we can give and what ministries we can contribute to.”  
    “You will learn to share and educate yourself about other’s culture. You learn how to work with them.”  
    “There’s a lot of learning and working together.”  
    “We always need to emphasize the educational aspect of the celebration. We are a diverse community and we would like to learn from what others do. It makes sense.”  
    “We also need to tell them and educate them about what to do. It is all a matter of educating everyone about what we do.”  
    “We have a different audience every time. The education part begins the program. You open the mass with an educational piece.”  
    “We need to be more open and be willing to learn. It helps a lot if we listen to others.” “We learn by doing. It’s also a gift to know how to coordinate tasks with others.”  
    “We get to teach them the history of our faith. They don’t need to go to the Philippines to learn those.” |
| Building and Enriching Community           | “We support and nourish each other’s traditions and celebrations. We see here building community.”  
    “We come to enrich the bigger community with our gifts.”  
    “You learn how to work with them. Their help is big if you are able to get their cooperation.”  
    “We get to show our culture and our family values. We come to church as a family. They see that as good.” |
| Acknowledging / Sharing of Gifts/ Talents   | “Just by being around, you know that you get to deal with different talents and skills. “They key is coordination. A good leader coordinates.”  
    “We give everyone a part of the job based on what they can do.”  
    “We also have different gifts. You just have to deal with it. You cannot change them. We can take them for who they are.” |

Likewise our first-generation immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers acknowledge certain personal limitations that contribute in a less positive view of their multicultural communities (see Table 4.22). Their self-reported limitations are as follows: the tendencies to get fixated to old ways of doing things; a perception of what they lack in terms of certain skills; a consciousness of being too emotional for comfort; and other natural life circumstances. Citing cultural adjustment theories, researchers Q. Wang, S. Leen, and K. Hannes note that maladaptive behaviors brought about by ‘separation’ and
‘marginalization’ adjustment strategies can in fact be opportunities for learning. A separation strategy, as defined by Wang, Leen and Hannes (2018, 760), involves immigrants’ keeping their original culture and rejecting a local culture, whereas a marginalization acculturation strategy refers to rejecting the norms of both cultures. Discomforts brought about by such maladaptive behaviors, Wang, Leen, and Hannes posit, may for first-generation immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers, be opportunities for additional learning. Introducing their ‘pedagogies of discomfort,’ which “invites critical thinking, awareness raising, re-appreciating one's own culture, and re-evaluating worldviews,” Wang, Leen and Hannes point to the benefits of moving out from comfort zones, challenging emotional, unconscious daily habits and values, and promoting greater intercultural dialogue and cooperation (2018, 760). Therefore, the self-reported limitations posted on Table 4.24, while evoking concerns in multicultural communities can, through strategic formation and training, be productively addressed.

Table 4.24 Dispositions that negatively impact views of a multicultural organization.

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<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixation on old ways</td>
<td>“When I really believe in something, no one else can make me change my mind.” “The negative thing about me is that I am stubborn.” “I have difficulty with gospel music. I find it very loud.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Confidence and Direction</td>
<td>“What do I do? Everyone seemed to know what each one was doing. I didn’t have anyone telling me what to do. I wasn’t sure if I was doing the right thing.” “I lose heart easily. I lose strength and courage.” “I’m very shy. When you’re shy, they think you’re aloof. I don’t mingle much.” “I lose my self-confidence sometimes. I rely on people’s appreciation. I ask always if ‘I’m doing the right thing.’” “I can be quite timid. I have second thoughts about doing things.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Emotions</td>
<td>“I get angry. I have my first reactions. I get to question people. I easily react.” “I feel hurt by her, but I just keep quiet. I don’t want to offend her.” “My tendency is to flight, but I cannot do that. I really love my work. I couldn’t give up.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiredness and other Practical Limitations</td>
<td>“That’s true. But that runs you down. The quality of work will be impacted too because you are not your prime self.” “As I grow older however, things have become more difficult. I get to forget things already sometimes.” “We cannot work properly if I am over extended. The most efficient person is the busiest.” “I can’t join them anymore because I live far. It’s difficult for me.”</td>
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</table>
Q.4 What recommendations can they make to members of such organizations to help sustain involvement and participation in such multicultural contexts?

Immersed in the life of their multicultural contexts, our respondents remain the best sources for recommendations and suggestions to further involve and assure the participation of fellow Filipinos in their communities. A major recommendation for a deeper experience of inclusion and engagement in their multicultural community, according to our respondents, revolves around the work of being volunteer church workers. Apparently, to volunteer for work in the parishes opens many opportunities for immigrant Filipinos, not only to express their faith and affirm their collective identity with compatriots but also to gain new skills and insights about the dynamics of their multicultural community.

Figure 4.6 Filipino immigrant-volunteer church workers’ general sentiments about “volunteer work” in their communities.

Navigating through a complex world of varying persuasions, such as a multicultural community, immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers claim to have benefited much,
more so in terms of their spiritual outlook, leadership, and community skills. Volunteer work for them IS a source of great honor and blessing, an endeavor which they strongly recommend their compatriots to engage. Figure 4.5 shows our immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers’ general positive regard and sentiments about their involvement as volunteers. Table 4.25 illustrates our respondents’ strong suggestion for compatriots to seek volunteer work and from it derive deeper meaning from, and engagement in, their multicultural communities.

Our respondents’ coded statements affirm the research about the empowering effects of volunteer work. Professors in the field social work, F. Tang, V. Copeland and S. Wexler, in their work with senior adults, note how volunteering and actively participating in the life of a community can improve well-being and health (Tang, Copeland and Wexler 2012, 89). Apparently, the activity “generates a host of benefits that accrue to the recipients of volunteer services, to the community in which volunteers serve, and to the social service sector that has come to rely increasingly on volunteers” (2012, 89). In the case of the Filipino volunteer church workers’ responses to this study, fulfillment seems to come from the meaning they derive from their work. Volunteering is a way to satisfy one’s passion for service to community, fulfilling a passed-on heritage from families, or simply performing an act of giving back or expressing community membership. Incidentally, our respondents are also very involved in recruiting more volunteers to help in their communities. Volunteer work, which opened doors for them to deeply integrate into their multicultural communities, is a worthwhile endeavor that they wish their compatriots would experience more fully.
Table 4.25 Recommendations: Opting for volunteer work and finding meaning and fulfillment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteerism as a Choice and Personal Option</td>
<td>“A parish will make you as included as you allow it to. If you say ‘yes’ then you are there.” “You’ll have to make your own move. You’ll have to say ‘yes’.” “I suggest that folks come and serve in parish ministries. Be in the life of the parish. You get plugged in.” “To volunteer for parish work is a choice. I volunteer for God and community. To do so is food for my soul.” “If I look at myself, I’m involved. I want to be more involved.” That’s what I have. I only have my availability. I don’t know why. I want to serve. I want to get to know God more. I want to be in touch with Him a lot of times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteerism and Service: A Way of Life, A Commitment and Source of Fulfillment</td>
<td>“It’s satisfying enough to be of help. It’s uplifting. If it’s food, I feel full. After volunteering, I feel I just did my part.” “This is part of my life. When one thing has become a part of your life, you will always look for it. It has become a part of my life. Filipinos tell me that I should rest a bit and let others do the work. I don’t care. Paid or not paid, it’s my passion. I’m happy with what I’m doing. I’m fulfilled.” “Why volunteer? It’s our expression of gratitude. It’s about giving back. We feel that we’ve been blessed.” “I always think of the work as a commitment.” “My perspective is to give myself voluntarily to the church. We were raised this way in the Philippines.” “When you have a task, you just have to do your task and nothing more. For us, we like to do more.” “What I do is to make myself more visible. I need to share my gifts. I cannot be a burden to anyone.” “When we volunteer, we give our all. People ask: Don’t you get tired. But work needs to get done.” “I do volunteer work. I’m not paid. We are always helping people. My parents were always like that ... forgetting about themselves. Always helping.” “I feel like if I stop giving, if I hold things back, I would feel a block in my stomach. It will be a baggage that can turn into poison.” “I feel satisfied because I’m helping a lot. I give to community. I’ve also met more of my good friends there. Friends are like family.”</td>
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Along this line, Tang et al. note how volunteer work can indeed support lives—especially for the disadvantaged and the vulnerable—through its favorable outcomes, namely: “to counter loss of power in varied life domains, reduce sense of isolation and helplessness, and strengthen self-esteem and personal control” (2012, 90).
For our Filipino respondents, life as volunteer church workers roots itself deeply in their expressions of faith. They communicate this sense of spiritual well-being as an incentive by way of encouraging others to step up and be more involved in their multicultural parish. Table 4.26 lists the spiritual benefits our respondents derive from their volunteer activities.

Table 4.26  Recommendations: Deriving spiritual benefits from volunteer work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Faith</td>
<td>“I like what I am doing in the parish. I serve. I think of it as my gift and offering to the Lord. Serving the Lord and His people is a real privilege for me.”</td>
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<td>“Do not expect help if you volunteer. We get to do everything. It can be tiring but God gives us more strength. That’s the motivation.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“What do you get from volunteer work? Basically, it is about (an expression of) our deep faith. We are doing this all for the Lord. No pay. We know that he is the source of everything. The source of life. We do not have anything without him.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“We are into ministry to serve the Lord. We were created to love, honor and serve. We are saved not by service but for service. When we serve others, we serve the Lord. When we feed the hungry, it’s very fulfilling.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“My faith deepens. We are serving and bringing Jesus to people.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“When I volunteer, I feel good. It’s all about serving the Lord. It’s not about wishing that God give me a blessing. It’s always about gratitude.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Doing volunteer work for the parish is personally uplifting. It keeps my faith stronger. It makes my relationship with the Lord closer. It’s not about the money.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I’m learning a lot about God by helping out, by volunteering.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“There’s a lot to be thankful for. We just want to pay back. We don’t ask because God knows what we need. Sometimes God has given us more without us even asking.”</td>
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The responses posted in Table 4.26 affirm long-time social work claims that a transactional relationship exists between faith and service. Social work researchers D. Garland, D. Myers, T. Wolfer point to how “faith motivates volunteers to serve, and serving, in turn, may deepen and transform the volunteer's faith, leading to a greater commitment to service, compassion for those who suffer in unjust social systems, and the potential for more radical engagement in the community” (2008, 264). Clearly, from our
respondents’ experience, their sense of feeling spiritually uplifted and blessed, further grounds their efforts to engage in meaningful volunteer work despite the many practical challenges they need to overcome. Incidentally, the respondents themselves have reported some difficulty in recruiting more volunteer workers in the parishes. It may serve this recruitment process well for volunteers to more publicly articulate in community the significance of their work in deepening their faith and the relative attainment of meaning and fulfillment in their lives.

On the practical side, respondents also pointed to certain skills that Filipinos can still learn or improve as a way to support their consistent engagement in their multicultural context. Table 4.27 represents some of their recommendations for further skills building. A more active engagement and participation in their multicultural communities, our respondents point out, requires further development of their communication and transactional skills and more stable grounding in the values of hard work, respect, humility, community, and adaptability.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code and Transactional Skills</th>
<th>Verbatim Statements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate and Transactional Skills</td>
<td>“I wish Filipinos can be more vocal about their opinions. We get to complain quietly. We don’t let others know what we think. It’s always good to present our ideas even when they may not be acceptable.” “Communicating with them is important. We need to let them know that this is how we are in the Philippines.” “You also have to speak up and share your thoughts. One must be ready to offer one’s comments. If your comments are accepted, then that’s good. If not, you can pray again about them. “We have to make sure however that we communicate well. I tell Filipinos that we can still learn to better enunciate our words when we are talking. Americans find it hard to understand us sometimes. Our pronunciation is different really.” “It’s a challenge when people don’t understand how we speak. We don’t talk the same way as them.” “We also need to be frank with each other. Some say ‘sorry.’ We need to be honest with each other too, so we can correct each other.”</td>
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| Firmness and Hard Work | “I advise Filipinos to be strong. We must be firm. We have to set our minds on a goal.” “What they (Filipinos in the Philippines) don’t know is that it is difficult here. You’ll have to work hard here.” “They (community members) get to see me at work. Some eventually say they believe in me. (I) always must prove (my)self even up to now. Even when you’re already established, you still have to prove yourself.” “My advice to Filipinos is to always give the best of what they have. We don’t need to feel that we are less especially when among Americans.” “Filipinos will need to work harder. We also need to be more down to earth and humble.” |

| Respect, Humility and Equal Treatment | “Treat people equally. Try to be good and they will respect you. Respect is very important.” “It’s always easy if you are good to them. People are people. We are the same. If you are respectful to them, they’ll be respectful of you too.” “We all need some humility (kabaang loob). If you do not have that you will not surrender to others. If you are not humble, you will not learn to listen. You will push always for your agenda.” “You have to show that you are courteous. Be a model to others.” |

| Find and Build a Community of Friends | “It’s best if one can settle in a church community that accepts you. That will make life easier.” “It’s important to serve the church and surround oneself with friends who are deep and strong in the faith. Those things contribute to things positive. Choose your friends.” “Come to church. Be involved in activities, in whatever ways. Meet new friends. Friends are very important especially in times of need. We also need people to talk with every so often.” |

| Flexibility | “We need to be more adjusted to many situations. It’s not about doing simply what we want to do. When in Rome, we do as the Romans do.” “When I organize, I have a timeline. I’m more adaptable now. I’m more flexible. If things change that’s okay.” |
Summary

Results presented in this chapter were derived primarily from interviews, field notes, and extra archival documents. Sections were divided into the following: (1) the site profiles of each parish under study; (2) a general profile of research samples/respondents; (3) research methodology as applied to data collection and analysis; (4) the presentation and analysis of themes; and (5) this summary. The bulk of the presentation followed the sequence of the four major questions presented at the beginning of the study. A summary of findings follows:

- Quite uniquely, first-generation immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers describe their multicultural context in terms of three major themes, namely: (1) the people who constitute the community; (2) their fellow-Filipinos with whom they keep close—yet divergent—relations; and (3) the influence of their religious leaders. Filipinos, being naturally collectivist and people-oriented, view multicultural dynamics in terms of their relations with others. A focus on “people” allows the phenomenon of multiculturality to be assessed via the lens of persons, their needs, and commonalities in expressing their faith (over race or structures or rules). Reported diversity, even among Filipinos themselves, allows us to think of multiculturality as more than about mere ethnic differences. Multicultural differences exist even among groups sharing a common ethnicity or nationality. Finally, the role of leaders is crucial. Immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers, while holding their religious leaders in high esteem, also have elevated expectations about the role pastors are expected to play in conflict situations.
• Practicing their religious culture in a multicultural setting, for immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers, means the freedom to express the faith they brought with them from their homeland. This faith engenders greater hope and wellness, trust and greater faith in God, and deeper generosity and commitment to community life. Practicing their religious culture also entails belonging to a physical church where they encounter the Divine, participate in the liturgy, and meet their friends and families. Practicing their religious culture also means having venues for their positive confessions of being blessed, assurances that they are growing in their prayer and devotion, which consequently inspire in them some change and conversion.

• Among the values that positively influence their views regarding their multicultural parish can be seen the following: their capacities to learn from other cultures and educate others about their own; their positive commitment to enrich and build communities and share their own gifts and talents.

• Among those they believe hinder them from viewing their communities more positively are the following: a fixation on old ways of doing things; an acknowledged lack of self-confidence and skills; extreme emotions in response to things that are different; and a general experience of tiredness and exhaustion.

• Some recommendations Filipino volunteer church workers offer to help sustain members’ involvement and participation in their multicultural parish include: choose to be a volunteer; find a connection between the faith they practice and opportunities for service; and develop skills in communication, firm resolve and
hard work, respect for others, humility and equanimity, deepened friendships, and work on flexibility and adaptability.

The data shared here, it is hoped, will explain the experiences of inclusion and religious engagement of first-generation immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers in their multicultural parishes. Filipinos will continue to flock to their churches. Despite the challenges of dealing with their current multicultural communities, the church for them remains a haven of peace and protection, a visible place of communion with the Divine, a reminder of home, a place of reunion with family and friends, a place that exacts from them greater personal generosity and conversion. One respondent captures every Filipino volunteer church worker’s reason for continually engaging in their multicultural community: “This is my parish. This is my spiritual home. I take care of this parish. I am not just passing through. This is my home. I am here. This is how I feel. I have ownership of this place.”
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This project began with an objective to describe and understand the dynamics of a multicultural church using the lens of an immigrant people who struggle to make sense of their faith and to nurture their desires to be included and engaged in their adopted church communities. The study, therefore, outlined a qualitative multi-case research effort that specified, among others topics, the statement of a problem; the purpose and significance of the study; the research questions and components of its chosen methodology.

The general profile of our interviewees has included a summary description of their immigration experiences in the American milieu. Other than the very real stressors (e.g., lack of language proficiency, perceptions of being different, actual experiences of discrimination, etc.) that arise from initial adjustments to a new setting, immigrants (particularly Asian Americans) might well profit by acknowledging unconscious tendencies to describe what is “American” as influenced by the effects of “colonial mentality” (De Castro et al., 2008; Kim, 1998). Nevertheless, while the larger external U.S. environment continues to present challenges to the lives of immigrants, the specific context of religious organizations—considering their evolving demographics and emphasis on a life of faith—seems to more deeply facilitate adjustments and freer expressions of immigrants’ cultural identities. The reflection methods adopted for this study are appropriated in relation to the specific religious contexts of our respondent interviewees.
This study, therefore, grounds its inquiry on an overarching mode that reflects on the phenomenon of multiculturality as an ecclesial reality. Edward Farley provides a helpful tool that presents a developmental and process view of a church phenomenon that begs to be understood through the critical involvement of members. These members are tasked with looking beyond a single “portrait” of a church and instead focus on the act of portraiture—an empowering tool that generates more meaningful symbols and images apt for our time, yet rooted in history and collective practices. Farley’s mode of theological portraiture corresponds to systematic-historical theologian John Webster’s (2018) view of a church as a reflective theological community. Webster, while acknowledging “tradition—the routines, expectations, symbolic life of a community in history—as the essential backcloth of our knowledge,” nevertheless does not suggest that we cannot think or speak in ways not provided for by the communal stock of ideas and language on which we draw (Webster 2018, 565). Christian speech, Webster says, is always an “attempt to speak the language of Easter,” of the resurrection that implies for us the “limitless creativity of God” that becomes “infinitely potent in expanding our human history” (2018, 579).

Farley’s mode of theological portraiture finds similarities with the act of “forthtelling” proposed by Ghanaian theologian Rev. John S. Pobee. To forthtell, Pobee remarks, engages with the contemporary reality of the context and lessons of history to “articulate what we should or could be doing, so as to be viably church.” (Pobee, 2001, 319). In support of his advocacy toward ecumenical formation, Pobee notes how this mode of forthtelling employs the use of memory, “not just to recall the past, but to make present and real the insights and teachings of history, experience and scripture” (2001,
A reference to a collective memory and memorial, Pobee expounds, is central to our rites of Christian worship—our knowledge of which, he says, must contribute to making the memory of our being a church as a dynamic reality. Pobee stresses that the act of forthtelling must naturally involve a wellspring of experience, a cornerstone of religion that must be taken seriously (2001, 320). Theologizing for Pobee cannot simply be about reflection, transmitting a body of information, absorbing facts and figures, and maintaining church structures. Rather, it is about “participation in or doing the word of God,” an encounter between revelation and social reality (2001, 321). Indeed, religious experience can be an authentic source of divine revelation that “transforms convictions, patterns of thought, emotion and behavior in the light of God's word” (2001, 328).

From the foregoing, we concur Farley’s mode of theological portraiture to be a valuable tool for understanding an ecclesial phenomenon such as the growing multiculturality of our church communities. Peoples of faith, as Webster suggests, must actively involve themselves in the making of a reflective and theological church by attempting to speak the transformative language of Easter. To assure its credibility and viability, this reflective church must speak, Pobee suggests, out of the rich deposit of its collective experience and memory.

While Farley, Webster, and Pobee provided us with the overarching mode of reflecting on the ecclesial reality of multiculturality, we presented three theological frameworks, with which individual members of our communities can ground their own experiences of multiculturality. We speak of course of the following theological frameworks, namely: (1) a notion of faith expressed through an encounter with the other;
(2) the empowering recognition of the multiplicity of gifts in our communities; and (3) the call to embody and participate in Trinitarian communion.

This chapter primarily presents a synthesis of findings from Chapter 4 and the theological frameworks just mentioned. It consists as well, of a discussion about the significance and implications of the research for the researcher—and for ecclesiological and theological discourse. The chapter also presents emerging opportunities for further research and the continuing questions that have arisen as an outcome of the study. A summary will conclude this chapter.

**Synthesis of Findings and Theological Frameworks**

The discussion that follows represents the researcher’s attempt to synthesize the dimensions of theological portraiture with the study’s proposed theological frameworks and the themes that are emerging from the research surveys and interviews.

**Multiculturality: A Portrait of Ecclesial Existence and Encounters**

While describing their experiences in their adopted religious communities, first-generation immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers affirmed a portrait of an unavoidable reality of ecclesial existence—its multiculturality. This phenomenon, while drawing us to focus on the influence of transnational movements of peoples cannot but lead us into noticing how multiculturality is not just a theme but an existential reality of being church. Scripture is replete with images of itinerant patriarchs, prophets, apostles and the early peoples of God, crossing seas and deserts, planting their roots and traditions of faith in new and sometimes even unfriendly territories. This picture of the past, of the almost unimpeded movements of peoples across regions, occasioned the flourishing of faith communities in many places around the world. We also know that the eventual
establishment of nation states and the strict enactment of geographical boundaries slowed down this natural flow of peoples crossing regions and domains. At present, cases of cross-cultural exchanges, even within our churches, would seem like a new and novel phenomenon. Upon a second look at ecclesial history, or ecclesial existence—as the first dimension of our overarching theological reflection method suggests that the distinctive character of our church communities points to multiculturality.

The historical givenness of multiculturality, which we have derived from the first dimension of theological portraiture, supports efforts to make an intentional shift of
emphasis from reinventing or refashioning a given church reality so as to make a parallel bid to focus on the nature and anthropology of persons who make it up. In this study’s first theological framework, we referred to Miroslav Volf (1996) and asked the questions: What kind of selves do we need to be to live in harmony with others? How should we think of our own identity? How should we go about making peace with the other? Or, if we may, now add: How do we understand this person who needs to navigate in this given ecclesial existence?

Apparently, our first theological framework of “encountering the other” in the reality of ecclesial existence, the welcoming and embracing of the other as proposed by Volf, has become for the human person an opportunity for learning and understanding one’s life/world. From this perspective we referred to Emmanuel Lartey (2006) who emphasized how real-life encounters with real people can be a true way of deriving genuine knowledge. A human person fully engaged in one’s life/world derives growth, knowledge and even care for oneself. Lartey, of course, was appropriating Emmanuel Levinas’s philosophical concept of the “other” and making explicit how through this encounter with the other, a person can catch glimpses of the Divine. Much like Volf, who warns against forms of the “new tribalism” that threaten to divide and fracture societies, Lartey cautions about human tendencies to suppress the other, how being unmindful of the other becomes a form of forgetfulness of God. As a help to understanding this situation, Gemma Tulud Cruz (2008) draws us back to ecclesial realities by seeing the portrait of multiculturality in terms of “authentic borders.” Nurturing these genuine places of encounter, Tulud notes, instills for everyone a sense of home and quality relationships that seek to inspire persons to be their own authentic self. In support of this
endeavor, we also find a worthy partner in David Tracy (1987) who placed great stress on the value of conversations that require a constant reevaluation and interpretation of our relations and world views.

Clearly, our mode of acknowledging the historicity of ecclesial existence, of multiculturality as a phenomenon, points to the crucial tasks of persons making sense of a given life/world. Interestingly, results from this current research—a survey to inquire about how multiculturality is described—pointed precisely to how our respondents referenced the role and social location of persons. Ecclesial existence, as supported by our survey results, involves encountering persons in flesh and blood, in their varying cultures and persuasions, in a mode of community living that is multicultural. In the case of our first-generation immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers, this encounter also involves grappling with engagements Filipinos have with fellow Filipinos, acknowledging their own cultural uniqueness, both good and bad, both when they are in accord and when discord arises. For Filipinos this engagement with persons also flows into their relations with those who lead them in community. Our findings showed how our Filipino respondents support and respect their priests and pastors and have reasonable expectations that leaders run their communities with fairness, trust, and acknowledgement of peoples’ identities and uniqueness. The results of our survey with Filipino volunteer church workers in three Seattle area parishes, clearly show that our multicultural ecclesial existence begs to be understood more via the lens and perspective of unique human persons.

In addition, Filipino respondents—themselves rooted in a unique collective history—provide a fitting example of a cultural identity that welcomes sustained
exposure to cross-cultural exchanges. By virtue of possessing a “collectivist culture” (Triandis and Suh, 2002), a consciousness for “performing citizenship” (Pido, 2012), a tendency to an “interdependent self-construal” (Datu and Reyes, 2015; Markus and Kitayama, 1991) and a capacity for “bi-cultural adaptation” (Mossakowski 2007), our surveyed respondents seemed to be in an opportune position not only to integrate well into their adopted parish communities but also to face and overcome conflict situations among themselves. A portrait of our Filipino volunteer workers’ assessment of their multicultural contexts, details how they see persons in their communities as friendly and welcoming, appreciative, supportive, and engaged in nurturing their life of faith. Fellow-Filipinos, with whom they may find themselves in some forms of conflict, were also described positively as religious, church goers, family-oriented, and generous with their gifts. Our respondents’ self-reported heightened sensitivity to community dynamics, their capacities to acknowledge differences, and a mindfulness of others’ situational responses place them in a highly suitable position not only to engage and integrate smoothly into their multicultural context but also to deal with problems head-on with a keen interest in preserving relationships.

A Quest for the Normative Among A Multiplicity of Gifts

Acknowledging the limits of our study while simultaneously affirming the role of theologians to pass judgments based on theological inquiry, we set out to portray what in our ecclesial existence may well be shared—as well as normative realities. Again, we reinforce Farley’s method of theological inquiry as a reflective process, not meant to impose an assent to some authoritative formulation but to describe intrinsic human qualities with which more community participants may perhaps identify. Farley’s second
dimension of theological portraiture asks theologians indulged in reflective inquiry to make constant proposals, which in our judgment are normative and appropriate for Christian living. Images and insights from stories and experiences of our first-generation immigrant Filipino volunteer church workers may well be applicable sources of shared and binding human operations.

Our theological framework directs our thoughts to another unavoidable ecclesial reality: the preponderance of a multiplicity of gifts as well as the actual demands for multi-mindedness in our communities. We started off by acknowledging the reality of a multiplicity of gifts through a notion of an “other” that we cannot subsume into ourselves—that “other” that we must regard as a mystery. From Cynthia Lindner (2016), we consider how this disposition allows us to understand more deeply the complexity of Christian ministry and hold at the same time the powerfully contradictory realities that exist. This polyphony of thoughts and dispositions, Yves Congar (1982) also asserts, naturally brings about tensions and conflicts that when brought out in the open can serve communities most beneficially. Citing the writings of French writer Robert de Montvalon, Congar also impresses on us the need for community members to be more at ease with conflicts and discomforts in their organizations. Both Congar and Lindner echo William James and Michail Bakhtin (cited in Congar) in affirming how this contemporary description of truth as “polyphonic,” begs always to be co-created through dialogue.
George Newlands and Kathryn Tanner (2004) emphasized that the direction of our desires for dialogue should be about breaking away from our narrow-minded tendencies and moving toward engagements that aim to promote common human values and practices. Unity of faith and the spiritual life are expressed in a diversity of forms, says Pope John Paul II (1979). Clearly, our second dimension of theological portraiture demands that we strive for forms of unity amidst our acknowledged polyphonic existence. Congar himself suggests that differences can be resolved only if we trust in a power and principle that we hold in common, that which transcends us. To this end, Newlands and Tanner point to the call for Christians to remain open to the “Word,”
God’s free and uncontrollable Word, the principle of unity that binds people together despite conflicts and differences.

Our quest for the normative, even amidst our polyphonic existence, finds concrete illustration in the survey responses of our Filipino volunteer church workers. In this regard, we cited Campese (2012) who emphasized the value of human and faith experiences as privileged sources of theological reflection. From our survey, we note how our Filipino respondents’ life of faith grounds them in a shared human experience that transcends even their ad-intra differences. Apparently, elements of this life of faith facilitate overcoming the less positive dynamics in community. For our Filipino volunteer church workers, therefore, a life of faith becomes a true source of hope and wellness, of trust and knowledge of God and an inspiration to be more self-giving and committed to one’s ministries. This practice of faith, which facilitates adjustment to and a mitigation of troubling migration conditions (Tulud Cruz 2008), understandably connects our respondents more deeply with the Divine (Dunns-Hensley 2018). In their shared practice of faith, our respondents find meaning in their longings to belong and be counted as a member of community, to participate in rituals of worship, to find consolation being within actual sacred spaces, to pass on their religious practices to family and friends, and to express their generosity and support for the church. In addition, this life of faith enables them to express real “positive confession” (Frahm-Arp 2018), a way of being more conscious of their gifts and blessings, their growth in prayer, their movement toward greater personal and communal conversion and reliance on God’s protection and guidance. If we are to propose a norm, a shared reality amidst the multiplicity of gifts and the polyphony of voices in our communities, that norm may well be an openness to
partake in this dynamic life of faith. Persons are naturally entangled with the divine in their everyday life (van der Merwe 2018). This life of faith must inspire degrees of spiritual awakening and religious conversion (Bakken 2007) and result in some tangible social impact (Sindima 1998) especially engagement in a more positive life within a community.

Given the reality of differences in personal dispositions, a quest for a normative and shared human experience is essential to achieve a bond of unity. Our theological inquiry, based on the experiences of our immigrant Filipino church workers, helps us make an informed judgment that the nurturing of a life of faith, through prayer, worship, community life and a constant movement toward degrees of conversion and practices of generosity, help overcome the differences that accompany a community’s natural experiences of multiplicity.

Gearing the Situational Present Toward a Telos of Communion

The third dimension of theological portraiture calls us to get into a mode of investigating ecclesial issues in the situational present to support moving our communities toward a greater and deeper understanding of our collective telos. Farley introduces this dimension to mitigate possible fixations on historicity and normative practices. By further investigating elements of such a situational present, Farley impresses on the developmental aspect of theological portraiture. The reality from which a portrait is based continues to evolve, and this third dimension of theological reflection creates for all a consciousness of a richer and more promising future vision of God.
Figure 5.3 The importance of the third dimension of theological portraiture, the Situational Present, the Telos of Communion, and the Engagement/Volunteerism

Our theological framework wished to connect this vision of God for all to the notion of “koinonia” that we may derive from a portrait of the perfect Trinitarian communion. Koinonia is an existential reality for the diverse persons of the Trinity (Thomas 1997), to which we, as a believing community are asked to participate. We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people (Pope Francis 2018) and by being an engaged member of the church, a person becomes an “image of God,” exists as God Himself exists and takes on God’s “way of being” (Zizoulas 1985). This reality, Zizoulas stressed, is an event of communion, a project not merely undertaken by an individual person, but a goal held in common with others.
This thrust toward koinonia means for our communities numerous intentional efforts. Our portrayal of this vision of communion entails, among others, (1) reviewing and negotiating norms and recognized cultural differences (Cousar 1998); (2) upholding and giving oneself totally to another in mutual acceptance and giving (Boff 1988); (3) constantly having in mind a community that is “whole, united and unifying” (Moltman as cited in Boff 1988); and (4) healing the alienation and the breaches that arose out of differences (Newbigin 1989). These efforts, we recognize are mostly Spirit driven and not chiefly human propelled—an acknowledgment that God is “efficaciously present in the world” and “present in specific shapes or patterns of praxis that have a configuring, transformative power within historical praxis” (P. Hodgson 1989).

It also helps to trust in people’s capacities to indulge in “sense-making” of their life/world as means to possibly revisit and re-envision their role identities (Mihkaylov and Fierro, 2015). Cultural knowledge creation is ongoing and requires openness to interactions and feedback. Pedagogies of discomfort challenge community members to think critically, to raise their awareness, to re-appreciate their own culture, and re-evaluate their worldviews (Wang, Leen and Hannes 2018).

Needless to say, this plunge into sense-making and cultural knowledge creation has accompanying discomforts that will hardly be appealing to all. The experience of our Filipino volunteer church workers suggests a tendency to flee difficult situations and use escape as a way to avoid confrontations. In our objective to revisit a situational present, we focused on our church workers’ recommendation to promote volunteerism and asked how this mode of encountering and engaging the other in their communities can be re-envisioned to further promote a deeper sense of koinonia among diverse influences.
Other than instilling the benefits of volunteerism and participation in community life as means to improving well-being and health (F. Tang, V. Copeland and S. Wexler 2012), we also capitalize on the normative life of faith that motivates service, transformation, commitment, compassion, and radical engagement in community (D. Garland, D. Myers, T. Wolfer 2008).

For our respondent Filipino volunteer church workers, active engagement in the complex dynamics of community life expresses and manifests their faith. Clearly, the normative aspect of faith-life and the drive to engage in community through volunteer work connect almost effortlessly. Concretely, Filipino volunteer church workers refer to: (1) their feelings of being spiritually uplifted and blessed, (2) the meanings they derive from their ministry, (3) the opportunities to express their passion for service to the community, and (4) the spiritual benefits that ground their parish involvements. This derived spiritual benefit from their acts of volunteerism becomes a driving force as well for their project of recruiting others to help in parish ministries.

To the end of reaching greater and more effective communion within their diverse community, Filipino parish workers also acknowledge their need to hone certain practical skills. They look forward to further developing their communication-transactional skills and deepening the values of hard work, respect, humility, community living and adaptability. Programs to sharpen these skills, pragmatic as they may sound, when connected to uplifting one’s faith life, in the context of community life, will go a long way in further portraying a people advancing toward koinonia.
Figure 5.4 The researcher’s summary of the dynamics between and among the three dimensions of theological portraiture, their relations to the theological frameworks presented and the findings derived from the study’s actual interview and surveys.

Significance and Implications

The discussion that follows adresses the following topics: (1) The study and its personal significance to the researcher; (2) the study’s ecclesial significance; (3) its theological significance; (4) the opportunities for further research; and (5) the questions arising from the study.

Personal Significance

This study resulted from the researcher’s ministry to, and encounters with, first-generation immigrant Filipinos in Seattle, Washington. Their stories of faith,
community life, and their adjustments to an adopted cultural setting may well be a source of inspiration and learning for peoples in similar circumstances. As a visiting pastor, the researcher’s engagement with fellow-Filipinos living both their culture and their life of faith was varied: (1) an experience and an appropriation of home, and (2) an appreciation of the identity of a people that struggles to make its presence and its contributions to community life felt. The study affirms the long-held Filipino dictum: Where there is a church, there are Filipinos. For the researcher, the practices of faith and religiosity among Filipino immigrants in Seattle was vocation affirming. The multicultural flavor of the current context, however, opens possibilities for new learnings for any pastor. As a priest and pastor, the researcher discovered the need to be more conscious of the greater ministry to reach out not merely to an exclusive group or ethnicity but to all. A consciousness of multiculturality in a church setting, even amongst Filipino immigrants, reveals more challenges for any pastor to become familiar with the ever-growing complexity of church life.

As a Jesuit priest formulating frameworks for this study, the researcher acknowledges the inspiration he derived from Ignatian Spirituality, particularly with reference to the charisms of: (1) active engagement in the world, (2) personal care for the other, (3) choosing civil dialogue amidst the polyphony of world views, (4) a notion of the world’s sinfulness manifested in group conflicts, and (5) an election to move forward and follow the servant King’s vision for all. Cognizant specifically of the multiplicity of voices that may contribute to needed knowledge, the researcher—while keeping Ignatian themes in mind—intentionally cited views and perspectives from a variety of faith backgrounds and disciplines. Thus, the frameworks incorporated here, while having in
view the influence of Ignatian Spirituality, connected as well to a more multi-disciplinary approach that considered philosophy, theology, psychology, and other social science fields alongside worthwhile perspectives from many faith denominations.

**Ecclesial Significance**

The research’s adoption of Edward Farley’s thoughts as an over-arching reflection framework, points to an ecclesial slant that the study wishes to emphasize. Multiculturality is an unavoidable ecclesial reality with its roots in the very history of the church. Acknowledging this reality is of utmost importance for any church that ventures to be more welcoming and sensitive to promoting unity amidst diversity, to enhancing the will and freedom of stakeholders to contribute to community life, and to developing creative leadership strategies that encourage dialogue and break barriers caused by actual experiences of inequality and oppression—even within religious organizations.

The study likewise focused on a life of faith that is not private but shared. A corporate existence, as Farley pointed out, is intersubjective and involves co-intentionalities that promote, for engaged persons, a shared goal, a kind of redemptive consciousness for all (1982, xiv). Therefore, our emphasis on a common telos, a movement toward Trinitarian koinonia, offers a strong suggestion that church members actively link their life of faith to a life in community and through programs that promote service to and with others. Communion with others—in consideration of the challenges that accompany it—approximates the life of the Trinitarian communion and redirects our faith practices from being merely private and personalized. We thus make such a recommendation to reinforce a life of faith in community, based not on strict scientific research results but rather from a theological inquiry that compels any theologian to
render judgment about our shared life/world. The recommendations to seek engagement in communities through volunteer work and thus to further hone practical skills that complement cross-cultural adaptability are important and concrete efforts we can pursue to better our life of koinonia.

**Theological Significance**

Our adopted overarching reflection method connects the oftentimes disjointed theological themes of historicity, shared normative practices, and a process approach to phenomenon. Any exclusive emphasis on one dimension at the expense of another, as Farley suggests, is unnecessarily reductionist. In our case, however, this composite of what is historically given, practiced, and evolving fits the intent of a theology that wishes to be practical and emergent even while rooted in its traditions and existential identity. As we’ve employed this genre of theological portraiture to the phenomenon of multiculturality, we find its use applicable as well to other future theological themes and investigations.

While we have derived greater grounding on theologies related to encounter, persons, communion, dialogue and intersubjectivity, we also note the indispensable role of theologians to pass and recommend judgments as may pertain to the deepening and uplifting of a Christian community life. Research methodologies may suggest inhibiting theologians from making normative and universal claims; however, our approach reminds us that a theologian’s subject of investigation transcends that of a researcher’s. Apparently, it is incumbent for theologians to risk making claims and formulations not from a perspective of scientific research but from a reflective inquiry that contributes most positively to a meaningful living.
We also find it worthy to dwell on the processes of theologizing that co-opt and appropriate the workings of the “mundane” sciences. Although we still affirm the role of philosophy as a ‘maidservant’ of theology, we recognize as well, as we’ve cited in this study, the value of the social sciences, specifically sociology, psychology, social work, etc. to support our theological reflection. It was the intent of this study to affirm the results of our survey by triangulating with theories and studies made in these other scientific inquiries. Specifically, it is in the interest of this study to make assessments of ecclesial phenomena in terms of organizational development dynamics. As organizations, Churches can gain much from the learnings and milestones derived from a systems viewpoint.

Finally, also as derived from our reflection method, any portrait of our theological reflections will need to be constantly cross-checked with the ongoing and evolving realities in our communities. This method of cross-checking requires persons to be more actively engaged in the life of communities, in the complex processes of dialogue that reference their collective past and current practices, with hopes of moving discourses toward a telos of deeper communion and understanding.

**Emerging Opportunities for Further Research**

From the experience of our respondent Filipino volunteer church workers, we learn that there remains a palpable need to further gauge how parish leadership can more effectively respond to their multicultural set-up. Further research, perhaps even a separate survey, can ask parishioners, what for them are the criteria for determining whether a pastor, priest, or administrator is multiculturally trained. Results from this survey may be used to formulate or upgrade programs and workshops pertaining to enhancing leaders’
cross-cultural competencies. A similar program, employing other knowledge creation strategies, can likewise be regularly updated and implemented for the use of the general parish community. It may no longer be enough to simply be acquainted with the culture and practices of another. As we acknowledge multiculturality as a reality of our ecclesial existence, it may help communities to pursue skill-building programs (i.e., communication, feedback giving, conflict resolution, or even supervisory effectiveness) to facilitate greater multicultural education in organizations.

Also, while there may already be a few studies related to the theme of lay volunteerism and involvement in church organizations, much might still be done to establish more meaningful links between service volunteerism and growth in faith. As theologians, we can adjudge and stress that faith be manifested in praxis. Community life is an opportunity for praxis, a way of living out one’s faith amidst the difficult challenges of welcoming and addressing conflicts through dialogue. Likewise, we believe this theme of “volunteerism” can help leapfrog deeper reflections about the role of lay church members, the larger priesthood of the faithful, who themselves already contribute great value to the mission and ministry of the church. In this regard, we call to mind suggestions made, specifically by Faustino Cruz, to further investigate the evolving roles of immigrants as religious leaders. In his descriptions of “catholic multicultural trends,” Cruz points to the “changing personal and institutional praxis brought about by the inclusion of diverse religious practices and beliefs of immigrant and non-white religious leaders and church members” (2013, 56). This greater involvement of immigrants in church leadership, Cruz asserts, must add the voice of contesting the immigrant leaders’ location as an “invisible subject” (2013, 56). Immigration, Cruz adds will remain a
“critical factor in reconstituting religious and congregational membership” (2013, 57). A more critical analysis of the “spiritual dimensions of immigrant ways of knowing and habits of being,” Cruz suggests, may hopefully reinforce the role of religion as a critical variable that impacts immigrant acculturation and integration to life in their host communities (2013, 57).

We note as well that most respondents interviewed for this study immigrated to the United States during the period from 1969–1986 or the “martial law era” in the Philippines (only 2 respondents came from a later wave). The profile of our respondents—mostly retired/semi-retired and freed from child-rearing responsibilities—account for their availability to volunteer their time and energy with much ease for parish activities. Referring to University of California (San Diego) sociology professor Yen Le Espiritu, we easily classify our respondents according to the wave of Filipino immigrants that sought and emphasized family reunification and personal occupational advancement (1996, 31). Earlier waves of Filipino immigrants to the United States during the American colonial period, says Le Espiritu consist of the pre-World War II laborers to Hawaii (and Pacific West Coast) and the pre-1970 Filipino sailors in the US Navy (1996, 31). Official policies for recruiting Filipino immigrants per wave of arrival in the United States, suggests Le Espiritu, impacted not only the regional and class composition of immigrants but also the process by which they expressed group formation and differentiation (1996, 29). Owing to the limitation of our study, and the insufficient availability and presence of younger Filipino parish volunteers, future research on the character and profiles of these younger Filipino immigrants may reveal a different portrait and engagement level in ecclesial activities.
Continuing Questions Arising from the Study

The contemporary world, as we now observe, has become prone to relativism—which gets a natural boost from the individualistic and utilitarian impulses in our societies. Often, we hear statements like: “I am spiritual but not religious,” which can suggest a more free-wheeling, anti-institutional approach to living one’s faith life. We can, of course settle with a notion of “to each his/her own” and let people be. However, a question we must ask is this: Does this undermine the capacity and contributions of persons working together, threshing out complex challenges facing them and making collective proposals to better their common existence?

We recognize, on the other hand, the value of self-determination, a necessary stage when individuals can make decisions for themselves separate from the interdependent construal operations in collectivist societies. It will be right to believe perhaps that for a person to contribute to a collective endeavor, one will need to bring into a group one’s unique identity. From this study, we get to affirm that one ethnic culture is never simply a single culture. A person is a product of many influences and similarly, any one community derives its identity from more than a single way of living and looking at the world. Migrant peoples, who by their unique circumstances have exposed themselves to more distinctive and polyphonic environments, are themselves in a greater position to assert how one culture, how one’s life of faith continue to evolve through time and space. Portraiture then becomes a mission, an intentionality that involves all bodies and all voices moving forward as the transcendental Spirit leads.
Summary

Portraits from history suggest that in 1929, Felix Zamora, like many Filipinos, took a liking to Hollywood films. An immigrant, Felix goes to a movie theater along Broadway Avenue in Portland, Oregon and memorialized these impressions:

They segregate the Filipinos, Japanese, Chinese, colored people and they stay on the balcony and all the white on the first floor. . . . I dress up at that time and went to feel my luck. . . . I like to sit on the main floor where there is lots of vacancies. . . . I got a good suit, and everything is spic and span. (as cited by D. Khor from an interview made by Pearl Ancheta, 1981)

Professor of Asian-American studies Denise Khor in her article "Filipinos are the Dandies of the Foreign Colonies" (2012) published in the Pacific Historical Review, interestingly notes how Zamora, though made aware of the theater’s exclusionary practices, nonetheless tried and got his luck to sit among the whites on the theater’s first floor (380). Apparently, it helped him through the segregated reality of his time by dressing up in a “good suit.”

A year later, in 1930, Zamora’s compatriots embroiled themselves in a violent anti-Filipino campaign in Watsonville, California. Much like Zamora, a big wave of Filipino workers had come to fill farm jobs previously held by the Chinese and the Japanese (whose immigration into the United States was halted in the 1920s). With the Philippines being a colony of the United States, Filipinos freely immigrated to America, but they were restricted from acquiring citizenship. Having adopted the “American way of life” back home, Filipinos started to create a stir in places like Watsonville. Simultaneous to the American Depression, Filipinos were taking over the jobs typically held by the locals. For recreation, they congregated in the so-called taxi dance halls (and in movie houses like Felix Zamora had done), and this facilitated interracial relationships.
between Filipino men and white and Mexican working-class women (Khor 2012, 382). According to one report: “The Filipinos got into trouble at Watsonville...because they wore ‘sheiker’ clothes, danced better and spent their money more lavishly than their Nordie fellow farm hands.” (2012, 383)

Because of their apparent prowess on the dance floor, Filipinos were winning the women over and this was occurring at the same time as they were displacing locals from their jobs. Consequently, hundreds of Watsonville residents formed mobs and assaulted the Filipinos. The riots went on for 5 days in Watsonville and over a period of a year, were replicated in at least 30 more incidents of violence against Filipinos on the American Pacific Coast.

Since then, immigrant Filipinos have learned to call America their home. The men eventually brought their families with them. While they continue to bring with them their home-grown images and idealized beliefs about America, they bring much more, specifically their culture of faith, family life, and a unique kind of resilience for living in a multicultural world. Their venues of engaging and encountering the other have since then changed from a movie theater or a taxi dance hall. Still perhaps more flamboyant and Hollywood-styled, Filipinos had since then moved in with their families and shifted their engagements to another familiar venue: the local church.

The portrait of Filipino immigrants in the United States has gone through several stages of re-creation. Their experiences, their immigration history, their heritage of a normative practice, and the perspectives of their multicultural and polyphonic environs have become for Filipinos a rich source of theological reflections. The framework for this study allowed us to anchor our results on the phenomenon of encountering and
embracing the ‘other,’’ which our respondents consequently affirmed with an inclination toward persons in their communities. Amidst the reality of a multiplicity of gifts and voices, Filipinos ground themselves and find commonality in their collective life and expressions of faith. As they continue with their journey, however, the painstaking process of recreating their collective portrait, appending and retracting elements on their life canvas carries on. The church has become the new dance floor of engagement. The “riots” had been kept at a quiet minimum. And as our immigrant Filipinos flock to their adopted church communities to pray, we pray they keep true to what they do best—dance the perichoretic moves of the Trinity that works to bring folks of diversity into communion, commits to a kind of work that flows beyond diversity and the distinctiveness of all these persons combined. It pays to remember an image of Felix Zamora crossing from the theater balcony to the main viewing floor and challenging—through redefinition—the context of his time. Depending on where one sits in a room the view changes for each person, and our efforts at portraiture allow us to evolve and create a new, albeit temporary, portrait of life that we have the power to constantly redefine. Filipino immigrants have long since learned to navigate freely to and from different rooms and angles.

As first-generation immigrant Filipinos have taken volunteerism to heart in their parishes, they have also gifted the community where they work and worship with the gifts that nourish multi-mindedness and multicultural acceptance. The unique Filipino culture, faith traditions, and collective sense of community have strengthened parishes in the Archdiocese of Seattle. A challenge now facing an aging immigrant group is how to inspire Filipino youth to embrace community in their faith life. The results of respondent
interviews suggest the underpinnings of Filipino experiences in the various parishes studied. With the data generated it is hoped that clergy and parish leaders will continue to learn how to embrace multi-mindedness and multicultural interactions.
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APPENDIX A:

SITE PERMISSIONS
Appendix A: Letter of Permission to Parish Priests

(Sample Letter)

November 2018

Rev. Fr. Maurice M. Mamba
Priest Administrator
Immaculate Conception Parish
820 18th Avenue, Seattle WA 98122-4706

Dear Reverend Father Mamba:

Peace in Christ! As we have previously discussed, I’m seeking your kind consent and permission to conduct interviews among your parishioners regarding a study I am making as a requirement for a Doctor of Ministry degree at the School of Theology and Ministry - Seattle University. The title of the study is as follows:

Inclusion and Religious Engagement in a Multicultural Church: A Multi-case study of the Experience of Immigrant Filipinos who are Volunteer Church Workers in Select Parishes in the Archdiocese of Seattle

For this purpose, I’ll be seeking at the most, 3-5 interview-respondents with whom I can communicate separately for arrangements. Interviews will be scheduled within the month of August 2018 and will run for 45 minutes to an hour each. Please be assured that appropriate interview and research protocols will be maintained in the process. I’ll be glad to discuss with you specifics of the research as you may require. I can be reached through my Mobile Number: 206-639-3348.

Very truly yours,

FRANK SAVADERA
Researcher
A.2 Invitation to Participate in a Research/Study

(Sample Letter)

November 2018

Dear Friend and Fellow Church Worker,

Peace in Christ! You have been pre-qualified to participate in a study being conducted by FRANK D. SAVADERA as a requirement to complete his Doctoral degree in Ministry at the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University.

The study is entitled:

INCLUSION AND RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH: A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF IMMIGRANT FILIPINOS WHO ARE VOLUNTEER CHURCH WORKERS IN SELECT CATHOLIC PARISHES IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE

To qualify as a respondent interviewee, you will need to confirm that you are:

- a person originally born in the Philippines;
- an IMMIGRANT to the United States;
- a VOLUNTEER Catholic church worker in your parish;
- a registered member of your Catholic parish.

Attached herewith for your perusal and reference are the following documents:

- Informed Consent Form
- List of Interview Questions (Interview Protocol)

Each interview will last from 45 minutes to an hour and will be held in a reserved room in the parish rectory. Interviews will be conducted from November 2018 to January 2019. Please confirm your decision to participate in the interview by sending an emailing to savadera@seattleu.edu. Schedule of interview will be arranged with you thereafter.

Would appreciate your kind help and support for the said research/ study.

Very truly yours,

FRANK D.B. SAVADERA
Researcher
APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
November 28, 2018

Frank Savadera
School of Theology & Ministry
Seattle University

Dear Frank,

As indicated in my November 23 email, your protocol FY2019-009 “Inclusion and Religious Engagement in a Multicultural Church: A Multi-case study of the Experience of Filipino Migrant-Volunteer Church Workers in Select Parishes in the Archdiocese of Seattle” is now approved until June 1, 2019. Thank you for a well-written and organized protocol.

IRB approval expiration for student principal investigators aligns with anticipated graduation dates, and continuing approval depends on registered status at Seattle University. The SU IRB cannot provide oversight for research studies by non-active SU affiliates, such as alumni or unregistered students.

Carefully read the following post-approval policies, for which your faculty adviser is jointly responsible to ensure that you follow. Always use the most updated forms on our website.

- If you want to make any changes in the course of the study, including an extension due to a later graduation date or to transfer lead PI status to your faculty adviser, you must submit an IRB Modification Request and obtain written approval before implementing the change.
- If you conclude data collection and will no longer work with or contact participants (i.e., data analysis stage only), you may submit a Downgrade to Exempt request, eliminating the requirement for further IRB oversight.
- If you do not request a downgrade, then before graduation or at least a week before approval expires (June 1, 2019), you must submit an IRB Closeout Report, so we can officially close the protocol to remain in compliance with Federal and SU human subjects protections policies. In the report you will clarify what will happen to any identifiable data (e.g., will be retained/stored by faculty adviser) as described in the approved protocol.
- Finally, if for any reason, you should not continue working on the project, please notify the IRB immediately, so we can mark the protocol as withdrawn.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Andrea McDowell, PhD
IRB Administrator

Email: modowela@seattleu.edu
Phone: (206) 296-2585

cc: Dr. Sharon Callahan, Faculty Adviser

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Administration 201 901 12th Avenue P.O. Box 312000  Seattle, WA 98112-1090
APPENDIX C

PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE: INCLUSION AND RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH: A MULTI-CASE STUDY AMONG FILIPINO IMMIGRANTS WHO ARE VOLUNTEER CHURCH WORKERS IN SELECT CATHOLIC PARISHES IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE, WA

INVESTIGATOR: FRANK D.B. SAVADERA
School of Theology and Ministry – Seattle University
Contact No. 206-639-3348

ADVISOR: (if applicable) SHARON H. CALLAHAN, Ed.D.
School of Theology and Ministry – Seattle University
Contact No: 206-296-5336

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate ministry and faith experiences of first-generation Filipino immigrant volunteer church workers in a multicultural church setting. You will be asked to complete a 45 minute to one-hour interview with the investigator and when necessary, a follow-up interview via Skype or phone.

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctoral degree in MINISTRY at Seattle University.
RISKS: There are no known risks associated with this study. The interview protocol however will specifically inquire about “negative dispositions” or experiences of “exclusion” that are meant to be respectively weighed against positive dispositions and experiences of “inclusion.” You may refuse to answer inquiries which, in your assessment may elicit certain personal discomfort.

BENEFITS: Your participation will contribute to the academic and collegial understanding of Filipino immigrants’ faith and ministry experiences in a multicultural church. We can’t guarantee, however that you will personally experience benefits from participating in this study. Others may benefit in the future from the information we find in this study.

INCENTIVES: Participants will receive no gifts/ incentives for this study. Participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a secret code. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a locked or password protected file. When the study is completed, and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report or publication. All research materials and consent forms will likewise be stored in a locked file/ cabinet and will be accessed only by the researcher and/or the research adviser. Human subjects research regulations require that data be kept for a minimum of three (3) years. When the research study ends, any identifying information will be removed from the data, or it will be destroyed. All the information you provide will be kept confidential.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time without penalty. Your withdrawal will not influence any other services to which you may be otherwise entitled.
SUMMARY OF RESULTS: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request. You may inquire about the results of the study by June 2019 through email address: savadera@seattleu.edu or Mobile No. 206-639-3348.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT: I have read the above statements and understand what is being asked of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason, without penalty. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project. I understand that should I have any concerns about my participation in this study, I may call FRANK SAVADERA, who is asking me to participate, at Mobile No: 206-639-3348. If I have any concerns that my rights are being violated, I may contact Dr. Michelle DuBois, Chair of the Seattle University Institutional Review Board at (206) 296-2585.

_______________________________  __________________ _____
Participant's Signature    Date

_______________________________   _________________ _____
Investigator's Signature    Date
Interview Protocol

INTRODUCTIONS/INSTRUCTIONS

Interview Questions:

1. I’d ask you first to remember the first time you’ve set foot in the United States. How do you describe your experience of being in a new place? How is this place different from your place of origin? What helped you as you settled in your newly found home?

2. How long have you been in the parish? What ministry do you hold? How do you describe dynamics/relationships in the parish? Your relations with the parish priest? Your relation to other church workers? Other parishioners? Fellow Filipinos?

3. How do you describe the work being done by the parish for the community? What are the gifts of being in your current community? What are the challenges of being in your community?

4. What does it mean for you to help voluntarily in the work/ministry of the parish? How do you describe the feeling? What satisfaction do you derive in maintaining your ministry and participation in parish activities?

5. What positive personal disposition and values do you think support your work/ministry in the parish? Why? How?

6. What negative personal dispositions do you think do not support your work/ministry in the parish? Why? How?

7. What recommendations can you make to newly arrived compatriots or other immigrants to assist them in their adjustments to a new environment? What would you have done differently to have assured you of a smoother adjustment to your then new church community? Will you advise the same to those who are coming in new?
APPENDIX E

FINDINGS/LIST OF PRIMARY CODES
| CLUSTER_01: PRE-ARRIVAL | Place of Origin  
|                        | Impressions of USA  
|                        | Education/ Work in PH  
|                        | Religious Involvement in PH  
|                        | Challenges  
|                        | Immigration Opportunities  |
| CLUSTER_02: ARRIVAL in the USA | Dates/ Circumstances  
|                        | Status: Immigration  
|                        | Positive Impressions  
|                        | Negative Impressions  
|                        | Initial Adjustments  |
| CLUSTER_03: PARISH INVOLVEMENT in the USA | Initial Contact with Parishes  
|                        | Parish Description/ Church Programs  
|                        | Primary Involvements/ Ministries  
|                        | Relations with Parishioners in General  
|                        | Relations with Parish Priests  
|                        | Relations with Fellow Filipinos  
|                        | Parish Challenges  
|                        | Gifts/ Opportunities  |
| CLUSTER_04: OTHERS | Filipino Culture  
|                        | Religious Practices/ Devotions  
|                        | Life as a Volunteer  
|                        | Advice to Filipinos  
|                        | Life Realities as Migrants  
|                        | Suggestions/ Recommendations  |