

SANCTUARY IN THE MARKETPLACE: COMMUNICATING RELIGIOSITY AND POP CULTURE IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Abstract

Filipinos love to mall and it is no surprise that malls, being business enterprises, proliferate the country because of consumer demands. Malls provide various goods and services in one-stop-shop, including religious celebrations, to draw most people from all walks of life to this cycle of consumerism. The celebrations of mass often become shrouded with tinge of commercialism. It is in this context that a study, using indigenous methods and techniques of ethnography, of the mass-going culture of Filipinos inside the mall is vital in understanding an emergent language and culture of religiosity. It unravels the meaning of the celebration of the Eucharist in the mall from the vantage point of parishioners. This paper proposes an explanation for attending mass in the mall over regular parishes, which is the domain of religious profession. The paper argues that mall provided a sanctuary, a consecrated place of worship, even in the midst of a marketplace.

Keywords: *Pop culture, religiosity, performance, malling*

INTRODUCTION

“Filipinos love to mall” (Panao, 2008).

I do not know to what extent this statement is true. But it is no surprise to me that malls, being business enterprises, proliferate in the country because of consumer demands. In the words of Tolentino (2001),

“Malls are ultimately businesses which thrive simply as markets for demands. Incidentally, however, as business tries to meet these consumer demands it also creates more wants. Malls effectively serve as venues where shoppers can feed this cycle of consumerism.”

The statement above implies that malls provide various goods and services all under one roof, in one-stop-shop to draw the most people from all walks of life to this

vicious cycle. As the mall jingle resonates, “We got it all for you!” Services that are even thought incongruous in materialistic malls are also accommodated. For instance, mall owners provide spaces for the Catholic Church to hold mass celebrations in a “clearly circus-like commercial environment.” (Panao, 2003; Tolentino, 2001).

It is no surprise that mass celebrations are held in almost every mall. I have even attended masses in different malls for a couple of times. Worship services there were superficial and that my being there was not a deliberate expression of my spirituality but rather just incidental. I intended to do errands than to celebrate the mass after all.

This experience resounded the mall mass-going experiences of many that the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is shrouded with a tinge of commercialism and consumerism. Like the experience of others, it is still more of a marketplace than a place to foster spirituality (Somera, 1998).

But what struck me one time was to see a chapel *per se* in a big mall and people were patiently standing in long queue to enter the chapel. I wondered how the celebration of mass in such chapel is different from the mass celebration in parishes or in the lobby or activity centers of other malls. There must be something in it—thinking anthropologically, it could be issues of identity, mere hegemonic reproduction, or cultural production at work. Whatever it is, it is communicating to us an emergent culture of religiosity.

In this study, I want to demonstrate that the mass-going in the chapel inside the mall can provide a sanctuary, a consecrated place for worship, even in the midst of a marketplace. I argue that this phenomenon is a product of cultural production brought out within the constraints of globalization. This paper attempts to unravel the meaning of the celebration of the mass (Eucharist) in a chapel in the mall from the vantage point of parishioners. This ferrets out explanation for attending mass in the mall over regular parishes, which is the domain of religious

profession. The study consequently describes the mall mass-goers.

METHOD

I used techniques of ethnography as methods of inquiry. I utilized the indigenous research methods of *groping* [“pakapaka”] (Santiago, 1979) as a field method and *casual asking of questions* [“patanong-tanong”], which includes *cultural sensitivity or shared sensitivities* [“pakikiramdam”] (Pe-Pua, 1990). If I may still add, I also resorted to “paiwas-iwas” and “patagotago.” Because of several constraints in the setting, I was just able to have one-shot casual interviews with different informants. I attempted to arrange regular or in-depth conversations but to no avail. Perhaps I was seen as an “outsider” from their turf that I found rapport-building difficult.

DISCUSSION

A Walk in the Clouds

I must admit that I do not consider myself a mall rat. It is not that I do not like the ambience of the mall, it is just that I go to a mall for purpose—to get something I really *need*, that is. As I trod nonchalantly through the labyrinth of shops and stalls I realized I was in a different world than just 7 minutes ago when I hustled out of MRT-Shaw and walked under the scorching sun. The air felt cool, the surroundings were clean, and it felt safe to walk aimlessly. It

was like a fantasy. Each shop has its own brand of appeal from bright or warm lights, to novel architecture, to colorful advertisements, to catchy music, all competing to entice people. Time stopped and I just found myself in the world's biggest chapel inside a shopping mall—the *Chapel of the Eucharistic Lord*, fifth floor Mega-Atrium of SM Megamall.

From afar, I hardly noticed the chapel if not for the banner names in the center (*Chapel of the Eucharistic Lord*) and at the right side (*Adoration Chapel*). The chapel has blended well with the stalls. It is bounded by Nail Spa Lounge on the left and Metro Dental on the right.

As I drew near, I began to see the beauty and grandeur of the chapel. Its warm yellow bright lights shone through the glass panes. I cannot help but be drawn towards the altar where the image of Christ on the cross is found. On the right is the image of the Virgin Mary while on the left is the image of St. Joseph. The altar was simple but elegant, painted white and adorned with gold trimmings. The pews were made of Narra, polished with natural luster of brown color that blended well with the neat and shiny, beige, tiled floor. The walls are mounted with grayish brown carpet tiles that gave elegance, not only acoustics.

The chapel is divided into three sections: on the left side is the Children's Room, which can accommodate a hundred;

at the center is the main chapel, which has a capacity of about 1,300 persons; and on the left is the Adoration Chapel, which can seat 200 persons.

As I entered the chapel, an usherette directed me to sit on one of the pews. However, I deliberately stood at the back so I can get a good vantage point. I wanted to talk to some people who were also standing beside me but the modesty and formality (or sanctity at that) of the place left me to simply observe people and their activities. Is there something in the place, in the lighting, in the architecture, or in the people who were there that made me awed? I am not sure. It was totally different from what I expected and what I just read.

It finally dawned on me. I was in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist—the mass.

Meet the Folk-ers!

I tried as much as I could to engage some parishioners to talk to me but I only got to know a few. I was thinking that most of the people who attend the mass in the chapel inside the mall belong to the higher rung of the society. So I asked.

JC, a seminarian on Regency who works in the office of the chapel, tritely said, "*halo-halo e, hindi naman po mayayaman... meron din, pero mas marami po ang mga nagtatrabaho lang rito, malapit. Mas marami rin babae. Pag Sunday po naman kadalasan grupo... mga kabataan, o pami-pamilya...*"

During my first visit to the chapel, I asked the usherette to allow me to just stay at the back. When asked why, I seized the opportunity to introduce myself and my intentions. She introduced herself as Sis. Joy, 70, a retiree, and a member of the GAC's (Greeters and Collectors) of the chapel. I stayed near the exit when the masses were over. I looked for mass-goers whom I can talk to. I talked to Mark, 24, from Kalentong. He is a fresh graduate as electronics technician and is still hunting for a job. I also met, an OFW who has only attended the mass in the mall twice. He was currently waiting for his documents to be processed.

In one instance, I initiated talking to a janitor who was cleaning the glass walls in one of the stalls near the chapel. He told me he regularly attends 3:30 PM Tagalog mass during Sundays right after his duty for around a year now. He introduced himself as Ador, 48, from Pangasinan but now lives in Bagong Pag-asa, Quezon City. He works in the agency *All Around Services & Merchandize*. Shortly before another mass, I approached a man named Allan, 40, a bachelor, whom I thought friendly. He said he almost always attends mass in the mall at the same time before he goes to work at 2:00 PM. He goes to the mall to attend the mass because he works as an engineering associate for the maintenance section of Discovery Suites, which is near SM

Megamall. I also got to know Jonjo, 41, a family man from Imus, Cavite. He works as a sales management and marketing staff in EDSA Central, which is just a stone's throw away.

In the course of my stay in the office of the chapel, I got a chance to casually talk to Alice, 58. She graciously answered my informal inquiries. She told me she has been attending the mass at Megatrade Hall since 1998. I also got a chance to talk briefly to cousins Agnes, 41, married, and Reanna, 30, both residing in Marikina. Agnes teaches in a private school in Quezon City while Reanna works as a graphics designer at Global City, Taguig. They told me they usually go there for mass, grocery, and other errands. A seminarian, retiree, job-seeker, OFW, janitor, engineer, sales management and marketing staff, cashier, teacher and graphics designer—these were the few people I met and I want them to speak before us.

Reading Between the Lores

People who attend the mass in the mall came for a recognized reason of celebrating the mass. This, however, denotes more than just being in the chapel. It is what they do and how they perceive what they are doing that gives their activities their associated meanings, which they share within their group. This is what is referred to as culture being the “essence of life, and

how, the way we do things, the way we do, the way we look at things” (Magoulick, nd). This idea is important in that “a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which calls its own” (Dundes, 1980).

Through the course of time the culture as a process creates “new meanings, new practices, new significances and experiences” that are brought into the spectrum of ethnography regarding the notion of culture as emergent (Dundes, 1980).

The mass-goers of the chapel in the mall, in the course of time, have developed their own way and the why of doing things as they commonly celebrate the Holy Eucharist.

Imported: Quality that Matters!

When I casually asked Sis. Joy the reason and the meaning of mass-going in the mall, she answered me straightforwardly in paradox that the mass-going in the chapel in mall is just “the same but is different.” When I probed on her answers she went on to elaborate that, “*parehas lang sa labas... kasi misa pa rin naman, pero may pagkakaiba talaga rito... iba rito... imported!*,” she blurted out. She emphasized the untold prohibitions not necessarily imposed by the chapel nor by any of the GAC’s. She said, “*parang maraming bawal dito pero hindi naman.*” The people thronging in the chapel

have their own sense of self-imposed discipline.

“*Behave talaga ang mga tao rito... may kaayusan kasi,*” she added to put emphasis on the organization of the chapel. Those with babies are led in *Children’s Room* at the left side, elderly and differently-abled in the *Adoration Chapel* at the right side, and the main chapel at the center is for most mass-goers. During weekdays, however, the main chapel is closed and only the *Adoration Chapel* is used for the celebration of masses. She was also proud to say that Studio 23 covers the live mass every Sunday at 9:00 AM. Likewise she gave information on the different schedule of masses for different people and nationality—i.e. Chinese mass, Charismatic, English and Filipino, and even for deaf and mute before.

To accommodate and organize attendees, the chapel provided for several mass schedules. A total of seven are scheduled masses on Sundays: 9:00 AM-Charismatic Mass, 11:00 AM-Chinese Mass, 12:30 PM-English Mass, 2:00 PM-English Mass, 3:30 PM-Tagalog Mass, 5:00 PM-English Mass, 6:30 PM-Tagalog Mass. There are also two English Masses on weekdays at 12:15 PM and 6:00 PM. On Saturdays, there are four schedules: 12:15 PM-English Mass, 4:00 PM-Children’s Mass, and two English Masses at 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM.

She even talked about the history of the chapel in the mall. She said,

“Nagsimula ang misa rito matagal na, pero hindi rito sa lugar na to, iba-iba pa. Sumulat kasi si Mrs. Sy kay Cardinal Sin. Nasa Rivers (of Living Water Catholic Community) pa ako non...Kaya nagkaroon dito. May Chinese Mass nga e pero ngayon hindi na puro.

Dati...magulo. Maliit lang... dyan sa labas... sa may Liturgica. Siksikan at maingay... pero ngayon iba na. Tahimik... Solemn talaga at nagsisimba ha? Ang mga tao talagang nagsisimba di tulad sa iba... Maayos. Malaki na... maganda. Malamig pa, diba? Imported nga e!”

When the mass has started, we mutually stopped talking (probably the self-imposed discipline she meant) to honor the worship service. I just concluded by asking if I can still talk to her some time and she acquiesced but only when she is available or at the time when she is in the mall to serve in the chapel, which she cannot confirm when. She told me she was already exhausted and wanted to go home when the mass is over when I insinuated talking to her further after the mass.

When the mass was over I stayed near the exit to find someone I can casually talk to. Luckily, I spotted Mark who was alone. He was candid in his answers that he started attending the mass because the priests in the mall deliver better homilies than those in the parishes he has attended before. He believes he has a need to

celebrate the mass at least every week to be closer to God. He regarded that his life is lacking, if not empty, when he does not attend mass. He was saying,

“...ang misa para sa akin ay paraan ko para mapalapit sa Diyos... para kasi pong may kulang... basta yon, parang may kulang... dito na rin ako sa megamall kasi magagaling ang mga pari rito... maganda silang magsalita...”

Before he became a regular mass-goer in the mall, he was just invited by his friends to attend a mass before they go malling. Soon after, he goes to attend the mass alone. He even said that nowadays, he goes to mass in the mall only to attend mass. He goes home immediately after the mass. I ended our talk when I felt he insinuated leaving. I asked if I can still talk to him some other time but he cannot be sure of his convenience or at the time when he will in the mall again.

Convenience: It's Just There!

I was standing near the exit one time after mass to start a conversation with a guard on post. When I was just starting to open up casual conversations, Jonjo was just there beside me and showed interest and curiosity in what I was asking. I seized the opportunity to engage him in a conversation instead and asked him what a mass in the mall meant for him.

He confidently expressed his personal desire to celebrate the Holy Eucharist because he believes in its social dimension. He considered it as his responsibility to God to develop friendships and goodwill to people, which he can accomplish in attending mass. He also believes he gets intellectual, emotional, and spiritual benefits from attending the mass and it is what completes his days or weeks.

In his very own words he said,

“Dyan lang ako galing. Malapit. Kaya dito na ako. Nilakad ko nga lang...

...ang misa meron yang social dimension...kaya, sabi ng iba pwede na kahit sa TV o kahit saan pwede naman... well, it could be but dapat hindi. Yong social dimension importante yon... kaya yong Eucharist diba? Titingnan mo talaga... si Christ yon nakisalamuha sa atin. Dapat talaga pupunta ka sa simbahan...kung maari nga maging kaibigan mo lahat. Kaya nga may sinasabing magbigayan tayo ng kapayapaan... We need to develop friendship...peace. Alam mo ba yong Holy Sabbath? Noon hindi ka dapat nagtatrabaho... ang responsibilidad mo pumunta ka sa templo... mass yon diba?

Kanina nabanggit mo kung ano ang nagagawa nito sa akin? Well, intellectually, emotional... spiritual... meron. Sa intelektwal yon nga... mauunawaan mo ang Gospel. Dapat yon ang maintindihan natin... diba may first reading, second... tapos doon na ang homily ng pari para ipaliwanag sa atin. Sa emotional naman, mabuti talaga...maganda ang pakiramdam mo pagkatapos... magaan, which lead to strength and worry free... yon yong spiritual. Kahit marami kang iniisip sige lang... parang nawawala o gumagaan kasi may spiritual strength ka. Yong reverse naman siguro emptiness... basta parang

may kulang...hindi mo maintindihan... basta hindi buo. Kailangan talaga...

Noong mga bata kami talagang pumupunta talaga kami sa simbahan...sa Pasay pa kami non. Pinagagalitan kami ng mga lolo namin pag hindi... tsaka yon na rin...guilt siguro before pero ngayon higher level na siguro... gusto ko na sa sarili ko...

... Eto na lang no...we should go to mass not because he needs us but because we need him... I am guilty. I need to attend mass because we need the Lord. We need others... ”

He attends mass in the mall because of proximity to his workplace, EDSA Central, which is just a short walk away. I terminated the conversation when he told me that his friend was already waiting for him. I asked if I can still talk to him another time at his convenience but he could not be certain about his availability or convenience. Nevertheless he gave me his contact number. I asked him the following days for another interview but he declined because he was rather busy on that week.

To Ador, who regularly attends mass during Sundays right after work, it is just convenient that he attends the mass in the mall because he is already there. To wit, *“tatal nandito naman na ako. Kesa pumunta pa ako sa simbahan dito na lang.”* He also shared his sentiment that since life is difficult these days, he attends mass to ask for help from the Almighty. Likewise through the mass he is thanking God for the blessing he receives and keeping him safe

from harm or illnesses. Customarily, I asked for another time with him and he accepted it except that he cannot be sure where his daily assignment is.

Allan almost always attends mass in the mall at the same time before he goes to work at 2:00 PM. He goes to the mall to attend the mass because he just works in a company, which is near Megamall. “*Madalas dati dyan ako sa St. Francis o kaya sa Antipolo... pero ngayon dito na kasi malapit lang... malamig pa,*” he added. He usually attends mass even before he works there because he believes giving time to God is his responsibility aside from asking God for help and guidance in his everyday work. To him, it is his principle to be religious. I tried to ask if I can still meet him the following day and he said he might be there again. The day after, I attended the mass at the same time. I was looking for Allan but never saw him in the small crowd in the *Adoration Chapel* where masses are held during weekdays.

One time, in my stay in the chapel’s office, I got a chance to casually talk to Alice. She attends the mass at Megatrade Hall since 1998 since she is a good fan of Fr. Mario Sobrejuanite, whom she finds a great speaker. She regarded her weeks empty if she does not attend mass. She also thought of attending the mass as an obligation to God. In so doing, she feels good and closer to God when she attends. Later on I found

out that she serves as a cashier in the office and consequently has all the time to attend mass in the chapel—she is just there, she said.

Efficiency: Time is Gold!

I was waiting and looking for Allan one time for a second interview but never saw him in the *Adoration Chapel*. I got to talk to Rudolf instead. Though he did not want to give me his full name and his other details, he gave me straight answers to my casual interview. He has only attended the mass in the mall twice. He was only waiting for his documents to be processed and thought of going to the chapel to attend mass. He believes it is his obligation to do so.

Since he is already in the mall and found out about the chapel then why not he spent it for a while in chapel than just in shops? To make the most of time, he spent time in the chapel as well to pray for a good fortune in his quest for overseas work.

I remembered what Allan told me also when he chose to attend mass in the mall than in local parish. Aside from the proximity of the mall to his workplace, he can also arrange his schedule to be “friendly” for him. During Sundays, he goes to mass at 3:30 PM so that after the mass he can go to get his small grocery for a week.

“*Umaatend ako ng misa ng 12:15 halos araw-araw kasi dyan lang ako sa*

malapit. Pagkatapos ng misa... mga ,I pwede na ako derecho kumain para eksakto pagkatapos manangahali makarating na ako sa duty ko bago mag 2 o' clock," said Allan.

Agnes and Rheana believed that attending mass in the mall is the same as attending it in a parish church. When I asked them why in the mall, they told me it is the practical thing to do because they get to do so many things in one place. *"It's all here... we go to mass, do the groceries, have lunch, and sometimes go to the parlor, etc."* The mass in the chapel is solemn and they found the priests in the chapel very engaging than most of the priests in their local parish.

The value added to their attending mass in the mall is,

"maximizing time... we parked only once... get to do everything in less time compared to going to the parish church then going to the supermarket and other places for our errands. Smart diba? Malamig pa... aircon e. For instance just today, si Rheanna has a dental appointment. During which I will be reserving tickets for a trip in Cebu this 21st ... after that we'll meet for grocery."

Efficiency was highlighted in the people's mass-going experience in the chapel inside the mall. The concept of a one-stop-shop provided the parishioners with added attraction. The very words of Agnes (and Rheanna) conformed to the claim of the mall owners that they got it all for us—including a venue for worship.

The mass-going experience in the mall is seen within the context of

globalization. The idea of the mall is in itself a product of a venue for world markets. The mall is not just "an air-conditioned plaza for promenaders and their families but also a temple of high-grade capitalism and rampant materialism" (The UP Forum, 2008). The slogan "we got it all for you" gives us the impression and invitation to quality, convenience and efficiency.

Globalization is equated with modernization. The preceding concepts derived from globalization concepts were manifested even in the people's celebration of the mass in the chapel. Following the idea, globalization is seen as a dynamics whereby the social structures of modernity are spread the world over (Scholte, 2000).

The mass-going experience is evident of the performance that every mass-goer sought to behave. Not all performance, as Magoulick (nd) claimed, are equal and 'full performance' of mass going are situated only in a "rich convergence of performer, situation, setting, audience and society." As what the parishioners and I myself partly shared, we cannot help but blend into the setting which we were in at that time, i.e. we observed the mass with solemnity and active involvement to the ritual that the people in the chapel performed.

Consequently, a larger "controlling process" was operating in the context. The words of Sis. Joy, showing the way people behave with finesse and order echoes the

latent power that surrounds the parishioners in the chapel. “*Behave talaga ang mga tao rito... may kaayusan kasi,*” “*Solemn talaga at nagsisimba ha? Ang mga tao talagang nagsisimba di tulad sa iba...*” were explained by Sis. Joy with “*parang maraming bawal dito pero hindi naman. Gustong gusto nilang mapabilang dito [They really want to belong in here].*” This is tantamount to Nader’s “transformative nature of central ideas such as coercive harmony that emanate from institutions operating as dynamic components of power... with no real center and no one employing power tactics” (Nader, 1997).

The notion of mass-going experience in the mall as “imported” is hegemonic in nature. Gramsci’s notion of hegemony in the role of a standard is seen as people “complicit in devaluing their varieties of speech and accepting the legitimacy of the standard. It apparently is a form of domination of oppressed classes through their complicity in the system of cultural practices which dominate them, not through the use of naked force (Foley, 1997).

This, being “imported,” is a known value associated with Western culture that locates power for molding standards for others to follow (Marsella, 2005). It appears that the concept of order, discipline, and solemnity that the informants used to describe the mass-going in the chapel in the mall is “foreign” to Filipinos who flocked

the mass in local parishes. It buttressed, according to Marsella (2005), “mind colonization,” (the control disguised in the free act of behaving *accordingly* of individual parishioner who entered the chapel), Nader explicitly said that there seems to exist a much superior culture, that of the “foreigners,” and imposed upon us. The better mass celebrations, if I may say, marked with order, discipline, and solemnity appears to be only possible with foreign influences.

Just as identity is not a fixed attribute of persons but a relational phenomenon and developed through transactions with the environment, belonging to the group of this ‘quality’ provided people with a treasured sense of identity (Mead, 1934). Allen, Wilder, & Atkinson (1983) and Hansen & Liu (1997) regarded identity as an individual self-concept derived from the knowledge of having membership of a social group together with the emotional significance attached to that membership. Just as what the generated data implied, the parishioners that I came across may have shared this notion of significance of being in the group of mall mass goers. But there is more to just this.

More than this hegemonic notion, however, is the fact that the parishioners redefined a new identity through assertions of their agencies despite their contextual environment. The parishioners in the process presuppose achievement in making new

social order amidst the struggle. This is in relation to the becoming “creators of knowledge” purported by Galea (2005) in “representing themselves other than the usual” derived from Foucault’s “possibility to use one’s positions within networks of power for thinking about themselves differently” (Foucault, 1984 in Galea, 2005).

The parishioners articulated Irigaray’s mimetic strategies of “acting out the roles that they have been assigned but in acting them out they will have the opportunity to redefine them and give them new meanings” (Galea, 2005). This appropriation or the interplay of the self with social conceptions and expectations brought out parishioners’ formulated identity fashioned to make their own, to reorder them, adapt them, and otherwise transform them (Rockwell, 1996). After all, hegemony and identity-production are contingent processes, and the structure, important as it may be, is only one force among many (Levinson, 1996) in the lives of the people.

It should be noted that parishioners in the chapel in the mall see the phenomenon of mass-going convenient to them. For many of my respondents, the option to celebrate the Eucharist in the mall instead in regular parishes, implies expediency on their part. Aside from attending the mass as the main reason, their attending in the mall is an offshoot of their proximity or accessibility to where they were, where they are, and where

will they be after the observation of the ritual.

It should also be seen that they preferred mass-going in the chapel because it gave them a perfect venue for a focused worship, prayer and adoration in a comfortable or clean and air-conditioned location, where safety is guaranteed by the setting. The celebration of mass in the chapel inside the mall allowed the parishioners to make the most of their time in this fast-paced busy world, without neglecting the very essence of their acts of worship through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

This mall mass going phenomenon is an emergent culture as a process in which, “new meanings, new practices, new significances and experiences are continually being created” (Williams, 1973).

Suffice it to say that what mass-goers do from what they learned from somewhere or somebody, coupled with contestations they appropriated are producing an emergent culture of their own. It is “participating in the constitution of a new social distinction,” being learned, shared, and communicated—culture (Perry, 2003), where they are very much a part of the dynamic process (Skinner & Holland, 1996).

CONCLUSION

Filipinos’ celebration of the mass in the chapel in the mall is an offshoot of globalization that is not anchored *only* in

economics (mere consumerism). The globalization's thrust for modernity is viewed as the quality sought by the mass-goers in the chapel. Mall mass-going of convenience and efficiency are likewise seen in globalization's "description of the condition of global modernity"—*connectivity* and *proximity* (Tomlinson, 1999).

The people who attended the masses in the mall have "Filipinized" their celebration of the mass. They are contextualized in a global world of quality, convenience, and efficiency without losing themselves in plain and abject consumerism. They have produced their own brand of mass-going and ascribed new meaning into it. They regarded the mall mass-going as more "spiritual" since before or after going to work or malling, notwithstanding the staying in long queues for several minutes during Sundays, they went to the chapel to

solemnly pray and celebrate the Holy Eucharist.

Paradoxically, the advent of the celebration of mass in the mall is a result of the request of the owner of the mall—Mrs. Felicidad "Molly" Sy. What I knew is that people found a sanctuary in the midst of a marketplace... answering the mall owner's aspiration "to provide the most conducive environment for prayers and silence, elevation and personal reflection to people in a market place."

Because of the limitations of the study, a different methodology may be explored and employed for richer data generation. This will be of great help in the analysis of the phenomenon for the better understanding of people's experiences. A comparative and in-depth study to explore the mass experiences of the parishioners in other mall setting may also be done.

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