

CALL FOR PAPERS/PARTICIPANTS  
*Foodscape*s: Gastronomy, Theologies and Spiritualities,  
Catholic Asian Feminist Theological Orientation  
8<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference  
Venue: Vietnam  
Date: January 18-21, 2018

#### WHO WE ARE

Ecclesia of Women in Asia (EWA) is an academic forum of Catholic women theologians in Asia. EWA encourages and assists Catholic women in Asia to engage in research, reflection, and writing from a feminist perspective. It invites women towards doing theology that: a) is inculturated and contextualized in Asian realities; b) builds on the spiritual experience and praxis of the socially excluded; c) promotes mutuality and the integrity of creation; d) dialogues with other disciplines, Christian denominations and religions/faiths.

This Call for Papers/Participants is extended to all Catholic women “doing theology” in Asia at the grassroots, pastoral and/or professional level.

#### THEME AND CONTEXT

On this day, and age, more and more people are concerned about their food intake, food source, supply and security, incomprehensible food waste, and the consumption that goes with it. In fact, there is a *foodscape* (using the idea of landscape) or “plate-full” of issues and spectrum connected to food, vis-à-vis health, environment and ecology, cultures, politics, economics, spirituality, and theology.

In this regard, food is a promising discourse that many can relate to, for it is part of our everyday “palate”, survival, and sustenance. Food is a compounded concern, tangled with various surging issues, which needs an enlightened response. It is an opportune time to discuss how a discourse on food can bring to a greater light on its direct and indirect effect on us, from individual to global.

Gastronomically speaking, people are becoming more health conscious given the rise of illnesses that is partly attributed to excessive food consumption alongside unhealthy lifestyles. Healthy eating is healthy living, - is a common slogan of people who promote proper diet. However, reality strikes us with the chronic problem of malnutrition in many parts of the globe. This either be due to climate change, war, imbalance crop yields, and more. This seeming contradictions and imbalances turns us to a concern from individual to communal aspect of food on consumption and waste, vis-à-vis growing starvation, hunger, and security in other parts of the globe.

It is needless to say that food is part of our culinary culture, and community life. Given the stereotype of women as “bearers” or “contributors” of culture, it is not surprising that women are at the heart and center of the discourses on food, health and the environment. Women are stereotyped as “the mother-nurturer,” and therefore often regarded as “cooks” and “helpers”. In some Asian cultures, still retain the “caste at the table”, where women are last in the list who “must” eat the meal. This is simply deprivation for women, even in the households. Food here is a question of rights vis-à-vis customs.

On the one hand, food is common to feasting or celebrations, how simple this may be. Food is also medicinal, which traditionally is incorporated in dishes if not, are made into medicines, or plainly taken raw. Because food plays a pivotal role in the caring identity of women, food as medicine reinforces the belief that women are healers

On the side of economics vis-à-vis morality can be dealt with. The issue on food consumption and production vis-à-vis food security has led science to develop (genetically modified organisms) GMO to address the need for more produce. Likewise, seeing the possible depletion of natural resources leads to the invention of biofuel, that directly affects food supply meant to decrease the growing death toll on hunger. Hence, the debate on biofuel vis-à-vis food security is a concern indeed.

Connected to food security is the concern of community sustainability, given that a number of our food sources are questionable. It is a question now of profit making over sustainability and responsibility, and shareholders over stakeholders.

The spirituality of food is never on the sidelines. This can be connected to anthropology, wherein we get to understand the people behind the culture through food. Through this, we can explore the relation between women and food, health, and hierarchy. As such, we can explore the possible relation of spirituality to farming, and its effects on the produce. Food fellowship can be part of one’s spirituality.

Food has been attributed to the characteristics of women who provide nourishment and are essentialised or universalized as natural nurturers. In this case, it is appropriate to see the “*foodscape*”, that is, the vast dimensions of food, not only in the lives of women, their families, but to her community as well.

A dialogue with Pope Francis *Laudato Si* is an opportunity for a greater recognition of women’s role in the Church and her community. Rather than regarding doing theology as an irrelevant activity in the lives of women in the world, Asian women must assert themselves, by re-engaging with issues, and voice out how this global changes directly affects them. Food in particular as well as other issues surrounding it is an integral part of humanity and our reality, and that is timely that Catholic Asian women respond to the “signs of the times”.

In view of engaging deeper into these theological conversations, the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the Ecclesia of Women in Asia sends out this Call for Papers on the theme: “*Foodscapes: From Gastronomy to Spirituality, Catholic Asian Feminist Theological Orientation.*”

Keywords: Below are some keywords, which can be explored for the papers, but are not limited to:

Water  
Nutrition/Malnutrition  
Farming  
Diet  
Gastronomy  
Obesity/Beauty  
Addiction  
Food heritage/anthropology  
Culinary practices  
Herbal  
Table fellowship  
Fasting (Spirituality of)  
Food source  
Environment  
Sustainability  
Social enterprise  
Food security  
Eating/Living  
Health  
Food security/scarcity  
GMO  
Water  
Lifestyle  
Green (corporate) revolution  
Biodiversity  
Food chains  
Organic food  
Food revolution  
Food studies  
Food media/channels  
Food theology  
Water theology  
Rights

## POSSIBLE TOPICS

Below are some of the broad areas, which can be explored for the papers but are not limited to:

### The relation of gender to food

- Gender as an analytical category in re-defining man-woman relationships
- Re-thinking masculinity and femininity and related gender roles (e.g. male celebrity chefs and women routinely preparing family meals)
- Emergence of the 'third gender' and its impact on conventional notions of gender (e.g. queer ecofeminism)

### Scripture

- Women who prepares food (e.g. the Matriarchs [Sarah, Rachel and Leah], widow encountered by Elijah, Mary of Bethany, mother-in-law of Simon)
- House churches and Breaking of the Bread
- Offering of first-fruits (e.g. in the Torah)
- Women as hosts of the Eucharist in the early Christian church

### Systematic Theology

#### Feminist Theological Anthropology

- New findings in neurology and its implications on theological anthropology
- Revisiting *Laudato Si* in connection to food and environment, as well as responsibility
- Feminist perspectives on "food" or "table-fellowship", "households"

#### Christology

- Christological questions that address gender issues (e.g. Lisa Isherwood's 'fat Jesus')
- Jesus as nurturer, food provider/distributor
- Jesus as egalitarian through table-fellowship
- Multiplication of the Bread
- Last Supper or Farewell Party

#### Mariology

- Mary at the Wedding at Cana

#### Ecclesiology

- EWA as an ongoing feminist theological discourse for women "nurturer" and perhaps provider, contributor and the like

#### Moral Theology/Ethics

- Women and the geo-politics in Asia (e.g. ethics of eating animals or animal rights, access to food and excess of food)
- Theology of the body (e.g. consuming the world-Word)
- Body Shape and "Lookism" on Food Diet, (media representations of the ideal "woman's shape and size")
- Feminist theology and Caste (even "at the table")
- New initiatives for the empowerment of women (e.g. appetites)

- Impact and Importance of Women Farmers (e.g. fair trade, food ethics)
- Women and work in the context of globalization (e.g. food and migration)
- Women power in sustainability, such as social enterprise, farm to market networking
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#### Liturgy/Liturgical Theology

- Women's role in Asian Christian rituals (e.g. gendered food practices, agency, resistance)
- Feminist or Feminine liturgy (e.g. ethics of consumption)

#### Christian Mission/Missiology

- Postcolonial, Poststructural, Postmodern and Trans Feminist reading of Christian missionary history (e.g. transnational tables and the politics of identity, food and race)

#### Pastoral/Practical Theology

- Women's contribution to the pastoral outreach in the church (e.g. feeding the poor)
- Women grassroots groups and organizations in Asia that are challenging and redefining theology in their own communities and countries
- Feminist theology of Food and Water
- Asian women's creative strategies for evangelization through "table-fellowship" or culinary activities (such as soup kitchen, or "chicken soup for women")

#### Spirituality

- Spirituality of Fasting
- Feminist spiritual discourses on Food and Water (e.g. youth food practices, politics of 'good' food, 'bad' food, fast food, slow food, feminist postcolonial milk studies)
- Food Spirituality
- Water Spirituality

#### Inter-religious theology

- Interreligious dialogue and women (e.g. diasporic foodways)

#### Political Economy of Food and Gender Question

- Food preparation, production, and wages
- Unquantified household contributions to family, community and economy

#### Mode of Presentation

In this "Call for Papers" – the "papers" can take the form of written essays or performed through poetry, art, dance and/or music, even role-play involving audience participation. More unconventionally, hypertext explorations and multimedia texts are encouraged. Submitted texts must be theological in scope, contextualized in Asian women's lived realities and provide an avenue for critique and ongoing discussion. We aim to publish quality papers.

### Identification of Paper Presenters/Participants

Because of EWA's emphasis on promoting theological research, a *fundamental criterion* for participation in this Conference is the ability and willingness to write and present an original, creative theological paper or art that has *never before been published*. The deadline for submission of an abstract of about 300 words is on the **30<sup>th</sup> October 2016**.

A screening committee will then conduct a *blind-review* of the abstracts to identify those who could be Paper-Presenters, taking into account the following criteria: relevance to the theme, consideration of the Asian contextual perspective, originality of insight, methodology, and organization of the paper, as well as, representation by country. In terms of methodology, dialogue with feminist theories and other disciplines (i.e. sociology, gender studies, peace studies, race and ethnicity, postcolonial and development studies, human rights, international relations, and so on) with theology is highly encouraged.

By **December 31, 2016**, those who submitted abstracts will be informed if they have been accepted as Paper-Presenters at the conference. You are expected to submit your complete paper of 3000-5000 words on or before **August 31, 2017**.

From the completed papers of active EWA members, one paper will be further selected for videoconferencing in colleges/universities in the US and in other continents. The paper selected will be announced on or before **October 30, 2017**, and is required to submit an approximate 1500 words of one's presentation on or before **December 1, 2017**. All things being equal, preference will be given to those who have not made a Skype presentation in the last EWA conferences.

### Process of the Conference

The papers will be circulated to all participants for reading before they arrive at the Conference. The conference will consist of plenary and small group sessions and it is anticipated that there will also be invited guest speakers. The small group sessions will be a time for further discussion and critique of the papers. The Conference will provide opportunities for deep reflection and expanding awareness of issues from other Asian countries, input, discussion, prayer and networking.

### Funding

EWA will cover the conference fee, room, and board of all participants. We are raising funds to cover the plane tickets of paper writers. While efforts are being made to raise some funds, we have no guarantees about the outcome of this. We will try our best to fund as well, non-paper presenting participants, on request. Thus, if intending participants can meet their own travel expenses (e.g. by seeking funds from their own institution), it will make it more possible for us to support those with greater difficulties. We will welcome any contribution, however small, from those who can afford it.

### RSVP

Those who are interested in writing a paper for this conference are asked to submit their applications (with or without an abstract) on or **before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016**. Please use the on-line

form provided at the link below. Those interested in a creative work presentation (such as art work, and the like) should submit their application at the latest **30<sup>th</sup> October 2016**.

The On-line Application form is available at this link:...[On-line Application Form](#).

If the link does not work, please copy and paste this

URL: <http://goo.gl/forms/JILROY12B>

#### Future Correspondence

It is preferable that all correspondence – including sending of the final paper – be done through e-mail to the Secretary. Siphim Xavier, E-mail: <[siphimxavier@yahoo.com](mailto:siphimxavier@yahoo.com)>

#### EWA Coordinating Team

Coordinator:	Jeane Peracullo (Philippines)
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Web Coordinator:	Andrea Si (Philippines)