

การบูชาบรรพบุรุษของกลุ่มผู้นับถือ นิกายคาทอลิกในภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ (กรณีศึกษา ประเทศเวียดนาม) Ancestor worship of Catholic in Southeast Asian (Case study Vietnam)*

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บทคัดย่อ

การบูชาบรรพบุรุษ ถือเป็นประเพณีที่แสดงความกตัญญูของลูกหลานชาวเวียดนาม ซึ่งในปี คริสต์ศักราช 1553 ในเวียดนามเกิดการแผ่ขยายอิทธิพลของศาสนาคริสต์นิกายคาทอลิก ทำให้การบูชาบรรพบุรุษถูกทำลายลง เนื่องจาก การเกิดความขัดแย้งอย่างรุนแรงระหว่างกลุ่มที่นับถือศาสนาคริสต์นิกายคาทอลิก และกลุ่มที่ไม่ได้นับถือศาสนาคริสต์นิกายคาทอลิก จนกระทั่งปัจจุบันการละทิ้ง การบูชาบรรพบุรุษของศาสนาคริสต์นิกายคาทอลิก นั้นก็ยังคงอยู่ในสังคม เวียดนาม ซึ่งการละทิ้งการบูชาบรรพบุรุษดังกล่าวนำไปสู่ผลลัพธ์ต่าง ๆ ทางสังคม อาทิ ร่องรอยของความขัดแย้งจากอดีต ความเป็นอื่นของผู้ที่นับถือศาสนาคริสต์ นิกายคาทอลิก การห้ามมิให้มีแต่งงานกับผู้ที่ไม่นับถือศาสนาคริสต์นิกายคาทอลิก เป็นต้น ซึ่งบทความนี้ให้ความสำคัญกับการอธิบายการบูชาบรรพบุรุษของคน กิงห์ (Kinh) ของผู้นับถือศาสนาคริสต์นิกายคาทอลิกในเวียดนาม โดยพื้นฐาน ข้อมูลทางประวัติศาสตร์และการสำรวจทางสังคมวิทยาใน 3 เขตศาสนา ดังนี้ เขตศาสนา โหนว หลีก (No Luc) ในจังหวัด พูเถาะ (Phu Tho) ตื่อเน (Tu Ne) ในจังหวัด บักนิง (Bac Ninh) กายเมิน (Cai Mon) ในจังหวัด เบ็นแจ (Ben Tre)

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โดยบทความนี้จะอธิบายให้เห็นถึงการบูชาบรรพบุรุษของศาสนาคริสต์นิกายคาทอลิก ผ่านทางกิจกรรมต่าง ๆ เช่น งานศพ งานแต่งงาน วันหยุดในเทศกาลปีใหม่เวียดนาม (Tet) นอกจากนี้ยังบรรยายถึงความแตกต่างและความเหมือนของกลุ่มที่นับถือคาทอลิกและกลุ่มที่ไม่ได้นับถือศาสนาคริสต์นิกายคาทอลิกในเวียดนาม ดังเช่น ความเหมือนระหว่างศาสนาคริสต์นิกายคาทอลิกในเวียดนามกับจีน ฟิลิปปินส์ และคาทอลิกญี่ปุ่น จากที่กล่าวมาจะเห็นได้จาก กระบวนการบูรณาการผสมผสานกันระหว่างศาสนาคริสต์นิกายคาทอลิก กับวัฒนธรรมพื้นเมืองซึ่งจะทำให้เห็นความชัดเจนมากขึ้น

คำสำคัญ : การบูชาบรรพบุรุษ, คาทอลิก, วัฒนธรรม, การบูรณาการ, โบสถ์คาทอลิก, พิธีกรรม

Abstract

Ancestor worship is a tradition filial piety of Vietnamese people. The penetration of Catholicism into Vietnam (in 1553) dismissed ancestor worship, causing profound social conflict between Catholics and non-Catholics. Up to the present, the notion that Catholics abandoned ancestor worship still exists in Vietnamese society. This notion led to social consequences such as stigma, alienated Catholics; prohibiting marriage with Catholics...The paper focuses on the opinion and form of ancestor worship of Kinh Catholics. Basing on historical data and results of sociological surveys at three parishes (No Luc parish in Phu Tho province, Tu Ne parish in Bac Ninh province and Cai Mon parish in Ben Tre province), the paper exposes the ancestor worship of Catholics in Vietnam through certain activities such as funerals, weddings, Tet holidays... The paper describes the differences and similarities in matters of ancestor worship between Catholics and non-Catholics in Vietnam; the similarities between Vietnamese Catholic with China, the Philippines, Japan Catholic so that

the integration process of Catholicism into native cultures can be seen more clearly.

Keywords : Ancestor Worship, Catholic, Culture, Integration, Catholic Church, Rite

Introduce the issue

Ancestor worship was convinced to be a filial piety of peoples all over the world in general and in Vietnam in particular, especially in ethnics at Southeast Asia (James G. Fraiser, 1913) The topic of Ancestor worship attracts many researches because of its popularity and importance for the religious consciousness of the peoples in the world. After the period of war, activities relating to ancestor worship like rebuilding communal houses, temples, ancestral temples, repairing tombs, finding missing people, writing genealogies... have become prominent phenomena in social and religious life... The issue has been mentioned and studied in many different aspects such as rites, belief of souls and death (Doan Trung Thong, 1994; Nguyen Hong Duong, 2001), worship eulogies in rites, ritual order, etc... This topic can be broad or narrow, depending on approaches of different people on different fields. Because the issues relating to ancestor worship can be broad or narrow, there are many different arguments. In the treatise, terms are taken out to discuss. Terms like “worship”, “ancestors” are all discussed (Do Quang Hung, 1999). At family level, ancestors are dead people including grandparents, parents ... Ancestors of parentages include great grandparents, great-great grandparents or brothers living in previous generations (at least three). At communal level, ancestors are people who contribute merits for villages such as national heroes, Hung Kings (Dang Nghiem Van, 1996) ... In different aspects, the

form and size of ancestor worship is also different. There are many ethnic and religious groups in society. Each group has its religious beliefs and ways of venerating the dead people, basing on the perceptions of its own. Therefore, the issue is very rich and diverse.

From the perspective of religion, particularly the viewpoints on ancestor worship of Vietnamese Catholics differ from that of other religious groups. In this paper, I only mention the ancestor worship of Kinh Catholics and do not analyze the ancestor worship among Catholics in the other ethnic groups such as Tay, Nung, Hmong, Dao ... It is very difficult to implement that because each ethnic group inside Vietnam has its own conception of the soul, of death and the existence of the soul after death. Also, the way they remember and worship their ancestor is different indeed.

Additionally, I am encouraged to write this paper because ancestor worship is a tradition filial piety of Vietnamese people. The penetration of Catholicism into Vietnam (in 1553) dismissed ancestor worship, causing profound social conflict between Catholics and non-Catholics. Up to the present, the notion that Catholics abandoned ancestor worship still exists in Vietnamese society. This notion led to social consequences such as stigma, alienated Catholics; prohibiting marriage with Catholics... In the past, the abandonment of ancestors even means committing serious felonies and is persecuted (Nguyen Nhu The, Nguyen Van Thuan, 1998).

It is hoped that this paper will contribute to clarify the issue: Do Catholics venerate their ancestor? What do Kinh Catholics think about ancestor worship and how do they perform that religious activity? Basing on historical records, documents and sociological surveys at parishes from 1995 to the present, I describe issues relating to ancestor worship of Catholic communities in Vietnam. On that basis, comparing the problem of ancestor worship in the Catholic community in the countries in the region

such as China, Philippines, ... Thereby, similarities and differences between Catholics and non-Catholics in term of ancestor worship are found out. Also, the process of development and integration of Catholic culture into Vietnamese indigenous culture.

Research method and research area

This study is the result of many surveys and fieldworks done at Catholic parishes across the country from 1995 to the present, especially at Tu Ne parish (Bac Ninh province 2008, 2014), No Luc parish (Phu Tho province 2009, 2011), and Cai Mon parish (Ben Tre province 2003, 2009, and 2014). The total sampling differs from area to area. In 2014, 300 sampling were done Catholic communities of Tu Ne and Cai Mon. Besides, main methods used are participant observation, deep interviews for individuals (priests, parishioners), concentrated group discussions. In addition, historical method, statistical comparisons, analysis, synthesis... are done in research. This study used the results of other studies in countries such as China, Philippines... to compare.

About study areas: the three selected parishes are No Luc (Phu Tho province) as representative of Catholic parishes in Northern Midland¹ ; Tu Ne (Bac Ninh province) as representative of Northern Plain² ; Cai Mon (Ben Tre province) as representative of Southern

¹ No Luc parish has historical establishment of more than 400 years, founded in 1609, located in Thuy Van Commune, Viet Tri city, Phu Tho province. The parish has 1.442 households with 5.927 parishioners.

² Tu Ne parish located in Thanh Lang commune, Luong Tai district, Bac Ninh province. In 1692, Catholicism was introduced into Tu Ne. Catholics account for 58% total population of the commune.

region³. In addition to the nature of regional representative, the three parishes represent the nature of rural and urban area, No Luc is in Viet Tri city, Tu Ne belongs to rural area of North and Cai Mon locates on rural area of South.

Basis of ancestor worship in Vietnam

Ancestor worship has been a longstanding creed of Vietnamese. This activity is actually deep-rooted in social life and in consciousness of Vietnamese people. In all families, this religious doctrine has become a dogma named “When drinking water, remember its source” on the background of “filial piety”. For Vietnamese people, ancestors consist of people having the same bloodlines and national heroes such as Hung Kings, Au Co Mother ... Ancestor worship is a beautiful culture generated by people who are fond of “Emotion” rather than “Reason”. Like other countries in Southeast Asia, ancestor worship in Vietnam is increasingly consolidated and expanded when Eastern and Western cultures are introduced. Due to the interference of outside cultural elements, there are different viewpoints on ancestor worship in different historical periods and in different schools of thought like Confucianism, Buddhism or Catholicism. Vietnamese people living in villages have their own distinct cultures showing through lifestyles, customs, beliefs, folklore... Villages are built on the foundation of the blood relations of many parentages. Therefore, ancestor worship plays an important role in maintaining the environment of families and villages.

³ Cai Mon parish is in the area of Vinh Thanh commune, Cho Lach district, Ben Tre province. The parish is founded for 400 years ago, since about 1700. The parish has 12.889 parishioners, taking about 77,2% total population of the commune.

Vietnamese traditionally thinks that a human has both body and spirit parts. The body can pass away but the spirit exists forever in another world. Also, the spiritual part is the more noble part of a human. This concept similar peoples in other countries in Southeast Asia as China, Philippines, Japan... (Worship the ancestors of the Vietnamese and some countries in Southeast Asia, n.d.; Frazer, 1913) Body and spirit together make creatures alive and active. The spirit only gets away from the body after death. Vietnamese supposes that “the life after death is the same as the life alive”. It means that dead people also have same basic needs as living ones such as eating, wearing, consuming and saving for rainy days. Thus, dead people need to be worshipped so that they can have good lives in netherworld. Vietnamese supposes that “Netherworld” is the home of ancestral spirits after their death, like Nirvana in Buddhism or Heaven in Catholicism. Philippine Catholics also believe in the soul, in life after death. A dead continued to their normal activities in the world of the soul. (Worship the ancestors of the Vietnamese and some countries in Southeast Asia, n.d.)

With such a concept, Vietnamese people consider ancestor worship as piety which they never give up. Ancestor worship shows the close bonding between ancestors - the dead people - with their living offspring. In other words, ancestor worship describes the connection between living earth and netherworld. On the other hand, ancestor worship show out gratitude for the nurture of Catholic parents. Therefore the time-honored as pastoral as many feel the serene peace of mind as much. From reverence, the desire to give their ancestors in where “Heaven”, from the belief in spirits after the falls, the grandchildren sought to press curious with the time-honored ancestral, burn incense and memorials, be careful with the ancestors each new year occasions, every time there is a great deal as a marriage or funeral ... Adults use these occasions to remind their offspring

of their parentage origin and to do their duty of filial piety. According to results of surveys issued by The Institute for religious Studies from 1995 to the present, ancestor worship is done by 98% Vietnamese population on average. (The Institute for religious Studies, 2008)

Together with the universal nature, ancestor worship also has distinctive nature when its expression forms are shown in different social and religious groups, depending on beliefs and perceptions of each group. Distinctive features of expressions create the diversity and prosperity of ancestor worship. The first distinctive feature among different religious and social groups is the opinion on soul and on accommodation of soul after death. Atheists do not believe in soul or life after death, they suppose that "Death pays all debts". The conception of Buddhists is that human life is closely tied to afterlife. If the soul of somebody can not escaped from karma, he or she will become entangled in the transmigration cycle and return to a corresponding life to pay for what he or she did in previous lives. Therefore, Buddhism does not advocate killing animal because animals are reincarnated beings coming from previous life. Then filial ancestral rites are performed as Requiem of Buddhism. Families which have funerals will invite monks to chant so that dead people can be free from suffering; In Vu Lan festival, people go to Buddhist temples and pray for their parents. According to the concept of Buddhism, Vu Lan ceremony is Buddhist amnesty day, people do good deeds in this day and their parents are blessed.

Catholics have their own perception about the existence of soul and body, about the place where the soul will resides after death: heaven, hell or purgatory. (The, Triet, and Xuan, 1992, pp. 91-92) Catholics do not think that Death pays all debts. They believe that people who please God and are pure will go to heaven and be called the Saints. Other guilty people

are pushed down to purgatory or fire hell to compensate for bad things they did when they were living, depending on the significance of their sins. Such people are the Ghosts. According to Catholic doctrine, all Catholics must believe in dogmas about death, life, soul, and body even though the explanation is not obvious. Thus, the belief of the parishioners is significant. Catholics also believe that living people and dead ones (Saints and ghosts) still have connections. The saints and God will bless for living people. Living people create welfares to help ghosts redeem sins which are committed when they were on earth, then ghosts can go to heaven and be with God blessing for living ones. The relationship of living people with saints, souls and God is the basis of the beliefs of transferring credits. Living people venerates the dead ones to express their gratitude for what the dead ones did for grandchildren if alive and all the things they will and God's blessing for his descendants after death. The investigation results in other areas, indicating the purpose of ancestor worship is to express gratitude to ancestors of Catholics constitute 98.9%. (Hanh, 2014b) In the Philippines, they worship their ancestors because they believe that “In most areas they revered the departed spirits of their ancestors through ritual offerings, and also believed in a variety of nature spirits. Such beliefs were central to healing practices, harvest rites, and to maintaining a cosmological balance between this world and the afterlife. Spirits were invisible, but also responsible for both good and bad events. Yet Filipinos believed that proper ritual feasting of the spirits would appease them, and result in good harvests, healthy recovery of the ill, and the fertility of women”. (Russell, 1999)

It can be said that the basis of ancestor worship of Catholics comes from their own teachings. Their religious beliefs are fully placed into the almighty of God. God is the center of everything and all explanation. And,

all the words are described in honor of God. The doctrine set rules relating to ancestor worship and force people to follow. In “Decalogue” (Ten Commandments of God), following three commandments teaching people to worship God, the fourth commandment forces parishioners to honor their parents. This stands behind the worship of God. This is a very important thing that all Catholics must have the responsibility and obligation to perform. Children always take care of parents no matter how they are, healthy or sick, which is an act of pleasing God. Catholics believe that the existence of human is a gift that God offers. And children are always grateful for the nurture of their parents without any exceptions because it is not only a duty but also a moral deed of children. The Bible recognizes the happiness of a family as parents love their children and children are obedient, dutiful to their parents. This is the basis for parishioners to practice their ancestor worship. Accordingly, ancestor worship is being respectful and grateful of next generations for previous generations. Therefore, after a long time being neglected due to the restriction of the Church, ancestor worship still exists in the spiritual life of Vietnamese Catholics⁴. This is a historical problem during the process of extending mission “god nation” of the Vatican, Vietnam is not an exception..

⁴ Ancestor worship was forbidden by Vatican church and various missionaries had different behaviors in certain historical periods. However, in general, missionaries strictly followed the bans of Vatican church. Ancestor worship was only abolished after Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) finished. See more at Nguyen Hong Duong: *Catholic rite and lifestyle in Vietnamese culture*. Nxb KHXH, HN, 2001

Ancestor worship in Catholic history

The issue of ancestor worship of Kinh Catholics tightly relates to the behavior of Holy See and missionaries for this issue in missionary history of Catholicism.

Ancestor worship of Vietnamese cannot be separated from historical context named “Chinese Rites”. At the time of Matteo Ricci, superior of Jesuit (S.J.), there were not any arguments of Chinese rites. After the death of Matteo Ricci (1610), this debate appeared again among groups Jesuit. When missionaries of other lines (Dominican, Augustine, Franciscans, and Ba Le) came to China (since 1630), this debate became more acrimonious. Debates during periods of different popes and decisions were written in papers of Vatican. Papers relating to Chinese rites have influences to Vietnam and neighboring countries.

Behavior of the Vatican church in Rome

The issue of ancestor worship of Catholics in Vietnam in particular and in the East in general, mainly in China, attracts more than a dozen popes, generating debates between the different missionaries. While Jesuits in China did not condemn the worship of Confucius and ancestors, the Franciscans in Vietnam opposed that because they thought this kind of worship is the same as secular worship. (Hanh, 2008)

Pope Clemente XI (1700 - 1721) held a conference with bishops to discuss this issue and then accepted the decree *Cum Deus optimus* of Court of Investigation in the Apostolic Constitution in 20th November, 1704. The Pope Forces bishops and priests of all missionary lines follow the Church and condemn ancestor worship without having complaints. In 19th March 1715, Pope Clemente XI issued *Ex illadie* which recalled two constitutional decrees in 1704 and 1710 and *Nanjing* decree in 1707 and

excommunicated those who did not obey the Holy Roman in term of condemning Chinese rites, forcing the missionaries in the East (including Vietnam, China, and Philippines...) had to swear allegiance to the Holy Roman in this matter. Pope Benedict XIV (1740 - 1758) issued Exquo in 11th July 1742 to force people obey *Exilladie* (1715) and Asians are not prohibited ancestor worship. This Act gave the Chinese Catholics angry discontent, they spent most of direction. Only a very small number continue to follow the Roman Catholic only⁵. At that time, the debate of ancestor worship was temporarily terminated. This is a long time ancestor worship was thoroughly impressed with the Vatican banned in the Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, China, Philippines, and Japan...

The issue of ancestor worship is discussed once again in the first half of XX century with the decree *Plane Compertum* of the Catholic Congregation of Evangelization of Peoples, approved by Pope Pius XII in 7th December 1939. This decree dismissed Exquo (1742) and *Exilladie* (1715). Then, the pope issued the decree of *Summi Pontificatus* which recognized rituals of ancestor worship were not officially religious rituals but only expressions of legitimate cult for national heroes and the dead people.

The issue of ancestor worship was proclaimed in Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), which emphasizes the communion with the dead as follows: All belongs to Christ and receives the Holy Spirit forms a unique church and associates together in Christ (Eph 4.16). Therefore, the unity between people living on earth with dead ones is not interrupted. In contrast, the Church has always believed that this unity even becomes stronger thanks to the communion. After the Second Vatican Council, ancestor worship is done in the Catholic community in Southeast Asia, primarily China, Philippines, Vietnam.

⁵ http://sachhiem.net/CHARLIE/CN_TTDTG/Duongcut.php

Behavior of missionaries with ancestor worship in Vietnam

Dominicans: Dominican is one of the very first missionaries presented in Vietnam. In 1679, Roman church divided the territory of Tonkin into 2 parts: Western Tokin and Eastern Tonkin. East Tonkin territory is assigned to the management of Dominicans. It can be said that the Dominican had the most negative attitudes toward ancestor worship among missionaries in Vietnam

On 7th June 1759, Pater Lui Huy, as representative of East diocese, sent letters to clergies and parishioners talking about “36 entanglements of An Nam, The Pope had been known”, in which there are many “entanglements” relating to ancestor worship. (Selected letters in general letters...Q1, 1903, pp. 11-19) In 1796, Phê sent parishioners in the East territory a letter to recall the ban of making catafalques or using palanquin. (Selected letters in general letters...Q1, 1903, p. 46) Dominicans have given some rituals for “taking bodies” of dead people and accepted some customs like receiving the distiches of bereaved families. However, the distiches must ensure the principle “nothing violates the religion”.

Missions Etrangères de Paris (MEP): In general, MEP still prohibits Catholics from worshipping ancestor. In Hue, for a long time, MEP and Jesuit missionaries had a disagreement on how to recognize and deal with ancestor worship. It can be seen from historical documents that Catholics under the management of MEP are permitted to perform *cúng hậu*⁶. *Cúng hậu* in the Catholic churches was maintained until the middle half of XX century. At the end of XIX century, more and more people take lands to churches to apply for *cúng hậu*. The applicants included people who had sons and who did not have male heirs. Sometimes, sons brought lands to

⁶ *Cúng hậu* is perform which Catholic Churches received land or money of people when they alive to worship for them after they dead.

the church so that the church would be in charge of praying for their deceased parents (or sometimes even grandparents) in death ceremonies. Gradually, *cúng hậu* had become a problem which attracted not only priests and bishops but also Holy Roman church. In 1905, Holy Roman church issued a decree about *cúng hậu*.

In order to venerate dead people, Catholic Church takes the day of 2nd November every year to pray for faithful deceased members, for the classes or for the souls in purgatory. This is an opportunity for Catholics to pray for the souls of deceased family members, easing their sins so that they can go to Heaven.

The ancestral worship rituals of Kinh Catholics in Vietnam

It can be said in a year, Kinh Catholics perform ancestral worship on occasions such as the Lunar New Year, Soul Day, funeral, anniversary of death, wedding ... with diverse forms and rich styles. Results of the survey in 2014 showed the importance of this occasion, the Catholic perform ancestral worship at the rate of 100%. Results of studies in China, Philippines also said Catholics in these countries also perform ancestral worship and on that important occasions. (Nghia, 2010, p. 5)

Ancestor worship of the Vietnamese Catholic is clearly seen through funeral ceremonies and anniversaries of death. In funeral, we divide it into specific phases such as moments before death, the believer's death, burial, and then anniversary of death.

Since the second half of the nineteenth century, death of Kinh Catholics called the *sinh thì* (*second birth*); the dying time is called *rinh sinh thì* (*the point of death time*). Some elders explained that, according to Kinh Catholics, it is the death in the earth, but also the beginning of a new life in heaven. Moment of death also means the birth of a new life in

elsewhere. Parish church bells ringing for the dead are called the *second birth bell* or melancholy bells and die bell.

Catholic people but also Vietnamese, so many contents of mourning clothes and funeral rituals... for Catholic dead are similar to non-Catholics. However, there is also much difference on a funeral, expressing specified characteristics by the church.

When believer is in dying hour, the priest is invited to give extreme unction to the patient with prescribed ceremony in Catholic rituals. Relatives and co-religionists will concentrate on the dead house and pray *a happy death and enjoying face of God* for the dead, as well as support the dead's relative in terms of and help the works possible. Survey results in Tu Ne, No Luc, Cai Mon showed that families invited the priests to do anointed account for 91% and believers concentrate to pray is 92,5% in the dead's house⁷.

When dying, the dead is placed in bed which is surrounded with fresh flowers and scented water. At an appropriate time, placing the dead in to his coffin will be started, Catholics have no concept of good or evil dead time, good time or date is not importance for burying, building funeral home, not having palanquin procession. However, as the law required, Sunday Advent, Lent, Easter, the solemnity, Tuesday and Tam Ash ceremony are not dates for funeral, but replacing another day. (Duong, 2001, p. 206) When a person dies, in addition to reporting to the village authorities, relatives have to notify the parish priest and professor Issued. Cathedral chimes signaling melancholy fellow died. Depending on the

⁷ Le Duc Hanh: Result of religious social survey in Tu Ne 2008, 2014; No Luc 2009, 2011; Cai Mon 2008, 2014. The number of families invited Priest to pray be 91%. The total number of families invited other ministers accounted for 100%.

number of ringing bell (7 or 9 hours) that can know the deceased is male or female, young or old. If the deceased is elderly, the last bell vibrates long, even if the young person will shake the melancholy tone short. If the deceased is a priest, the bells ring grief all day and night until the priest's funeral ends. When listening to melancholy bells, believers constantly working towards the church pray expressed grief over the death.

In the Catholic parish, after the death of parishioners, burial rites conducted at the church, cousins, relatives and co-religionists alternately take turn praying at the dead's beside. They put a small table, with holy water, fruit, a bowl of incense and incense-burner in front of the deceased coffin. Catholics often burn incense and prostrate themselves and praying when visiting the dead person. By the burying time, the minister read prayers and sprinkle holy water on the deceased's body. Then they put the coffin to the church, it will go head and ordained ministers ahead of the coffin. The deceased was taken to the church in position: if the dead is parishioner, placed facing the altar, with significant views on God. Funeral Mass was celebrated under the liturgy according to regulations of the Church. The liturgy of the Mass meant to pray for the soul of the deceased. Those who attend the Mass purpose praying for the deceased soon enjoy the vision of God.

After the ritual at the church, the deceased was taken to the funeral. Sequences are: Funeral flag, high candle crass, young men, middle-men, musical sound, wreaths, coffin, the dead's relative and parishioners. Vietnam Catholics do not have the custom of moving back in front of the father's coffin and behind her mother's. Crying, road rolling, mourning haircut... is prohibited. (Duong, 2001, p. 212) At St Park, the last farewell to the deceased as the Church defined as the rite of blessing the new tomb, farewell ceremony before the coffin lowered into the tomb were

conducted by the priest or minister. Farewell includes immediate family and other relatives and co-religionists. In Philippines, “local peoples follow traditional customs related to burial rites, but often invite Christian priests to celebrate the last rites or formal burial rites in addition”. (Russell, 1999)

After the funeral, their families set up altars to revere the deceased. The ancestor altar of Catholics furnished with incense, candles, lamps, and vases, dead’s portrait, the Bible and fruits, and made according to certain principles, and always lower than an altar of Jesus. This custom is also found in the Catholic China, Philippines. (Russell, 1999)

Kinh Catholics do not have to exhume, or cremated remains of people died. The deceased was “*đào sâu chôn chặt*” (buried forever into the ground), also known as *kim tĩnh* (static needle), grave can be built solidly. Results of the survey of sociology at the study sites showed that 100 percent of Catholics use static needle for the deceased. (Hanh, 2014b)

Over time, Vietnamese Catholic gradually appear prayers types related deaths and revered ancestors, such as prayers for the patient; prayer for the dying; prayers for just dead; prayer in time laying the dead in a coffin; prayer for the soul (Duong, 2001; Nha Trang bishop’s office, 1997, pp. 201-220) ... Although Catholics do not use the traditional worships of Vietnam, they have particular forms of memorial which are based on traditions. The contents such as 3days: visit the tomb, prayer; 49 days: worship and prayer; 100 Days: worship and prayer; first death anniversary: prayer; second year’s mind: prayer. The results of sociological investigation shows all the forms have been made on the Catholic community. (Hanh, 2014b)

Every anniversary, Vietnam Catholics has two main forms of commemoration: Massing at the altar or tomb. In the anniversaries of death, Catholic always mass, pray, visit grave and organize family meals. (Hanh,

2014b) Mass at the church on this occasion is usually full of participation of children in the family and the other fellows. The rituals of death anniversary are not much different than the other Masses. Only thing, the Mass begin, one in a deceased's family will hold a bunch of incense, going to the sanctuary of the church, standing in front of spiritual incense and bowed down before the witness of all the brethren. When conducting Anniversary celebration, priest must notify the holy name of the deceased to be prayed for their souls by congregation communion. In addition, in the evening, the family prays for the soul of the deceased. The co-religionist in relationship and parish are invited to say grace. Bible forced to read is the Litany for the soul. In the Catholic parish of Vietnam, in the past, a person has no son to take care of worship to pray every year before his death, the deceased often think about "*cúng hậu*" in the Catholic church.

In addition to the anniversary, as the Catholic calendar, the second of November is praying day for their parents and grandparents which is Souls Day Pray. November of solar year is month for calling up the spirit of the dead. On this occasion, the parishioners often remodeling St Park, remodeling relative headstones, priests, monks. In the afternoon on the second of November, a Mass was held in the church to pray for the soul. Then, the priests and parishioners going to the church from the St. Park. Along the way, Catholics pray. Then, believers light candles on the graves of relatives, and their brethren. Besides, at the end of the year, in early spring, Catholics usually go to the St Park to clean and decorate the ancestral graves, remembering the dead. The Catholics very attach special importance to ancestor worship, clearly expressed in the rituals on two days: the last day of the year and the second day of the Lunar New Year. (Hanh, 2014b) In the Catholic parish, on the 30th Festival, in the patriarchal family, the altar of ancestors has been cleaned, beautified,

more fruit garnished and fresh flowers. On the evening of the last day of the year, everyone in the clan focused on patriarch's house, before praying to ancestors, the patriarch declared reason for focusing whole tribes on that day. Then, the patriarch burn incenses and bow down before the altar of the ancestors in the presence of the whole tribes. After burning incense, candles, electric on ancestral altar, praying for the ancestors begin to take place. Prayers to ancestors are usually in Catholic books of duty and 50 bibles to pray for ancestors. After about 1 hour, the prayer ended, everyone keeps sentiments of gratitude ancestors, grandparents in their mind. People talk and tell stories of our ancestors. Older people tell their children about stories of ancestors and old memories. All create a spiritual atmosphere, friendly and reminiscent of their ancestors. On the second day of the New Year, children are concentrated in the chief's house again for New Year's greetings with each other and mainly to pray to their ancestors. Forms like prayer ceremony for ancestors on the night of the last day of New Year. Then the Catholic families in the village often "gather into the union, come to the families having dead in the year to pray for the deceased" or pray to greet other fellows. This is a good practice in many Catholic parishes such as Tu Ne (Bac Ninh), a typical example. (Hanh, 2014a)

Catholic believers is different from non-Catholics of rituals related to their race, for instant, they do not built ancestral temple and race anniversary (clan). Typically, the patron saint of groups is considered the head of clan. Saint patron anniversary is considered their ancestor-worshipping days. And that is one of the largest celebrations of the parish. However, Catholics in many places still set up genealogy, still remember the anniversary to transmit to posterity the next generation. In general, in each family, patriarch usually has a book recording the death date, the

holy name of ancestors to the 3rd, 4th generation. And the previous life, people choose second day of the Lunar New Year to prayer for their ancestors in ancient time. Infected, in many areas such as Tu Ne Catholic (Bac Ninh), Kim Son, Yen Mo (Ninh Binh) ..., the establishment of annual is abundant. There are two modes of popular genealogies: a genealogical tree and board are established and hanged on the wall in a solemn place in the family. The genealogy of the family founded in Catholics families showed awareness of the Catholics of ancestors, family, or clan, the clan relatives ... more profoundly.

In addition, the ancestor worship of the Catholic Vietnam has been done on other occasions such as weddings or working away ... Results of the social survey at three study sites showed that the performance of Catholics' ancestors worship on festivals is accounts for 98.6%, funerals and anniversaries is 98%, 92.6% is wedding, at the happy time of the family, important occasions such as children's passing examination or someone's working away from home is 76%, Soul Day Pray is 95%, pray to ancestors in general family reading bibles is 76% and in the Mass is 75%⁸. For the revered ancestors of Catholics in the wedding ceremonies, the survey results showed that 100% of Catholics agree with thanking with a bow of the bride and groom for ancestors of both sides of the family. This shows a deep sense of Catholics about their ancestors. The sense of roots, gratitude for their parents' giving birth and a settle position to them and the profound teachings for new members entered the marriage.

“Ancestor worship is to remember the dead and to show respect to them. Ancestor worship is very important to respect parents, grandparents” (deep interview female, 30 years old,

⁸ This is typical traditional custom at Tu Ne. Dinh Dong Phuong, 2000, Tu Ne geography, Sai Gon.

gardener, Cai Mon parish (Ben Tre) 10/2014)

“The Catholics not only worship God, but also ancestors. That is a beauty culture of the living. It is the heart, showing gratitude of the living with the dead “(deep Interview, Female 18 years old, students, Tu Ne (Bac Ninh, 9/2014)

Some comments – conclusion

Ancestor worship has the foundations derived from the teachings of Catholicism.

It can be confirmed that ancestor worship in the Catholic community of Vietnam has foundation in their own teachings. Showing gratitude to ancestors is what people must pay attention, Catholic doctrine set out what every believer must hold to fulfill filial piety to their parents and grandparents as well as when alive and dead.

For Catholics, the Bible is the basis and foundation for the catechism and law of Catholic Church. The Bible is very important for Catholics, in which they can find the basis of their faith, advice on how to live, how to behave with God and with humans, including relationships with parents, siblings, spouses, friends, and even enemies. The main filial piety is blessed by God and given to children to live longer. The Catholics always think that people who do not take care of his farther and even disdain their mothers are very serious crimes. “As a blasphemy, who neglected his father, despised mother, was angered Creator into it”. (Bible, 2003, p. 16) In Catholic doctrine, filial piety is very important, forcing everyone to comply because of the law of God. The signaling of children for parents is mandatory duty; parents are not indebted to the children about it. Catholicism has high opinion of virtues of parents in giving their children

birth and bringing up their children. This is the deepest dimension of Catholicism, shows the signaling of children for parents is a duty, not shirk that duty. Jesus also took criteria Honor parents the first criterion is that believers must be done to perfection. (Bible, 2003, pp. 16-22) The Bible recognizes whole happiness overflows in a family whose parents love their children, and children respect and filial to parents.

The ancestor worship in the Catholic has the basic features of it.

Catholics believe that the human has both body and soul, body and soul are created by God, expressed in Bible of God who uncreated Adam and Eve in the Bible. Ancestor of man is Adam and Eve.

From the basis of such beliefs, Catholics have separate forms signaling the ancestors died. For Catholics, Eucharist is the work to convey much happiness and virtue. The ancestor worship in the Catholic has the basic features such as a Mass is conducted in the Church for the dead by priests; tomb is blessed in St. Park. In three days later, relatives, neighbors would come to family which has people dead to pray for the deceased. In the early days, all relatives visit the grave every, some families do this until they make the 100th anniversary of death. It is conducted once per year on the day that he died, go to church to pray, praying at home, and visiting grave. On the occasion of the death anniversary (for example in 49 days, 100 days, the first death anniversary ...) all children are far and near have to "attend a feast in honor of the death anniversary", to commemorate the deceased and express the "piety", the "respect" his ancestors.

A further characteristic of ancestor veneration among Catholics is: in addition to the anniversary, as calendar of the Church, two typical days which are the second day of Lunar New Year and the eleventh of May for communities and children pray for their parents and grandparents. On that

day, in addition to the Mass held in the church, the laities also apply ceremony for parents and grandparents, visit graves, repair the tomb and clean the St. Park. In some places, priest conducts Mass at Holy Garden. In these days, the laities remind their children to participate fully in Mass and do good things to pray for their parents and grandparents and other spirits.

The funeral and anniversaries of death in the Catholic community contains many factors that integrate with the local culture. They also put small table represented fruits in front of the coffin when the corpse is still at home; also put the censer to burn incense and prostrate. There is also altars to worship parents and grandparents in the Catholic house, and many people often burn incense there, fruits are put on the altar, especially during the death anniversary, Tet, or when plants have the first fruits ... However, Catholics do not believe the dead will enjoy these fruits were used, they do that to manifest piety, children's filial only. The occasion of the main anniversary of death as anniversaries of seven weeks, anniversary of one hundred days, the last days of the years, coming out of morning are the elements brought from the local culture. The timelines is a long tradition of Vietnam and Catholics still keep that tradition. In general, Catholics are interested in signaling ancestors. The Similarities between the Kinh Catholics and non-Catholics that they have acknowledged the existence of immortality of the soul, but the difference between them is the concept of existing forms of soul, thus leads to the differences in the expression form of ancestor worship. (Hang, 1998, p. 31)

Difference between Catholics and non-Catholics in ancestors worship.

The basic difference is the difference in the conception of the soul and the existence of the soul after death: In the opinion of Catholics, when

a man died, he can enjoy the vision of God or come to purgatory to await the review. Souls in Purgatory will be prayed to be in the Heaven by their children. Non-Kinh Catholics think that soul leaves the body after going to the stream where they can meet their ancestors there. That place is the same to this world, ancestors also need things such as food, clothes, house and other needs such as when alive. The difference between Ancestors and the living is that ancestors cannot do the things that they use, but sent down by the descendants. Descendants sends down his possessions through her death anniversary occasions, holidays, typical works in the family, or when children need to pray for something. The products sent to the ancestors are burning votive to sacrifice. Therefore, worship is a form of signaling ancestors, if not having fulfill worship will be rebuked, by ancestors, even angry that may cause bad luck for their descendants⁹.

For Catholics, the only thing that ancestors can do for themselves and for their children or those who have helped them alive is they will intercede with God's blessings for them. This is also manifest relationship between the living and the dead in the view of Catholicism. So Catholics are usually not afraid of their ancestors, they worship in private ways of Catholics with unique purposes is to pray for early going to Heaven of ancestors. So, what children do aim at filial meaning, remember the source.

Differences in ancestor worship between Catholics and non-Catholics is the expression. With the concept that ancestors only enjoy the happiness, so in Catholicism, applying ceremony is focused on anniversary of death, common prayer and good deeds toward their ancestors, they are less

⁹ The result of social survey of Institute for religion study conducted in 1995, 1998, 2003, 2005, 2007 showed that 1/5 people asked said that they worship their ancestors because of being punished (the result of survey may be different between areas and years).

interested in preparing offerings, absolutely no burning votive. On the ancestors altars of Catholics only plug memorial incense before the picture of their parents and grandparents, a fruit plate, a vase of flowers with the aim at revered parents and grandparents, but not imply invite parents and grandparents used. Commemoration of the Catholic is an occasion for the living make merits for the dead to be soon in Heaven.

Non – Catholics believe that ancestors can enjoy offerings, so preparing offerings are very important. When inviting grandparents to home, if they cannot afford to make “high tray with full deck”, but at least have a bowl of rice, eggs, and paper clothes to protect their grandparents from hunger. If you do not do so, the children will not be comforted, even to be in charges of disrespect, disloyalty to the ancestors and the ancestors can be in the pouts or punishment.

Similarities between the Kinh Catholics and non - Catholics.

The first similarity is the concept of death. Death is not the end. Although both groups of society - this religious has an expression of the existence and the residence of the soul after the death is different, but they all express a point: death is not the end. Believe that death is not the end, both Catholics and non-Catholics together has one more common point is that the ancestors will also interested in children, always beside children in everyday life with fun and sadness of children. Although how is the concept, the death anniversary is a way to respect the ancestors. This point is the same Catholic Vietnam Catholic countries in China, the Philippines, and Japan... Everyone has parents; respect their parents ‘giving birth. In another words, each is composed of the cell of family cell, clan, and ancestors. Thus, society or social group has a duty to pay tribute to their ancestors, simultaneously encourage each member of the family and clan and community in signaling ancestors. This is highly appreciated in society

Vietnam and become the cultural character of Vietnam.

One more similarity in ancestor worship between Catholics in Vietnam and other countries such as China, the Philippines, and Japan with non-Catholics is looking for the source. In signaling, ancestor worships, and both social groups -religions have significant thought. The importance of the source is one of the indispensable elements to stabilize psychological, emotional, wills, of a human mind.

Ancestor worship in relationship to politics and culture

In the past, ancestor worship made conflicts about culture, politic between the Vatican and Southeast Asian countries as China, Philippine, Vietnam... About 4 centuries (from century XVI to middle century XX) the Vatican did not allow Catholic following in Southeast Asian Countries ancestor worship which it made divide Catholic and Non – Catholic. Non – Catholic thinks that Catholic give up ancestor worship caused conflicts in Vietnam society; it forms the basis for the political instability caused by the difference in religious beliefs. The consequence of Catholic notion not ancestor worship divisions created national unity and religion. The acceptance for the Catholic ancestor worship of the Vatican has resolved the political conflicts and religion in Vietnam in particular and Southeast Asia in general.

In summary

The ancestral signaling whether expressed of any ways it is just to close relationship between the living and the dead, to link the earthly life to the world where the dead living.

Depending on the concept of how ancestral spirits exist, how human life after death turned out to go along with the expressions of the people alive in accordance with the concept of social groups - religions. When

the worship of ancestors play a role of tightening the relationship in the family, clan, make that relationships more and more sustainable through ancestor worship ceremonies, help people feel more confident in life when remembering the ancestors. On the other hand, when remembering the ancestors as well as remembering a good example that our ancestors left, remembering the traditional values of ancestors. The theory of argument structure of Van Gennep and Victor Turner Anorld shows the transition phase from life to death is a major change in the life of every human being marked by conducting rituals. The rituals of ancestor worship are ceremonies of convey messages between the living and the dead. It is clearly apparent that Tunner's view showed that the ritual not only convey social meaning and deep humanity: but “The belief and ritual practices reflect and pointed out the economic and political factors, social relationships, moreover it is key to understand how human think and feel about relationships and social environment in which they are living” (Le Duc Hanh, 2011).

However, despite different beliefs, can lead to various forms of ancestor worship, basically, social groups – religion still have similarities that remain on the respect, fondness for the ancestors. Thus, the concept of Catholics of not ancestors worshiping ancestors was a mistake. This concept needs to be adjusted to eliminate the separation between non-Catholics with Catholics, for couples in and outside Catholicism is free to marry and build happy families. Greater significance is to create specific culture - religious diversity, solidarity and social stability. Ancestor worship automatically become a “habit” which is indispensable to Vietnam, it became unique cultural characteristics of the culture of Vietnam.

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