

A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING OF
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION AND
HUMAN HEALING PARTICULARLY OF
MENTAL ILLNESS

By

Cecilia Francisco-Tan

B.A.(Hons), GradDipTheol, PostGradDipEd

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY:

I affirm that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Cecilia Francisco-Tan

14 December 2011

“If we would know what is going on within us, if we would learn to integrate it with the rest of our living, we have to inquire, investigate, seek counsel.”

- Bernard Lonergan SJ -

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Feast day of St. John of the Cross

ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to establish a contemporary understanding of the relationship between the doctrine of the Incarnation and human healing, particularly of mental illness. It draws on Bernard Lonergan's transcendental method of theological discovery and M. Shawn Copeland's work in theological anthropology. Lonergan's work on the intelligibility of human consciousness proposes that understanding the human subject's conscious operations allows for greater insight into the theological questions in relation to the human condition. The specific human context, mental illness with human healing being an end-goal, is the drive behind the personal quest for meaning. The subject of the investigation is the researcher herself. The raw data gleaned from personal experience is critically examined *vis-à-vis* other relevant sources surrounding mental illness from theological, social, political, cultural and scientific fields. Church documents and the writings of theologians in the area of the doctrine of the Incarnation provide the theological base. Copeland's work provides the background into how it is possible and why it is necessary to interrogate specific human issues (in this case mental illness) as a way of visioning the Incarnation in today's context. Such an enterprise highlights the relevance of an authentic proclamation of who Jesus Christ is and the reconciliation and healing available to believers in the twenty-first century.

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