

FABC and the Challenge of New Evangelization in Asia

Hong Kong's Cardinal John Tong Hon, one of three prelates appointed by the pope to preside at the Oct. 7-28 synod on evangelization in Rome, has called on Catholics in Asia to renew their faith according to the model of early Church communities in the time of the apostles.

Cardinal Tong made the appeal in his message "FABC and the Challenge of New Evangelization in Asia," which he issued to the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Rome's approval of the FABC's statutes.

The message of congratulations and appeal for continued prayers and support for the Church in China arrived Sept. 24, as the FABC prepared for its X Plenary Assembly in Vietnam on Nov. 19-25 with the theme "FABC at Forty Years - Responding to the Challenges of Asia: The New Evangelization." Cardinal Tong was preparing to participate in the synod. His message to FABC reflects ideas and feelings he shared in his Oct. 8 address at the synod.

In June, Pope Benedict XVI named Cardinal Tong as one of three president delegates to the XIII General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the theme ***New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith***.

The FABC, a voluntary association of bishops' conferences in East, South, Southeast and Central Asia, was officially approved by the Holy See in 1972. It encourages its members to foster solidarity and co-responsibility for the welfare of Church and society in Asia, and to promote and defend whatever is for the greater good.

Today, 19 episcopal conferences in Asia are FABC members: Bangladesh, East Timor, India - CBCI (Catholic Bishops' Conference of India), India - Syro-Malabar, India - Syro-Malankara, India - Latin Rite, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Laos-Cambodia, Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan (ROC), Thailand and Vietnam.

The FABC also has nine associate members in places without an episcopal conference. They are three dioceses – Hong Kong and Macau in China, and Novosibirsk in eastern Russia – and six countries: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia and Nepal.