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INTRODUCTION

The theme of the IX Plenary Assembly of the FABC is “Living the Eucharist in Asia”. It was attended by the Papal Envoy & the Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, 66 Bishops including 6 Cardinals from 17 Episcopal Conferences and 6 associate members. There were 5 fraternal representatives from 5 non-Asian Episcopal conferences. Invited were the Bishop-Chairmen of the FABC Offices, priests, men and women Religious, and representatives from the laity. The choice of this theme, which is of perennial and crucial importance for the Church, situates this assembly within the context of significant developments in the Church since the VIII Plenary Assembly in Daejeon, South Korea in 2004.

On April 17, 2003, Holy Thursday, John Paul II published the encyclical letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* to help the Church appreciate again the life that she draws from Christ in the Eucharist. On October 7, 2004 he issued the Apostolic Exhortation *Mane Nobiscum Domine* where he declared the Year of the Eucharist to be celebrated from October 2004 to October 2005. He convoked the XI Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2005 to close the Year of the Eucharist. The theme of the Synod was “The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church.” Upon his holy death, his successor, Benedict XVI promoted the preparations for the Synod, presided over *it* and issued the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* on February 22, 2007. Hence the following reflections which constitute the Final Document of the IX Plenary Assembly of the FABC benefit from a wealth of insight and teaching from the papal magisterium. The Episcopal Conferences of the FABC and its Associate members contributed their valuable observations and comments. Studies on the theme of the Assembly by various offices of the FABC provided valuable information and theological-pastoral insights. Finally the workshops in regional and interregional groups and the lively discussions at the plenary sessions, significantly enriched this Final Document.

Building on the Church’s Magisterium, this Document aims to help Episcopal Conferences and dioceses. We commend it to our Priests and Religious in Asia for their on-going formation on the Eucharist. We also endorse it to diocesan ministries related to the Liturgy, Catechesis and Faith Formation, the training of lay leaders, the formation of Basic Ecclesial Communities and other faith communities. We believe that this Final Document would be a very useful guide in reflecting and acting on how the Eucharist might be better understood, celebrated, and lived in the context of Asia.

For this reason each section includes contextualized pastoral implications that Christian communities would find helpful towards living the Eucharist in Asia.

General Asian Pastoral Context

The reflections of the IX Plenary Assembly arise from the realities transpiring in various parts of Asia. From one perspective, these phenomena could be interpreted as the Asian search

for life, the Asian celebration of life and the Asian struggle for true life. We rejoice to see in Asia signs of vibrant life in the fecundity of creation, the wealth of cultures, the depth of religious and ethical traditions, the strength of new economies, the progress in technology, and the promotion of human dignity and peace. We discern the Holy Spirit's lively presence in the religious, social, cultural, political and economic movements that safeguard the rights of the poor, children, women, migrants, laborers and the integrity of creation. But we are also deeply aware of the ambivalence of some developments that at first glance promise life, but ultimately deal death. The increasingly open economies, with concomitant rapid industrialization, have devastated rural agricultural communities. New forms of poverty have caused migration and the break up of families. With the unrestrained flow of capital came the unabated entry of information, new mindsets and priorities that are altering the cultures of Asia, especially the youth, but not always for the good. In many parts of Asia, political power still remains a tool to dominate rather than to serve. We lament the merging of repressive politics with economic prowess, and of religious affiliation with cultural chauvinism. In the midst of the ruins of life brought about by wars, violence and displacement of peoples, we are amazed at the Asian capacity to celebrate life and to hope for a better life. The Church journeys with the peoples of Asia as they search for true life.

Rooted in the living Tradition of the Catholic Church, especially in the recent papal magisterium and the realities of life in Asia, our reflections will focus on living the Eucharist in the context of Asia. "Living the Eucharist" springs from and in turn nurtures "believing in the Eucharist" and "celebrating the Eucharist". Our discussion on "living the Eucharist" is deliberately set within the framework of a living faith and a living celebration. Although Church teachings and liturgical sources are not always quoted in this document, they serve as the wellspring for the Eucharistic form of life proposed to believers and the Church. But far from neglecting the concerns of life in Asia, we bring and relate them to our faith in the Eucharist and to its celebration. We never leave behind the dreams, hopes and pains of our people when we come to the Eucharist. In fact, our communion with Jesus in the Eucharist renews our engagement with the realities of life in our world and gives form to Christian life in the world. Thus our present reflections attempt to follow the methodological "circularity" of life-belief-celebration-life.

A. THE THEOLOGICAL-PASTORAL FLOW OF THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

1.) The Eucharist: The Life of Jesus as our Life and Communion

Living the Eucharist is not a mere appendix to Eucharistic faith and celebration. The Eucharist is the very life of Christ given to us to become our life. In the Bread of Life discourse in John 6:22-60, Jesus declares that he is the Bread come down from above. He is the *gift* of the Father, with the *mission* to give *life*, eternal life. His gift is the very life of God being shared with humanity.

But this requires from us a response of faith inspired by the Holy Spirit. In “eating his body and drinking his blood,” we forge a *communion of life* with the Triune God, a new *covenant* in the blood of Christ (cf Lk 22:20). In Asia, where the characteristic mode of the Church’s existence is that of dialogue, the Eucharist is a unique experience of God’s dialogue with us and our response to God: a dialogue of life, a dialogue of love.

This dialogue of life and love takes on a liturgical form in the Eucharist. We see, hear and touch the life of Christ and its dynamism in the celebration of the liturgy. Its various parts enable us to share in the rhythm of Christ’s life offered for our salvation. We realize that the Eucharist is not a sacramental memorial of only one part of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. His whole life, culminating in the Paschal Mystery of His suffering, death, resurrection and final glory, was a pleasing sacrifice or offering of love to the Father for the salvation of the world. His sacrifice is both an act of obedience to the Father and compassion towards weak sinners. His was a sacrifice of adoration and service. His life was Eucharist.

Every Eucharist embodies in a sacramental way the life of Jesus so that we who celebrate it may live as Jesus lived. The Holy Spirit frees our hearts to so that Christ may live in us as we journey towards the fullness of the Reign of God. We give thanks to God for making us share in Jesus’ life in the Eucharist.

Following the flow of the Eucharistic celebration, we shall look at the Eucharistic life offered to us by our Eucharistic faith.

We recognize that in Asia there are major ancient eastern Eucharistic rites, such the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara, both of which we celebrated during the Plenary Assembly. For purposes of simplicity and pastoral understanding this Final Document follows the sequence of the Latin Eucharistic celebration.

B. INTRODUCTORY RITES

1.) Gathered as a Family in God: A Countersign to Divisions

The first moment in the Eucharist is the gathering of a community or a family. We believe that it is the Lord *who* calls, invites, and convokes. The initiative belongs to God. Therefore, we acknowledge that the coming together happens in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. It is God who “hosts” this sacrificial meal, the memorial of Jesus’ saving Pasch and the pledge of the heavenly banquet in the Reign of God. As evidenced in the life of Jesus, meals were one of the privileged occasions to gather a people, not just to taste food but also “to taste” the Reign of God.

God’s invitation, unlike ours, gathers for the Eucharistic meal people from different economic, social, political, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds and even of different geographic

and time zones. A new family of God's children, constituted by grace and faith, happens in our midst. This is *ecclesia*. The fruit of God's encompassing love is a community of brothers and sisters, sharing the common dignity of being God's children. God's presence in grace generates brotherly and sisterly presence. This is a foretaste of the new humanity that we are longing for. We become a family because we are responding to a call beyond us. The Eucharist teaches us that if we are able to go beyond our petty concerns, if we only heed the call beyond us, then maybe we can communicate with one another a neighborly, brotherly and sisterly presence.

i.) Contextualized Pastoral Implications

One of the strong characteristic features of Asian cultures is belonging and loyalty to one's family, clan, community and ethnic group. This is celebrated most often in meals. Never only about food, meals in Asia foster and renew bonds that last for generations. Significant moments in life like birth, naming, marriage and farewells are marked by meals through which the community shares in these "life moments". The practice of Buddhist monks of begging for food and sharing it with the community conveys values worth emulating.

As communities gathered in the Eucharist, Christians are called to live as a gathering rather than *as* a scattering community. We are to contribute to the strengthening of community life in Asia amidst the threats to it. Individualistic and pragmatic lifestyles inhibit frequent family meals and their capacity to generate community. In some Asian cultures, meals reflect a rigid caste system that prevents sharing of food and life with people of another caste. Loyalty to family, ethnic group, nation or faith community has often led to rejection of, discrimination and violence towards "outsiders". Migrant workers, refugees, and multitudes of displaced peoples search for welcoming communities as much as for food.

Living the Eucharist involves a new way of coming together as a family because it is God who gathers. We commend and support small Christian communities, basic human communities, ecclesial movements, religious communities, parishes, dioceses and other committed people that sustain the Eucharistic life of gathering God's children in situations of fragmentation. Formation in Eucharistic faith and spirituality needs to highlight the community-forming aspect of God's action in the Eucharist and to avoid a narrow individualistic view of participation in the Eucharist. Priests are called to live their Eucharistic faith by developing a sense of family in the communities they are serving so that the faithful, especially the poor and neglected may find a home in the Church. Religious communities, by their international character, are to witness to the power of the Holy Spirit to gather peoples of different nations, tongues, and cultures.

2.) Recognizing God, Acknowledging our Sinfulness (Penitential Rite)

Born anew as a response to God's call and grace in the Eucharist, the Church is the icon of the Trinity: the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. But the grateful recognition of this reality intensifies our sense of being a community of sinners. Even during Jesus' ministry, it was God's love manifested in Him that made people like Simon, Levi and Zacchaeus realize their sinful situation. Much like the prodigal son in Luke 15, we also waste our inheritance.

So we come back to the Father, bearing the burden of sin, as we say, "I confess to Almighty God..." "Lord, have mercy." We admit our sinfulness, however, not only to God but to our brothers and sisters as well. We appeal to them "to pray for us to the Lord our God". No one pretends to be holier than the other. We recognize our participation in the common brokenness of humanity. Ours is a community of needy supplicants before God and each other. We are all poor. We all need God's mercy. We all need our neighbors' prayers. We dialogue with God and neighbors in humility.

i.) Contextualized Pastoral Implications

The Asian soul is often characterized by its search for the Divine and for life. Such a search, present in the religious and philosophical traditions that originated in Asia, is at the root of humility, non-violence, non-aggression, patience and harmony. An ethic that covers relationships, governance and lifestyle flows from the wisdom of these traditions. But we are also fully aware of the temptations posed by delusions of power and deceptions of self-righteousness. The violence, discrimination and wars that are destroying the natural and human landscapes of Asia show how much we have succumbed to lies and pretensions. When we start thinking of ourselves as the source and guardian of goodness while viewing "the others" as the cause of evil and error, we are deluded. Domination starts replacing the sense of community.

Living the Eucharist includes seeing the presence of God's action and grace in other people. Given the plurality of cultures and faiths in Asia, the Eucharist opens our eyes to the manifestations of truth and goodness among those who are different from us. At the same time we rejoice at the truth that has been entrusted to us.

Prejudice has no place in a Eucharistic life. It does not follow, however, that truth is to be sacrificed in a facile accommodation of others. On the contrary, we hold on to truth but in charity and humility, with the awareness that in spite of the truth we profess, we also have contributed to the misery and problems of the world. So we will not ruin each other. We will not be agents of discrimination. We will share our blessings as we share our sorrows. We will extend mercy as we plead that it be given to us. Ecclesial communities and movements that untiringly promote reconciliation and dialogue in conflict-laden parts of Asia disclose a vital aspect of the Eucharistic life.

A community that lives up to the call to be the seed of redeemed and reconciled humanity renders fitting praise to God: "Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth." A community fully alive gives glory to God.

C. LITURGY OF THE WORD

1.) Listening to the Story of Jesus

The gathered community will now be fed with the Word of God for "human beings do not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." The Bread of Life, Jesus, is received from the table of the Word and the Eucharist (cf. DV 21). It comes as no surprise that the Eucharist involves listening to the Word of God. Jesus, during his public ministry, taught and preached the Word of God. He continues to instruct us and we listen to Him, the Son of God who possesses the words of eternal life (cf. Jn 6:68-69).

At this point we ask: what does the Word of God awaken in us? It is faith. Faith is born out of and strengthened by listening to the Word of God. St. Paul states: "Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Romans 10:17). In an age where the printed word and "visual" word of mass media and information technology play a significant role in shaping beliefs, opinions, mentalities, trends and lifestyles, we should all the more explore the power of the Word of God in generating a life of faith.

In 2006 the Asian Mission Congress held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, dwelt on "Telling the Story of Jesus in Asia" as a mode of mission. We can, therefore, consider the Liturgy of the Word as a storytelling moment of the Eucharistic memorial. God speaks. God always initiates a dialogue. God tells God's story of love for us. God's Word acts. God's Word is alive. God's Word effects life. In the Liturgy of the Word, the story of God's revealing and saving action in history is proclaimed through the readings from the Old Testament, the New Testament and especially the Gospel of Jesus who is the fulfillment of God's revelation.

The response to the living memory contained in God's Word is faith. Faith is needed to encounter the Risen Lord in the sacramental signs and in ordinary life. But it is only in the Holy Spirit who guides us into truth (Cf. Jn 16:13) that we come to faith in Jesus as Lord (cf. I Cor 12: 3). Human wisdom is insufficient for us to come to faith in the Word of God. We need to realize that faith involves listening to the Word, accepting it in one's life, allowing it to transform one's life, acting on it and sharing it with others. Faith goes beyond intellectual assent. *It is equated* with obedience to God, an obedience that entails radical conversion. Faith changes one's life. It becomes one's life.

i.) Contextualized Pastoral Implications

In Asia, the sacred writings and books of various religions are never treated merely as reading materials. They are meant to draw from one's heart a response of adherence at the very least. The reverence with which sacred books are approached and listened to

reveals a belief that more than human words are involved. This Asian character blends well with the openness to the Word necessary for the Eucharist to become a true experience of living faith. But even outside of their religious usage, words mean a lot to Asian peoples. People are expected to be true to their words. When uttered with sincerity, words evoke trust and foster relationships. In the same way, the Word of God proclaimed especially at the Eucharist is meant to strengthen the bond between Christ and the Church. When the attentiveness to words characteristic of Asian peoples is brought to the liturgy of the Word, then hearts would be rekindled in faith and love (cf. Lk 24:32).

Moments of silence can help the community be open to the workings of the Holy Spirit as the Scripture readings are proclaimed. Contemplating the Word of God, the minds of the faithful are transformed by spiritual wisdom. Time for reflection and thanksgiving can allow the heart to savor the faith that is renewed by the God's Word. Formation in faith should inculcate the spirituality of listening to God's Word that leads to acts of justice and goodness.

Readers or lectors should also be formed both in spirituality and skills so that they could serve the Word of God and the community in a worthy manner. We also praise God for the growing numbers of small or basic Christian communities centered on the Word of God. In their neighborhoods or gatherings, they do not only pray the Word of God but they also make it the principle of discernment for personal and communal action.

The homily is a matter of urgent concern for the faithful. They rightly expect to be nourished by the life-giving Word through the homily. The preacher *is engaged* in the dialogue between God and the community. In some sense, the homily is the preacher's dialogue with the community after he has listened to God's Word. A fellow believer to whom has been entrusted a pastoral charge, the preacher presents a testimony of faith. Prayer, study, reflection and familiarity with the situations of life encountered by the community must go into the preparation and preaching of the homily. The preacher's witness of life can never be divorced from the effectiveness of his preaching.

As the evolving cultures of Asia are bombarded with words promising life, a good and easy life, the most vulnerable victims of empty promises are the youth and the poor. Our Eucharistic celebration teaches us to be attentive so that we may be able to discern from the many words around us what word we would choose to live by. Through the homily, the Table of the Word can become a school for discerning the life-giving Word from words that deal death.

2.) Building a Common Memory (Retelling the Word)

The Scripture readings at the Eucharist come back according to cycles and feasts. After a certain period of time, the readings become repetitive. The recurrence of the same texts might

bore some of the faithful. But the repetition is necessary for the faith. The recounting of the story of God's action in salvation history is not meant to be a sheer transmission of information. Rather it is a living memory that is passed on with the Holy Spirit as sure guide. When the hearer freely accepts the living Word in faith, he/she becomes a part of the Church's living memory of God and God's saving action.

The Eucharistic memorial is not confined to the narrative of the Supper. The Liturgy of the Word is keeping memory as well. Every time the story is told, we are invited again to respond to the God who has loved and saved us. And by remembering, we are united by the Holy Spirit with the communities of the past who remembered before us and transmitted their memory to us. By the same token, we are in communion with Eucharistic communities all over the world that remember God's marvelous deeds through the same Word. We are also already in union with the future generations of Christians who, by listening to the Word of God, will remember the same things.

The faith generated by the Word of God is not simply personal and individual. It is also communal faith. As we receive and transmit memory, we constitute our community as a community of faith. Social scientists emphasize the vital role of common memory in the survival and strengthening of families, clans, communities, nations and even business corporations. It is interesting to note that people are usually gathered in family or community meals, on which occasions their stories are also gathered into a "reservoir" of common memory. So the Word of God does not only evoke faith in the hearts of believers, it also makes of believers a community of faith centered on common memory of the good things the Lord has done.

i.) Contextualized Pastoral Implications

The traditional societies of Asia put value on the telling of stories and narration of epics. Aside from fostering cohesion among the members of a clan or tribe, these memories are effective bearers of community identity, values and belief. The initiation of adolescents into adulthood often includes long hours or days of listening to the living memory of the community. But due to various social factors and constraints, members of the same community do not hold the same memories anymore. The infrequency of family meals, the massive migration of peoples, the dispersal of victims of armed conflicts are just a few phenomena that have greatly hindered the flow of stories into the communal stock of memory. There are many people whose personal stories will never be shared. People who do not become part of a community's memory lead lonely lives.

3.) God's Authorship of the Word

Every Eucharistic community can find joy and solace from the common memory that it shares with past and present generations of Christians. Thanks to the Word of God, no

Christian is alone. This consolation, however should lead to Christian sensitivity towards people who have been erased from the memory of the world, those who are not remembered and cannot remember. Our memory of God's graciousness impels us to live in solidarity with the forgotten, so numerous that we wonder why they do not come to mind. Our faith proclaims they will always be part of God's story and memory. Far from being mere sentimentalism, remembering the forgotten is an act of living faith in God in whose saving memory they always remain.

We believe that the Sacred Scriptures are truly God's Word consigned into writing through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God, the story of God's action in salvation history comes in the form of human words and stories. So the Psalms, the Book of Isaiah, the letter of Paul to the Philippians are truly God's Word. After the proclamation, we do not hesitate to respond, "Thanks be to God!" But there is no denying that it was David, Isaiah, Paul and other human authors who put the Word of God in written form. So real is their authorship that the writings bear the marks of their unique circumstances, styles and temperaments. It is faith that makes us see God's authorship in humanly composed writings. The Church's faith, guided by the same Holy Spirit of scriptural inspiration, has led her to discern God's true authorship. We are before the mystery of divine communication here. God communicates His word through simple human instruments and their stories.

4.) Suppressing Stories in Asia

This important experience of faith teaches us to listen constantly to God's communication through the stories of other people. The faith that comes from listening involves the human stories and words through which God speaks. In some parts of Asia simple but threatening human stories are being suppressed. The truth they contain frightens those whose self-interests might come to an end if the truth prevails. Suppression of stories takes various forms like dictatorial rule, crackdown on media, arrest and killing of those branded as subversives, alteration of the results of elections, and revision of history books. But what do we fear in those stories? We are afraid of what God wants to communicate. The Eucharistic faith gives us the courage to listen to and even welcome these stories into our common memory. Listening to God speaking to us in the signs of the times, we discern how God's story is unfolding before us through these human stories.

5.) A Joyful but Risky Act (Professing a Common Faith)

The Lord has spoken. We now respond. On Sundays and solemnities or feasts, the recitation of the Creed follows the proclamation of the Word and the homily. There is no better response. The profession of faith has a Trinitarian structure, the focus of which is the mystery of Jesus Christ. The formula highlights the economy of salvation already revealed in Scriptures. It nurtures the living relationship of the believers with the God who saves. Doctrinal precisions present in the Creed reflect the discernment that the Church has undergone through the centuries in order to settle and propose the authentic content of the

Christian faith. The Creed therefore is also another form of the Church's common memory that binds us to the communities of earlier ages. In union with the Church of generations past and with the believers of the future, a Eucharistic community joyfully professes its faith in the Triune God. By such a confession of faith, they also hold on to a renewed understanding of the world, of human beings and of human destiny.

i.) Contextualized Pastoral Implications

The Creed as a response in faith to the Word of God and as a bearer of the Word of God should be taught to the faithful, particularly to children and the youth, not only as a set of formulations of truth to be believed in but also as a vision of life arising from one's faith. Presented that way, catechesis on the Creed would integrate content with worship and ethic.

It is unfortunate that in some parts of Asia, professing one's faith can be a dangerous act. Aside from facing the rejection coming from relativism that denies an objective basis to faith or from various forms of practical atheism, we encounter disquieting incidents of religious intolerance, disrespect for religious freedom and outright persecution of Christians. The Asian martyrs and missionaries from other lands who met martyrdom in Asia on account of their profession of faith in Jesus Christ witness to the extraordinary strength that faith could give. The Christian communities would be greatly enriched by getting to know their lives and testimony.

We address to regimes that suppress the Christian faith and to religious groups that discriminate against people of religions different from theirs an appeal to respect this most fundamental of human aspirations and rights, namely to profess one's faith openly in word, worship and life. To Christians and people of other religions who face persecution, rejection and discrimination, we send a message of hope and solidarity.

6.) Imploring God who Listens (Prayers of the Faithful)

The community now addresses God with its prayers for the needs of the Church, of the world, of suffering and poor people and of the community itself. The spiritual tradition of the Church, rooted in Sacred Scriptures, extols the prayer of petition as an act of faith. It expresses our faith in a God whose Providence continues to guide creation, humanity and history towards the fulfillment of God's saving design. At the same time, it articulates our self-understanding as creatures in constant need of God's love and protection. We unite ourselves with the whole of humanity in turning to the source of life for the sustenance of that very life. The petitions, uttered in the spirit of adoration and acknowledgement of the true God, express our communion with all peoples whose needs we make our own. Finally, in the prayers of the faithful the Church declares its belief that God does not only speak but also listens, especially to those in need and to those who are not heard in society. God is truly a God of love-in-dialogue.

i.) Contextualized Pastoral Implications

One of the alarming situations in Asia is the systematic silencing of people's voices coupled with a deliberate self-imposed deafness on the part of those who should hear. Living the Eucharistic faith involves the Church's listening to the voiceless the way God listens to them with predilection. The readiness to listen to the poor manifests the Church's preferential love for them.

Furthermore, the Church should lend its voice to be the voice of the muted peoples of Asia. Through her their cries and petitions reach the ears of the God who can accomplish more than any human being could. The Church should not tire of invoking God's help to make the power brokers of society hear the weeping of the weak. But the Church should realize that before she could be the voice of the voiceless, she should be a good listener to them. Then the prayers of the poor become the prayers of the Church.

7.) Signs of Hope in a World of Injustice (Offering of the Gifts)

The Bread of Life, Jesus, has fed his community with the words of everlasting life. The Eucharistic celebration now moves to the Table of the Body and Blood of Christ. We will link this portion of the liturgy from the Preparation of the Gifts until the closing Doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer with living in hope.

Christian hope concerns the fulfillment of human life and creation in the Reign of God. In the Paschal Mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection, we are certain that our quest for life and meaning will not be in vain. The victory of God over sin and death has been sealed in Jesus Christ. Our hope is not based on a wish or an empty promise. We can hope because what we hope for is true and is at work now. Absurd and meaningless situations are often the privileged settings for living and witnessing to the virtue of hope.

The preparation of the gifts celebrates hope in Jesus' transforming power for creation and human labor. Holding the bread, the priest says, "Blessed are you Lord God of all creation! Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, fruit of the earth and work of human hands. It will become for us the Bread of life." A similar prayer of thanksgiving is rendered for the wine, "fruit of the vine and work of human hands that will become our spiritual drink."

As bread and wine are prepared, we recognize them as the fruits of creation and work of human hands, all signs of God's continuing gift of life. In the power of the Holy Spirit, these symbols of creation and human labor will become the Bread of Life and the "Work of Salvation" that would inspire us to share these gifts to humanity. The Eucharist brings to the fore a world filled with gifts. God the Creator shares His gift of love concretely through bread and wine. But it is not only the God of creation that is acknowledged. The earth is God's

partner in providing us with bread and wine. The human hands that worked to transform the fruit of the earth into bread and wine are incorporated as well into the great action of love and sharing of gifts.

The simple bread and wine we use at the Eucharistic celebration do not deserve to be present on tables prepared for exquisite dining. But we are gathered around a different table. The Eucharist is the proper place for the purity of the gift present in plain bread and wine to shine forth. Scripture attests to the workings of God's grace in small and ordinary persons, people or events, bringing hope to the lowly and the poor (cf. Lk 1:46-55). The transformation that the Holy Spirit will effect on these simple gifts brings sure hope to creation, to the earth and to laborers. Their gifts will become the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation, the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ that re-creates the world and humanity.

i.) Contextualized Pastoral Implications

The Eucharist opens our eyes to the giftedness of existence. Living in the Eucharist impels us to retrieve this key vision. In Asia, as in many parts of the world, the mindset of commodity has replaced that of gift. Human beings, relationships, work and meaning have been subjected to untold suffering due to the "commodification" of life. Helplessness and meaninglessness often result from this tragedy.

Creation and human labor have become victims as well. The Eucharist restores belief in the Creator and respect for creation and human labor as gifts, not as commodities to be manipulated for consumerist goals. Disrespect for creation and human labor leads to destruction and death. Only in the recognition of their giftedness will they become truly signs of the Creator's life and love.

Greed has robbed creation of its mystery. Profitability has supplanted a sense of awe before the grandeur of God's work in nature. Human labor does not command the respect due to God's partners in administering the world. One of the most abused sectors of society is that of the laborers. Denied just wages and dignified working conditions, workers are sacrificed on the altars of avarice and revenue. The earth cries out to God. Laborers cry out to God. In the Eucharist, we are certain that God hears them and through the Holy Spirit's re-creating action, God will transform the earth and human work again.

Paradoxically bread reminds us not only of the gift of food but also of hungry and malnourished people, of scandalous gaps in the lifestyles of the rich and the poor, of exorbitant prices of goods beyond the buying capacity of the poor, and of the helplessness of working parents to provide a bright future for their families. It is puzzling that wine, sign of the festive character of life, calls to mind images of wild drunkenness, of wives beaten up by alcoholic husbands, of victims of intoxicated attackers and of families going bankrupt due to vice.

But there is hope in the Holy Spirit's action and in our appreciation of simplicity. There is hope in the healing of creation through the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Mary is a witness to hope. God looked upon her lowliness. Through the grace of His presence, she would be called blessed by all generations.

An urgent concern for the Christian churches is how to bring stewardship of creation to the core of Christian spirituality and discipleship. While caring for the earth is universally recognized as necessary for the survival of the planet and the human race, it is often perceived as nothing more than a worthy cause. Catechists, biblical scholars, theology professors, spiritual directors, pastors, religious communities and basic ecclesial communities should work together to provide formation in stewardship of creation as constitutive of Christian discipleship. The way we deal with creation influences our dealings with human beings too. There is much to learn from the wisdom and practice of other faiths with regard to caring for the earth.

D. THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

1.) The Institution Narrative: From Betrayal to the Sacrifice of Self-Giving and Service

The Eucharistic Prayer is ushered in by the Preface and hymn to the triple holy God. This is a fitting introduction to the great Thanksgiving prayer of the Church where we recall the Supper Jesus took with his disciples before He died. It is in the Holy Spirit's power that we remember and "remind the Father" of the sacrifice that has made our peace with Him. Jesus is our peace! By the same Holy Spirit, the gifts of bread and wine become the gift of Jesus' abiding presence among us. The Supper sheds light and meaning on the death of Jesus.

What do we remember? The Church is admirable in its courage to remember. She could have glossed over embarrassing details but she chooses not to. So we declare, "On the night he was betrayed, he took bread..." (cf. Eucharistic Prayer III). The Eucharistic Memorial is an invitation to humanity to a healing and purifying remembrance so that we can foster true communion among peoples. Humanity is wounded. It wants to forget its wounded past. It suppresses memories that disturb. The Eucharist teaches us to bravely confront even painful memories. For in every dark memory, we see the action of God transforming nights of betrayals into dawns of reconciliation. Neglect or denial of shameful memories does not make them disappear. Rather they erode our peace and hope.

Remembering Jesus' commitment to and perseverance in His life-giving mission, we are filled with "memories of the future promise", already begun but awaiting fulfillment. The Eucharist enables us to confront the darkness of the past with the hope provided by the victorious love of God in Jesus. Betrayal and death can be the spring of life for oneself and for others, if like Jesus we offer a sacrifice of life acceptable to the Father.

The world is torn apart by betrayals. The race for more wealth, power and might makes traitors of people and nations. Blinded by false promises of life, we cease to see the gift of friends. The victim is tempted to retaliate. But the swift satisfaction that it brings quickly turns into bitterness that in turn breeds future betrayals.

In the Supper before he died, Jesus transformed the betrayal of his life into a gift of life. His gift was not an object or thing but His very body and blood. He was teaching the disciples that His humiliating death on cross was truly a loving offer of life. True life and salvation comes from self-giving, the sacrifice of self-donation so that others may live. Betrayal kills others while self-gift makes other truly live. Self-giving, however must be life-giving to the giver himself or herself. This happens only when there is full freedom and love in the giving and a worthwhile cause to which one gives. "No one takes my life from me. I lay it down freely," Jesus says (Jn 10:18). The Eucharistic faith affirms that the way to life is not to sacrifice others for one's ambitions, but to freely and lovingly offer one's life as a living sacrifice to God and the good of others. We see in Jesus' sacrifice of self in freedom and love the ethic of non-violence. Love does not victimize, but transforms victimization into self-donation. Victimization stops because love has conquered it.

At the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, we re-enact or memorialize the washing of the feet recounted in the Gospel of John (cf. Jn 13). During the time of Jesus, the lowliest of slaves performed this act not out of love but out of a duty *sometimes* brutally imposed on them. Jesus, however, did it freely. His giving of His Body and Blood was not only a deed of love but also a deed of service. His death was the culmination of His earthly service. Jesus, the Teacher and Lord, transformed Himself into a servant so that His disciples may also be transformed into servants washing each other's feet (cf. Jn 13:13-15).

i.) Contextualized Pastoral Implications

The Institution narrative of the Eucharistic Prayer enables us to live in hope: hope for those oppressed by bitter memories and for victims of betrayals. Jesus has shown the way. The histories of Asian peoples and nations speak of greatness, valor, wisdom and self-sacrificing love. We should keep these memories alive. We should proclaim them from generation to generation. Yet, we also need purification or healing of memories especially between Asian nations that have had experiences of betrayals and conflicts. We cannot allow bitterness to dictate human and international relations and public policy. Christians who live in Eucharistic hope can serve as catalysts in such healing. The good will generated by regional and continental gatherings of bishops, priests, religious and youth, ecumenical meetings and inter-religious fellowship is like a balm that soothes wounded memories. Small Christian and human communities that forge sentiments of peace among neighbors give us hope. We call on Catholic schools and institutes of learning to help in the healing of memories through a truthful yet balanced teaching of history to the youth. Ultimately our witness to Jesus' self-giving, non-

violence and service would rekindle hope that the seeds of a more humane society already exist on Asian soil. Transformation can happen because it has happened and continues to happen.

We need to mention the disturbing spread of violence all over Asia. Homes, schools, streets, places of worship and recreation spots have not been spared. As a cult of youthfulness and beauty spreads, their disciples delay aging and death at all cost. Yet, the arms race, poverty, abortion, domestic violence, illegal drugs and environmental pollution deal death with incredible ease. Living in hope in Jesus who died so that others may live, the Church must defend life in all its stages and untiringly work so that an ethos of life may pervade our land.

We also lament the growing sex tourism, sale of body organs, unbridled experimentation, prostitution, human trafficking, and mail-order brides that desecrate the human body. Equally abhorrent is the mutilation of the body as a method of criminal investigation. People with a missing arm or foot or eye remind us of the inhumanity of war. Jesus showed that the dignity of the human body is in its being a gift for the life of others. Our Eucharistic hope urges us to resist all forms of objectification of the human body, especially that of women and the girl-children. The Church's educational and catechetical ministry should form among the faithful a deep conviction about the noble vocation of the body. We gladly share it with the wider public so that legislation and media practice could benefit from it. Church communities should intensify its ministry to the differently-able. Lest we become arrogant, we remind ourselves that in all of these endeavors it is the Holy Spirit's action that effects transformation.

2.) Communion with the Living and the Dead

We invoke the Holy Spirit twice in the Eucharist Prayer. The first instance is over the bread and wine so that they will become the Body and Blood of Christ. The second moment is when we call on the same Spirit of Jesus to transform the community "nourished by the Body and Blood Christ" into "one body, one spirit in Christ." The Church cannot become the communal Body of Christ through its own efforts alone. Helpless in effecting that transformation, she relies on the initiative of the Holy Spirit of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2) who showers various gifts on the members for the good of the one body (cf. I Cor 12). The communion that is generated by the Holy Spirit is not confined to the local congregation. By virtue of the one Eucharist and the one Spirit of the one Lord, a local community is brought into the communion of the Universal Church. Our unity goes beyond ethnic, cultural, economic, or political identities. The mention of the names of the Pope and local ordinary testifies to that universal communion.

The Eucharistic Prayer includes a memorial of the living and the departed. The belief in the communion of saints comes to mind. We remember the saints who now share in the

triumph of Christ's resurrection. Our remembrance of them inflames the hope that our earthly journey will find its completion in Jesus. By remembering the departed, we hope in God that they may share in the reality of Christ's resurrection as the saints do. Our Eucharistic communion transcends human boundaries, even those set by death.

i.) Contextualized Pastoral Implications

As we have indicated earlier in this document, Asia continues to search for a new way of being one people amidst diversity. The danger of turning diversity into an occasion for division and conflict is real. Living in Eucharistic hope means, living by new standards inspired by the Holy Spirit in fostering community. Christians add to despair if we are party to the divisiveness in Asia. A living hope sustains our efforts in ecumenical, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue. If Christ's resurrection and gift of the Holy Spirit could surmount even the barrier set by death, we can hope for a transformed community in the continent.

In remembering the dead we need to be aware that many of the victims of different forms of violence in Asia are unnamed and forgotten. The Eucharistic memorial of the departed is our invocation of God's mercy and justice for the victims who will be buried in oblivion. Eucharistic hope refuses to forget especially those who are united with Jesus in suffering. He transformed victimization into victory. We have reason to hope for those Jesus died for. God remembers them and will restore justice on earth. We are sustained by our remembrance of the saints of Asia who suffered yet by their fidelity attained to the joy of God's presence.

In hope we cry out, "Amen!" to the Father who deserves all glory and honor for the new life that is offered to us in Jesus the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit.

E. THE RITE OF COMMUNION

1.) Love is Communion and Peace (The Lord's Prayer and Exchange of Peace)

The climax of the next moment of the Eucharistic celebration is the reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. The Table of the Word and of the Body and Blood leads up to the singular grace of receiving Jesus' gift of Himself so that we would live in communion with Him. Communion is love. As a prelude, the community addresses God the Father in the words Jesus taught us. In the Latin rite, the giving of peace follows the prayer. The exchange of peace retains its full significance as an act of communion and love even when it is located elsewhere as in the liturgy of other rites.

Addressing God as 'Abba' was a distinctive mark of Jesus. It caused scandal to people who believed that reverence precluded a familiar approach to God. Yet Jesus was expressing

the reality of who He was in relation to God. "The Father and I are one" (Jn 10:30). They belong to each other. They give of themselves totally to each other in their mutual love called the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught His disciples to pray to God as their Father too (cf. Mt 6:9-13). But we cry out, "Abba" only by the Spirit of adoption that makes us children in the Son Jesus (cf. Rom 8:15-16). The reception of the Body and Blood of Christ is the fruit of our being brought into the inner life of the Trinity who is the God of love, of self-giving, of communion.

We address God as Our Father. We believe that God is the Father who will provide for our needs, especially our daily bread. Jesus is our daily Bread who will soon be given to us in communion. But belonging to the Father means belonging to the other children of God in God's family and breaking bread with them. Baptized into the one faith in Christ Jesus, we become one body of Christ, brothers and sisters to each other (cf. Gal 3:26-29; I Cor 12). There is no true love of the Father without a genuine love of our neighbors. St. Paul says that receiving the Body of Christ in the Eucharistic sacrificial meal without discerning the presence of the Body of Christ in the community is eating and drinking judgment on oneself (cf. I Cor 11:29).

The sign of peace after the Lord's Prayer puts in symbolic action the love of the Father that binds us to one another. Peace is the gift of the Risen Lord. He gives us His peace so that we could give it to others too. Receiving peace from the Father and from neighbors prepares us to receive Jesus who is our peace (cf Eph 2:14-16). The peace of Christ reconciles us to God and to one another. He breaks down the barriers of hostility that keep people apart (cf Eph 2:14).

i.) Contextual Pastoral Implications

To live the love that we believe and celebrate in the Eucharist is to live in communion. There is no communion without peace. There is no peace without reconciliation. The quest for this type of love begins in the home. We stand on a sturdy tradition of family life in all cultures and faiths in Asia. The efforts in and outside the Church to strengthen the Asian family are signs of the Father's love at work in us.

But we are fully aware of forces that undermine the home. Poverty, war, abusive parents, and vices destroy loving communion. Even in the wider home of society, we see aggression, rivalry, competition and intolerance. There is a dire need for reconciliation, mercy and forgiveness in Asian societies so that we may finally live in peace. The Church lends its resources to peace building in Asia, urged on by the love of the Father who seeks to reconcile humanity to Him and to each other.

2.) Superabundant Love (Receiving Communion)

In the Lord's Prayer we asked the Father to give us our daily bread. The Father gives us Jesus, the Bread of Life, our daily Bread in our journey to the Kingdom yet to come. So we dare

to approach the Communion Table, but only after confessing that we are not worthy to receive Jesus. We rely on His invitation, on His word of mercy and compassion to gain the strength and courage to approach Him. His welcoming love increases our desire to be one with Him by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. No loftier desire exists in our hearts than that of welcoming the life of Jesus Christ to be our life. He first loved us. We love Him in return and love our neighbors with His love in our hearts.

This communion is more than what we deserve if the norms of strict justice were to be observed. We taste the extravagant love of God in Jesus who gives to His very life. This gift we do not deserve. As gratitude wells up from our hearts, we thank and adore the God who is love. Thanksgiving deepens our desire to love in return. Fed by Jesus, the Bread come down from the Father, we share Jesus with others, especially those who are deprived of love.

Asia has been blessed with bountiful natural and human resources. The lack of bread is due to the insatiable greed of a few that imposes poverty on the many. The cry for daily bread emanates from many homes and parts of Asia. Eucharistic love makes us hear and act on it the way the loving Father would. But as we work for a just society, we do not retreat from our duty to share the word of God as bread for those who are constructing a loving and compassionate society. Motivated only by love, we will not hesitate to critique the misguided desires of our times and the cravings for bread that is poison underneath.

We know that no amount of success and achievement would satisfy the hunger of humanity for love. Many affluent people in Asia hunger for love and companionship. So as we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, we also welcome Him who is present in the poor, the lonely, the lost, the weary, and the persecuted. Like Jesus, we give to them not only what is due to them but also what is truly ours - our love and life.

3.) "Amen!" To the Bread of Love: Commitment to Mission

After the closing prayer of thanksgiving, the liturgy is brought to its conclusion. The rite is not just a declaration that the liturgy is over. Neither is it simply a dismissal of a group. It is a sending. This is a beautiful development in liturgical theology where a simple rite has become a "missionary moment." God sends missionaries into His harvest. It is significant to note that the God who gathers a new family now sends this same family as His workers in the vineyard, for indeed the harvest is rich.

We can draw inspiration and insight from the sending of the apostles to the lost sheep of Israel, to the sick, the dead, those afflicted with dreaded skin diseases and those possessed by demons (cf. Mt 10:6-8). This is the great harvest of the apostles of Christ: the poor, the neglected and the lost. They are the true wealth of the Church. Every Eucharistic community is driven by the Holy Spirit to go to them for the Kingdom of God is promised to them. Like the apostles who were chosen to go forth and bear fruit (Jn 15:16), so is the Church sent to bear much fruit.

But this will happen only if we remain in His love (cf Jn 15:4). The one who is called to abide in God is sent by God. This is the mystery of mission: abiding as we go and going as we abide. It is not a “separation” from Jesus but a companionship achieved through participating in His mission.

Living the Eucharist in Asia calls us to a more attentive listening to the God who sends us as witnesses to His saving design. It requires, however a zealous availability to respond and a joyful going forth wherever God sends us. With eagerness, we go to the bountiful harvest of the teeming masses of the poor, the tired and the lowly in the vast world of Asia. All their lives, they hear only bad news. They experience bad news. Some of them consider their lives as bad news. To them we bring the Good News of a God who saves in Jesus who became poor out of love for us. We are saved by love – that is the Good News. But does our Eucharistic faith make our hearts burn with missionary ardor? Does mission move and inspire us, especially our youth? To what worthy “causes” do we make ourselves available? Are Christians in Asia more enamored of the “harvest” promised by individualist and materialist systems than the “harvest” of the blind recovering their sight, the cripples walking again, the lepers getting cured, the deaf hearing once more, the dead being raised to life and the poor having the good news announced to them? (cf. Lk 7:22).

We state clearly that worldly conquest or ambition is not the motivation for the Church’s engagement in mission. Eucharist is mission. The Eucharist is the presence of Jesus. It is Jesus himself loving and serving. The Eucharistic offering of himself, the joy of having found life in Jesus and the duty to share it to others – these impel us to mission.

4.) A Mission to Witness to Jesus Christ

Jesus sent his disciples in order to witness to the Gospel of the Reign of God. John the Apostle epitomizes the mode of such testimony when he wrote, “This is what we proclaim to you: what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched – we speak of the word of life” (I Jn 1:1). The apostle can witness to Jesus only if he has first seen, heard, touched him. During the Eucharist, we have gathered and touched the presence of God in the community. We have heard God speaking to us the Word of life and hopefully have made it part of our memory. We have looked with awe at the hope offered to creation, human labor and painful memories by the sacrifice of Jesus’ self-gift. We have tasted the Bread of Life full of love and peace. What we have seen, heard, looked upon and tasted, we now witness to. Participation in the Eucharist brings with it a mission of testifying in word and deed to the life we have been graced to experience. Spirituality, contemplation and mission meet. The Good News experienced in the Eucharist begs to be shared. The gift we have received brings with it the responsibility to share with others the Lord we have encountered.

i.) Contextualized Pastoral Implications

Every Eucharistic celebration renews the Church in its missionary calling. By its very nature as the bearer of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Church is missionary. Only by being true to its mission can it remain true to its identity. In the Eucharist, we receive Jesus who sends us as the Father has sent Him for the life of the world (cf. Jn 20:21).

Even as a small minority in most of the Asian countries, the Church continues to share the gift of Jesus with others. That is her life. And the celebration of the Eucharist nurtures the Church's missionary life. Where explicit missionary activity is forbidden, the Church can and must witness to Christ even in her silence. The quality of our joy, simplicity, compassion, and communion testifies powerfully to the truth of Jesus.

There is no chaining the Word of God. There is no stopping the fire of the Gospel and the Presence of Christ from emanating even from weak and frail witnesses. We are in great awe and deep gratitude for the heroic witness of many Asians who in many difficult political and religious situations suffer silently for the sake of the faith. Their testimonies speak of the power and the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist. Through spiritual communion or through secret celebrations, the Eucharist comforted and strengthened in their incredible witness of the Christ.

Many peoples and communities in Asia are in need of witnesses to the truth that in Jesus their quest for life will not end in vain: the migrants separated from their homes, women and children living in constant terror, broken families, those imprisoned and detained for crimes they did not commit, the differently-able and mutilated, and people contemplating suicide. The Church is sent to them. The Church, renewed as the Body of Christ in the Eucharist, bears Christ to them. Every member of the Body shares in the common mission of witnessing to Christ. We can mention a few examples: parents are witnesses of Christ's love to each other and to their children; the youth are missionaries to their fellow youth of the joy of having found Christ; public servants must witness to the humble service of love that Jesus exemplified.

Called to missionary witnessing, the Church in Asia must examine its credibility as a witness to Christ. In a continent where the consistency of wisdom and life is highly valued among teachers and religious institutions, the Church needs to review the quality of its communal witnessing to Christ. A Church community should become what it celebrates and receives in the Eucharist. The Church learns true mission in the Eucharist.

5.) A Gift and Promise of Presence

When we go to fulfill the mission entrusted to us, we believe that Jesus goes with us. He promised to his first disciples: "Know that I am with you always, until the end of the world!" (Mt 28:20). The pledge of His abiding presence in the Church's mission is the real presence of

Christ in the Eucharistic species that remains even after the liturgical celebration. The rite may end but the gift of presence endures. Thus Holy Communion could be given to the sick after the rite and the community that has celebrated can continue to adore the Blessed Sacrament. The promise of presence in mission already happens as a gift of presence in the Eucharist. We are consoled by the fact that the presence of Christ in the Eucharist already fulfills His promise of presence to those whom He sends out on mission. In Eucharistic spirituality, adoration goes hand in hand with mission. Genuine mission leads to adoration. Authentic adoration leads to mission. This gift and promise of presence sustains the Church as she charts rough roads and stormy seas.

The abiding presence of Christ in the Eucharist and in mission reminds us of His presence in our neighbors, especially the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the sick, the prisoners, the lonely, the abandoned and the victims (cf. Mt. 25:31-46). The Spirit of the Risen Christ hovers over creation and the events in history. As we testify to Christ's presence, we also discover and behold Him present in the poor, in creation, and in history. Mission is never without contemplation. But the more we engage in missionary contemplation, we realize that the presence of Christ is often "veiled" by the very signs that cannot fully capture the mystery they convey. The sinfulness of the world and of humanity, including the followers of Christ, also clouds the manifestation of Christ's life. Our mission and adoration happen in the tension of the "veiled presence" that makes us long to see the full revelation of the Reign of God and of the freedom of God's children (cf. Rom 8:19). In the meanwhile, we press on to make the gift and promise our own (cf. Phil 3:12), strengthened by the presence of Jesus - a gift already given and a promise waiting to be fulfilled.

F., CONCLUSION

The Church as the Body of Christ makes present in signs and mission the saving presence of Christ in history. In Asia, the missionary witness of the Church is a way of living the Eucharist. Living the Eucharist involves 1) becoming God's family as a counter-witness to divisions, 2) recognizing God as we acknowledge our sinfulness, 3) listening to the story of Jesus in human stories, 4) building a common memory, 5) professing the faith in joy in the midst of risks, 5) listening to the voiceless in the way God listens, 6) celebrating the gift of creation in a world of commodification and injustice, 7) transforming betrayals into self-giving and service, 8) being in communion with the living and the dead, 9) living in peace, 10) being deeply grateful for Jesus' superabundant love, 11) working as missionaries in God's bountiful harvest, 12) courageously witnessing to Jesus and 13) confident journeying in hope towards the fulfillment of promise of the Everlasting Banquet. This is the form of life we receive in the Eucharist. This is the life that we pray and work for in Asia. The dynamism of the Eucharist becomes the rhythm of life of the followers of Christ. The Eucharist forms the Church. The Eucharist is the life of the Church.

Mary, the bearer of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, experienced Christ's life in her and lived as a disciple of her Son. Hailed as the ark of the New Covenant, she is the exemplar

of the Church. Listening to the Word and acting on it, she is the Woman of the Eucharist who followed her Son until the end with much love and hope. She now lives with her Son in the glorious presence of the Father. She adores the Triune God, intercedes for the Church and the world until we all share in the Banquet of Eternal Life. Mary lived a Eucharistic life because Jesus was her life. Mother of Life and Mother of Asia, pray for us now and always!

G. SOME PASTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Formation towards Eucharistic Life

- 1.1. Programs of integral catechesis, faith formation, and liturgical formation on the Eucharist and its implications for daily living should be conducted at the diocesan, parish, and BEC levels;
- 1.2. Where such tools of social communication are readily available, TV or radio should be set up in village chapels for catechesis and faith formation;
- 1.3. Basic ecclesial communities or Small Christian Communities should be formed as Eucharistic communities that share with one another with the wider community in a service of transforming love.
- 1.4. In seminary formation, Eucharistic life and lifestyle must be emphasized.

2. The Celebration and Adoration of the Lord

- 2.1. The faithful should be trained in Lectio Divina with lessons in silence and contemplation;
- 2.2. The custom of having adoration chapels and Holy Hour should be widely promoted;
- 2.3. At an appropriate early age the faithful should be taught to demonstrate reverence before the Blessed Sacrament and deep sense of the sacred;
- 2.4. The inculturation of the Liturgy should be promoted according to the instructions of the Magisterium with the wise guidance of the local Bishop;
- 2.5. With the guidance of their pastors and facilitated by liturgical committees, parishes should make the celebration of the Eucharist more attractive and beautiful;
- 2.6. Bishops and priests are to improve the quality of the preparation and delivery of the homily;
- 2.7. Prayers of the Faithful are to be contextualized and inclusive of the wider community.

2.8. Instructions should be given with respect and kindness on the reasons for not giving Holy Communion to non-Catholics when Holy Mass is celebrated with them present, as in weddings; an alternative gesture of welcome could be given;

3. Living the Eucharist

3.1. Bishops and priests should instruct the faithful on doing the traditional corporal works of mercy as the fruit of the Eucharistic celebration;

3.2. Part of the collection from the faithful at Masses should be allocated for charitable purposes;

3.3. The formation of parish communities of forgiveness, reconciliation, and equality help significantly towards the living of the Eucharist;

3.4. Priests are to be models of the Eucharistic attitude of welcoming to all, of being for all people and of living a Eucharistic life of love and service;

4. Missionary Orientation

4.1. Catechetical and faith formation programs should incorporate modules of value formation to combat individualism, materialism, prejudices, and inequalities;

4.2. Diocesan and parish ministries should collaborate in defending and promoting life from conception to death;

4.3. The pastoral care, including counseling, of victims, abused women, children and youth, the lonely, the desperate, the poor, and the elderly should be given adequate attention;

4.4. The special needs of the youth require a corresponding pastoral care in listening to them and speaking their language;

4.5. Episcopal conferences should actively promote peace-building and reconciliation in the wider society with special attention to ecumenical and inter-religious collaboration;

4.6. We should appeal to leaders of nations to stop the arms race;

4.7. Episcopal conferences and dioceses should establish pastoral programs focused on the stewardship of creation.