

## TRANSFORMATIONS OF CATHOLIC SACRED SPACE IN THE URBANIZATION IN HANOI

***Abstract:** On the basis of field surveys and the Church's resources, the article mentions the transformation of the Catholic spaces of some parishes and sub-parishes in Hanoi. The trends can be seen from intuitive and non-intuitive angles. For the first trend, the Catholic sacred spaces have had significant changes in the appearance and function of churches. This transformation is likely a process in tune with the process of urbanization, towards the spaciousness, comfort, and modernity. For the second trend, there are changes in the interior sacred space. It is an integration with modern urban life, a reflection of the process of urbanization as well as a dispute and reservation between the sacred and secular spaces.*

***Keywords:** Transformation; sacred space; Catholicism; urbanization; Hanoi.*

### Introduction

For Catholicism, “sacred space” is a relatively open concept, it is not only the sanctuary with the statue of the crucified God and the altar of God in the church, but it is also human psychology and emotions in the ceremony. Talking about the sacred space in the church, it is also necessary to mention the additional factors such as light, space, images, etc. However, when a Catholic symbol is moved or built in a public space, it also creates a new “sacred space” with sensitivity because it is in conflict with cultures beyond it and with other secular values. Therefore, when examining the sacred space of Catholicism in Hanoi in the context of urbanization, we do not just

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define the framework according to a single definition. The sacred space is analyzed according to the characteristics and actual changes of this religion in Hanoi.

Therefore, the article mentions the totality of sacred space when discussing the transformation of the sacred space of Catholicism in Hanoi in the urbanization process. *The Catholic sacred space is the place where praying and honoring God and other Catholic sacred objects such as Saints, Our Lady, etc.* That place is obviously not only confined to the heart of the church but it also includes the complexes around the church campus and the parish. In this article, we examine two main aspects such as transforming the sacred space from the material perspective and the spiritual perspective<sup>1</sup>. We examined documents and conducted some surveys at several churches in Hanoi. In addition, we interviewed some believers to ask for more information on this topic. We paid attention to aspects of urbanization such as migration, land availability, the construction process, and its effects on the increase or decrease of spaces of Catholicism. We limited our research to a few churches belonging to the cathedral parish, mainly in the inner city, which is strongly influenced by the urbanization process.

### **1. Some changes seen from the material aspects**

There are parishes in the inner and suburbs such as the Cathedral of Hanoi, An Thái; Cổ Nhuế (rebuilt), Cửa Bắc (restoration), Hàm Long, Đồng Trì, Hà Đông (restoration in 2017), Hàng Bột, Nam Dư (rebuilt), Phùng Khoang (restoration), Thái Hà (restoration in 2002), Thịnh Liệt, Thượng Thụy (the sub-parish of Văn Phái restoration, the sub-parish of Phú Gia rebuilt the pastoral house), Vạn Phúc<sup>2</sup>.

Based on a field survey of some churches such as Phùng Khoang, Nam Dư, Cửa Bắc, Hàng Bột, Cổ Nhuế and reference to the Yearbook 2016 of Catholic Church (*Niên giám của Giáo hội Công giáo 2016*) and the history of some parishes, we indicate general changes of Catholic spatial aspect through the construction of some parish churches or sub-parish churches in the inner and suburban areas as followed.

### ***1.1. The rise of religious spaces***

Changing of Catholic space in the urbanization of Hanoi is an increase of church space for religious activities. The parishes have taken the following forms:

*New church construction* with a larger area and function on the old church area. In the context of rapid urbanization, land prices in Hanoi are expensive, and the surface area cannot be increased, some churches have increased the space by high building into 2 or 3 floors in order to meet the demand of parishioners' church attend, (churches Cỏ Nhuế, Hoàng Thôn, Tân Lạc<sup>3</sup> for examples). It is rarely seen in traditional church construction before the Doi Moi period. It reflects the fact that in cramped, modern urban spaces, when religious land is gone and limited condition for construction, architectural patterns or traditional church construction can not meet the needs of the believers for religious activities.

*Separating and establishing new parishes and sub-parishes*, then building new parish churches. In fact, for believers, the recognition will be motivation to call for social capital, creating a great spiritual motivation to transform religious facilities, in which the churches' construction. For example, the recognition of Bằg Sở Church as a pilgrimage center of the diocese has made the church to be a massive, majestic place to deserve the title. And it is also the purpose of promoting the Catholic values, further increasing tangible Catholic spaces.

For some special cases such as the parish church of An Thái, because it was too small, the parishioners have built a new church near the old one to meet the needs of religious activities. Building a new one without discarding the old one, because they had land for the new one and remained the old one.

### ***1.2. Building functional buildings***

For Catholicism in Hanoi, the transformation of the religious space can be seen through the increasing of functional buildings to serve the needs of maintaining and developing the religion.

On August 5, 2020, Joseph Vũ Văn Thiên, Archbishop of Hanoi Archdiocese, performed the ceremony and started the construction of the Archdiocese' Pastoral Center on the Archbishop's premises at 40 Nhà Chung Street, Hoàn Kiếm, Hanoi. The old blocks will be replaced by new pastoral houses. The whole building is expected to be built with 10 floors (2 basements) a total area of 19,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The 2-basement space with an area of 6,000 square meters is the venue of major events, the hall can accommodate about 500 people, conference rooms, classrooms, cafeterias accommodate about 400 people in total and garage. They can meet the needs of future development of the Archdiocese. The great hall is located in the middle of the first floor. Next to it is a large living room, a dining room, a traditional room and functional rooms. From the 2nd to the 6th floor is accommodations, with 157 single rooms, 9 special rooms with 44 m<sup>2</sup> area, 4 large dormitory rooms, 50 rooms of the surrounding blocks. The whole campus can accommodate nearly 300 residents. The 7th and 8th floor is the chapel space with a capacity of more than 400 seats. The terrace is a garden with an area of nearly 400 m<sup>2</sup>, overlooking the cathedral, the statue of Our Lady. The whole building is built within 2 years<sup>4</sup>.

Another case is Vạn Phúc parish, since being a parish in 2007, through different generations of priests who have cared for constantly improving and upgrading many items of the church. The construction can be seen as follows:

In October 2010, Mr. Đỗ Đức Hân was the parish priest of Vạn Phúc. He had a meeting with parishioners to make a plan to build a building with an area of 130 m<sup>2</sup>, divided into offices and living rooms. This work was built and completed in the end of 2015. Then, in the summer of 2017, seeing the seriously deteriorated church grounds, the altar and the windows were broken, priest Đỗ Khắc Doãn met with parish members to replace entire windows and the altar, and concreted the church yard. In April 2018, priest Đỗ Khắc Doãn and parishioners have joined forces to build the pastoral house. This pastoral building consists of three blocks (the hall was built in 2003, the rooms added in 2015 and the new house built on the ground of the former kitchen.

These blocks are reinforced and added one more floor to serve the study of catechism and activities of the parish).

The additional construction works are usually on the campus of parishes and sub-parishes. They are often pastoral houses, halls, traditional houses of the parish, status ... These items are usually functional houses for religious activities such as the associations, the catechism classes, ceremonies such as the calendar of saints, marriages, etc.

The most common thing can be seen is the parishes have paid attention to building new pastoral houses or repairing the old one. Currently, the pastoral houses' space has been expanded in most parishes. They are an integrated project for many activities of dignitaries and believers. Besides, they are also a gathering place for catechesis and meetings of groups and associations of the parish.

The expansion of the religious space in the parish churches has the following characteristics:

(1) Maximize the utilities on a fixed area, it is often expanded horizontally and in height, changes the face of many parishes.

(2) These religious spaces aim at educating Catholic values, disseminating Catholic moral values and truths to believers, especially young people. It means that these spaces meet the other needs besides the church attended.

(3) In addition to creating a space for Catholic activities and the education of believers, it is also a space of Catholic culture. Catholics come to these places not only to Mass, to recite, to pray, to practice hymn but it is a cultural space of their own.

### ***1.3. Restoration of sacred spaces***

The change of Catholic religious space in the urbanization context of Hanoi is also manifested in the restoration and upgrading of parish churches.

Based on the results of the parish churches' surveys in the inner city, we found that the restoration was carried out in Phùng Khoang, Hà Đông, Thái Hà churches, especially Cửa Bắc church- a beautiful

church with classical architecture, mixed East-West style- in the heart of the city. Cửa Bắc church is not only a place to celebrate rituals to worship God but it is also a valuable architectural work. Built-in the late 1920s, many vicissitudes of time and tropical climate caused degradation, heavy damage. Therefore, this church has been remodeled from the roof to the inside of the church such as reinforcement, plastering, and painting entirely inside and outside the church; recondition the roof, the electrical system, and the main gate; upgrade the sound system, the pulpit as well as the sanctuary<sup>5</sup>.

The transformation of the Catholic worship space through the restoration of works has the following characteristics:

(1) Restoration is often done with old churches with unique and typical architecture. However, these churches were not too degraded and seriously damaged, they ensured the religious function of the community. The restoration aims at preserving the unique and typical Catholic culture and architecture because these churches are the pride of believers in the context of rapid urbanization, especially in architecture and construction.

(2) This restoration is usually done with the Catholic churches in inner Hanoi because applying for land or building new facilities is often more difficult than rebuilding the churches.

#### ***1.4. Stylized in the layout of the sacred space Cách điệu những bố trí cố định của không gian thiêng***

The functional elements within the church are almost unchanged. For example, the structure of the church with two rows of chairs, the sanctuary with the crucified statue, the altar, the table for scripture always exists. However, my observation of some churches such as Nam Dư, Yên Duyên, Tân Lạc showed that the designs of the basilica of the new buildings are often simple and elegant without details like the old churches. The elements of space, height, and light are still relatively harmonious. There is no church sanctuary that lacks natural light due to the urbanization process because there are spaces around the church. It can be seen changes in materials such as the use of modern materials such as cement, sandstone, paint instead

of wood, iron, or lime as in the past. The churches often have amplified sound systems through amplifiers. The bell towers of new churches in Hanoi (except for Bắng Sỏ parish church) are not separated from the church (they traditionally placed before or after the church). Perhaps due to the limited land fund, the design is the most reasonable. In general, in the diversified transformation of modern urban space, the old or new church in Hanoi is still clearly present and expresses its distinctive identities. This is different from the sacred space of some Protestant denominations, Protestants can rent a modern building as a headquarters for the church or as a place to worship God. It is sometimes difficult to realize it is a religious facility without going inside.

It can be said that the transformation of Catholic sacred space in the urbanization context of Hanoi generally changes in the appearance and increase in other functions of the church. However, the “hardware” of the sacred space is almost unchanged, because it is the symbols of Catholic faith such as the statue of Our Lady, St. Joseph, bell tower.

## **2. Some transformations from a spiritual perspective<sup>6</sup>**

### ***2.1. The increase, consolidation of the sacred space as a response to the modernity***

There is a fact that the rise of secular spaces can affect the sacred spaces of Catholicism. For the parish church of Thinh Liet or Phung Khoang, re-planning, rebuilt of the pond around the church, or re-arranging the Catholic symbols is also to reaffirm the boundary between the sacred space and the secular space<sup>7</sup>. Because without such improvement, the land may be encroached upon, leveled, and then the existence of other forms of construction or residence on it. Some churches have expanded in height, in addition to increasing the use of the facility, they also assert their existence in the heart of the city with many types of planning that break landscapes, if the church does not rise high, it may become small in front of a high-rise building area.

Considering the modernity of a city from the land fund’s aspect, we realized the transformation of Catholic sacred space in the context of urbanization is also the dispute, the conflict between Catholic sacred

space and secular space<sup>8</sup>. It can be seen through many events, the cases such as 178 Nguyen Luong Bang, 42 Nha Chung, Dong Chiem in Hanoi in the past, etc. This transformation is not clear, however, there is a fact that the Catholic Church wanted to expand its space to areas that had previously been used. The rapid urbanization is accompanied by migration, increased pressure on the people. Thus, the government has to expand secular space (for example, annexing Ha Tay province to Hanoi city), utilizing secular spaces in the inner city (for example, the space of factories was relocated), available spaces of religion. The change of intended use related to the Catholic land (the land used by the Church in the past) resulted in a Catholic reaction in various forms such as mass gathering, collective prayer, writing letters, and propaganda in the media to protest.

Modernity has a basic feature in relation to religion that is “the desacralization” (giải thiêng). The desacralization in terms of secular principles mainly belongs to the principles of political conduct between polity and religious organizations. Religions had little opportunity to exist in political principles such as forming a party, participating in national education. The sacredness belongs to personal rights and privacy in specified spaces. For the urbanization process in Hanoi, this phenomenon is a narrowing or keeping of religious spaces in front of secular spaces that are increasing by urbanization. Thus, some spaces that had belonged to Catholicism were very difficult to legalize into sacred space when there was a process of becoming a secular space<sup>9</sup>.

On the contrary, gathering for the praying of some believers and dignitaries has formed “spontaneous sacred spaces”, it also has limited the secular features in the urban process that can affect the sacred spaces. It can be seen through the incident 42 Nha Chung and 178 Nguyen Luong Bang in 2007 and 2008. As a result, the land of “religious origin” cannot be built or used for other purposes.

Finally, the disputed areas became public spaces where both the government and citizens included the Catholics found plausibility. Thus, the transformation of Catholic sacred spaces in these situations

has reduced the increase in urbanization activities such as construction or the utilization of land around the church- which belonged to Catholic sacred spaces.

The formation of Catholic “spontaneous sacred spaces” during land disputes is the reaction to the urbanization process. In fact, it is the conflict between religion and modernity in the context of urbanization. The religious and secular values invade and contradict each other. It can be seen through the case 42 Nha Chung, Hanoi, after many negotiations between the city government and the Archbishop, a garden was formed instead of a project as originally planned.

### ***2.2. Increase of religious activities in a sacred space***

There is another transformation of Catholic sacred space from a spiritual dimension in the context of urbanization in Hanoi, it is the increase of religious activities in a sacred space. This increase includes church attendance and religious activities.

The surveys conducted at a number of churches in Hanoi (before the Covid-19 pandemic) showed that there was an increase in service hours compared to about 10 to 15 years ago in some churches<sup>10</sup>. For example, there are ceremony hours: 5:00 a.m., 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., and 16:00 (for children), 18:00 and 20:00 (for the youth) at the Cathedral on Sunday. Cửa Bắc Church had the following ceremony on Sunday: 06:30, 10:30 (in English), 18:30. Hàng Bội Church had the following ceremony on Sunday: 06:30, 9:00 (for Children), 17:00, and 19:00. Thái Hà Church was probably one of the most celebrated churches on weekends: 05:30, 09:00, 12:00, 19:00 on Saturday; 05:30, 08:00, 10:00, 16:00, 18:00, and 20:00 on Sunday. Thịnh Liệt Church had the following ceremony on Sunday: 06:30, 19:00 (18:30 in Winter), 7:00, 16:30 (for children), 19:00<sup>11</sup>.

In addition to Saturday or Sunday church service, parishes also have various activities of associations. Seminary classes are promoted at the church. These activities increase the use of church space, it creates a religious life with more activities. It is closely related to the expansion of spaces to increase the functionality of a church such as new buildings, high-building churches, parish pastoral houses.

The rise of religious activities reflects the fact that in a modern capital like Hanoi, the religious activities of believers are relatively regular. It is unlike some churches in Europe, there were sparse or absent parishioners coming to pray. Thus, the Catholic sacred spaces shaped by stable religious activities<sup>12</sup>. The participation of all ages in ritual activities, including the elderly<sup>13</sup>, the youth and children can be seen through the ceremony. Therefore, the sociological indicator shows that the Catholic sacred space has not disappeared or has been in inverse proportion to the urbanization context, it seems to be constantly increased and strengthened. It reflects another fact that God still has an important meaning in the hearts of many believers. Moreover, it is also the efforts of local church rulers and the Catholic families to maintain their religious activities in the context of the increasing secularization of the urban space.

The transformation of the sacred space through an increase in hours of activity shows that the need to express beliefs is still important with many people in a transforming city. However, it also reflects on the spiritual support for residents who are suffering from pressure, connecting with the sacred in a sacred space brings balance to their life.

The increase of Mass hours on weekends is closely related to the process of urbanization. In fact, the number of people going to Mass is increasing, they are not only included the Catholics with the origin of Hanoi<sup>14</sup>. In addition to the population growth, the increase in religious activities is also due to the migration flows to Hanoi. Parishes such as Thái Hà, Phùng Khoang, and Cổ Nhuế have a lot of believers who come to Mass are pupils, students, and workers from other provinces who are studying and working in Hanoi. On the one hand, these churches are next to universities and colleges and are in the center and crowded people. On the other hand, many young people from other provinces attend the Mass at Thái Hà Church because there are specialized organizations for Catholics like Catholic students of Bùi Chu diocese, Catholic students of Phát Diệm diocese. There are priests who are in charge of these youth organizations. Catholics go there to exchange, share and act together in church-organized activities such as

volunteering, donating...<sup>15</sup>. That is also the reason some churches have an increase in Mass hours. For example, Thịnh Liệt (Kẻ Sét) parish church has about 800 original parishioners, however, there are about 10.000 believers who participate in religious activities, each Mass hour has nearly 2,000 believers on Sunday. However, “generally, from December 20 to January 15 (lunar calendar), the ceremony becomes sparse because the believers return to their hometown to celebrate Tết, the Mass suddenly becomes empty”<sup>16</sup>.

Thus, the increase in the continuity and density of activities of the Catholic church in Hanoi in the context of urbanization also reflects a shift of many individuals sharing the same religious beliefs in choosing a particular religious sacred space. The convergence of many individuals with the same faith in one place also creates different personal connections such as having more friends, exchanging religious knowledge, and participating in church programs. “At Thái Hà Church, many people become friends and even get married from going to Mass and meeting there”<sup>17</sup>. The sacred space has not been created by believers who had similarities in culture and lifestyle as in the past. The transformation of the Catholic sacred space in the situation of increasing the Mass hours in the same place creates the continuous operation of the church and dignitaries, it also manifests a diversity of compositions and cultures as well as the different levels of religious awareness of individuals who come to Mass compared to before. For example, at Cửa Bắc Church, there is also Mass in English for foreign attendees. “In addition to Cửa Bắc Church, there are also Korean Catholic communities that regularly gather at Nhà Chung”<sup>18</sup>. They can take advantage of visiting this unique architecture as well as attend a Mass hosted by Vietnamese dignitaries. It did not exist before the Doi Moi period, because our country had not been opened and integrated at that time and in a state of the economic and political embargo.

The increase in religious activities in a sacred space has also created motivations and pressures for the Church to transform the space (from a material aspect) such as expanding, rebuilding,

renewing the church. Thịnh Liệt Church has restored the roof and restored catechism classrooms to meet the daily needs of migrants and children. It also created links in promoting or calling for the participation of parishioners in movements of the church. At the same time, it led to a strong communion of faith through connection. For example, in the case of Thái Hà, 178 Nguyễn Lương Bằng in the years 2007-2008, communion in prayer to claim the land was not only among believers and the dignitaries of Hanoi but was also spread to many other dioceses across the country<sup>19</sup>. Sacred space from a non-visual perspective is clearly no longer static within the boundaries of a church or a parish.

As mentioned above, there are the Mass hours for children, young people, it also shows a change in the arrangement of Mass hours and preaching. In the past, the number of parishioners was not much, children used to follow their parents to church. Currently, the allocation of Mass hours demonstrates an attentiveness of faith to believers. The lectures of the dignitaries are in accordance with the perception and psychology of believers. *“The Mass for children is usually on Thursday and it usually takes place from 8 am to 8:30 am on Sunday. Children who participate in this ceremony usually range from 5 to 12 years old, they can be accompanied by an adult. This ceremony is aimed at children, not adults. Before the ceremony, they practice children’s songs”*<sup>20</sup>. Thus, the modernity of the urban area has also led to the specialization of a sacred space to achieve the best effect in keeping and conveying religious faith to believers. It is the best way to foster religious faith for believers in the context of the ascendancy of secular values, which is attractive to young people.

### ***2.3. Recognition of new organizational meanings to increase religious activities***

For religious organizations, the recognition of a cultural or religious significance is the foundation for those recognized places to become busy and bustling. For example, a monument recognized as a national historical relic will easily obtain funding from the State or from socialization to restore, upgrade, and maintain the operation.

That recognition does not only comes from the policy or from the law, but it comes from people. For example, people believe that Saint Tran (Đức Thánh Trần) is sacred and has many powers, so at the beginning of the year many people come to Tran Temple to attend the ceremony, to worship with the hope of good luck for the whole year. During this time, the sacred space of Tran Temple mixes secular services. As the result, this place can be transformed in appearance, expanded space thanks to the investments of state and of social sources.

For Catholicism in Hanoi in the context of urbanization, there are differences to the relics under the management of the cultural sector.

*Firstly*, the increase of a religious space does not depend on the recognition of the cultural sector but it largely depends on ecclesiastical permission. For example, the Ordinary of Hà Nội (Ordinarius) elevates religious groups into sub-parishes, sub-parishes into parishes. Recently, the sub-parishes of Trung Trí and Tân Lạc (had belonged to Hàm Long parish) were elevated to parishes. It reflects an increase in terms of personnel and sacred places such as parish priests, the establishment of associations, construction related to the pastoral houses, churches. Parishioners receive more spiritual care.

*Secondly*, it depends on the belief traditions of the believers. These traditions involve habits and the expression of faith. A typical example is the sacred space of Saint Lê Tùỵ temple and Bằng Sở church<sup>21</sup>. This place worships martyrs, so parishioners often make pilgrimages to ask for grace. Saint Lê Tùỵ is considered as having many miracles, including healing miracles. This site was elevated to the Pilgrimage Center of the Archdiocese of Hanoi. The recognition of the Church led to the transformation of religious spaces in the aspect of facilities. Today, Bằng Sở church and the pastoral center are spacious with grandeur and beauty.

#### ***2.4. The emergence of secular elements in the sacred space***

Will urbanization and modernity affect the traditional values of the church? In fact, any religious organization is facing the encroachment of secular values that diminish religious meanings or sacredness.

The construction of a number of new churches in recent years in Hanoi shows that architectural elements and modern perspectives of design and construction have been seen in religious buildings. The main components that create the sacredness of a church unchanged, however, the simplification of the church's spaces from the arch of the sanctuary to the pedestals, the altar of God is a common feature. That simplicity creates religious spaces with modernity closer to people than the ancient features of church spaces designed from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. *“Currently, many new churches are no longer painted with golden paint in the sanctuary. The space of the church is modern, does not have much dome-shaped anymore. The places of worship are also not fussy, just make a simple pedestal for statues, which closes to the daily space. It is no longer solemn and ancient, losing spiritual and mysterious space”*<sup>22</sup>. There is also an opinion that *“The altar of God, the sanctuary should be decorated with wood, people will feel warmer. For example, you will not feel cold like in some other places when entering the Cathedral of Hanoi”*<sup>23</sup>. Currently, church spaces have been equipped with quite a lot of large-sized television screens to help parishioners sing hymns and respond in services. In some churches with a small area, parishioners have to attend services in the courtyard, they can directly participate in the ceremony through a large projection screen. It is noteworthy that a large number of migrants attend Mass so there is no church space to accommodate all people so believers have to stand in the hallways and in the yard. At that time, the corridor and the yard also create a sacred space because many people participate in the ceremony, sing hymns, pray, etc. However, it is clear that the area inside the church will be reserved for elders and virtuous people who are zealous for religious work. Outside the church, there are children, adults and young people. However, phone ringing, answering calls, even surfing the web still happens to some individuals, mainly young people during ceremonies. They stand outside so they are not supervised or reminded by the pious people who are gathered and silent for the Mass inside of the church<sup>24</sup>. Many people who arrive late to Mass do not feel remorse. Others left as soon as they finished receiving the Eucharist, not attending the entire ceremony<sup>25</sup>.

There are some opinions about the current lectures. Some young people like the short preaching of priests, the language of youth. Old people sometimes don't like these kinds of lectures. If any priest preaches a long lecture with the language of moral, it will be considered rigid. Young people do not like to listen to it. However, the current trend of preaching is to use modern even everyday words in ceremonies. There are some good sermons that are shared internally or posted online for reference, so the sermons sometimes refer to the same source, they are similar to each other, which reduces the depth of the experience of reflecting on God's Word<sup>26</sup>.

Therefore, in the sacred space of a ceremony, in different churches, there are different choices for Catholic migrants. There are Catholic sacred spaces in Hanoi dedicated to young people, migrants, and free-lance workers such as Thai Ha, there are also ceremonies for those who like ancient spaces such as the Cathedral and Cua Bac, and there are spaces mainly for local parishioners such as Hà Đông, Vạn Phúc, Thạch Bích.

It needs to mention the fact that a number of sermons have been integrated topical and political issues into it. However, it is not all parishioners want to listen to these sermons in the church, they think that the sacred spaces should be dedicated to religion, it does not need to discuss political and secular issues.

### **Conclusion**

In the context of urban development, it is inevitable to some extent that the Catholic sacred spaces have been affected by urban changes. On the other hand, urbanization also created the vitality of religious spaces. Moreover, the increase of migrants from other provinces to live in Hanoi has led to a number of Catholics coming to live in parishes, creating pressure to expand the public spaces. Thus, urbanization forced the Catholic community to transform to keep up with the change of society. To some extent, the Catholic sacred spaces have been affected by the changes. However, urbanization can also contribute to promoting and bringing new vitality to the physical and spiritual appearance of Catholic spaces. The concern that urbanization

may encroach on the Catholic sacred spaces has been partly balanced by the perception of urbanization as a positive tool helping to preserve and promote space. For example, as a result of fear of encroaching on the church's land or throwing garbage on the church campus, many parishes have had the motivation to build or renovate<sup>27</sup>.

It is different from the sacred spaces of the traditional religions or of other religions such as Buddhism. Transforming the Catholic space in the context of urbanization in Hanoi mainly depends on the management of the Church. It is a model of community management in order to preserve Catholic values. In addition to the impact of the urbanization process, the transformation of the Catholic space in Hanoi is also influenced by the community of believers and dignitaries rather than the involvement of the State's policies because the Catholic churches often do not belong to the historic or cultural management of the government.

Catholic spatial transformation in the context of urbanization emphasizes the multi-function element of a space. These are spaces that are not only dedicated to the worship of God but they tend to integrate utilities in a sequence of actions of honor, praise, prayer, worship to education. For example, the pastoral house is a space for catechesis, receptions, residences of priests, etc,.. Thus, modernization has led Catholics to aware of the planning of Catholic cultural spaces to maintain identities and traditions in the context of secularization.

Catholic sacred spaces in Hanoi have been affected by the urbanization process. There has also been a process of increasing secular elements into sacred spaces. It reflected a process of receiving new elements of modern society to transmit and preserve religious values. However, it poses problems that the Church has to choose between tradition and modernity, between religious and secular values, between integration and protection of identity. The choice of religious values or the acceptance of a mixture of secular values depends on dignitaries and believers involved in the process of constructing their sacred spaces./.

**Notes:**

- 1 However, this separation is only a convention of analysis, in fact, there is no religious material transformation that does not imply meanings and spiritual values in it. In contrast, the transformation of the material aspects is necessary to give it some spiritual or religious meaning in order to gather and mobilize social resources for that change.
- 2 In 1999, Van Phuc was separated from Sở Hạ parish and became a sub-parish of Đồng Trì parish. During the time of Vu Thanh Canh priest, the sanctuary was repaired and restored. At the end of 2000, the sub-parish of Van Phuc was under the care of Bui Ngoc Tuan priest. At the end of 2002, he discussed with the parishioners to build a hall to serve the catechism of children and meetings. The meeting house was inaugurated in 2003. In April of that year, the priest continued to build the cave and the statue pedestal around the church campus as it is today. In 2004, Vu Thanh Canh priest sponsored to build the church gate. The priest also sponsored all the statues placed in the cave.
- 3 Tân Lạc street, Minh Khai, Hai Bà Trưng, Hà Nội. The sub-parish church belongs to Hàm Long parish.
- 4 See: *Tuần báo Công giáo và Dân tộc*, N0. 2268, from 14 to 20/08/2020, p. 12.
- 5 See <https://cuabacchurch.com/>
- 6 This section analyzes some aspects of transforming sacred space from a spiritual perspective. However, there is no spiritual value that does not exist through material constructions. Thus, the division is only by convention. In this section, the author mentions Catholic facts (material aspect) and discusses the religious significance of those events from a spiritual perspective. The author is also interested in religious emotional transformations; recognition and dealing with the divine have created changes in the material aspects and worshipping.
- 7 According to the data of the author.
- 8 In this article, it is understood as spaces that are not reserved for things related to religion such as prayer, worship, catechesis.
- 9 For example, Garment Joint Stock Company Chiến Thắng at Nguyễn Lương Bằng street.
- 10 According to the data of the author through the interview with believers, they said that there was an increase in the number of hours for Mass.
- 11 Field surveys of the author at the end of 2019.
- 12 We do not have enough data to discuss the quality of believers' faith because there is no sociological survey.
- 13 Early ceremonies are usually reserved for the elderly.
- 14 Families who have settled in Hanoi for three generations or more.

- 15 According to the data of the author and information of the Interview with Mr. Nguyễn Văn B, 46 years old who used to go to Mass in Thai Ha church. Currently, he's religious activities in Thinh Liet church
- 16 Interview with Mr. Nguyễn Văn B, 46 years old who often goes to Mass at the parish church ofThịnh Liệt.
- 17 Interview with Mr. Nguyễn Văn B, 46 years old who often goes to Mass at the parish church ofThịnh Liệt.
- 18 Interview with Mr. Nguyễn Văn B, 46 years old who often goes to Mass at the parish church ofThịnh Liệt.
- 19 The issue of 42 Nhà Chung with the participation of parishioners from Vinh Diocese who came to pray. Thai Ha church related to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, based in 38 Kỳ Đồng, Hồ Chí Minh city.
- 20 Interview with Ms. H, 38 years old who often accompanies her children to Mass at the parishes of Vạn Phúc and Nam Dư.
- 21 Peter Lê Tuyền was born in 1773 in Bằng Sở, Hà Đông, a priest, beheaded on October 11, 1833, in Quan Ban during the reign of King Minh Mạng. On May 27, 1900, Pope Leo XIII honored Peter Lê Tuyền as Blessed. On June 19, 1988, Pope John Paul II canonized him as a saint. Temple of Saint Lê Tuyền in Bằng Sở village, Ninh Sở commune, Thường Tín district, Hanoi.
- 22 Interview with Ms. H, 38 years old.
- 23 Interview with Mr. Nguyễn Văn B, 46 years old.
- 24 Field surveys of the author
- 25 The fata from the interviews of the author with some believers.
- 26 The data from the interviews of the author with some believers.
- 27 This case can be seen in Phung Khoang parish, half of the pond in front of the church being leveled and the campus in front of the church decorated with Catholic statues. Or Làng Tám (Kẻ Sét) church, Thinh Liet parish has renovated the pond to avoid littering and encroachment. In recent years, this pond has been encroached on by surrounding households and discharged polluting wastewater. The parish has repeatedly presented to the local authorities to arrange the road for the surrounding households and to renovate the church's pond. On September 12, 2011, the Archbishop and the parish sent a letter to Hoang Mai district stating that the church is using the front pond of the church according to the certificate of the Administrative Committee of Hà Nội City and asked for a pond embankment to protect the environment and avoid encroachment. The parishioners contributed funds for the renovation along with the approval and financial support of many non-Catholics in the area. And Trung Tri church, the new rebuilding is also aimed at protecting the church's land from being encroached on by surrounding residents in the process of urbanization.

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