

Pontifical Diplomacy in the East Asian Region: A Pre-Pope Francis Era (1964-2013)

*Angeli Francis S. Rivera**

Senior High School, University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines

Abstract: This article is a humble venture into the pontifical diplomacy of the Vatican II popes Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI, and how their diplomatic styles consistently upheld the nature and mission of the Holy See with the ideals of the Vatican II Council. Through pontifical diplomacy, the Holy See rightly exercises the Church's prophetic office. The author used text-based and author-based analyses to decode and interpret the Addresses to the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See of Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI from 1968-2012. The author finds that major political events in the East Asian region have formed each papal style. Paul VI established the foundations of modern pontifical diplomacy by tapping on bilateral and multilateral diplomacies' potentials. John Paul II used the same platforms to appeal and conscientize states and institutions to respect the primacy of the human person and to trust the universal and moral foundations of diplomacy. For his part, Benedict XVI focused on truth against moral relativism and dedicated it to the path of openness, forgiveness, and new energies. These unique papal styles are also found to influence Pope Francis' Culture of Encounter (COE).

Keywords: East Asian Region, Holy See, Peace, Pontifical Diplomacy, Vatican II

*Angeli Francis S. Rivera, PhD can be contacted at asrivera@ust.edu.ph.