

## Ecological Consciousness and the Black Nazarene Procession: A Critical Analysis

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**Abstract:** The devotion to the Black Nazarene of Quiapo is one of the well-known expressions of popular piety of Filipinos. Every year, millions of Filipino devotees from different parts of the country flock to the *translacion*, the transfer of the image from the Luneta to its shrine in Quiapo. However, this event always leads to a mini-ecological catastrophe because it generates tons and tons of garbage left behind by the participants, supposedly all devout Catholics—representing a glaring incongruity between belief and practice. In this paper, the researcher will investigate the ecological consciousness of the devotees and the reasons for the conflict or gap between ecological belief and praxis manifested in the tons of waste that the devotees of the Black Nazarene of Quiapo leave behind in the yearly procession. The researcher will discuss various church teachings on ecology especially the new papal document *Laudato Si* to support this study. It will use the theory of Fr. Jaime Bulatao, S.J., *Split-level Christianity*, as a lens to explain the said inconsistency between ecological belief and praxis among the devotees. Filipino cultural traits such as such as *hiya*, distance-making, etc., will be used to clarify the causes of the incongruity. The paper will end with recommendations on how this may be addressed.

**Keywords:** Split-level Christianity; Black Nazarene; Ecology; Catholic Church

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The devotion to the Black Nazarene of Quiapo is one of the well-known expressions of popular piety of Filipinos. Every year, millions of Filipino devotees from different parts of the country flock to the *translacion*, the transfer of the image from the Luneta to its shrine in Quiapo. But this multitude of believers also causes a mini-ecological catastrophe, since they generate literal sea of trash.

And this is despite the fact that all of the devotees are supposedly devout Catholics, and presumably aware of the teachings of the Church regarding stewardship of creation. Though the main focus of this feast is the fulfilment of a *panata* (*vow*) or devotion, the concern for environment must not be forgotten; the devotion must “involve respect for the dignity and integrity of creation.” For this reason, the yearly procession of the Black Nazarene would make an interesting study, especially the reasons for the conflict or gap

between ecological belief and praxis manifested in the tons of waste that the devotees leave behind.

The first part of this paper will clarify the ecological consciousness of the devotees present in the procession. The second part explores the various teachings of the Catholic Church on Ecology in order to highlight these existing doctrines. These form the basis for the claim that all Catholics, not excepting the Nazarene devotees, have a responsibility to take care of the environment. The third part of this study will attempt to show that there is an inconsistency between the ecological belief and praxis of the Catholic devotees of the Black Nazarene present in the procession. Bulatao’s *Split-level Christianity* is used as a lens to clarify and to have a clear understanding of the factors that affect this phenomenon. More so, the overall findings of this study support the teachings of the encyclical letter *Laudato Si* of Pope Francis on Care for our Common Home, specifically in “counteracting the

throw-away culture”. It is hoped that the results of this study will result in the fine-tuning of the Black Nazarene procession and devotion so that it can be a means for the development of Catholics who are more ecologically-responsible.

## 2. DEVOTION TO THE BLACK NAZARENE AND THE EXTENT OF THE ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF FILIPINOS

Religious piety though not the highest form of worship to God is the most appealing and meaningful to the ordinary Filipino (Aguinaldo, 2002, p. 11). One of the examples of Filipino devotion is that to the Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno (Our Father Jesus the Nazarene) or popularly known as Black Nazarene of Quiapo. “The life-sized image of Christ clad in a maroon-colored robe with a crown of thorns and a diadem in the form of three silver rays, bearing a big wood cross, is in a semi-kneeling position indicating His struggle to stand up and with a heavy load about to fall. His whole face, eyes and mouth manifest the writhing pain he suffered and portrays a calling for someone to help him carry the heavy cross (Sembrano, 2013, p. 434).” It is a fitting “emblem of the passion, struggle, and faith for Filipino Catholics.” This devotion has also been described as a blend of fervid native animism and formal Catholic piety and devotion. The most notable part of this feast would be the “*translacion*,” a procession of millions of people who gather every January 9, in Quiapo, Manila. This day however, is not actually the parochial feast of Quiapo Church which is dedicated to Saint John the Baptist. What January 9 commemorates instead is the transfer (*translacion*) in the mid-eighteenth century of the Black Nazarene image from the walled city, Intramuros, to one of the city’s *pueblos*, Quiapo. Since then, the procession has become very popular and more people gather every year to participate in the procession, which has been described by Mark Joseph Calano as the most massive in the Philippines (Calano, 2015, p. 168). The number of people also produces some contrasting views: for the observers, the procession is unruly and fraught with dangers; for devotees, however, the procession is seen as “orderly.” “But to the majority, chaotic as

it may seem, incidents leading to serious physical injuries, more so untimely death, is very rare or has never happened (Aguinaldo, p. 5).” One of the reasons why people go despite all these dangers--even walking barefoot on the hot hallowed ground--is the “*panata*”, a private and personal relationship with the *poón* and fellow devotees and *mamamasan* cultivated through participation in the *translacion* (Calano, p. 172). This relationship motivates the person to participate every year in the procession. However, the external aspect of the *panata* is publicly done on the street, when the devotee or *namamanata* walks barefoot under the hot rays of the sun. To gain some relief from the tiresome effort of walking and struggling amidst the crowd, people buy food, water and other things—resulting into quite a big volume of garbage. The responsibility to the environment, if neglected, is the least priority for the devotees, since their focus is on fulfilling the “*panata*”. No wonder then, that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI warned the Catholic faithful that these types of engagement and commitment “[tend] towards the irrational, and can at times be somewhat superficial (2010).”

The irony in this religious activity is not only limited to people-to-people interaction. It can also be observed in its environment. One of the examples would be the tons of garbage left by the devotees as they make their way to Quiapo Church. In his homily during the 2012 celebration, Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle (as cited in Esmaguel II, 2012, Rappler) requested and challenged the devotees to manifest their concern for the environment. He said: “Sa piyesta pong ito ng Poong Nazareno, may pakiusap at hamon po ako. Sana po ang Luneta Grandstand at lahat ng daraanang ng prusisyon, walang makita ni isang basura. Patunayan natin na hindi na natin hihilahin si Poong Nazareno at ang kalikasan pababa dahil sa ating kawalang-malasakit. (Brothers and sisters, on this feast of the Black Nazarene, I have this request and challenge. I hope that not a single piece of garbage will be left in the Luneta Grandstand and along the entire procession route. Let this be proof that we intend to stop dragging down the Black Nazarene and the environment due to our lack of concern for others).”

Cardinal Tagle’s call has fallen on deaf ears. From 192 tons, or 32 truckloads collected in

the year 2013, there were 336 tons collected from the Manila streets in 2014. The garbage was mostly plastic bags and styrofoam containers--despite the ban on plastics in Manila, which was enforced starting last September 2013. The plastics ban or Manila City Ordinance No 8282 was passed in September 2012. A one-year moratorium was imposed to allow businessmen to shift their inventory and operations from plastics. At the same time the Anti-Littering Law MMDA Regulation No. 96-009 also prohibits the act or littering.<sup>1</sup> This year it is reported that "the millions of devotees, who participated in the procession of the Black Nazarene that ended early Sunday, left garbage weighing 315 tons, or the equivalent of 30 truckloads" (Villas-Alayaren, 2016, Manila Bulletin). Hence, the Church's call to care for the environment is not only a religious act. It can also be seen as an act of obeying the law and the authorities for the sake of the common good (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, p. 168). We are all obliged to honor and respect all those whom God, for our good, has vested with authority. In this particular situation, the negative action of disobedience towards authority becomes a de facto custom since it has been widely practiced every year, contrary to the expected behaviour in accordance with the ideals of the authorities.

This negative activity, or we may say, phenomenon, is a single act and a collective action which may lead us to rethink or question our understanding of our faith, to ask whether this de facto custom is really a local custom since it is contrary to the Western Church's ideals. Or is it a misinterpretation of Western culture by the indigenous Filipino culture?

### 3. CHURCH TEACHING ON ECOLOGY

The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) reminds Filipinos with regard to their attitude towards popular religious practices that these must "be vitally related to Filipino life, and *serve the cause of full human development, justice, peace and the integrity of creation*" (emphasis added; no. 174). In the Bible, God commanded human beings to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it (Gen. 1:27). In other

words, we are in charge of creation; in charge, meaning, have the responsibility of making it fruitful and sustainable. To take charge does not mean to exploit without limits. God took the man (people) and settled him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it. In this task, we must admit that we have failed. "The perfect harmony of humanity and the rest of Creation was [sic] ruptured (Koenig-Bricker, 2009, p. 29)," because of humanity's negligence and failure to respond and/or act accordingly. So in the face of such frightening reality Pope Benedict XVI (as cited in Koenig-Bricker, p. 31) is telling us that all of us, Christians and non-Christians alike, we were created to be caregivers, stewards, champions of God's Creation, not despotic rulers. In July 2007, Pope Benedict XVI said in a meeting with the clergy:

We all see that today man can destroy the foundation of his existence, his earth. We cannot simply do what we want with this Earth of ours, with what has been entrusted to us... (www.vatican.va, n.d.).

Benedict says that the earth to speaks to us, and we must learn to be obedient to its voice. The natural calamities of recent years remind us that we cannot just do whatever we want; our abuse of the environment will always have tragic consequences.

In this statement, the Church, through Pope Benedict XVI, calls us to protect and stop the abuse of our home, the Earth. He also pointed out during the celebration of World Day of Peace in 2008 that "We need to care for the environment: it has been entrusted to men and women to be protected and cultivated with responsible freedom, with good of all as a constant guiding criterion." This human stewardship is also found in the seventh commandment of God which involves the "concern for quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1994, no. 2415)." In this view, stewardship includes concern for the welfare of the future generations who will live after them, not just the present humanity. The question

ought to be “What kind of world will be the future generations would experience if human beings will continue humiliating the beautiful creation of God which He entrusted to them?” or “Are human beings responsible stewards of creation, especially in considering future lives?” In short, human beings created in the image and likeness of God, to whom God bestowed the responsibility to take care of His creation, must think the consequences of their action in daily life. Only thus they can holistically fulfill their God-given responsibility of being stewards of creation.

The Church, through the bishops and the Pope, has not failed in apprising and catechizing the people of God regarding their responsibility for God’s creation. The latest teaching of the Catholic Church concerning ecology is the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si* of Pope Francis. In it, the pope emphasized the connectedness of all creation: “Everything is closely related (Francis, no. 137).” This cannot be denied by anyone. Human beings are part of creation and whatever happens to creation will affect them. For example, when we throw garbage to the river or anywhere, these will contaminate the river and will result in the lack of clean water, health problems and even the death of fish species in the river.

At this point, it will also be opportune to focus on the problem with regard to the “throw-away culture” of the people of God mentioned by Pope Francis in the *Laudato Si*. He was referring to the millions of waste that people are producing which make the earth not a beautiful place to live in (LS no. 21). Pope Francis says, “We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations....” (LS no. 22). We need to look for ways to counteract this throwaway culture, and in this we have not made much progress.

These deplorable attitudes of people in dealing with creation will continue if these will not be addressed immediately. The People of God must not be deaf and blind; they must hear, see or do something to address the abuse that is being committed against the earth. It is very clear according to our Christian faith that one must take a stand for his/her role as steward of God’s creation. One must not be indifferent to the ecological crisis; instead, one must be a responsible

steward and care-taker of the creation of God, considering particularly the generations to come, who are seriously affected by humanity’s wastefulness. The Christian environmentalist Calvin B. de Witt (as cited in Deane-Drummond, 2008, p. 84) identifies seven principles as line of action on stewardship, one of which is “we must not fail to act on what we know is right.” This simply means that belief and action must be applied together on stewardship. In short, stewardship is also witnessing. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (as cited in Khroeger, 2011, p. 36) stated that “The faithful, therefore, must learn the deepest meaning and the value of all creation, as well as its role in the harmonious praise of God.”

#### 4. SPLIT- LEVEL CHRISTIANITY AND INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN ECOLOGICAL BELIEF AND PRACTICE

The inconsistency between practice and belief of Filipino Christians was noted as early as 1966 by a Jesuit priest and psychologist named Fr. Jaime Bulatao, S. J., of the Ateneo de Manila University. He called it *Split- Level Christianity* which is a term referring to “the co- existence within the same person of two or more thought-and-behavior systems which are inconsistent with each other (p. 2).” He found that the inconsistency of values systems among Filipinos is the result of the influences of more than three centuries of foreign rule on Filipino culture. The influences might not be so obvious to Filipinos, but these are occasionally manifested by their behavior. To have a clear understanding, he gave some illustrations to describe such split-leveling:

- A policeman in the downtown district in Manila goes fairly regularly to Mass and considers himself a Catholic. Nevertheless he collects “tong” from the small stores in the district as protection money. He feels he has a right to it because he is their protector against gangsters (Ibid., pp. 3-5).

(The Split: the modern Catholic principles of justice vs. a feudal attitude that the lord may tax those whom he protects.)

- An A. B. graduate (cum laude) from a Catholic boys' college marries immediately after college, and takes up residence in Negros. Everytime he comes to Manila he seeks out other women. Once, suspecting his wife of unfaithfulness, he hits her with his fist and drives her out of the house. When charged with inconsistency he says: "I was never serious about those other women. My wife has no right to go out with another man." When asked to reconcile this double standard with principles learned in school ("Thou shalt not commit adultery.") he answers: "It's just human weakness. In Negros every hacendero has a querida. Some have several.

(The Split: Catholic rules regarding marriage vs. cultural norms.)

### *The Three (3) Characteristics of Split-Level Christianity*

First is *Conviction of Fitness*. It is a feeling which is different from a sense of human weakness because it "involves absence of a sense of guilt, or the presence of only minimal amount (Ibid., p. 6)." The person believes that he/she can do something else especially when most of the community is practicing it, e.g., cock fighting and drinking alcohol are not wrong because they are common pastimes among adults. People perceive that everything is all right because there is a "sense of the rightness of both systems, the inconsistency, while at times noticed, is not felt keenly (Ibid., p. 7)." There is a conviction that any adult can do it since he/she is old enough, as for instance excessive gambling, which the Church says is immoral especially when it involves the poorer classes.

Second is *Unconscious Conflict*. This pertains to the consciousness of a person to what is happening to his/her own behavior and/or action. There is an inconsistency between inward conviction and outward action, but this "inconsistency itself is either not perceived at all, or is pushed into the rear portions of consciousness. At the most it is taken for granted and simply 'forgotten'" (Ibid.). Though there is a possibility that he/she just forgot the norms to which he must conform, still the "disturbance" and "guilt" are no longer felt due to the unconsciousness to the

inconsistency. "There are, however, special cases in whom [sic] the unconscious has become conscious. Usually of the better- educated class, they are quite aware of the inconsistency between their philosophical system and their actual way of life (Ibid., p. 8)." But then they take advantage by using their consciousness to make others' life miserable and/or to use the status quo to gain something for their personal purpose and/or interest. Fr. Bulatao asks whether it is better to call them "split-leveled Christians or not to call them Christians at all"? These opportunistic persons include politicians who build schools, churches and/or contribute to charitable organizations but have their names displayed prominently so that they will be known by the community – who do not know that these donors have overpriced the costing of the project as their commission for the service they have rendered. It is an embarrassing experience when the split between appearance and actual deed is discovered; only then is *hiya* or shame felt.

Lastly, there is "*Distance Making*". This is usually the defense mechanism applied by a person who failed to follow the norms of his/her community due to *hiya*. The person who is experiencing this feeling usually distances "the self as far as possible from the gaze of a person in authority" because he/she is afraid of being condemned (Ibid.). This "distance-making" is also done by someone to avoid the authority figures that might hinder him from committing something wrong. For instance, a person who is addicted to playing computer games will go to a place where he/she won't be found by his parents. In the examples given above, "the girl reading pornographic books hides under the blanket from her Peace Corps roommate (Ibid., pp. 8-9)."

Randy David in his essay called "Split-level Spirituality" the religion in which "scapulars replaced amulets. Images of saints displaced the wooden gods in our ancestors' homes. Priests took the place of our local shamans. And the sacred mountains, those ancient places of worship, were replaced by the colonial churches. But the new forms did not erase the substantive spirituality." However this view cannot be applied to the devotees in terms of ecological consciousness for it focuses on folk Catholicism.

Having discussed the fundamental concepts of Bulatao, we may now ask, as Catholic Christians, is this Split-level Christianity applicable to the phenomenon of the devotees of the Black Nazarene with regard to ecological praxis and belief? Is it possible to formulate Catholic Christian principles that allow us to judge the status quo and establish standards to address this phenomenon?

First of all, it is very clear that the devotees generate tons of trash or waste arising from their disregard for environmental laws by leaving their trash just about anywhere. Though they know from the very beginning that this action is wrong and prohibited, they just took it for granted since most of their companions in the procession are also doing it. On this point, the conviction of fitness becomes relevant because there is a conviction and rightness in the mind of devotees that throwing of trash is nevertheless not wrong since most of them are doing it.

Secondly, one of the main purposes of the devotees in joining the procession is the *panata* (vow) or devotion to the Black Nazarene and not to promote the care for environment. Since this latter purpose is not the center of this event, the devotees may not be mindful of and receptive to their responsibility to be stewards of God's creation. Delio (2006) clarifies that "to profess that Christ is the center is to believe that the center is everywhere (p. 501)." It is also clear in the Church's teaching on ecology that the people of God whom God created in His own image and likeness placed them in charge of His beautiful creation as stewards and care-takers, though most of the times they fail to fulfill this purpose and duty because of their forgetfulness and ignorance. For this reason, there is an unconscious conflict in this situation due to the fact that the devotees' central concern is not on the environment but on their *panata*. It seems that their erroneous action cannot be felt or is minimized because they feel that they are expressing their faith, while forgetting that their responsibility for the ecology cannot be separated from that same faith. Moreover, Aguinaldo, the researcher who studied Filipino Culture in line with the devotion of the Nazarene, stated that the majority of the devotees of the Black Nazarene "belong to the lower-income group" (Aguinaldo, p.

25). Majority of them are not that well-educated. According to Bulatao, the unconscious mind will become more conscious when a person is better-educated because "they are quite aware of the inconsistency between their philosophical system and their actual way of life (Bulatao, p. 8)." He added though that an educated person may nevertheless use this advantage in practicing a faulty endeavor, i.e., according to the example of Aguinaldo regarding the devotees of the Black Nazarene:

A well-known professional uses his claimed devotion as pure manipulation. He does not go to Sunday masses, has two mistresses and gambles a lot. He claims that while he is doing wrong, he makes up for it by giving alms and lighting up candles at the feet of his revered image in the church; this way he thinks that God may understand (Aguinaldo, p. 30).

In this example, the concerned person obviously uses a defense mechanism to cover his fault, though if his wrong deeds come to light, the concept of *hiya* or shame will come in.

Following from the above, one may argue then that leaving trash during the Black Nazarene procession is only what is to be expected from people who lack of education, since even the professional is not setting a good example, instead covering his misdeeds with misleading mechanisms. Thus the special case of *unconscious conflict* might not be applicable to this situation, since most of the devotees come from the lower class in the society and don't have enough education. They are not able to abuse their power in manipulating the situation. On the other hand, even if the Church continues catechizing the people of God regarding respect and care for the environment, it seems that these efforts remain mere words which cannot be seen in the actions of many Catholic Christians. This is evident in the case of the Black Nazarene devotees in a sense that most of them have forgotten or they disregard their responsibility for God's creation. These are the statements of some devotees with regards to the

problem of trash during the Black Nazarene Procession:

- A 37-year-old married man who had only a few years' education and belonging to the economically poorer class in the society said "Natural lang 'yon pag piesta ng Nazareno" (It's natural during feast of the Black Nazarene) and he pointed his right hand on the street, "Tingnan mo nga kahit hindi piesta ng Nazareno ang daming basura" (look even it's not feast of the Black Nazarene there's a lot of trashes). He said that even some of the authorities who are supposed to enforce the rules violate them. Moreover, the law and the Church teaching of the Church on garbage disposal or care of the environment can be applied in the province but not here in the city, he said in Filipino.<sup>2</sup>
- A councilor and tricycle driver who has been joining the procession since 1978 in fulfillment of a *panata* stated that one thing that hinders them from throwing their trash in the trash bin is their tiredness "pagod" (tired) because of the long walk and heat of the sun. Though he knows that it is wrong, he reasoned out that "Minsan lang naman 'yon kaya ok lang na magtapon ng basura sa kalsada dahil mabigat kung dadalhin mo pa katulad ng bote ng tubig, may naglilinis naman pagkatapos ng prosisyon" (It really happens only once in a while, that's why it's ok to throw trash in the street. It's heavy to carry, and there are people who will clean up after the procession).<sup>3</sup>
- There were also two brothers and their *kumpare* who are carpenters who have been joining the procession for their *panata* every year. They pointed at the vendors and to the generous persons who give food during the procession as the reason for the need for proper garbage disposal. One of them said "Pero sa tingin ko hindi na naman ano (responsibilidad) nang mga namamanata 'yong kalat doon. 'Pag halimbawa sa sitwasyon na 'yon si Kristo na talaga (ang pagtutuunan mo ng pansin), iisipin mo pa ba na may kalat ka? Tsaka 'di na trabaho nang mga devoto 'yon, anong ginagawa nang mga MMDA? (I think the trash there is not responsibility of the namamanata. In that situation Christ is the focus, do you ever think

of your trash? At the same time, it's not the work of the devotees, that's the work of the MMDA?).<sup>4</sup>

One may argue if they are worthy to be called true Catholic Christians or just a Catholic Christians in virtue of baptism. Meanwhile the disturbance or guilt is no longer felt due to the unconsciousness to the inconsistency.

Thirdly, since most of the devotees belong to the lower class in the society. They probably don't have enough education so the *hiya* or shame might not be possible in some cases. Besides, they think that throwing of trash is socially acceptable because most of them are involved in this mistaken action. Anthropologist Frank Lynch, S J (as cited in Roces, 2013, p. 86) sees the generic meaning of *hiya* as "the uncomfortable feeling that accompanies awareness of being in a socially unacceptable position, or performing a socially unacceptable action." Meanwhile, since there is an absence in the concept of *hiya* or shame, the distance-making mechanism in this respect might not be perceived.

Finally, through the analysis illustrated above between the Split-level Christianity and the ecological consciousness of the Black Nazarene devotees, we find that there is significant room for the development of the devotees' ecological consciousness using the lens of Bulatao's Split-level Christianity. There can be no argument that the Split-Level spirituality has its place in the ecological consciousness of the Black Nazarene devotees. The Split-level Christianity makes clear the phenomenon of the devotees with regard to ecological consciousness, i.e., the result of the inconsistency between belief and practice. It therefore has a helpful psychological task in reconciling the devotees to the ideal stewards or care-takers of God's creation specifically the environment. Moreover, the Split-level Christianity is vitally needed in forming the Black Nazarene devotees to practice the consistency between practice and belief.

## 5. RECOMMENDATION

There is a Filipino belief that says "Walang hindi nadadaan sa maayos na pag-uusap" (Nothing is impossible for a peaceful conversation). This belief could also be an approach to addressing

the phenomenon of the devotees' ecological inconsistency. Ma. Cecilia T. Medina (as cited in Mercado, 2000, p. 19) is correct when she used the words of Vatican II as a challenge in the dialogue between faith and culture and devotion. She stated that "Christ himself search the hearts of people and led them to divine light through truly human conversation..." In the same way, Fr. Segundo Galilea, a famous Third World theologian from Chile, recommends a more balanced and integrated pastoral attitudes to pastoral agents and institutions who are working in relations to popular religiosity by not underestimating its role as a means of evangelization (1998, pp. 32-34). In the case of the devotees, like Christ, the Church is challenged for continuous action of evangelization in order to strengthen people's awareness and align them to the message of Christ. Only human conversation or evangelization, using the medium of the Quiapo devotion, will bring the devotees of the Black Nazarene into the light, making them aware of the true significance of God's creation. Thus, the devotion becomes a way to form them as ecologically responsible Catholic Christians.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In this study we have outlined a congruent judgment in the phenomenon of the Black Nazarene ecological inconsistency that draws inspiration from Bulatao's Split-level Christianity. As mentioned above, Bulatao's Split-level Christianity is still relevant in today's world especially in studying the psychological

inconsistency of a person's beliefs and actions. We realize that the standpoint articulated in our discussion for our claim that inconsistency on the side of the devotees is not comprehensive due to the absence of *hiya* or shame in the data presented. Nonetheless, we could say that the devotees' lack of good model/s and integrity are some of the factors which hinder them from doing what is right in the situation.

From this point of view, our stand on the inconsistency of the devotees' ecological belief and practice becomes strong and reliable. While the *panata* (vow) or devotion to the Black Nazarene of Quiapo is the main focus of the devotees and not specifically ecological responsibility, Catholic practice must also include consideration for responsible human stewardship. This could be a continuous challenge for the devotees to align themselves to the teachings of the Church on ecology and follow the law that govern them in the society. Otherwise this ecological phenomenon will not be resolved. This is the beginning of a deep reflection for the devotees of the Black Nazarene on how to become consistent in practicing their responsibility as stewards or care-takers of God's creation. It is fitting to end this discourse using the principle of creation that says "men and women, created in his image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27), are for very reason called to be the visible sign and effective instrument of divine gratuitousness in the garden where God has placed them as cultivators and custodians of the goods of creation" (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, no. 26).

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### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>According to the source the law originally took effect on September 15, 1996. But its implementation was suspended last August 2002. The law was again vigorously implemented in Metro Manila last September 15, 2010 up to present. Metro Manila Council. MMDA Regulation No. 96-009, 1996. Retrieved from [http://www.mmda.gov.ph/images/pdf/regulation/MMDA\\_Reg\\_96-009.pdf](http://www.mmda.gov.ph/images/pdf/regulation/MMDA_Reg_96-009.pdf).

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<sup>2</sup> Personal Interview. In front of the entrance of Quiapo Church, Manila, Philippines, November 15, 2015 at 8:05pm.

<sup>3</sup> Personal Interview. Under Nagtahan Bridge. Legarda St., Sampaloc, Manila, Philippines, November 30, 2015 at 7:30pm.

<sup>4</sup> Note: The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is the government agency in charge of garbage disposal in Metro Manila. Personal Interview. 2708 Legarda St., Sampaloc, Manila. November 30, 2015 at 7:50pm.



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