



**FABC FEDERATION OF ASIAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCES
OFFICE OF CONSECRATED LIFE
(FABC – OCL)**

SYMPOSIUM IV

“Consecrated Life at the Service of New Evangelization in Asia”

**Redemptorist Center, Pattaya, Thailand
July 20- 25, 2015**

In this year of Consecrated Life for the universal Church, we, the 101 delegates of Religious Women and Men, members of Secular Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life, Priests, Bishops, representing 17 countries of Asia, shared our experiences and reflected on the theme of “Consecrated Life at the Service of New Evangelization in Asia.”

Through an earlier questionnaire, FABC-OCL asked religious congregations about their understanding and concrete experiences of New Evangelization, the challenges and megatrends confronting them in Asia, and the pastoral resources, priorities and prophetic role of their communities.

We noted Pope Francis’ call to “wake up the world” through communion and mission, and three characteristics of a Church engaged in New Evangelization: to be a Church of joy and mercy; to be “a Church which is poor and for the poor”; and to be an open Church.

We listened to the addresses of Cardinal Braz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and Archbishop Savio Hon Tai Fai, SDB, Secretary of the Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples.

We listened to country reports that gave us an appreciation of the distinctive context of each country, as well as the common challenges confronting all of us. In Pattaya, we also visited and learned from church-affiliated centers for orphans, differently-abled persons and marginalized women. But most of all, we listened to each other's stories and peak experiences of God's goodness and mercy at the heart of our vocation. We have developed friendships and a feeling of belonging to one family. In this light, we reiterate the call to fidelity, to communion and to mission.

I. Fidelity to Jesus Christ and to the charism of each consecrated community

The New Evangelization thrust of the Church calls us consecrated men and women to return to our "first love", who is God in Jesus Christ to whom we are consecrated and to whom we are to be configured. This means to encounter the person of the Son anew and allow the Spirit to transform us into his likeness so that we can bear witness to him and to the Gospel for all peoples. This implies:

- An integral and life-long formation, which focuses on radical living of the Gospel nurtured by a life of prayer, simple lifestyle, humility, and docility;
- Owning and living our charism;
- Undergoing a process of conversion which involves us as persons and as communities, as well as our structures and institutions;
- Rediscovering the beauty of consecrated life with its joys, hopes and challenges;
- Becoming prophetic in living the Evangelical Counsels;
- Deepening an awareness of God's readiness for reconciliation and our forgiveness at all times;
- Experiencing God in real-life situations (natural and human-made disasters, political issues, etc.) as sources of hope and mercy.

II. Communion

Taking up the Holy Father's directive to religious to be "experts in communion" and prophetic witnesses living by Gospel values, we commit ourselves to living the inclusive love and solidarity that Jesus taught and lived by:

- Promoting a genuinely open and fraternal life in our communities, appreciating the uniqueness of persons and cultures, and helping all persons to grow up to God's dreams for them;
- Appreciating multiculturalism as a value, not as a burden; learning the richness of the cultures and settings where people come from;
- Treating our colleagues, employees and domestic help as treasured partners, creating the atmosphere and the structures for competent lay persons to work with us with justice and respect;
- Promoting unity and healing where there is division, bigotry or violence against groups.

III. Mission

As "missionary disciples," all Christians, particularly religious communities, are urged to "go forth to the existential peripheries." (Pope Francis to all Consecrated People, Nov 21 2014). We are asked to move from our comfort zones to the margins, from mediocrity to passionate commitment.

The new evangelization is to be carried out by means of attraction, not by proselytizing (EG, 114). This means that we do mission following the *via pulchritudinis*, the way of beauty. It is through loving service that the beauty of the Gospel and the Christian faith shines through.

Trusting in God's enabling grace to respond with creativity and effectiveness, we face several megatrend challenges in Asia such as:

- Massive poverty and caring for the least and the lowly;
- Migrants, refugees and human trafficking;

- Indigenous people and preservation of cultures;
- Religious freedom and peace building;
- Family life and responsible parenthood;
- Youth and new ways of communication;
- Care of the environment and the earth as our common home.

We need to persevere in our dialogue with the poor, with peoples of other cultures and religions, as well as with the youth and faith-seekers.

We trust in our brothers in the hierarchy as well as our co-workers among the laity to regard us as equal partners in responding to the signs of the times. We need a profound prayer life and contemplative eyes to see Christ in the faces of the poor and the marginalized.

Commitment

We, consecrated men and women, are being challenged anew to turn our eyes towards the world, “to share the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of women and men of this age, especially those who are poor. . . who are afflicted [discriminated against, and marginalized].” (GS, No. 1) Pope Francis has sounded the call for us, consecrated persons, to wake up the world and shine with the radiance of joy.

We recognize that we often appear as spiritless, lacking the fervor of a radical follower of Jesus Christ. We fix our gaze on Him, and allow Jesus to touch us daily. And He will come to us again; bless us, giving us a new heart.

To be faithful to our vocation as consecrated persons, we need to be:
Mystics: women and men for whom God is our first love and the source of our joy and strength;

Prophets: Convinced disciples for whom the non-negotiable absolute is the Gospel of Jesus;

Servants: Loving and humble men and women who truly put the needs of others above our comforts, and who want to make a difference by creating a world of mutual respect, care and compassion.

Jesus came among us in tender compassion, drew strength from oneness with God, walked through the world excluding no one and used power only to heal and do good. We want to walk through God's world as He did. We rely on God's tender mercy, and on one another, and on all women and men of good will. And we want to support anyone who wants to walk the path as Jesus did.

We seek the motherly intercession of Mary, the best model of discipleship and Star of the New Evangelization. She listened to God's word, trusted God, said a whole-hearted 'Yes'- and then hastened to serve.

Like her, we, too, center our life on God's word, trust God to give us wisdom and strength, and say a full 'Yes.' Then, like her, we hasten to serve those who need us most.

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