

**Encountering the Stranger:  
Multiculturality and Spirituality at a Crossroad**  
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**Abstract**

Given the reality of multiculturalism in our world due to increasing international migration, the Church is confronted with both a task and an opportunity. First, multiculturalism implicates the Church's missionary thrust to be relevant and credible in its task of evangelization. Second, it ushers us to recognize the "other face of God" in the "culturally other" with new eyes grounded on the spirituality of encounter. Framing the discourse using the threefold structure of See-Judge-Act and re-affirming biblical and pastoral underpinnings on encountering the culturally other, I conclude that God who is greater than our thoughts and imaginations, that God through the Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, who is "totally Other" is best revealed and discovered in the face and reality of the "culturally other" in our midst.

**Introduction**

The phenomenon of "international migration", the massive movement of people around the world, characterizes our contemporary world. Such migration contributes to the formation of societies constituted by culturally diverse groups of peoples. In this paper, I designate the term, "multiculturalism", to embody such growing cultural diversity among peoples in different societies of the world. At closer scrutiny, multiculturalism signals the advent of the "stranger" or "foreigner" – the "culturally other". What does multiculturalism mean for the Church and her mission? How do we relate with the "culturally other"? What is the spirituality that empowers us to engage with the "stranger"?

In this paper, I intend to give an exposition into two parts: first, an exposition on Multiculturalism, which follows the three-fold structure of See-Judge-Act: SEEING (the phenomenon of multiculturalism), JUDGING (the theological significance of multiculturalism), and ACTING (mission in an age of multiculturalism); second, a reflection on the required spirituality required for, or even the spirituality which emerges out of our engagement with the stranger.