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Quan Am and Mary: Vietnamese Religious, Cultural, and Spiritual Phenomena

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Marian devotion among Vietnamese Catholics and worship of the Goddess of Mercy, Quan Am or Guanyin (Chinese),¹ among Vietnamese Buddhists, are two dominant forms of religious practice in Vietnam.² Popular devotion to these female deities formed a special type of religiosity that has helped sustain the institutional religions and nurture the ethical and spiritual life of the followers. While Marian devotion helps Catholics sustain their faith in the difficult times as well as survive religious persecutions,³ devotion to Quan Am helps Vietnamese Buddhists cope with trying situations in their lives.⁴ Moreover, while devotion to Mary motivates Catholics to live out their ethical lives in a relationship with God and other human fellows, devotion to Quan Am helps Buddhists attain ethical and spiritual values, such as compassion, patience, mercy, and harmony.⁵ Similarly, Catholics look to Mary as an exemplar of compassion, humility, patience, peace, and charity.⁶ From a cultural perspective, devotion to Quan Am and Mary has been also strengthened by the indigenous Cult of the Mother Goddess interweaved with Vietnamese feminine cultural characteristics.⁷

Although some have mentioned cultural interactions between the Vietnamese indigenous Cult of the Mother Goddess and Buddhist and Catholic popular piety, little research has investigated the spiritual and ethical dimensions between the two traditions comprehensively. On the contrary, many works on Vietnamese Buddhism and Catholicism seemed to have overemphasized the differences between the two traditions.⁸ While acknowledging the differences is important, searching for common ground on spirituality and ethics would open the door for further comparative studies.

Given the significantly shared characteristics between Marian devotion and worship of Quan Am, this article attempts (1) to present the common patterns in the way in which Vietnamese Buddhists and Catholics approach Mary and Quan Am; (2) to discuss the interactions between Vietnamese indigenous cult of Mother-Goddess (*Đạo Mẫu*) and Marian devotion and worship of Quan Am, through which popular piety has strongly taken root, developed, and continued to thrive in the midst of cultural and religious challenges;⁹ and (3) to examine the spiritual and ethical domains through which personal and collective transformation manifests. The research hopes to shed light on religions in Vietnam and aims to offer a fresh view of Buddhism and Catholicism that has been distorted by religious and political ideologies.¹⁰

COMMUNAL DEVOTION: BUDDHISTS AND CATHOLICS

In the Catholic Church, Marian devotion manifests in different forms: pilgrimage, patronage, personal prayers, and communal celebrations. All of the Catholic pilgrimage shrines in Vietnam were built in devotion to Mary. Hundreds of Catholic parishes chose Mary to be their patron.¹¹ More important, every Vietnamese Catholic parish always presents at least a magnificent shrine or statue of Mary. These shrines are frequented by people of different ages. In addition, large pilgrimage locations, such as La Vang, Tra Kieu, and Binh Trieu, attract millions of people annually. Every year in mid-August, an estimated half million Vietnamese Catholics, including a majority of bishops, clergy, and religious men and women, gather to pray to Mary at the National Marian Shrine called La Vang in Quang Tri Province, a central province of Vietnam.¹² Catholic pilgrimages to the Marian shrines in several places, such as Đà Nẵng, Kontum, Daklak, Bến Tre, and Vinh Long, have also increased.¹³ When the Catholics gather at Marian shrines, local as well as national, they recite the rosary, sing praise songs to Mary, offer flowers and petitions to her, and hope for abundant blessings bestowed on their families and country. To Vietnamese Catholics, more significantly, Mary is not only the Mother of Christians, she is the Mother of the country of Vietnam.

WESTERN INFLUENCES AND CULTURAL ROOTS

Marian devotion in Vietnam has been significantly promoted and developed from the beginning of the Western missionary period in the seventeenth century.¹⁴ Various religious groups from Europe and North America, such as the Dominicans and Redemptorists, introduced Marian devotion to Vietnam.¹⁵ Also, according to some scholars, at the very beginning of his missionary effort, Alexander de Rhodes, a pioneering Jesuit missionary in Vietnam, had already incorporated Mariology in his catechism.¹⁶ The devotion was strongly developed in the following decades after some experienced a Marian apparition during a persecution of Christianity in 1798.¹⁷ In 1801, when the persecutions subsided, Bishop Marie Antoine Gasper, a French missionary, built a small chapel in La Vang and ordered the placement at the shrine of a French statue identical to the Notre-Dame des Victoires in France.¹⁸

Back in 1659, when two French missionaries, Francois Pallu and Pierre Lambert de la Motte, became the first bishops of the church in Vietnam, it opened a new era in which French Catholic spirituality began to have influence.¹⁹ During the nineteenth century, numerous Catholics began to make pilgrimages to La Vang to pray to Mary. In 1961, church hierarchy in Vietnam consecrated La Vang as the national pilgrimage shrine. Thus, for many decades, Vietnamese Catholics have been making pilgrimages to La Vang to celebrate the anniversary of the Marian apparition. During the 1960s, Vietnamese Church hierarchies also consecrated the Church of Vietnam to Mary. From an ecclesial viewpoint, strong development of Marian devotion in Vietnam stemmed from great efforts from the church hierarchy and different religious groups from the West, and it was gradually embraced and developed by local Vietnamese groups.

MOTHER GODDESS AND MARIAN DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES

From a cultural perspective, however, some scholars point out that that Marian devotion and even the worship of Quan Am in Vietnamese Buddhism might have been influenced by the Vietnamese indigenous Cult of the Mother Goddess, or *Đạo Mẫu*.²⁰ Philip Taylor, a leading anthologist of Vietnamese culture, also points out that strong devotion to the Mother Goddess has been a dominant form of Vietnamese religiosity.²¹ Even in modern times, there has been an increase in the number of pilgrimages to shrines and temples dedicated to the ancient Mother Goddess.²² The interaction between Western Marian devotion and the indigenous Cult of the Mother Goddess has contributed to strengthening Catholic Marian devotion in Vietnam. Scholars like Tran Ngoc Them examine Vietnamese feminine cultural characteristics, in which the important role of the mother in the family has contributed significantly to shaping the worship of Mother Goddess.²³ Based on the feminine cultural principle, ancient Vietnamese worshiped a variety of female deities, such as Mother of Sky, Mother of Mountains, Mother of Ocean, Mother of Fire, and many other smaller female spirits. This tradition has continued to develop and influence other religious traditions such as Buddhism, Catholicism, and Taoism.²⁴

More interestingly, some scholars have even discovered that several Marian devotional practices in the Catholic Church in Vietnam have adopted rituals from the Cult of the Mother Goddess. Nguyễn Hồng Dương showed that several Marian devotional practices, such as chanting, procession, dancing, and tossing flowers to Mary, had been practiced in the Cult of the Mother Goddess for many centuries, long before Christianity arrived in Vietnam.²⁵ The research reveals that, besides the influence of Western Christianity on the spirit of Marian devotion among Vietnamese Catholics, the Cult of the Mother Goddess has contributed to strengthening and coloring this tradition.²⁶

THE ANCIENT VIETNAMESE BUDDHIST GODDESS OF MERCY

In Vietnamese Buddhism, a close relationship between the worship of a Buddhist Goddess of Mercy and the ancient Vietnamese religious tradition needs to be highlighted. For example, the ancient Vietnamese worshiped a Goddess of Mercy named Man Nuong, or Mother Man Nuong.²⁷ According to legend, Mother Man Nuong was believed to be the first Vietnamese female bodhisattva. Northern Vietnamese also called her *Phật Mẫu* (Female Buddha). She had four "daughters" who governed four natural domains: cloud, rain, thunderstorm, and lightning.²⁸ These four daughters, called *Tứ Pháp* (Four Powers), have been venerated by Buddhists at a system of the four temples in Hanoi, Bắc Ninh, Hà Nam, and Hưng Yên cities. Rooted in an agricultural society, *Tứ Pháp* primarily functioned as a response to the needs of farmers. When Buddhism was introduced to Vietnam, Mother Man Nuong became the first Vietnamese Buddhist Mother Goddess.²⁹ Mother Goddess, in this cultural context, was incorporated into Buddhism and it became a new form of Vietnamese Buddhism. The four daughters of Man Nuong also became four Buddhist bodhisattvas.³⁰ Nowadays, some Buddhist temples have six statues: the statues of Buddha, Mother

Man Nuong, and her four daughters (Tu Phap). This combination of original Buddhism and a native religious cult reflects a beautiful marriage between two religious traditions at the very beginning of Buddhism in Vietnam. Despite the mixture of the two religious traditions, most worshipers have been drawn to the worship of female bodhisattvas.³¹

BUDDHIST DEVOTION TO QUAN AM

As millions of Vietnamese Catholics gather at Marian shrines to pray, Vietnamese Buddhists also gather at temples to pray to the Goddess of Mercy, Quan Am. In the months of March and April and on the New Year days, Buddhist followers from across the country make pilgrimages to Chùa Hương (Perfume Pagoda) an ancient Buddhist temple in suburban Hanoi, capital of Vietnam, to pray to Quan Am.³² To Vietnamese Buddhists, this holy place is seen as a national pilgrimage center. Individuals, groups, and even private companies often organize pilgrim trips to this place frequently.³³ During the year, major celebrations in the months of June and November are also designated for the worship of Quan Am in many temples. Nguyen Minh Ngoc, a Buddhist scholar, states that Goddess of Mercy Quan Am has become an integral part of Vietnamese daily life over many centuries.³⁴ The strong devotion to Quan Am allowed Buddhist scholars to compare the relationship between Quan Am and the lives of Buddhist followers to breath and food for the body.³⁵ For example, on the streets of Vietnam, one can easily see small Buddhist altars or images of Quan Am carefully built in city buses, as well as in private cars owned by Buddhists. Also, magnificent images of Quan Am dominate the Vietnamese landscape and have captivated most authors who write on tourism in Vietnam.³⁶ Recently, Buddhist songs that express a love for Quan Am have been composed and widely sung by Buddhists. Many Buddhists even downloaded those songs as their phone's ring tone.³⁷

It is significant that while Vietnamese Catholics present Mary as a divine and heavenly deity, Vietnamese Buddhist artists present Quan Am with a beautiful, calm, caring, and compassionate face. According Trang Thanh Hiền, a Buddhist scholar, this Buddhist presentation of Quan Am reflects the characteristics of the Vietnamese woman who plays an important role in nurturing and educating her children, because she is portrayed as a loving mother who is sensitive to children and neighbors' suffering, and willing to offer help whenever needed.³⁸ This helps explain why many Buddhists called Quan Am "Mother Quan Am," a similar address to Mother Mary in the Catholic Church.

Trang Thanh Hiền also writes about Buddhist devotion as follows: "Most Vietnamese are more familiar with images of Quan Am than images of the Buddha."³⁹ Trang's statement stems from her research on the statues of the thousand-armed and thousand-eyed Quan Am in numerous Buddhist temples of Vietnam. In 2008, for the first time in the history of Buddhism in Vietnam, a major project was undertaken in which researchers examined more than five hundred Buddhist temples in North Vietnam to see how the Goddess of Mercy Quan Am had been worshiped. The research yielded significant findings. First, among 198 Buddhist temples in

the Ha Tay province, only two temples are without statues of Quan Am. Some temples present two, three, four, or even five statues of Quan Am.⁴⁰ Second, most Buddhist temples display statues of Quan Am that are placed in juxtaposition with an image of Buddha inside the temple, at the most venerated place. Third, additional statues of Quan Am are presented at the main gate of each temple, facing the outside world, symbolizing the Buddhist understanding of the bodhisattva's compassion and the desire to reach out to humankind. Last, some temples present the statue of Quan Am Thi Kinh holding a baby on her chest, quite similar to images of the Virgin Mary in the Catholic Church, who holds the baby Jesus on her chest.⁴¹ Similar to one of the Chinese versions of Chinese Guanyin who holds a baby on her chest, Quan Am Thi Kinh in Vietnam also holds a baby, though her baby is not her own son.⁴² According to Jeremy Clarke, the Chinese Guanyin holding a baby on her chest was influenced by a Catholic presentation of Mary in the thirteenth century.⁴³ Quan Am Thi Kinh's presentation, however, was a Vietnamese legend in the nineteenth century that tells about the life of a wife named Thi Kinh, who was wrongly accused of attempting to murder her husband. Since women had no voice in a patriarchal society, she chose to escape by entering a Buddhist monastery. There, she had to disguise herself as a man and become a Buddhist monk. Because she was physically attractive, Thi Kinh was sought after by a young lady named Thi Mau, who intended to seduce Thi Kinh. Due to Thi Kinh's indifferent attitude toward this unwelcome affection, Thi Mau devised a strategy to have sexual relations with her male servant. After she got pregnant, she blamed Thi Kinh for being the father of the baby. The irony of the story is that Thi Kinh was a female. How could she be responsible for Thi Mau's pregnancy? Unfortunately, Thi Kinh became a victim of injustice that she had to endure in front of the sangha, the community of monks. After Thi Mau gave birth to a boy, she brought the baby to the pagoda with the intention of handing the baby over to Thi Kinh. With great compassion, Thi Kinh received the baby and raised it. A few years later, Thi Kinh passed away. It was at this moment, in which her body was cleansed, that the monks and nuns came to realize that Thi Kinh was a woman. She was cleared of the false accusation and endorsed by the Heavenly Buddha. Thi Kinh was recognized as an incarnation of Quan Am, and she has been worshiped in many temples since then. Images of Quan Am Thi Kinh often include a baby on her chest.⁴⁴ This physical presentation of Thi Kinh gave an impression on a close relationship between Buddhist Quan Am and the Virgin Mary in the Catholic Church. Moreover, among many Quan Ams in Vietnam, Thi Kinh gained great popularity and has been venerated. One of the reasons for her popularity is that her life story offers multiple meanings of justice, spirituality, and liberation. Further explanations of these spiritual aspects will be discussed in the second part of the paper.

HEART OF MARY, HEART OF QUAN AM: A CENTRAL SPIRITUALITY

Having discussed the history and customs of Marian devotion and worship of Quan Am as well as the influence of the Cult of the Mother Goddess in Buddhist and Catholic Marian devotion, this part of paper will discuss the three shared spiritual

and aspects in these two traditions: faith, hope, and love that have sustained and inspired the devotees to live out their religious tradition.⁴⁵ This study hopes to shed more light on the Catholic-Buddhist spiritualities and open a new window for inter-religious dialogue.⁴⁶

Faith as a Source of Spirituality

Shared with most Buddhists in the Mahayana tradition, Vietnamese Buddhists strongly believe in the absolute power of Quan Am in that she can save believers from misfortune and suffering in life.⁴⁷ The belief that there is “nothing that Quan Am cannot do” has remained a conviction among Vietnamese Buddhists.⁴⁸ More interestingly, Vietnamese Buddhists believe that anything they ask for would be given to them if they visit the Perfume Pagoda twelve times.⁴⁹ Such a belief that has attracted millions of followers to this temple frequently. While the poor come to pray for Quan Am’s blessings on their daily needs such as having enough food to eat or yielding a good harvest, the rich also come to ask for a blessing for a successful business. The Perfume Pagoda is especially well known for efficacy in responding to married barren couples who strongly desire to have children or child reference.⁵⁰ Whatever motivations they have, when the Buddhists gather at the temple, they offer incense, fruits, and personal petitions to Quan Am and put great hope in a loving response from her.

In addition to the Perfume Pagoda, the worship of the thousand-handed and thousand-eyed Quan Am sets the Buddhist belief apart. The symbol of thousands of hands and eyes both demonstrates the power of Quan Am and indicates her constant presence to them. More significantly, the worship of the thousand-handed and thousand-eyed Quan Am, according to the Buddhist belief, has sustained and nurtured the Buddhist tradition in Vietnam during periods of crises involving institutional Buddhism.⁵¹ Similarly, the worship of Quan Am Thi Kinh and Quan Am Nam Hai played an important role in promoting Buddhist values and serving as a method of action that provided remedy for the chaos of Vietnamese society during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries.⁵²

In the minds and hearts of the Vietnamese Buddhists, Quan Am, known as Mother of Mercy, has instilled peace and comfort in their lives, especially in trying times. Even those who left the country bring with them stories of Quan Am. Vietnamese men and women have also experienced Quan Am as a compassionate companion, an influence that constitutes stability in their new American lives.⁵³ Sandy Boucher beautifully noted:

Particularly in the case of Vietnamese women, Guanyin may have interceded in their attempts to flee their country. In the refugee camps in Thailand, where the Vietnamese found safety, large statues of Guanyin were constructed, for the Vietnamese credit Guanyin with saving their lives and aiding their escape. The boat people called on Guanyin, and many believe that she saved their particular craft from the storms, starvation, and pirates that brought other boats to ruin.⁵⁴

Boucher's discussion on Vietnamese Buddhist faith in Quan Am reflects an extreme importance of spiritual dimension in Buddhist experience; that is, Quan Am could transcend the geographical and national boundaries and remain faithfully present to her devotees wherever they go. The profound experience of Quan Am's compassionate presence in their lives when they start a new life in the foreign land truly motivated Vietnamese Buddhists to build magnificent statues of Quan Am in the United States as an expression of faith.⁵⁵

Faith in Quan Am Compassion and the Heart of Mary

Parallel to Quan Am's compassionate heart, Marian devotion to the love of Mary is exemplified in a tangible way. For example, in addition to the image of Mary holding the baby Jesus to her chest—one of the most popular images of Mary—she has also been portrayed as a loving deity with a magnificent heart externally exposed on her chest.⁵⁶ The Immaculate Heart of Mary has become one of the most popular icons widely venerated in the Catholic Church and fervently loved by Vietnamese Catholics. The image itself suggests both Mary's divine love and mercy for humankind and manifests a mother-child loving relationship. The Catholic Church teaches that Mary is the mother of God, so she is also the mother of all Christians.⁵⁷ Her role is not only to help Christians live in accordance to the Gospel, but also to reach out to protect her children from dangers. In other words, human beings are constantly put under her loving care and protection.⁵⁸

This belief motivated many Catholic parishes in Vietnam to name their parishes "Heart of Mary."⁵⁹ In addition, one of the most widely read Vietnamese magazines also took this title, *Trái Tim Đức Mẹ* (Heart of Mary Magazine).⁶⁰ *Trái Tim Đức Mẹ* is published by a native male religious order called *Đông Công* or "Mary Co-redemprix." Members of this religious group strongly devote to Mary and they recite the Hail Mary, one of the most common prayers to Mary in the Catholic Church, many hundreds of times a day. They recite it individually as well as chant it communally several times during the day. Most Vietnamese Catholic families also chant the Hail Mary at least twice a day, early morning and in the evening.⁶¹ Interestingly, some believe that Catholic chanting of the Hail Mary and other prayers several times a day in family settings is an imitation of Buddhist chanting rhythms in North Vietnam in the seventeenth century.⁶² Since then, it has become one of the most important religious practices for Vietnamese Catholics during the day. There is no doubt that frequent chanting of the Hail Mary at home and in the church several times a day has contributed significantly to nurturing Vietnamese Catholic religiosity for several centuries. Particularly during the religious persecution period under Communism, when hundreds of Catholic priests were put in reeducation camps after the fall of Saigon in 1975, communal chanting strengthened and nurtured the faith of Catholics.

Besides the influence of Mary Co-redemprix in the devotion to the Heart of Mary, the church hierarchies (all are male figures) in Vietnam have significantly brought about a new Marian spirituality through various solemn dedications to the Heart of Mary. For example, establishment of the Association of the Heart of Mary in 1843 in North Vietnam marked a significant milestone in promoting devotion

to the Heart of Mary.⁶³ In 1960, the Vietnamese Bishops solemnly dedicated the country of Vietnam to the Heart of Mary at the *Vuong Cung Thánh Đường Sài Gòn* (Vietnamese Notre Dame Cathedral in Saigon). In 1961, they also solemnly dedicated the *La Vang Shrine* to the Heart of Mary and made this place a National Marian Pilgrimage Center in Vietnam. In the same year, the Vietnamese Episcopal Conference launched a long period of devotion to the Heart of Mary that began in 1961 and ended in 1964.⁶⁴ The dedication to the Heart of Mary implied that the land of Vietnam and its people were put under protection of Mary. It is significant to note that during the 1960s Vietnam was experiencing an escalation of the war that would bring about a total destruction of the country. Moreover, from the Vietnamese Catholic perspective, the rise of communism in the North with strong support from other communist countries such as Russia and China was considered a new type of evil in the world. Therefore, the act of dedicating the country to the Heart of Mary gave a strong hope that Mary would deliver Vietnam from the evil of communism as well as shield the church from being touched by its atheistic ideology.⁶⁵ The strong belief that the Heart of Mary would win over the evil of communism was preached by Vietnamese church authorities and widely circulated among Catholics by Catholic presses during this period.⁶⁶ Although devotion to the Heart of Mary had been practiced in Europe earlier, this practice bore a special significance in Vietnam as the church was facing the threat of Communist atheism. The Heart of Mary, according to Vietnamese Catholics, became a source of love and protection.

Such a brief sketch of Buddhist faith in *Quan Am* and the Catholic faith in the Heart of Mary in trying periods shows a significant similarity of spirituality in expressing the religious belief in the Goddess of Mercy *Quan Am* and Mary. More importantly, the devotion to *Quan Am* and Mary did not stop at the level of spiritual sentiment, but it moved the devotees to express their faith through actions.

Quan Am and Marian Spirituality: An Ethical Perspective

From an ethical perspective, Mary and *Quan Am* have been important ethical exemplifiers for Vietnamese men and women to practice morality by each tradition. When examining the guidelines for temple worship to *Quan Am* in Vietnamese Buddhism, significant aspects of reconciliation and transformation are evident. In preparation for participating in temple worship, the devotee is instructed to examine his or her interior life in relationship with others. Fasting is encouraged, then focusing on intentions within prayers and making peace with friends, neighbors, and family members.⁶⁷ Attempting to reconcile with neighbors, friends, and family members before engaging in temple worship is an important part of Buddhist rituals. This practice gives the devotee the opportunity to internalize his or her life in relationship with others. It also provides a context in which the devotee can develop a good daily moral habit. As Buddhists prepare to offer petitions to *Quan Am*, they are instructed to pray as follows:

In a sincere purification of mind and heart, I come in front of the Buddha and the Goddess of Mercy Quan Am, offering these fruits and flowers and asking for blessings on me and on my family. I am committed to directing my mind to good deeds and avoiding evil acts, imitating the life of Quan Am. Relying on Your [Quan Am's] help, we will have enough strength to destroy bad karma, gaining more good merits and virtues so that we will live a peaceful, happy, and longer life.⁶⁸

This regular prayer in the Vietnamese Buddhist temples serves some important spiritual benefits. First, it motivates the Buddhist to set his or her mind and heart toward the Goddess of Mercy Quan Am as a model of spirituality and morality. It shows that the Buddhists strongly believe in the transforming power of the Goddess of Mercy that can liberate them from both the external evils as well as from internal sinful tendencies.⁶⁹ Additionally, a strong belief in Quan Am and the sincere desire for spiritual perfection motivates Buddhist men and women to encounter the Goddess of Mercy more frequently because they believe that, ultimately, it is Quan Am and not human effort that will lead to transformation.

This Buddhist reconciliation practice, to some extent, significantly parallels the penitential rites in the Catholic liturgy and corresponds to the Biblical teachings on Christian reconciliation. At the very beginning of the liturgy, the Catholics confess their failures and ask Mary to pray for God's forgiveness: "I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do; and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God."⁷⁰ The desire to reconcile to God and other human fellows at the very beginning of the liturgy through the intercession of Mary makes Catholic Christians keenly aware of their ethical lives in front of God and others. It motivates the Christian to live out the Gospel's message in a spirit of reconciliation. In the Gospel of Matthew, for example, Jesus strongly commands: "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."⁷¹ The emphasis on one's relationships with God and with others is not only publicized in the liturgy but also internalized through a process of purifying the mind and heart. In the process, the Christian recalls his or her sins against God, self, and others before participating in the sacred liturgy.

In the Catholic Marian devotion, the spirit of reconciliation was intensified when the apparition of Mary in Fatima took place in Portugal in 1917.⁷² On the one hand, the event had sparked Marian devotion in Europe in the first few decades of the event; on the other hand, it responded directly to the political situation of Vietnam in the following decades when the country was facing rising threats of communist atheism in North Vietnam. It motivated the church hierarchy in Vietnam to promote the devotion to Mary and practice Fatima's messages with a hope that the Heart of Mary would win over the rise of communism in Eastern Europe, China,

and Vietnam.⁷³ From the 1950s to the 1970s, Vietnamese Catholics were asked to seriously practice three core components of Fatima's messages: conversion of the heart, praying the rosary, and devotion to the Heart of Mary. Because one of the purposes of Fatima's messages was to orient Christians toward the building of a peaceful world, the church hierarchies envisioned that the messages would address the escalating wars in the world as well as in Vietnam. The two world wars in the twentieth century not only divided the Western world, but also had devastating impacts on Asian countries, including Vietnam.⁷⁴ In the international political arena, following World War II, a new era of communism threatened religious freedom and the Catholic Church was on its radar.

In this context, conversion of the heart implies not only avoiding sins against God but also humanity. Many Vietnamese Catholics hoped that the devotion to the Heart of Mary would help the conversion of Russian communism. This devotion also helps the devotee gaze on Mary as an ethical and spiritual model for those who want to live a moral life in front of God. Since the event of Fatima, numerous Marian associations, such as the Blue Army of Mary, Legio Marie, and the Daughters of Mary Association, and many other groups related to Mary were born.⁷⁵ Some still believe devotion to the Heart of Mary truly contributed to the collapse of Eastern European communism. Whether such a belief can be verified or not, one can recognize that those associations have contributed meaningfully to the spiritual transformation of the Church in Vietnam in the twentieth century. Members of these devotional groups have both attempted to live out Fatima's messages and played as agents of reconciliation in the communities where they are called to serve.⁷⁶

Drawing from the ritual guidelines for reconciliation in Vietnamese Buddhism and those in the Catholic Church, one can see a significant similarity in building a reconciled world through the devotion to Quan Am and Mary between these two religious traditions. Interestingly, it reflects a communal dimension through which each member is instructed to cultivate him- or herself ethically for the benefit of the community. In addition, devotion to Mary and Quan Am helped the devotee be constantly aware of his or her existence in a relationship with the Divine and with other human fellows. It seems clear that social and communal dimensions retain an integral part of the Buddhist devotion to Quan Am as well as in the cult of Mary in Vietnamese Catholicism. The practice ultimately aims to bring about a greater transformation, not only for the individuals but also for the larger community.

In the cult of Quan Am, personal transformation takes place in different forms, but the most obvious one is sharing one's blessings with the poor. Buddhist pagodas are well-known charitable work. According to Trang Thanh Hien, after the Buddhists offer their prayers and gifts to the Goddess of Mercy in the temple, they come out and give money to the poor who frequently show up at the festivals.⁷⁷ Noticeably, the poor usually do not make requests of the pilgrims as they are on their way to the temple. Rather, they wait until the pilgrims have participated in temple worship. The reason is that both donors and recipients believe that blessings bestowed on the pilgrims need to be shared.⁷⁸ Although charitable work is a common practice in Buddhism, sharing the blessings received from Quan Am with the needy is a

unique practice attributed to the cult of Quan Am at many Buddhist temples in Vietnam. If Christian love for God and for other human fellows is the highest virtue in Christianity,⁷⁹ then Buddhist love for the poor is strongly encouraged as one participates in the worship of Quan Am. This virtue beautifully echoes the core ethical value of Buddhist compassion and it manifests in a visible spiritual transformation.⁸⁰

Hope in Liberation: Worship of Quan Am

Vietnamese Buddhists look to the Goddess of Mercy with a strong belief that she will bring *đại từ* (greatest happiness) to her devotees and offer *đại bi* (greatest compassion) to all human beings. Therefore, Buddhists expect a source of protection, healing, and deliverance from misfortune and injustice from Quan Am. The story of Quan Am Thị Kính in Vietnamese Buddhism presented above has intensified the liberating aspect, especially in the realms of personal and social justice. To Vietnamese Buddhists Thi Kinh's story, featuring experiences of both injustice and liberation, has become a great source of hope and inspiration for Buddhists, especially for women who have experienced injustice.⁸¹ In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, personal stories of each female bodhisattva were often woven into the story of the cult of the Goddess of Mercy Quan Am. They presented a message of liberation from personal and social injustices. Nguyen Lang argues that the cult of Quan Am strongly developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in which Confucian ideology was used to oppress Buddhism and degrade women's stature within society and the family.⁸² In such a patriarchal and andocentric structure, the cult of Quan Am reappeared with a feminine form of deity that challenged and counteracted the male social dominance that caused injustice within the family and society. In the sixteenth century, Buddhism was strongly criticized by Confucian scholars for encouraging people to run away from the world and not remain filial to family or responsible for social affairs.⁸³ Stories of Thi Kinh were developed to respond to Confucian attacks. They present a model of Buddhism that encourages responsibility for family and society, as Confucian ideology expected. On the one hand, Confucianism strongly emphasized patriarchy, in which women do not have voices. On the other hand, social engagement and family responsibility are strongly emphasized. In this sociopolitical context, a new form of bodhisattvas arose that served as a channel through which Buddhism would be better understood.

While the patriarchal social structure emphasized rules, harshness, strictness, rationalism, and lack of mercy, Quan Am manifested the opposite traits, emphasizing compassion, caring, and sensitivity.⁸⁴ When examining various sources of literature, one will realize that Vietnamese Buddhists look to Quan Am not only as a source of personal transformation but also as a great source of hope for social change. Among many stories of injustice and redemption, the story of Thị Kính Quan Am has become an outstanding lesson for social justice. Her story has been taught in schools, performed on stage, and incorporated into religious discourse.⁸⁵ Her story of humiliation, patience, endurance, and holiness has become an inspiration for addressing social injustice in many ways. First, it presents the reality of a society in which a woman had

no voice to defend herself from a false accusations. Second, in the midst of suffering, Buddhist temples became the sole reliable source for protection and survival.⁸⁶ Third, amid the darkness of suffering due to unjust condemnation, redemption took place and overcame misfortune. If traditional Buddhism offers an approach to individual liberation,⁸⁷ the cult of Quan Am offers both personal and collective liberation.

Themes of Liberation in Marian Devotion

Within the Vietnamese church context, themes of liberation are pervasive in Vietnamese sacred songs and prayers to Mary. The Magnificat, a well-known song of Mary that praises God's liberating power, has been put into songs and sung regularly in the church as well as at major events of Marian devotional gatherings.

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.⁸⁸

Other songs, such as *Mẹ Oi Đónai Thương Việt Nam* (Mary, Please Look upon Vietnam) *Salve Regina*, *Nữ Vương Hòa Bình* (Queen of Peace), *Trên Con Đường Về Quê* (On My Way Home), *Mẹ Viếng Thăm* (Mary's Visitation), and numerous others, express strong Christian reliance on Mary's liberating power from struggles in life and belief in an ultimate liberation. Many songs about Mary with a liberating theme were composed in a period in which Vietnamese people were experiencing bloody wars, Christian persecution, poverty, social injustice, and the division of the country between north and south from 1954 to 1975.⁸⁹ For example, the exodus of almost one million Catholics from the north to the south during the years of 1954–1964 to escape the communists, many people saw as an exodus under the guidance of Mary.⁹⁰ The symbol of Mary in a fighting position against evil has instilled a strong belief in Mary's liberating power. Inspired by the Bible, Catholic artists portrayed Mary with tremendous divine power that can subdue the serpent—a symbol of devil, under her feet.

Interestingly, this symbolic image is also seen in some images of Quan Am Hai Nam, one of the most popular Buddhist female bodhisattvas in Vietnam.⁹¹ The story describes the problems of evil as disguised within a human form that then interferes with the tranquility of human beings. Hearing the cry of humankind, Quan Am appears and defeats the devils, granting peace back to humanity. While Quan Am provides a refuge and protection for those who rely on her, Vietnamese Catholics rely on Mary for her protection from evils.

Hail Mary and Namo Bồ Tát: Liberating Effects

While many Vietnamese Catholics pray the rosary many times during the day in devotion to Mary, Vietnamese Buddhists are encouraged to recite a mantra regularly as a form of devotion to the Goddess of Mercy Quan Am. "Namo A Di Đà Phật, Namo Bồ Tát Quan Am, savior of suffering and misfortune" is one of the most important mantras for the Buddhists.⁹² They believe that when they recite this mantra, Quan Am is immediately present and will respond to the devotee. This belief can be compared to how citizens of the United States perceive a phone call to 911. Buddhism offers a simple way to meditate by calling on the name of Buddha Amitabha, Namo A-Di-Đà Phật. Devotees of the cult of the Goddess of Mercy add the phrase "Namo Bồ Tát Quan Am, savior of suffering and misfortune" to express their strong faith in Quan Am as well. According to the Buddhists, constant chanting of "Namo Bồ Tát Quan Am, savior of suffering and misfortune" also helps transform lives and gives the believer a sense of peace. One can realize a similar pattern of chanting of the Hail Mary in the Catholic Church and the "Namo Bồ Tát Quan Am" in Vietnamese Buddhism.

The Hail Mary, "Hail Mary, full of grace. Our Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death," has become one of the most important "mantras" to Vietnamese Catholics, both individually and communally.⁹³

In short, if Vietnamese Catholics consider Mary as a liberator who would deliver them from suffering, injustice, and turmoil, Vietnamese Buddhists look to Quan Am as a representative of the transcendent Buddha, who has the absolute power to bring great happiness to her devotees (*Đại Từ*) and can exercise her greatest compassion to all human beings (*Đại Bi*).⁹⁴ Similarly, the Buddhists also believe in the transformative power of Quan Am, who can liberate them from external evils as well as their internal sinful tendencies. This belief reflects the humble attitude characteristic of many Buddhist followers who choose to rely on divine power.

CONCLUSION

This article, having explored the three essential dimensions of popular devotion in Vietnamese Buddhism and Catholicism, establishes that these two religious traditions share noteworthy similarities in spirituality, religious practices, and ethical applications. While there are many theological differences, there are notable points of overlap, especially in respect and veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Quan Am. These privileged divinities serve similar roles in the Vietnamese Catholic and Buddhist communities. They serve as ethical exemplars and a source of protection, spiritual support, and abundant hope for liberation. This commonality explains the important role of popular piety that has shaped Vietnamese and Buddhist spirituality. The dominant image of feminine deities found in Vietnamese indigenous religion and Chàm Hinduism in Vietnam reinforces the respect and appreciation of Mary in Catholicism and Quan Am in Buddhism. From an interreligious standpoint, this

spirituality common ground will help broaden the Christian-Buddhist understanding of religious experience that has been underrepresented by the religious and political discourse in Vietnam since Christianity took root in Vietnam in the seventeenth century. This continued study in Buddhist-Catholic popular piety can positively contribute to furthering interreligious dialogue in Vietnam and foster a deeper understanding of Buddhism and Catholicism throughout Asia, where Marian devotion and the worship of Quan Am coexist.

NOTES

1. Guanyin, an abbreviation of Guan shi yin (觀世音), is a Chinese translation of the Sanskrit Avalokiteśvara, and Quan Am is the Vietnamese pronunciation of the Chinese characters *guanyin* (觀音). While Guanyin in Chinese is understood as “perceiver of sounds” in general, Vietnamese Quan Am has been articulated as “perceiver of the sounds of suffering.” For a history of Guanyin in China, see Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-Yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); see page 2 of this work for an explanation of the Chinese version of her name. For a Vietnamese explanation of Quan Am, see Thích Lat Ma Pho Giac, *Nghi Thức Hạnh Nguyên Quán Thế Âm & Sám Hối* (Devotional Rituals to Quan Am and Repentance) (Ho Chi Minh: Dong Phuong Press, 2000), 1–9.

2. According to the Christian belief, Mary was mother of Jesus, the God incarnate, while Quan Am is one of the most revered bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism. Since the article is focused on the context of Vietnam, the term “Quan Am” will be used.

3. Since Christianity arrived in Vietnam in the late sixteenth century, Vietnamese Christians have experienced multiple religious persecutions conducted by emperors such as Minh Mạng, Tự Đức, Thiệu Trị, and other rulers. During the persecutions, Vietnamese Catholics often came to Mary as a source of protection. See Phan Phát Huồn, *Việt Nam Giáo Sử* (History of the Catholic Church in Vietnam) (Long Beach, CA: Cứu Thế Tùng Thư, 2000). Also see Trần Khắc Khoan, *Học Thuyết Trinh Nữ Maria* (Marian Studies) (New Orleans: National Pastoral Center for Vietnamese Apostolate, 1995), 512–530.

4. In addition to numerous stories of Buddhist experiences of Quan Am’s intervention in their lives, stories of Vietnamese boat people are some of the most moving ones. See Sandy Boucher, *Discovering Kwan Yin, Buddhist Goddess of Compassion: A Path toward Clarity and Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 16.

5. For a reflection on Buddhist virtues manifested in Quan Am Thi Kinh and Quan Am Hai Nam, see Nguyễn Lang, *Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận* (A History of Vietnamese Buddhism) (Hanoi: Van Hoc Press, 2000), 530–531.

6. See Trần Khắc Khoan, *Học Thuyết Trinh Nữ Maria*, 520–525.

7. See Philip Taylor, *Goddess on the Rise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004); see also Thiên Đê, *The Quest for Enlightenment and Cultural Identity: Buddhism in Contemporary Vietnam* in *Buddhism and Politics in Twentieth-Century Asia*, ed. Ian Harris (London: Pinter, 1999), 255.

8. For example, *Phật Giáo & Công Giáo* (Buddhism and Catholicism) by Jorathe Năng Tím, a Vietnamese Catholic author trying to present Buddhism and Catholicism with an attempt to build a mutual understanding between Buddhists and Catholics. Jorathe Năng Tím, *Phật Giáo & Công Giáo* (Buddhism and Catholicism) (Ho Chi Minh City: Nha Xuất Ban Tôn Giáo, 2014). In *Phật Giáo & Công Giáo*, Năng Tím presents beautifully the core teachings as well as philosophy and theology of Buddhism and Catholicism. Unfortunately, the Vietnamese Buddhism that the author presents is a form of Theravada Buddhism without discussing Buddhist rituals, devotion to Quan Am, chanting, prayers, and pilgrimage—the most common religious forms of Buddhist practices in Vietnam. On the other side of spectrum, Buddhist authors have attempted to address Buddhist-Catholic conflicts from political perspec-

tives and lacked an engagement in spiritual investigation. See Mạnh Thất Lê, *Lịch sử Phật giáo Việt Nam* (A History of Buddhism in Vietnam) (Hue: Nhà xuất bản Thuận Hóa, 1999).

9. Culturally, the influence of Confucianism that promoted masculine and hierarchical structures once weakened Buddhist institutions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, while popular devotion to female deities has continued to develop over the time. See Nguyễn Lang, *Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Việt Nam* (A History of Vietnamese Buddhism) (Ho Chi Minh: Dong Phuong Press, 2000).

10. Although the relationship between Buddhism and Catholicism in Vietnam has improved in the last few decades, religious conflict in the past between these two traditions has lingered in the minds and hearts of many followers.

11. For example, thirty parishes in Hanoi chose Mary to be their patron, whereas only two parishes in that diocese chose Jesus.

12. See Nguyễn Hồng Phúc, *Đức Mẹ La Vang* (Our Lady of La Vang) (Los Altos, CA: Vietnamese Catholic Federation, 1997), 59.

13. Vietnamese Episcopal Conference, *Sống Đạo Theo Cách Việt Nam* [Vietnamese Ways of Practicing Religion] (Hanoi: Religious Press, 2004), pp. 93–94.

14. See Peter Phan, *In Our Tongues* (New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 97–99; see also Đỗ Quang Chính, *Tản Mạn Giáo Hội Việt Nam* (Scattered Stories of the Church in Vietnam) (Montreal: Anton & Đuốc Sáng, 2008).

15. *Ibid.*

16. See Đỗ Quang Chính, *Tản Mạn Giáo Hội Việt Nam* (Scattered Stories of Church in Vietnam) (Montreal: Anton & Đuốc Sáng, 2008); also see Peter Phan, *In Our Tongues*, 98.

17. *Ibid.*, 1–15.

18. To French Catholics, Notre-Dame des Victories, or Our Lady of Victory, played an important role in the Church in France. On one hand, that title of Mary is associated with the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. On the other hand, the French believed that Mary had helped Philip of Valois win over the Flemings in a war between the French and Flemings in 1328. Philip of Valois himself then came to this cathedral to give thanks to Mary. See Nicholas J. Santoro, *Mary in Our Life: Atlas of the Names and Titles of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and Their Place in Marian Devotion* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2011), 570.

19. See Đỗ Quang Chính, SJ, *Hai Giám Mục Đầu Tiên Tại Việt Nam* (Two First Bishops in Vietnam) (Montreal: Anton Duoc Sang, 2007), 107–117. Also, according to Phan Phát Huồn, Francois Pallu and Pierre Lambert de la Motte also promoted the praying of rosary as they engaged in mission in Vietnam. See Phát Huồn Phan, *Việt Nam Giáo Sử* (History of the Catholic Church in Vietnam) (Long Beach, CA: Cứu Thế Tùng Thư, 2000).

20. For an overview of Vietnamese worship of female deities, see Nguyen Minh San, *Những Thần Nữ Danh Tiếng Trong Văn Hoá Tín Ngưỡng Việt Nam* (Well-Renowned Female Deities in Vietnamese Folk Religion) (Hanoi: Nha Xuất Ban Phu Nu, 1996), 18; see also Ngô Đức Thịnh, *Đạo Mẫu Ở Việt Nam* (Cult of the Mother Goddess in Vietnam) (Hanoi: Nha Xuất Ban Thong Tin, 1996).

21. See Philip Taylor, *Goddess on the Rise*, 49.

22. It is significant to note that the worship of female divinities not only takes place in the Cult of Mother Goddess. It was also quite popular in Cham Hinduism, a form of Hinduism in Vietnam. Nowadays, both Cham and Vietnamese groups in central Vietnam worship the same goddess. For a comprehensive understanding of feminine Hindu influences in Vietnam, see Gitesh Sharma, *Traces of Indian Culture in Vietnam* (New Delhi: Banyan Trade Books, 2009).

23. See Trần Ngọc Thêm, *Tìm Về Bản Sắc Văn Hoá Việt Nam* (Research in Vietnamese Cultural Identity) (Ho Chi Minh City: HCM Press, 1996), 254–255.

24. See Ngô Đức Thịnh, *Đạo Mẫu Ở Việt Nam*; see also Nguyen Hong Duong, *Nghi Lễ Và Lời Sùng Công Giáo* (Rites and Practices in the Catholic Church in Vietnam) (Hanoi, Nha Xuất Ban Khoa Học Xã Hội, 2001), 310–315. Also see Trần Ngọc Thêm, *Tìm Về Bản Sắc Văn Hoá Việt Nam*, 234–237.

25. See Nguyễn Hồng Dương, “Đức Maria Trong Tâm Linh Sùng Kính Dân Gian Của Tín Đồ Công Giáo Việt Nam,” in *Mother Goddess and Some Shamanistic Forms of Ethnic Groups in Vietnam and Asia*, ed. Ngô Đức Thịnh (Hanoi: Social Sciences Publishing House, 2004), 242.
26. *Ibid.*, 243.
27. Interestingly, Buddhists in North Vietnam often call Man Nương Phật Mẫu or “Female Buddha.” Because Phật Mẫu in Vietnamese language usage also means “Mother of the Buddha,” some Vietnamese mistakenly think that Man Nương is the mother of Buddha. Although northern Vietnamese do not call her “Quan Am,” she is equally worshiped as Quan Am.
28. Ngô Đức Thịnh, ed., *Mother Goddess and Some Shamanistic Forms of Ethnic Groups in Vietnam and Asia* (Hanoi: Nha Xuất Ban Khoa Học, 2004), 223.
29. *Ibid.*, 221.
30. *Ibid.*, 225.
31. Trang Thanh Hiền, *Hình Tượng Quan Âm Thiên Thủ Thiên Nhãn ở Việt Nam* (Images of the Thousand-Armed and Thousand-Eyed Guan Yin in Vietnam) (Hanoi: Nha Xuất Ban Văn Hóa và Thông Tin, 2005).
32. *Ibid.*, 11. See also Andrew Forbes and David Henley, *Vietnam Past and Present: The North* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Cognoscenti Books, 2011).
33. See Trang Thanh Hiền, *Hình Tượng Quan Âm Thiên Thủ Thiên Nhãn ở Việt Nam*, 13–15.
34. Nguyễn Minh Ngọc et al., *Bồ Tát Quán Thế Âm Trong Các Chùa Vùng Đồng Bằng Sông Hồng* (Bodhisattva Quan Am at Buddhist Temples in The Red River Delta) (Hanoi: Nha Xuất Ban Khoa Học Xã Hội, 2004).
35. See Giao Trinh Diệu Hạnh, *Truyện Thuyết về Bồ Tát Quán Thế Âm*; Nguyễn Minh Ngọc et al., *Bồ Tát Quán Thế Âm Trong Các Chùa Vùng Đồng Bằng Sông Hồng*.
36. Among numerous books on tourism in Vietnam, some significant books need to be mentioned. Lonely Planet and Iain Stewart, *Lonely Planet Vietnam* (London: Lonely Planet, 2014); John Colet and Joshua Eliot, *Vietnam Handbook*, Footprint Handbooks (Bath, England: Footprint, 1997).
37. Through numerous personal contacts with Buddhist friends whom I grew up with, I have had a better understanding of how personal devotion to Quan Am has been strengthened by music and modern media.
38. Trang Thanh Hiền, *Hình Tượng Quan Âm Thiên Thủ Thiên Nhãn ở Việt Nam*.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Nguyễn Minh Ngọc et al., *Bồ Tát Quán Thế Âm Trong Các Chùa Vùng Đồng Bằng Sông Hồng*.
41. While Chinese Guanyin holding a baby on her chest appeared in the thirteenth century, images of Quan Am Thị Kính did not appear until the nineteenth century. Her life story was written by an anonymous author. However, her popularity has been surpassed other forms of Quan Am. See Nhất Hạnh, *Sự Tích Quan Am Thị Kính* (Origins of Quan Am Thị Kính) (Walnut Creek, CA: Lá Bối, 1997).
42. *Ibid.*
43. Jeremy Clarke, *The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities in Chinese History* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013).
44. See Nhất Hạnh, *Sự Tích Quan Am Thị Kính*.
45. Although the concepts of faith, hope, and love are theological articulation of Christian virtues, these virtues are pervasively manifested in the cult of Quan Am. See Thích Đạt Ma Phổ Giác, *Nghi Thức Hạnh nguyện Quán Thế Âm & sám hối* (Devotional Rituals to Quan Am and Repentance) (Ho Chi Minh City: Phương Đông Press, 2010).
46. So far, very few people have presented a comparative spirituality of Quan Am and Mary in the context of Vietnam. Although some scholars, such as Philip Taylor and Trần Văn Toàn, briefly mentioned the cults of Quan Am and Mary in their works, their research subjects were not focused on comparative spirituality. For example, see Philip Taylor, *Goddess*

on *the Rise* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); and Trần Văn Toàn, "Mary và Quan Am Thi Kính" (Mary and Thi Kinh Quan Am) *Journal of Vietnamese Philosophy and Religion*.

47. For example, in comparing Buddhist texts between Chinese and Vietnamese, there are many similarities in expressing faith in Quan Am or Quanyin (Chinese). See Nguyễn Thụy Hoà, *Thực Hành Phật Giáo* (Buddhist Practices) (Saigon: self-published, 1969), 378–392; also see *Thích Đạt Ma Phổ Giác, Nghi Thức Hạnh Nguyên Quan Thế Âm & sám Hối* (Devotional Rituals to Quan Am & Repentance) (Ho Chi Minh City: Phương Đông Press, 2010), 5–10.

48. See Trang Thanh Hiền, *Hình Tượng Quan Âm Thiên Thủ Thiên Nhãn ở Việt Nam*, 6.

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*, 5.

51. Nguyễn Minh Ngọc et al., *Bồ Tát Quán Thế Âm Trong Các Chùa Vùng Đồng Bằng Sông Hồng*. See Tài Thư Nguyễn, ed., *The History of Buddhism in Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2009).

52. See Tài Thư Nguyễn, ed., *The History of Buddhism in Vietnam*, 177–184.

53. Sandy Boucher, *Discovering Kwan Yin, Buddhist Goddess of Compassion: A Path toward Clarity and Peace*, 16.

54. *Ibid.*

55. For example, most Buddhist temples in San Jose and other places in the Bay Area place magnificent statues of Quan Am in the temple. Recently, Di Lac Pagoda, a Vietnamese Buddhist Maitreya tradition in San Jose has finished a major project of Quan Am worship that involved in a large-scaled fundraising among Vietnamese Buddhists in San Jose. Also, among many Buddhist temples in Texas, the Vietnamese Buddhist Center, located in Sugar Land, a suburb of Houston built a seventy-foot-tall statue of Quan Am. See <http://www.vnbc.org/TTPG/>.

56. The image of the Immaculate Heart of Mary had a long devotional tradition in Europe. See Filipe Gomez, *Marian Devotion and Doctrine* (Makati, Philippines: St Paul's Press, 2014). However, this practice was intensified by Vietnamese Catholics during the 1950s and 1960s when the Vietnam War was escalating and they found in Mary a new hope for the Church in Vietnam as well as for the country.

57. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 963–975.

58. John Paul II, *Theotokos: Woman, Mother, Disciple—A Catechesis on Mary, Mother of God* (Boston: Pauline Book & Media, 1999).

59. It is important to note that reverence of the Immaculate Heart of Mary rose to great prominence in France during the eighteenth century, which is probably why this image is so popular in Vietnam. See Filipe Gomez, *Marian Devotion and Doctrine*.

60. Trái Tim Đức Mẹ magazine began to publish in the late 1960s in Vietnam. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, many members of the Co-redemptorist group moved to the United States, and they continued to publish in Carthage, Missouri.

61. See Phát Huồn Phan, *History of the Catholic Church in Vietnam* (Long Beach, CA: Cứu Thế Tùng Thư, 2000).

62. See Đỗ Quang Chính, *Tản Mạn Giáo Hội Việt Nam* (Scattered Stories of Church in Vietnam) (Montreal: Anton & Đuốc Sáng, 2008)

63. See Đoàn Quang, CMC, "Trái Tim Đức Mẹ" (The Heart of Mary) <http://www.xuanha.net/Fatima-3menhleh/3ttm-noiconannau.htm>, accessed April 9, 2016.

64. *Ibid.*

65. See Phát Huồn Phan, *History of the Catholic Church in Vietnam*.

66. Besides the *Heart of Mary* magazine, the *Our Lady of Perpetual Help* magazine run by the Redemptorists in Saigon spent numerous issues proclaiming the victory of the Heart of Mary over communism. Although this political agenda had been promoted by church authority in the West, especially by Pope Pius XII in the 1950s, the Church in Vietnam intensified Marian devotion to respond to the rise of Communism in its own soil.

67. See Tuệ Quang, *Lên Chùa Lễ Phật: Những Điều Nên Biết* (Guidelines for Temple Worship) (Ho Chi Minh City: Nhà Xuất Bản Lao Động, 2011).
68. This text is my own translation from a Vietnamese version of Tuệ Quang, *Lên Chùa Lễ Phật: Những Điều Nên Biết*, 26.
69. *Ibid.*, 67.
70. This formula is a universal one and translated in hundreds of languages, including Vietnamese. For convenience, this version is derived from an English version, the “Penitential Rite,” in *The Roman Missal* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1985), 360.
71. Matthew 5:23–26.
72. For a history of Marian apparition in Fatima, see John Preiss, *Our Lady of Fatima True Devotion* (n.p.: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).
73. Catholics who grew up in South Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s frequently heard the very common phrase “Trái Tim Mẹ sẽ thắng” (Heart of Mary will win), which indicated a belief that sooner or later, communism will collapse.
74. See Tran Khac Khoan, *Ba Mệnh Lệnh Fatima* (Three Messages of Fatima) (Westminster, CA: Tran Khac Khoan, 2010).
75. It is significant to note that most native Vietnamese religious orders took the name of Mary as their patron.
76. See Nguyễn Châu Hải, *Tháng Đức Mẹ* (Month of Mary) (Hanoi: Tôn Giáo Press, 2005), 122–125.
77. Trang Thanh Hien, *Hình Tượng Quan Âm Thiên Thủ Thiên Nhân ở Việt Nam*, 7–9.
78. *Ibid.*, 9.
79. When people asked Jesus which commandment is the greatest, he clearly stated: love God and your neighbors. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2055.
80. See Anil Goonewardene, *Discovering Sacred Texts: Buddhist Scriptures* (Portsmouth, Heinemann Publishing, 1994), 40–41.
81. See Tài Thư Nguyễn, ed., *The History of Buddhism in Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values & Philosophy, 2009), 180–181
82. Nguyen Lang, *Viet Nam Phat Giao Su Luoc*, 523–527.
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Ibid.*
85. Nhật Hạnh, *Sự Tích Quan Âm Thị Kính* (Origins of Quan Am Thi Kinh) (Walnut Creek, CA: Lá Bối, 1997).
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Ibid.*
88. Luke 1:46–55.
89. See Bùi Đức Sinh, *Giáo Hội Công Ở Giáo Việt Nam* (The Catholic Church in Vietnam).
90. To have a better understanding of the Vietnamese Catholic spirit in the 1950s, see Peter Hansen, “The Virgin Heads South: Northern Catholic Refugees in South Vietnam, 1954–64,” in *Casting Faiths: Imperialism and the Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia*, ed. Thomas DuBois (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
91. Images of Quan Am Nam Hai are built upon a Chinese legend by modified by the Vietnamese. See Tài Thư Nguyễn, ed., *The History of Buddhism in Vietnam*, 181–186.
92. See Phật Lịch, *Nghi Thức tụng Niệm* (Buddhist Chanting Formula) (Phật Học Viện Quốc Tế Press, 1995).
93. Since missionaries introduced the rosary to the Vietnamese, it has become a form of religiosity through which the Catholics have sustained faith and lived their faith in a joyful and faithful spirit.
94. See Đoàn Trung Côn and Nguyễn Minh Tiến, *Kinh A- Di- Đà* (Amitabha Mantra) (Hanoi: Nha Xuất Ban Tôn Giáo, 2010).