

Buber's "The Space Between": Interfaith Dialogue Among Philippine Coast Guards

LTSG. Almero R. Panis¹, & Florante E. Delos Santos²

¹Philippine Coast Guard - Coast Guard District Chaplain, South-Western Mindanao, Zamboanga City, Philippines
almerpanis@gmail.com

²University of Makati - College of Arts and Letters/Center for University Research, JP Rizal Extension, West Rembo, Taguig City, 1215 Philippines
florante.delossantos@umak.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Aiming to explore the lived experiences of faith amongst 16 officers of the Philippine Coast Guard with different religious backgrounds, this phenomenological study, guided by Martin Buber's theory of the "I-Thou" and concept of "space between" explored how they express respect for others in their organization who do not have the same religion as they have. Their experience and meaning of interfaith dialogue were derived from the themes of their sharing during the semi-structured interview. In the end, it can be generalized that the differences in religion have become the opportunity for the "space between" where building relationships, recognizing differences, establishing dialogue, and respecting each other despite the differences could exist.

Keywords: I-Thou, the space between, interfaith dialogue

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.



Introduction

The complexities of one's religion may not be a hindrance to connecting with people of various religious affiliations. The spaces created due to one's beliefs and practices may also be opportunities for collaboration and dialogue. Using Buber's theory of "I-Thou" as a basis, this paper explores these spaces as avenues for building relationships, respect, recognition of differences, and dialogue. Ways by which interfaith dialogue can be built. The context of the study is the Philippine Coast Guard, in particular the Coast Guard Ecumenical Chaplain Service (CGS). The Coast Guard Ecumenical Chaplain Service is the primary moral force of the Philippine Coast Guard Organization (PCG). It was created for a consistent religious expression and spiritual and moral growth of PCG personnel and their families. The unit not just serves the PCG personnel but also includes parishioners, the laity, and the non-uniformed who are directly related to Coast Guard functions. The service pursues its integrated and holistic program through the following: a). worship and religious services where the Priests, Pastors, and Imams attend to their schedules and designated places presiding over their respective members through spiritual services and

prayers; b). pastoral care and administration which function includes looking after the good of all members in all aspects, including the care of and humane assessment of every member of PCG; c). moral and value enhancement program which gives importance to the moral formation of members through seminars, and recollections/retreats, among others; d). psychological and mental wellness which provides counseling and mental health-related services to its members; and e). social and community engagements which involve socio-cultural activities including community relations and outreach programs, and leadership activities. All these programs are primarily intended to support the overall mission of the Philippine Coast Guard. Up to the present, within the chaplain service, there are mixtures of different religions. Though diverse in beliefs, all work together as one PCG. In line with the mandate of the Coast Guard Ecumenical Chaplain service, freedom of religion must be practiced and respect must be rendered to all without prejudice to their religious beliefs and affiliation. (Plantilla Of Organization and Equipage Number, 2017) The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines (1987, Article 3, Section 5) is clear about the right to freedom of religion and belief, and that it should

be protected. Moreover, Article 32 of the Civil Code of the Philippines (1949) states that any public officer or employee, or any private individual, who directly or indirectly obstructs, defeats, violates, or in any manner impedes or impairs the exercise of freedom of religion for any other reason shall be liable. Likewise, in Article 132 of The Revised Penal Code (1930), interruption of religious worship has the penalty of prison correctional in its minimum period shall be imposed upon any public officer or employee who shall prevent or disturb the ceremonies or manifestations of any religion; and if the crime shall have been committed with violence or threats, the penalty shall be prison correctional and maximum periods.

It is in this light that the researchers intend to present in this paper the importance of interfaith dialogue as a means to deepen the bond among all members belonging to various religions. This dialogue is what will fill the in-between spaces across all religions. This study will shed light on how respect and collaboration are experienced through the narratives of these officers. To better understand the context of the deep faith of officers and the rich exchanges among various faiths, and before reporting the qualitative analysis of these narratives; literature and studies on faith and interfaith dialogue will be presented. The sub-themes present literature that relates to the rich practices of faith. It contends that because of the richness of an individual's experiences of his/her faith, one cannot help but long for an encounter with others' faith experiences through dialogue; and that through this the value of respect and love for God and others will be more present and enriched in the context of Philippine Coast Guard.

Interfaith Dialogue

Interfaith dialogue, defined by Swindler (in Beversluis, 1995) as a conversation between individual persons – and through them, two or more communities or groups – with differing views, the primary purpose of this encounter is for each participant to learn from the other so that she/ he can change and grow and thereby the respective groups or communities as well (p. 138). The opportunity for recognizing the existence of the other and his/her beliefs is always present in the interfaith dialogue. Though she/he may have a different view, one can learn once a conversation is established. Eck (2007; 2006), as referenced in Harvard Pluralism Project, accentuated the importance of active engagement across differences to seek understanding. She argued that religion must welcome, accept and seek inclusivity instead of rejecting and ultimately condemning it. She delineated the need to bridge

differences through dialogue between religions (inter-faith) in addition to managing differences within a specific religion (intra-faith). Understanding is thus central to achieving inclusivity. This may be achieved through engagement via various programs and activities that support interfaith dialogue.

The researchers recognized the importance of interfaith dialogue specifically in terms of communication and relationship. It can allow participants, and in this case, the officers to genuinely narrate their experiences and involve themselves in the encounter. Eboo Patel (2013) believes that effective interfaith programs facilitate positive meaningful relationships between people from different backgrounds and increase appreciative knowledge of other traditions. Social science data tells us that knowledge and relationships are the primary drivers of positive attitudes. And people with positive attitudes toward religious diversity will seek more appreciative knowledge and meaningful relationships. (Inter Faith Youth Care, 2013, para. 3).

The Space Between

According to Martin Buber (2002), a theologian and philosopher, an interpersonal encounter contains wonderful potential that far exceeds two separate people in conversation. This potential becomes apparent when two people actively and authentically engage each other in the here and now and truly "show up" to one another. In this encounter, a new relational dimension that Buber termed "the between" becomes manifest. When this between dimensions exists, the relationship becomes greater than the individual contributions of those involved.

The notion of "space between" is mostly where interfaith dialogue can be conceptualized. (Leirvik, 2014). It is a phrase borrowed from Martin Buber as found in his 1974 book titled *Between Man and Man* where he writes: "On the far side of the subjective, on this side of the objective, on the narrow ridge, where I and Thou meet, there is the realm of "between." (Smith, 2002). In the case of religions, that space that is created because of the differences in beliefs or practices is also a place for dialogue. Paradoxically, what differentiates is also what should connect members of various religions. It is a place that can be enriched to deepen a bond that a certain community holds. Jonathan Sacks, Britain's Chief Rabbi said that "God no more wants all faiths and cultures to be the same than a loving parent wants his or her children to be the same. That is the conceptual link between love, creation, and difference. We serve God, author of diversity, by respecting diversity." (Sacks, 2002) Many interfaith activities in organizations may use storytelling, education, dialogue, and service to foster a

sense of common humanity that might undergird a more peaceful world.

Filipinos' Praxis of Faith and Connectedness

According to the latest Philippine census, at least 81% of Filipinos categorize themselves as Catholics, 11% are Protestants, Muslims 6%, and others. Canete and del Castillo (2022) point out that religion in the Philippines is not a monolithic entity. Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, and autochthonous religions are present in society, and people have the freedom to practice their religious beliefs. Religion can also refer to the praxis of faith in the everydayness of life. Furthermore, The Parable of the Good Samaritan (New Revised Standard Version, 2021 Luk. 10:25–37) epitomizes fraternal solidarity. The good Samaritan speaks of how indifference can be overcome. Thus, it is a call for anyone to cross borders and limitations by reaching out, beyond personal, legal, and geographical biases and prejudices. Filipinos value this connection and sense of community. Macaranas (2021), for instance, contends that Filipinos have a strong sense of connectedness with the physical world and most especially with the Divine. Such a deep sense of connectedness is manifested in his religious practices and beliefs and is the very basis of his spirituality. And that this deep connectedness with the sacred explains many Filipino traits and even behavior regarding the expression of their faith.

Religiosity and Interreligious Dialogue

Lipnicka and Peciakowski (2021) speak of the religious and spiritual transformations that take place not only outside churches but also inside churches (between orthodoxy and heterodoxy). Relationships with traditional religious institutions are weakening, but a religious element is still needed as emotional support for the community and as a factor in ensuring the identity of an individual and society. This is related to the concept of religiosity as the personal and communal expression of people's connections to a particular religion. It allows people to see the contemporary changes from institutionalized religion to individualized religion, in which individuals, rather than institutions, and individual experience, rather than institutionalized patterns of behavior, are becoming more important. Likewise, Atkinson (2019) constructed an interfaith framework according to three principles a) recognition of difference, in which interfaith dialogue takes place in a space of moral tension where identities of both the self and the other are transitive, imagined, self-ascribed, and imposed; b) learning across difference, where there is an exploration and negotiation of meanings, objects or aspects of the self through participative structures that affirm and extend a person's sense of belonging and

identity to a more inclusive group through the considered construction of a shared vision, a shared practice or a shared goal; and c) transformation which is the enablement of people to initiate a process of mutual action, critical consciousness and shared humanity for positive human change.

Swanson (2019) in her thesis entitled "Interreligious Dialogue in the Religious Styles Perspective: A Qualitative Analysis of Instrumental Cases" mentions dialogical style as primarily characterized by a new openness for the other. "Dialog" described in this style references the ability of contradiction and difference not to result in exclusion or hostile action toward others.

Atkinson (2019) speaks of the central aim of dialogue which is not simply communication but also the creation of an ethical, humanitarian space where dissension and difference may be expressed to thereby stimulate collective, creative expressions through reciprocal inquiry. He further outlines various thinkers:

The existential philosopher Martin Buber (1965), together with the hermeneutic philosophy of Hans Georg Gadamer (1989), the reciprocity of Bakhtin (1984) and to a lesser extent the rational re-constructionism of Jürgen Habermas (1984) has become synonymous with the concept of dialogue through their studies on what may be termed 'ethical communication'. Others may be added to this list. Paulo Freire, who has been hugely influential in the area of pedagogy and human development through his critical orientation to dialogue, and David Bohm, who sees dialogue as a vehicle of human consciousness, are two such figures. Aligned with social constructivism, each of these scholars foregrounds dialogue as a phenomenon of co-creation and tension (Stewart & Zediker 2000). (p. 4)

By integrating the above literature with the results of the phenomenological analysis of the officers' narratives, a reflection of faith as contextualized from the various religious affiliations and bridged and nurtured through interfaith dialogue will conclude the paper. From the perspectives of these officers, insights about the importance of interfaith dialogue can hopefully be gained through this paper, what it is, and how it can be instrumental in deepening the faith experience of the Philippine Coast Guard as an organization of uniform personnel. The potential benefits of not only having a mechanism to build dynamic, active, and positive relationships and redirect attitudes in addressing religious diversity but also, nurturing one's

faith and strengthening one's view of humanity are means towards achieving a good and inclusive community.

As this study will employ the phenomenological method, one central research question is sufficient to guide the study as a broad approach to questioning is used to not lead or influence participants in a particular direction. Questions will be employed during the semi-structured interview but these, as stated, will only be prompt questions.

1. How do participants express respect for religions other than their own?

2. How do participants define dialogue with members of other religions?

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of faith based on the narratives of officers who are members of various religions within the Philippine Coast Guard, some of them Catholic priests, imams, pastors, or laity/lay members of their religions. This required the qualitative phenomenological approach. Despite the busy schedule of the Philippine Coast Guard officers, the researchers were able to interview them, some briefly and some lasting for an hour to ask questions regarding their faith experiences. Initially, an information sheet was sent to 30 prospective participants which they filled out for 5-10 minutes. Only 17 were sent back. All 17 were eventually interviewed. But one of the 17 decided to decline. What transpired from the interviews was transcribed, described, and interpreted not only during the interview but in the entire process of identifying and extracting the general themes and subthemes in all the transcriptions.

This study involved 16 participants and all of them are officers of the Philippine Coast Guard. They have been in service at Philippine Coast Guard for a minimum of one (1) year to a maximum of eighteen (18) years. Seven (7) of them are married and nine (9) are single; Fifteen (13) are male and three (3) are female; Twelve (11) are Catholics, two (2) are Muslims, one (1) is Anglican, one (1) is Christian and one (1) is a Seventh-Day Adventist. Eleven (11) reported having attended interfaith dialogue/religious activities and five (5) of them said they had not. And as to engaging in interfaith dialogue/religious activities, nine (9) reported said they sometimes engage; four (4) said that they often engage; one (1) is unsure; one (1) never engage in these activities; and one (1) has no answer. Ten (10) of them reported that they would like to participate in interfaith dialogue/religious activities at Philippine Coast Guard, five (5) said no, and one (1) did not provide an answer.

Pseudonyms were used to keep their anonymity as agreed upon in their Informed Consent Form.

Data Gathering

Prospective participants were asked to fill out a three-page information sheet including the informed consent form. A participant's concealment letter was also provided indicating that should they participate they will have to spend the following approximate periods: a) complete the information sheet for 5-10 minutes; participate in an orientation meeting in a specified room at Philippine Coast Guard for 10-15 minutes; participate in a face-to-face interview for 30-45 minutes; review a copy of the transcription for 30 minutes or less; and if needed, participate in a follow-up 2nd face-to-face or via zoom conversation for 30- 45 minutes. Thus, each participant was properly orientated on the general objectives of the study and the procedure of the data gathering. They were informed that participation in the study is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time without penalty/responsibility. A pseudonym was used for each participant throughout the study to protect confidentiality. All interviews consisted of questions regarding interfaith experiences and activities. No questions were asked about the participant's specific doctrine or beliefs, rather all questions were centered on attitudes and perceptions of interfaith dialogue. Every participant was free to answer or decline to answer any questions. The interviews took place in rooms where each participant felt comfortable freely expressing their thoughts and narratives with minimal distractions and privacy.

A semi-structured interview which ranged from 30 to 45 minutes was used in the conduct of the study. The interview began with the main prompt, "Tell me or narrate your experiences of interfaith dialogue." Prompts were used in the entire process of an interview to encourage them to tell more of their experiences. How their relationship with God is extended to others including those belonging to other religions or having practices different from theirs. Follow-up or probe questions depended on the way they responded to questions to detect the essence of faith and interfaith experiences from their perspective. As Stan Lester would point out, "phenomenology is concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual, 'bracketing' taken-for-granted assumptions and usual ways of perceiving. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based on a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such they are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights

into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom (Lester, 1999).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The authors transcribed the interviews and requested the participants to validate the transcripts. Subject to open coding, the transcript was segmented according to meaningful units and from those units, a total of 110 initial codes were drawn. Commonalities from these condensed units were subsumed into a single theme. Analysis of these themes has led the authors to incorporate them into larger units, thus making these the subthemes of a main theme. Thus, in this study four main themes and 29 subthemes were interpreted. In identifying themes and analyzing data, the authors are aware of their influence on the data collection and interpretation. Apart from triangulation in validating the results with related literature and the key framework of Buber's "Space Between" (1974), some of the participants were asked to read the manuscript and provide feedback to check if what is written validates their experience.

To aid in the axial coding of all sub-themes, the qualitative software, NVivo version 12 was used. This software tool made easier and efficient the structuring and organization of all materials from the transcripts. The grouping and counting of words also facilitated a deeper analysis of the materials found in each of the themes. Table 2 below shows the four major themes based on all the subthemes. The number in parenthesis refers to the number of times the word is mentioned. The prevalence of these across all the interviews supported the reliability of the extracted main and subthemes. These themes are elaborated on in the results and discussion section of this paper.

These results were validated by applying triangulation with related literature and the key framework of Buber's Space Between (1974). As one of the authors is a chaplain of the Philippine Coast Guard, his reflexivity was also included in probing and understanding the faith experiences specifically about interfaith dialogue among the Philippine Coast Guard officers.

Results and Discussion

The objective of the study is to explore the 'lived experience' of faith based on the narratives of the officers. Four main themes were identified. This section describes each of these four main themes with their subthemes. These four will eventually be integrated into one, consistent with the objective of this study, and will be expounded on in the discussion section. The descriptions taken from the interviews which were put

into scripts are presented here. Sample scripts to support each main theme is provided here, as follows:

Building Relationships

This is based on the Latin text that says, "Nemo dat quod non habet", meaning, "You cannot give what you do not have." To use Buber's framework, the profound relationship of an I with the Absolute Thou connotes an outpouring of this relationship with others. One cannot help but look outward from one's religion and recognize the presence of others, even those that do not belong to one's faith. Thus, the deep rootedness in one's faith allows the individual to reach out to others.

Fernando articulated: "A harmonious community in my religion paves the way for relationship building to connect with others for peace, love, and respect." The faith experiences in his community with his religion opened him to relate with others, building peace, love, and respect. Interfaith dialogue allows one to connect with others. Caloy, another respondent described this as "improving one's relationship with other Philippine Coast Guard officers and non-officers, and he further averred that "it also boosts confidence in sharing one's faith with others in the Philippine Coast Guard." Moreover, he pointed out that "I believe that through religious affiliation, it is the instrument used by the Lord to bring me near him. I am encouraged and determined to do good things and become a role model to my children and all young people in the Church. The same is true for a coast guard, as much as possible, I encourage fellow coast guardians to strengthen their relationship with the Lord." Evelyn on the other hand, spoke of the interfaith experience as "boosting her faith and relationship with God." In other words, one's engagement with interfaith activities involving other people or officers belonging to other religions does not diminish their faith. Instead, their relationship with God is even strengthened or boosted. Furthermore, according to Fernando, activities on interfaith dialogue "enhance the relationship with one another; builds character, friendship, camaraderie; partnership is formed, and love, peace, and respect are better appreciated."

Recognizing Differences

This main theme describes the officers' recognition of the differences in beliefs and/or practices. Abner, for instance, is convinced that "although we have different ways of praying, we believe in a One, True, God." Dino, another officer, said that "my experience in joining interfaith dialogue is that I can observe how others expressed their faith in prayers, among others but although there are differences with how I practice my faith, I respect their beliefs." Hector averred that "positive interaction between people with different

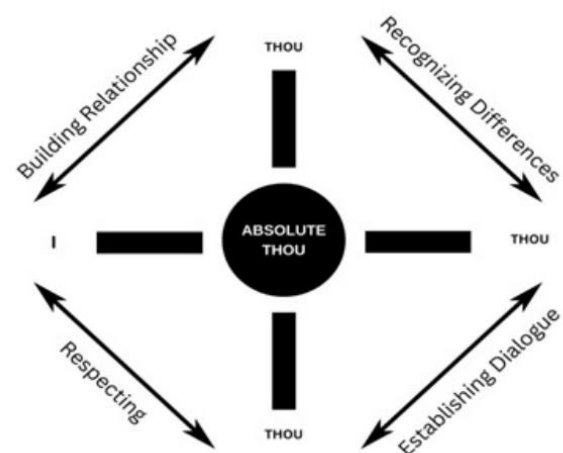
religious traditions is possible in interfaith activities." Further, he said that it is easier for him to blend in with people of other faith and traditions insofar as he is exposed to differences in belief in his family. He said that his father's family are Catholics while his mother's, are Christian or Born Again. "I learned to be more respectful. Different religion is not different people. They are our friends, family, and companions, and not an enemy." Further, he said that cooperation with people or officers is possible despite the differences in beliefs. Manny described that interfaith dialogue is "a bridge that connects" these differences in beliefs. It enables brothers/officers to bond as one despite their religion. By experiencing interfaith activities, officers become aware of "stories from different faiths" and "are eye-openers that although they have different religions, the faith experience makes one a better person." Also, according to him, inside the camp at Philippine Coast Guard, different religious activities are observed and areas are intended for worship and prayer. Caloy's description of interfaith dialogue summarizes the theme when he said that "it may help us to learn or to know deeper the meaning of Christianity."

Establishing Dialogue

Nora said that although she is not really into interfaith dialogue, she was able to experience some interfaith activities. She thinks that dialogue means "an open communication from one person to another," "it helps one to be open with the discussions with other persons," and that "It's a good worship exposure and it boosts one's morale." Moreover, she said that it boosted and deepened her spirituality. Ben described dialogue as "an interaction between people from different religious groups." Caloy explained that "if interfaith dialogue focuses only on the conduct of fellowship, it will be an exciting activity and help in one's spiritual growth, and that it is also "an opportunity to meet senior Philippine Coast Guard officers who are truly devoted to their faith and we get to listen to their faith stories which are truly inspiring." In one of these interfaith encounters, he also recounted an experience when "he lost the confidence to speak since his audience was mostly senior officers: "The feeling of being nervous while donning the traditional uniform and being unable to speak before senior officers were diminished when they (the senior officers) made you feel comfortable to make you feel that you are welcome. "Humility, simplicity, and being respectful were the things that I am reminded of when I speak of my experiences in attending interfaith activities ". This bridges the last major theme: respect.

Respecting

Respect is a value that is embedded in every officer's heart and mind. It is therefore not an unusual element that is present in the Philippine Coast Guard community. However, according to all respondents, interfaith dialogue has deepened the experience and practice of respect among members of the community. Caloy described this by saying, "acceptance of faith and respect for each other are the most important things that be considered when engaging in interfaith dialogue. As much as possible, one should not talk about church doctrines because it can cause debate and may lead to misunderstanding." He further said that through interfaith dialogue, "his treatment of others has been changed in a better way and that his understanding of things has become broader." For Lino, "journeying together in interfaith dialogue deeply allows us to recognize diversity in cultures and traditions and respect for them." That while he keeps and holds on to his faith, "I greatly and deeply respect their beliefs." This appreciation and respect for other religions were born out of his experience with "visiting their places of worship- mosques, temples, and churches." He averred further by saying, "I do not impose my beliefs on other people," "respect always matters a lot," and "I do not argue with their beliefs." Obet said interfaith dialogue "can be a way towards understanding and unity." For Patricia, "respecting means "being good to them." Nora talked about respecting as "creating and maintaining an open communication and having an open mind." Manny pointed out that the way to build respect is "by being considerate with others and that one must always help those who need help." And he further said that "by understanding other religions, one can learn how to mingle with them and that is only by understanding that we can genuinely respect them."



"I believe that the key to creating society that is nourishing, empowering and healing for everyone lies in how we relate to one another." (Martin Buber, a Jewish philosopher).

The figure above shows that interfaith dialogue is active, developing, dynamic, and is a continuing process that flows from one officer to another- from an I to a Thou (You), from one person to another. The Absolute Thou (You) is God. The full black line between I and the Absolute Thou (You) or the full black line between the Thou (You) and the Absolute Thou (You) speaks of the relationship of faith between the person and God. It can be any religion but it signifies the rootedness of a person with their religion including the doctrine or belief system, the worship or prayer, and the laws or practices in the practice of their religion. It is because of the richness of faith experience in one's religion that a person can relate with persons of other religions. As pointed out, one cannot give what one does not have. The lines between the I and Thou (You) or the Thou (You) and Thou (You) signify the "space between" a person of one religion to another person of another religion. According to Martin Buber, it is in this "space between" that interfaith dialogue happens. The four major themes of building relationships, recognizing differences, establishing dialogue, and respecting take place in this space. What is created is the interfaith dialogue that is active, developing, dynamic, and a continuing process.

According to Buber, an interpersonal encounter contains wonderful potential that far exceeds two separate people in conversation. This potential becomes apparent when two people actively and authentically engage each other in the here and now and truly "show up" to one another. In this encounter, a new relational dimension that Buber termed "the between" becomes manifest. When this between dimensions exists, the relationship becomes greater than the individual contributions of those involved. This type of meeting is what Buber described as an I-Thou relationship. (Martin Buber 2005).

Conclusion

Looking back at the experience of doing a phenomenological study on a topic that is close to their heart and faith, the researchers were thankful for having the privilege to hear the personal narratives of officers at the Philippine Coast Guard. Listening to the stories of faith and interfaith dialogue made them appreciate more the rich culture and diversity of religions and made them realize that they must do better when it comes to respecting others' beliefs and practices in the Philippine Coast Guard. By being allowed to enter the personal stories of officers on their faith, the researchers may

come up with programs and activities that will support a genuine mechanism to support inclusive environments. Hearing the officers' narratives of faith allowed them to reflect on their faith and to deepen their relationship with God so that they can give something more to others, not just lip service of faith but a genuine practice of religion and spirituality that reach out to others, not indoctrinating them nor forcing them to believe in what they believe in, but to appreciate their uniqueness and welcoming whatever learning they can have with them. Experiencing the positive outcomes that the proposed activities may produce will provide means towards having an authentic interfaith dialogue, one that can have the potential to create good communities and create social change in society. In summary, the Philippine Coast Guard just like any other institution in the Philippines is not only diverse in terms of culture but also religion and religious practices. Recognizing diversity also emphasizes the "space between" that has great potential for dialogue. A place where a genuine dialogue can take place. The place for building relationships, recognizing differences, establishing dialogue, and respecting each other despite the differences. It is here that the positive outcomes of an active, developing, dynamic, and continuing connection can happen. If this genuine interfaith dialogue can happen in the Philippine Coast Guard, an established institution then this transformative encounter among individuals of various beliefs can also happen in society at large, and ultimately the world.

References

- Atkinson, M. (2019). "Interfaith Dialogue and Comparative Theology: A Theoretical Approach to a Practical Dilemma". *The Journal of Social Encounters: Vol. 3: Iss. 1*, 47-57. <https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/socialencounters/vol3/iss1/8>
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1984). *Esthétique de la création verbale*.
- Buber, M. (2002). *Between Man and Man* (R.G. Smith, Trans). London and New York: Routledge.
- Canete, J.J, & del Castillo, F. (2022). *Pakikipagkapwa (Fellowship): Towards an Interfaith Dialogue with the Religious Others*. *Religions* 13: 459. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13050459>
- Civil Code of the Philippines, Article 32, (1949). <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1949/06/18/republic-act-no-386/#:~:text=Any%20person%20suffering%20material%20or,action%20that%20may%20be%20taken>
- Eck, D. (2007). American religious pluralism: Civic and theological discourse, in T. Bancroft, Ed.

- Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism, p. 243-270. Oxford University Press.
- Gadamer, H. G. (1989). *Truth and Method (2nd ed.)*. Crossroad.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Interfaith Youth Care. (2013). Retrieved from <http://www.ifyc.org/>
- Leirvik, O. (2014). *Interreligious Studies: A Relational Approach to Religious Activism and the Study of Religion*. Bloomsbury. <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/interreligious-studies-9781474254755/>
- Lester, S. (1999). *An introduction to phenomenological research*. Taunton UK, Stan Lester Developments. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Stan_Lester/publication/255647619_An_introduction_to_phenomenological_research/links/545a05e30cf2cf5164840df6.pdf
- Lipnicka, M., & Peciakowski T. (2021). *Religious Self-Identification and Culture—About the Role of Religiosity in Cultural Participation*. Religions 12: 1028. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel1211028>
- Macaranas, J.R. (2021). *Understanding Folk Religiosity in the Philippines*. Religions 12: 800. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12100800>
- New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. (2021). National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. (original work published 1989)
- Patel, E. (2013). *Toward a field of interfaith studies*. *Liberal Education*, 99(4). <https://silo.tips/download/toward-a-field-of-interfaith-studies>
- Plantilla of Organization and Equipage Number. (2017). Headquarters Philippine Coast Guard
- Stewart, J., & Zediker, K. (2000). Dialogue as Tensional, Ethical Practice. *Southern Communication Journal*, 65(2-3), 224-242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10417940009373169>
- Swanson, S. B. (2019). *Interreligious Dialogue in the Religious Styles perspectives: A Qualitative Analysis of Instrumental Cases* [Master's Thesis, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga]. <https://scholar.utc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1775&context=theses>
- Swindler, L. (1985). The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules For Inter-Religious, Inter-Ideological Dialogue. *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 1-2 https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/mjt/01-2_187.pdf
- Swindler, L. (2002). A vision for the third millennium the age of global dialogue: Dialogue or death!. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 1 (1). <http://jsri.ro/ojs/index.php/jsri/article/view/6/7>.
- The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines. Article 3, Section 5. (1987). <http://www.congress.gov.ph/legisdocs/?v=bills&results#17>
- The Revised Penal Code, Article 132. (1930) <https://www.ombudsman.gov.ph/docs>republicacts>
- The Revised Penal Code, Article 133. (1930) <https://www.ombudsman.gov.ph/docs>republicacts>

Author's Bio-note

Almero R. Panis is a Catholic priest currently assigned in South-Western Mindanao, Zamboanga City as Coast Guard District Chaplain. He finished philosophy at St. Vincent de Paul College Seminary in Calbayog City, Western Samar, and finished his theological years at St. John the Evangelist School of Theology in Palo, Leyte.

Florante E. Delos Santos is an assistant professor at the University of Makati. He serves as the current Director of the Center of University Research, UMak. His research interests include philosophy (particularly Wittgenstein and Wojtyla), student services, and counseling. He is a licensed professional teacher and a registered guidance counselor. He is a certified peer reviewer by the Publons Academy/ Web of Science. He is a member of the Philippine Integrated Counselors Association of the Philippines, Inc (PICAP), the Philippine Guidance Counseling Association, Inc. (PGCA), the Philippine National Philosophical Research Society, Inc.(PNPRS), and the Reading Association of the Philippines(RAP).