

Message of the YAsians of the 5th Asian Youth Day to the Young Asians

Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were sitting there; he then did the same with the fish, distributing as much as they wanted. (John 6:11)

We are YAsians! – the young Asians of the 5th Asian Youth Day, coming from countries all over Asia. We gathered for the grand YAsia Fiesta in the Diocese of Imus (Cavite, Philippines), 20 – 27 November 2009. As one, we ate a lot, we prayed a lot, we played a lot. We shared stories, we laughed, we cried, we made many new friends! We walked, we listened, we talked. We feasted and we celebrated our faith - all in the spirit of coming together, sharing the Word and living the Eucharist.

YAsia Fiesta made us rediscover our giftedness, openness and youthfulness. We experienced again our creativity and richness in talents. Despite barriers especially in language, we were able to reach out to one another and respect our differences. Because we are young, we are full of energy and we recognize that there is so much more in our lives.

We also realized the vast opportunities before and around us. Ours is the generation enriched with technological advancements for our efficiency and convenience. Our Church in Asia is open to learn and collaborate. Also ours is the rich living Christian heritage beginning with Abraham to Joseph, Mary and our Savior Jesus Christ until our present age. Indeed, we young Asians are so privileged and blessed!

Yet we also acknowledge with humility all the difficulties that beset us. In some ways, there seems to be differences in understanding of our value, presence, role and potential as young people both by the Church and by ourselves. Many among us find it difficult to identify ourselves with Christian beliefs and practices even if we were baptized Christians at an early age. Worse, some of us live in circumstances with little or no freedom in religious expression.

We are also burdened by the extremely uneven distribution of wealth in our countries, which results in the inequity in economic and educational opportunities. We too are being negatively influenced by the mass media and new media which in many ways lead us to the loss of self-identity with their emphasis on consumerism and secularism.

We are YAsians! Being nourished by the Word and the Eucharist, we dare to face and overcome these challenges.

We commit ourselves to renew, strengthen and practice our Christian faith in word and deed, prayer and service, even if others may judge and think of us differently. We will deepen our love for the Word of God and the Eucharist to keep the fire of Christ in us burning.

We also commit ourselves to the full development of our potentials and opportunities that we may rise from poverty of self and others.

With our Church, starting from our families, parishes and local Christian communities, we shall build bridges of peace, understanding and love. We confess our limitations and we beg our elders for support. We appeal to our Church to enable us to live our faith.

We proclaim God's kindness as we strongly affirm the power in us, young people – that power to dream, to influence, to make a difference and to change the world. This is indeed our new season of grace!

Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were sitting there; he then did the same with the fish, distributing as much as they wanted. (John 6:11)

We are the fish. We are the loaves – taken, blessed, broken and shared. We are YAsians! And so are you.

(This is the statement read at the Closing Eucharistic Celebration.)