Attending to the Movements of My Heart: An Asian American Conversion from “Uniatism” in the “Model Minority”

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Introduction

Until recently, I considered myself an Asian American evangelical Christian. Now I am a Greco-Catholic in the Church of Kyiv. I was received into the Church by chrism-
tion in Richmond, British Columbia on the feast of Ss. Peter and Paul in 2016. The parish there was famously described by the satire personality Michael Schurr, on his show Toronto Television, as the “Chinese mission” of the Greco-Catholic Church. I do not know if that is a good description of our actual demographic makeup, although it is a humorous characterization. Certainly, we have more than a few Chinese people in attendance because Richmond’s population is about 55% ethnic Chinese; in fact, people of Chinese descent make up about a quarter of the residents in the metropolitan area of Vancouver. But among those who regularly come to liturgies at the parish in Richmond, there are also people with backgrounds from the Philippines, Jamaica, Latin America, Japan, and the United States. We are a Canadian parish, which means that we have people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds who attend, and our common language is English – although the epistle is read in both English and Chinese.

I am one of the Chinese members of this community. My background, however, is a little bit more complicated than others who are actually from Hong Kong, the People’s Republic of China or Taiwan. Born in Canada and raised in the United States, my ethnicity is Han Chinese, but of all the languages that I speak, English is my most proficient.

It took becoming Greco-Catholic for me to describe myself as truly Chinese. I describe myself before my conversion as suspended between an English-speaking world and my inner Chinese heart. Now it is all one. This kind of integration required a process of conversion that was both spiritual and in-