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Pastoral Poética

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Pastoral Poética

Introduction

Cecilia González-Andrieu

The process of learning how to theologize with a particular community requires active accompaniment, which means choosing to do two things at once: to study and to walk. To study means to “read” all we can about the community’s own story in an unvarnished and honest way that, as historical theologian Justo L. González tells us, does not present us with an innocent history. It also means to “read” beyond texts, in the popular devotions, in the creative expressions, in the sites of resistance and of lament that a community expresses. To walk means to “walk with,” to be present, to show up, to see the reality of a community’s life in their daily living, in *lo cotidiano*. For this we need to venture out, as Pope Francisco tells us, to the peripheries to encounter the most vulnerable among us in the ordinary and often heartbreaking context of their lives.

The short poetic reflections that follow are the fruit of just such a process for a group of graduate students preparing as pastoral theologians. This cohort of theologians, who are part of LMU’s graduate program, meet with our faculty for courses at the Pastoral Center of the Diocese of Orange in Southern California and bring with them a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. During the fall of 2017 I had the good fortune to work with this cohort on a course on U.S. Latino/a Theology, where we read seminal texts in the field, especially the works of Virgilio Elizondo and Justo L. González and also practiced intentional and engaged learning. The students accompanied particular ministries or community organizations in their diocese, documenting and reflecting on *lo cotidiano* of the persons they were encountering.

Close to the end of the semester I invited these budding pastoral theologians to reflect on their experiences with these communities, to allow their creative side to speak not *about* the community but *with* the community. These are some of their reflections, spontaneous, written from their hearts in one particular moment in human history where they accompanied a community in danger and grieving, Latino/a persons, immigrants and their children, living in the toxic context of the United States in the year 2017.

Cecilia González-Andrieu, PhD. is Associate Professor of Theology and Theological Aesthetics at LMU and founding editor of this journal.

Cross Follow

Yaoxochitl Perez

A man crosses the desert
Our Lady follows
No one knows, no one sees, but she follows
Where he falls, where he thirsts
She follows
In life and in death
She sees, she knows, she follows.

Home?

Matthew Zemanek

I sing a song
for the missing
voices
a song of wounds
and walls
I look around
and
with every sound
I hear
nothing at all
hope
where?
Over there?
Am I welcome
where
the silence
...
calls?

Not Yet Home

Frances Park

Community is who we are

Community is what we seek

A space to call our own

A place to rest our heads

Lone voices amidst the dusty road

Cries from the desert arise

We remember our wounds

We carry our pain

We remain on the journey

Not yet arriving home

Faith at the Border

Patrick NG

Try as I must, O Mighty one,

Success is in your hand.

Lead me, O Mighty one,

My life is in your hand.

May God Have Mercy On My Soul

Michael Ready

We are the exiles of our own doing.

The Lord, our God, is the Lord of Love and Mercy.

Like the Jews in Egypt, God freed them from their misery.

But they disobeyed his commandments

And submerged themselves in sins.

As they were exiled to Babylon

They wept by the riverbank of the Euphrates.

Since they missed their promised land

And the Lord's Temple, Jerusalem.

They wept since they lost all hope, all love from God.

As for me, I am exiled from my homeland

And I am longing for the day I can return

To worship our God Almighty,

God of Love and of Mercy.

But because of my sins, I am still far away from home

May God have mercy on my soul.

A Good Place to Come From

Tim Reid, Jr.

I am a journeyman, a wanderer

Having long ago left the place my mind calls home

It is a place I longed to leave

When I was a boy

I say "it is a good place to come *from*"

While I pretend to recognize

The place that I am now

A question that stirs with every other step

Is "Will I get to where I'm going?"

I am not so sure the path is clear

And yet I sometimes also fear

That I have never really moved at all

A Haiku of Memory

Ree Taylor

Alone in a land
of unsmiling faces, *mi*
corázon reaches...

Longing

Ivette Valenzuela

The longing is always there
The longing for the family left behind
The longing for the dreams that never came true

The longing continues in this new journey
A new journey with new hopes
A new journey full of unknowns
A journey with struggles
A journey of hope

The promise of a better life
The promise to never forget
The promise to always love who you are.

Gloria

Elizabeth Carrillo Flati

For Joy and the glory of God we sing,
We sing to the Lord and lead the Church to raise its voice.
Though we are young and our voices break,
We sing for joy.
Though our days are filled with fear and doubt in this foreign land,
We sing for joy.
In the midst of sorrow and persecutions,
We sing for joy.
For the glory of God is in us,
This no one can take away.
We are God's children.