

# Reflecting upon Xavier in Japan: An Account of Cruelty in a Cross- Cultural Encounter

Michael Reid Trice, PhD

Director – Center for Religious Wisdom & World Affairs

Associate Professor – Constructive Theology



# Collaboration at **SU**

Buddhist-Christian Study: Departing from St. Francis Xavier's Japan Letters

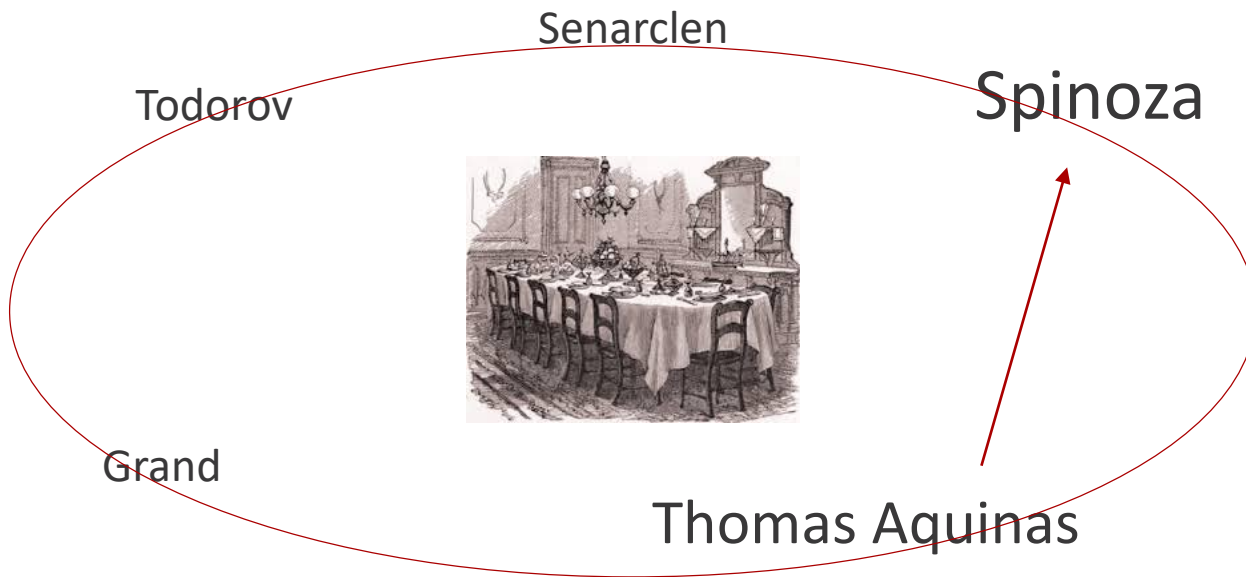
12 Scholars from Two Continents

Seattle (November 2019) Tokyo (September 2020) --

Themes: Studying Xavier from the viewpoint of Shingon-Buddhism; Xavier as a Mirror; Contrasting Buddhist and Christian Visions of the Afterlife; Cosmological Context of Xavier and his Background



# Talking Around Cruelty



- Western Tradition Avoidance of Cruelty
- Self-Implicating (*hasslich*)
- Method: Use Nietzsche's Phenomenology Cruelty as a Lens

Features of Cruelty:

Ideation  
Trauma  
Excision  
Enigmatic  
Wicked Struggle  
Deception

# Xavier in Context



- Questions:
  - Xavier the Phenomenon
  - Xavier's Audience(s)
  - Xavier's Enclosed Cosmology – How He Sees the World (soteriology, missiology, obedience)
- Xavier's Letters:
  - Exploring His Perceptions of Japan and the People
  - Ideation (letters 50 to 89) – They will listen
  - Projection (letter 96.20) – Theodicy and Confusion in the Heart
  - Conclusion: (letter 96.49) – The Unredeemed Dead



# ~~Conclusions....~~ Questions

- Will You Pin an Entire Heritage on a Single Person?
- Does Enculturated Cruelty Appear in Certain Ways?
- How do these Insights Help us Interpret These Figures? (Neither Angel nor Demon)
- Do We Gain Insights into how Ideals Justify Extreme Ends?