

**“GIVE ME A DRINK (Jn 4:7):
THE CHALLENGES OF NEW EVANGELISATION
AND CREATIVE PASTORAL RESPONSES”**

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I. THE ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST AS RENEWING THE ASIAN YOUTH

- *Ms. Estella Padilla, Ph.D., Bukal ng Tipan (Philippines)*¹

Introduction

The call to New Evangelization has been heard throughout the Catholic world. How does the church in Asia, especially in its ministry to the young which comprises the majority of the catholic population, respond to this call? This paper intends to look into the situation of the youth in Asia and the challenge they present to New Evangelization. Guided by the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar (John 4: 14-45), *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Gaudium Et Spes*, this paper has three parts: Part I " Give me a drink!" presents the pulse of the Asian youth, especially their thirsts; Part II " What do you say after 'hello'?" presents a theological and sociological dialogue as a way of analyzing these thirsts; and Part III "I met a man..." presents a mission-oriented response to the challenge of New Evangelization among the young of Asia.

¹ Aware that one's background locates one's theologizing and also one's limitations, some information: I was a member of a youth group in my parish during college days. This youth involvement has been life-changing from me that after graduation from university thirty one years ago until now, I have been working for the Catholic Church in different capacities. I was a parish fulltime pastoral worker for 20 years in our parish. During this time I was invited to found the BEC Desk of the Federation of Asian bishops Conferences (FABC) Office of the Laity in 1993 and for 20 years have been going around different churches in Asia to promote a participatory church through BECs. Since then, I have also become a member of the National BEC Desk under the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. Fifteen years ago, we set up *Bukal ng Tipan* which journeys with dioceses in the Philippines, as well as in Asia and Europe, towards a participatory church in the world. After finishing a doctorate degree in theology, I became a member of the Theological Association of the Philippines, as well as the office for Theological Concerns of the FABC.

PART I "GIVE ME A DRINK!" - YOUTH ASKS CHURCH²

The youth as the future has been debunked by the fact that the youth comprise the majority of the population. They are therefore the present. The popular adage: the present is not the result of the past but is borrowed from the future makes church ministers like us take seriously their request for a good drink. How does evangelizing the youth of today start?

A. New Evangelization as Contextualization

John 4: 4-42 was the bible text that inspired the final message of the Synod of Bishops' on New Evangelization. It starts with: "There is no man or woman who in one's life, would not find oneself like the woman of Samaria beside a well with an empty bucket, with the hope of finding the fulfillment of the heart's most profound desire, that which alone could give full meaning to life."³

New Evangelization therefore starts with context, with becoming aware of this thirst of our people. *Gaudium et Spes* (GE) reminded us fifty years ago to read the signs of the times: "At all times, the church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the gospel, if it is to carry out its task. We must be aware of and understand the aspirations, the yearnings, and the often dramatic features of the world in which we live."⁴ This paper therefore starts with listening to the cries, to the thirst, to the grief and anguish, to the joys and hopes of youth in Asia.

GS strongly reminds us that reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the gospel⁵ is the first task of

² The subtitles – Youth asks Church, Church asks Youth, World asks Youth – sound as if 'youth' is separate from 'church'. 'Church' in these subtitles refer to institutional church literally and metaphorically to the church that does not give enough space for the youth and are finding it challenging to minister to them.

³ Final Message of the Synod of Bishops on New Evangelization 7-28 October 2012 (from here on will be designated as *Final Message*), # 1.

⁴ *Gaudium et Spes* (from hereon will be designated as GS) # 4.

⁵ GS # 4.

evangelization. The Final Message also reminded us that our world is full of contractions and challenges but it remains God's creation and urged us strongly not to ignore the problems that such challenges bring. "This is true above all for the phenomena of globalization which must be for us opportunities to expand the presence of the Gospel. Secularization requires the church to rethink its presence without however renouncing it. The many and ever new forms of poverty opens new opportunities for charitable service: the proclamation of the gospel binds the church to be with the poor and to take on their sufferings like Jesus. Even in the most bitter forms of atheism and agnosticism, we can recognize – although in contradictory forms - not a void but a longing, an expectation that awaits an adequate response."⁶

We therefore recognize the call to New Evangelization (NE)⁷ as continuing the incarnational nature of our Christian religion. We believe that God is alive and continues to call us to follow Jesus in our world. NE, as contextualization, starts with listening, with sensing, feeling the pulse and the hearts of people.

The spirit of *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG) is also very much becoming aware of our context, our world – the sounds and smells of our streets. Pope Francis in EG is calling on all to go out, to walk the streets, to get dirt and dust, as it comes near to people and listen to them. "Evangelization...realizes that it has to grow in its understanding of the Gospel and in discerning the paths of the Spirit, and so it always does what good it can, even if in the process, its shoes get soiled by the mud of the street. Let us go forth then, let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ. Here I repeat for the entire church what I have often said to the priests and laity of Buenos Aires: I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the

⁶ Final Message # 6.

⁷ From hereon will be designated as NE, which refers the general call to New Evangelization enshrined in the synodal exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, which on the other hand would be referred to as EG.

streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.”⁸

John 4 starts with Jesus passing by Sychar. Jesus walked the villages, was always aware and sensitive to the situation in the village, to the needs of people. There by the well, in the heat of noontime, in the midst of a journey, he stopped, looked and listened...

Let us therefore start this paper by looking into the pulse of young people through three surveys on the Asian youth. It is almost impossible to clump Asia in general⁹ and the youth

in particular into one description, so take this survey simply as a slice of the actual situation of the youth in different parts of Asia, a way of sensing a pulse in that body of Christ, the church.

B. The Context of the Asian Youth

1. Socio-cultural Context¹⁰

- 57.5 percent of the world’s population is in Asia and 57.7 percent of the world’s youth population is in Asia. In 1960, Asian youth (age 15-24) comprised 17% of the total population, in 1985 reached 21 % of the total population, is expected to settle at 15.4 by the year 2025. If we include the below-15 category, South and Central Asia has 37% in this age group, compared to 32 percent in Southeast Asia and 22% in East Asia. So if one puts together those 24 years old and below (some countries include those 35 years old and

⁸ EG # 45,49.

⁹ Just for example: Brunei has 300,000 people and China has 1.3 billion people; the world’s poorest nations such as Nepal GDP per capita in 2001 of US \$ 1,310 and wealthy nations such as Japan with US \$ 25,130; different political set-ups liberal democracy, absolute and constitutional monarchy, military dictatorships, federal state, one-party systems.

¹⁰ Information on socio-cultural context of the Asian youth came from an Asian survey done by the Association of Asian Social Science and Research Council and the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia in 2005 entitled “Youth in Transition: the Challenges of Generational Change in Asia”.

below as youth), that would swell the youth population to more than 50% of the population (e.g. 65% in the Philippines).

- Although the system of education has improved and there is a relatively higher percentage of the young who is literate and educated, but in absolute terms the number of illiterates is still continually rising, and most of these numbers come from developing countries. World Employment Report (2000) tells that unemployment for young people remain at high levels, reaching over 30 percent in urban areas.
- Mobility is also a feature of the present as young people move from rural to urban studying and working in other countries. Mobility however is more than a redistribution of the population; it would also mean the youth is separated from traditional authority structures and are also exposed to different ideas, ways of doing things and people, as well as greater independence as they earn their own money. The increasing involvement of women in education and work is also observed.
- Increasing rate of youth who smoke, drink, use drugs, engage in sex before marriage, HIV-AIDS, suicide rates has been noted.
- Internet has become a main feature of life of much of the Asian youth as it penetrates streets and corners of urban, as well as rural areas. In South Korea, youth spend hours entranced by an aviator, in which they create a virtual identity on the web. The speed of the connection breaks down barriers between their real and virtual identity. In Japan, over one million boys lock themselves in their rooms for years at a time and only engage with the real world via cyberspace, a condition known as *hikikomori*. In Singapore, sex sites per capita are higher than any other country in the world. In China (only 6% internet penetration of the population), a recent promotion campaign, 'coke cool summer' encouraged youth to guess the highest daily temperature for Beijing for a particular month using sms.

Four million messages were recorded in 35 days. (Still in China) The usual activities on the Internet are chat rooms, online games, emailing and surfing the net. Within these seemingly superficial activities, youth could be using the anonymity of the net to challenge various traditional practices such as patriarchy and filial piety and entertaining sexual freedom, among others.

- The fast pace of socio economic change in Asia, propelled by economic growth and technological advancement, is also creating a culture very different from past generations. It is said that youth in Asia has been subject to more rapid change than their western counterparts as they move from traditional to post-industrial societies often within a single generation. Urban, as well as rural of a certain extent, youth have entered the globalized world through television and the Internet.
- The central feature of the transition that youth worldwide are undergoing today results in transformations in identity. There are four aspects of identity that stand out as issues related to youth in transition in a globalizing world. First, as a consequence of globalization, most youth in the world now develop a *bicultural identity*, one rooted in the local culture and the other stemming from an awareness of their relation to the global culture. With the Internet invading daily life and lifestyles, young people are directly in touch with different peoples and cultures, events and information from all over the world. Second, the pervasiveness of *identity confusion*. They find themselves at home in neither the local culture nor the global culture. As traditional ways of life change in response to Globalization, traditional worldview may lack compelling emotional and ideological power for young people. Thirdly, in every society, there are youth who choose to join *self-selected cultures* with like-minded persons who wish to have an identity that will be untainted by the global culture and its values. Self-selected group that provides more meaning and structure than the global culture. Some selected groups are religious in nature. Fourth,

identity explorations in love and work are stretching beyond the Adolescent years into a post-adolescent period of emerging adulthood. Globalization has affected the timing of transitions to adult roles such as work, marriage and adulthood. With people studying more, and working even harder, they tend to marry later.

- One common criticism we hear is exposure to western media is uprooting our young who are losing touch with their culture and leaving their motherland for much greener pastures abroad. On the other hand, traditions can also get reinforced as migrant members time their family visits with celebration of traditional cultural events or family functions, thus reinforcing and not forgetting the value of traditional practices on the migrants. Migrant workers actually become carriers of their local cultures and traditions, rather than become fully lost to the alien world. The revolution in information technology reinforced their links with their country of origin.
- Another interesting note on cultural change: in the March 2003 issue of Lycos Asia (Singapore newspaper), Shovha Tseriht Bhalla talks of Generation Y who, she admits, “seek gratification like their western counterparts, but differ in an important area – they have strong family ties”. Referring to favorable attitudes towards divorce and premarital sex found among 45% of the young surveyed, Bhalla says: “...such findings are always interesting for brand managers, the advertising industry, armchair behavioral scientists...and the like, the survey in question merely revisits an area that has been reconnoitered before but does little to plumb the depths of our youth.” She further says, “What makes more interesting reading and merits deeper discussion is the survey’s finding about the spiritual side of these young people. Buried within the newspaper report was this interesting nugget: “They are more enthusiastic about feeding their soul. Nearly half of those surveyed attended religious services at least once a month, while four in five take time out to ponder the meaning of just. When the

general worldwide perception of Generation Y as hopelessly self-interested and materialistic, it comes as a pleasant surprise – nay, an epiphany – that a significant number of Singaporean youth is inclined toward the spiritual.”

2. *Political Context*¹¹

- If youth comprise a substantial portion of the population, this indicates that the youth vote will become increasingly important in the political life of countries, especially their elections, and can even be decisive in determining electoral outcomes (e.g. South Korean elections). Indonesia, Philippines and Taiwan have established youth parliaments. India even has a children’s parliament that has been recognized by the UN. Exclusion of youth in political processes, or simply not having a voice, can drive them towards protest movements as a means of expressing social and political grievances (e.g. Philippines First Quarter Storm, China’s Tiananmen Square, Hongkong 2014). Recent youth protests across the world against injustice had growing inequality, which has been intensified by the global financial crisis and high unemployment. Importantly, many have lost their faith in the capacity of their governments and political systems to improve the situation, and since they feel excluded from formal political processes, they have chosen to channel their political engagement through protest movement
- North-east Asian youth conference ‘the world we want’ 2013 youth consider good governance as an important feature of their lives and s means to creating a better world. My World 2015 online survey, ‘honest and responsive government’ was rated the top three important issues for youth aged 16-30.

¹¹ Information on the political context of Asian youth came from *Youth and Democracy* (17,900 respondents from 12 East and southeast Asian countries from 2010-2012, published 2014), which includes a very interesting article on Cyberpolitics, pp.89-109.

- Interest and (psychological) involvement in politics: 49% interested in politics, 61% regularly follow political news, but only 6% discuss politics with others. This shows that they are not apathetic. Non-discussion of news with others may be due to lack of knowledge, understanding and experience of political issues as well as government performance on them or even no space to discuss such. Also young people consider political issues as removed from their daily concerns. Reluctance to discuss may also be reinforced by limited opportunities and lack of available social spaces within which they can engage politically. In some cases, open and critical discussion of politics is generally limited in contexts where youth are reluctant to create conflict and question authorities.
- Psychological involvement in politics among citizens is in part shaped by social capital, that is, the ways in which they connect to their societies. Three elements that make up social capital: social trust, membership in formal organizations and social network, which work together to encourage cooperation among citizens in pursuit of common goals. In societies with high level of social capital, i.e. Where social trust is high, and many citizens are members of associations and have large social networks, citizens tend to willingly contribute to common good and the cost of collective action becomes relatively low.
- Youth in the region critically assess government and perceive an acute need for enhanced governance in their societies, while at the same time expressing disappointment in the performance of state institutions in this regard. Youth in advanced economies and more pluralistic societies are comparatively more critical of the quality of governance in their societies focusing on weakness in their political systems with corruption consistently emerging as one of the most serious issues. Where differences show, youth with tertiary education, high levels of Internet use, and residence in urban areas are more likely to be critical citizens, more critical than their older cohorts. Youth in the region judge political

systems according to perceptions of substantive results they produce. Youth assessment of political governance also affect their involvement in politics.

- Lower rates of voter turnout than older cohorts has been noted but youth participate as much as older cohorts in political activities such as lobbying and activism (joining rallies and demonstrations, signing petitions). Information and communications technology expanding opportunities for youth to participate. In terms of sense of empowerment, 48.3 % of youth surveyed feel they are able to participate in politics, 30.2 % feel they can understand politics and 41.7 believe they can influence politics. Although not majority, but significant proportion.
- Research on generational change in politics and the role of new media in Asia is limited and the quality of information difficult to verify. But it is clear that the youth has effectively used new media to launch major campaigns to depose or elect leaders such as Suharto in Indonesia, Estrada in the Philippines and Roh in South Korea or to report on events muffled by established media such as the prosecution of Malaysia's deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim. Youth and its use of new media in political change cannot be ignored. Internet has become a site for more open political expression, Youth created a space in the Internet to express themselves.
- Effect or role of Internet in politics: firstly, young people turn to the Internet when they require alternative sources of information and usually in a perceived crisis situation when the established media is not providing unbiased information. Secondly, new media can remove economic barriers which exist with established mediums of television and print media. This increases the potential for youth and minority group engagement in the political endeavor. Lastly, Internet has facilitated transnational engagement of the diaspora in political change. They may support political change through providing alternative sources of information or by relaying

information through overseas ISP which are outside the jurisdiction of government. This creates a broad definition of the political constituency which is more difficult for authoritarian governments to control.

- From the late '90s, the internet together with SMS has revolutionized political activity because it allows for two-way communication between citizens and politicians alike unlike television or radio. Communication and response are more immediate and direct. However, need for more active presence in political deliberation has been articulate, not be contented with the use of chat rooms and short messages. It maybe that the Internet will create a new form of democracy in Asia. More than just a tool, the Internet is a new social space creating new relations within that space. It does not only speed up communication in the public sphere but changes the dimension and the structure of public sphere as well.

3. Religious Context¹²: Asian Youth Assembly Survey

- On the question of what attracts you to church, the answers in order of frequency: relationships (friendship, team spirit, family, community life); spiritual experience (experience Jesus together, praying together, praying in silence, love of Jesus); religious & youth activities (Eucharist, adoration, praying the rosary, teachings on Jesus, music, youth camp, youth activities in general); witness (religious' and priests' life very inspiring, happy people following Jesus)
- On the question why do you think other young people are taking distance/not attracted and even leaving the church, the answers in order of frequency: societal context (media, information technology, hedonism, current lifestyle, jobs,

¹² Religious context of the Asian youth came from a survey I conducted among the youth leaders of Asia during in their Youth Ministers' Conference in Korea during the Papal Visit to Korea August 2014. Nine youth leaders (one from the following countries: Hong Kong, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Indian, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines) participated in the survey.

poverty); ineffective church systems (not attractive/boring church activities, lack of activities for young people, no personal encounter with Jesus, lack of formation, lack of modernization, old-fashioned, conservative); youth not valued/given space (church does not value their ideas, they don't have a place to serve, not listening to the needs of young people, strict)

- On the question what are the present interests, concerns, needs of young people in your area, the answers in order of frequency: community (group experience, companions and guides to journey with them, having friends, need for love, belonging, support); interesting and helpful youth activities (social media, jobs, vocational and technical training, mention of religious/spiritual activities); mission (a place to serve others, reach out to the elderly, dialogue with other religions, the children);
- On the question what can the church do to respond to these needs, the answers in order of frequency: giving importance to the youth (ask their concerns, their problems, respect them, help them develop their potentials, be genuine with them, love them, value their ideas, listen to their voice, guide them, accompany them, involve them in decision-making, warm welcome, make them feel they belong, give them a place to serve); improving church systems (youth desk in every parish, youth as priority, training and formation, interesting spiritual/religious and social activities for the youth, fulltime professional youth minister, leadership training); facilitating spiritual activities (time and space to encounter Jesus, school of discipleship, healing and restoration, kerygmatic retreats); projects for young people, technical support especially in the rural areas.
- On the question what kind of Jesus/Jesus experience would be attractive to young people, the answers in order of frequency: Jesus walking with/accompanying us, Jesus dialoguing with us, Jesus understanding the heart of young people, Jesus caring and sacrificing for us, Jesus as simple full

of joy and smart, Jesus as example to be a good person in society,

C. The Well of Sychar: The Thirsts of the Asian Youth

Wells in Jewish societies have a context and (e.g. marriage) and a history (the well of Sychar in particular as the well of Jacob found in a Samaritan village). The Well of Sychar is a good imagery of Contextualization. We have started our reflection in 'Sychar' - by becoming aware of the historical context of the youth of Asia. How do we read the survey of the Asian youth from the point of view of Church ministers like us, brothers and sisters who want to reach out to them with respect and compassion?

I believe the following needs (or thirsts, in the language of the biblical story) can be gleaned from the survey:

1. The Thirst for a Voice

The recent events locally and internationally especially in political issues saw the youth clearly expressing themselves manifesting a deep desire to have a voice, to be heard and to be understood. Because they grew up and are adept about language of the Internet, they found a space with which to express themselves and interact. Because the Internet is a relatively free cost-less production, decentralized, instantaneous dissemination of information and feedback, it empowers young people to express themselves beyond the eyes of authorities - parents, teachers, as well as traditional values of obedience and propriety. The culture the information technology has cultivated empowered the youth in more ways than one. Right in their own room, in their own time, with their own persons and feelings and opinions, they have the power to connect to anyone on anything anywhere in the world. The internet has cultivated this culture of freedom that this has been called the 'me' generation - 'me' (sic) matters. Everyone, even especially the youth who are marginalized in different ways in different places, can have a voice and can be heard.

From the religious survey, the youth have often repeated this phrase - that they want to be understood, to be listened to, to be given importance to, to be valued. Although those surveyed are youth leaders who apparently are given a space in church structures, they could be speaking for all the young people in their very own church groups who perhaps are feeling that being part of church structures does not necessarily ensure that they have a significant presence in church life, especially in its decision-making processes. Or they could be speaking about their own desire or the desire of young people in general.

2. *The Thirst for Meaning*

Part of the natural growth process of young people is finding the meaning of their life, of their place in the world, what has been called identity crisis. However this natural search process of young people has been happening in the midst of a very fast movement in society brought about by modernization and technology, economic and cultural globalization, immigration and migration. Such movements also create cultural shifts, if not upheavals, redefining and reshaping a lot of the values of young people as they struggle to make sense of a world very different from their parents. Youth today are transiting not just from childhood to adulthood but between two different ways of life.

A lot of sociologists have posited that such changes have brought about a loss or a transformation of identity, a searching for a ground with which to securely stand on, especially for young people. When globalization alters or erodes traditional ways, sociologist Giddens observes: "identity has to be created and recreated in a more active basis. Identity becomes based less on prescribed social roles and more on individual choices."

Perhaps this need for identity-crafting is the reason for this spiritual search ('feeding the soul') found in the sociological survey/context. Among young Christians surveyed, they mentioned time and again this need for spiritual experiences (experiencing Jesus in silence, in prayer and worship, in togetherness) which I believe help them feel safe and give them hope and perhaps also somehow answer the existential

questions they have, especially about the meaning of their lives, their role and place in the world, among other things.

3. The Thirst for Community

The foremost sentiment coming from the religious context survey among Christian youth is the need for community. The need to do things together – spiritual and social activities, the need to have companions, friends, guides. Family and family spirit have also been mentioned and could refer literally to their own families or to create a family spirit wherever they go. I believe that young people who belong to different religious traditions or simply young people in general would also express the same need.

The popularity of the internet and especially social networking among young people is also a manifestation of this desire to relate, to be in a relationship as friends, or even simply to link up with others or even with strangers, to network on particular interests and concerns. Even in the political arena as noted in the survey, it mentioned that belonging to and commitment to social groups and communities increase political engagement among young people.

PART II “WHAT DO YOU SAY AFTER ‘HELLO’?” - CHURCH ASKS YOUTH

How do we understand in a deeper way these thirsts and start to respond to them as pastoral ministers? The next part of the story of John 4 is the dialogue. How do we dialogue, how do we interact, how do we connect with the youth? The world of the internet makes connections in an instant whichever part of the world you are. But do we church ministers connect to the youth literally and figuratively? That there are very few young people in the church is perhaps an indication that we do not connect effectively. Perhaps sometimes we feel that the youth is living in a totally different world than we do. However, the ability to connect to the youth is not just a matter of being updated in modern communication skills. Connection is at the heart of the

evangelization process. Let us look deeper into the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman to guide us.

A. New Evangelization as Encounter with God

New evangelization is not a new program. It means first and foremost a renewed encounter with Jesus, with the living God as one among us, loving us, liberating us and sending us to mission. “The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus!”¹³ It consists in “presenting once more the beauty and perennial newness of the encounter with Christ.”¹⁴

The encounter at the well of Sychar was life-changing. And like Jesus at the well of Sychar, the church also feels the need to sit beside today’s men and women. “She wants to render the Lord present in their lives so that they can encounter him because his Spirit alone is the water that gives true and eternal life.”¹⁵

The Samaritan woman on the other hand must have felt the love of Jesus that does not judge and instead made her feel dignified. As EG has said: “No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unfailing love. With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and start anew.”¹⁶

Knowing the thirsts of the youth, how does the church start to respond to them in a new way, a way that is effective, a way of New Evangelization? What does it mean to connect to the youth in a life-changing way? Let us consider this dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman from a theological and a sociological perspective.

B. Encounter and Change

1. A Theological Perspective

¹³ EG #1.

¹⁴ Final Message #3.

¹⁵ Final Message #1.

¹⁶ EG #3

In the bible text, thirst connected Jesus and the woman. As someone said, thirst makes friends of us all. Both of them are seeking affirmation about who they are. The dialogue facilitated their identity formation. Authentic dialogue is always two-way. The nature of dialogue is between equals. It cannot be between a superior and an inferior. It is never unidirectional, even if or especially if Jesus is on the other side of the encounter, of the dialogue. Both Jesus and the Samaritan woman needed something and both gave something to the other to build up each other's identity.

We always read and say that it was Jesus who started the dialogue. But I think the woman also somehow initiated the 'dialogue' not by saying the first word but by staying there. The story says that Jesus was in the well first. When the Samaritan woman arrived, she saw that there was a Jew there. We were told that she came to the well at noontime because she did not want to meet people. People gossip about her and her way of life. If she did not want to meet people, she would have left as soon as she saw someone at the well, and especially it is not just someone, not just an ordinary neighbor, but a male Jew! Any Samaritan woman would have left. But she did not. She was ready for dialogue. Her staying there gave Jesus the trigger to start the conversation.

The context of the encounter at the well was baptism and (re)birthing. Spiritual baptism and rebirthing is an attempt to answer the question: what is our name; who are we; what makes us who we are - existential questions we all face at one time or another in our lives.

So the wider context of this periscope is finding one's name or being named. The first chapter of John gave all the titles/names of Jesus - Word of God, Lamb of God, Rabbi, Messiah, Son of Man. He also performed his first miracle in Cana in Galilee where his identity was also beginning to be revealed more clearly. So this Jesus with the so-many titles coming from the backward province of Galilee went to the progressive city of Jerusalem on a very popular Jewish time of celebration. People

do not know him in this big city yet he had the courage to make a scene at the temple near Passover feast (where there were so many people in Jerusalem and the police are watching out for any disturbances!) So when Jesus made the scene in the temple, the people, especially the authorities began to ask “who is this man who had the gall to do this?” In chapter 3, Jesus meets Nicodemus and the theme of being born again was emphasized. Followed by a story of baptism with the disciples of John asking him who was this man who was also baptizing in the Jordan. Chapter 4 therefore starts with this context of identity-building - baptism and being born again as its metaphorical language.

Another image I want to emphasize is the Samaritan woman’s jar. In ancient imagery, especially in paintings, a woman always comes with a jar. A jar is an image of a woman’s womb. So in this text, a birthing was going to happen. When she left her water jar, they were both reborn. Their names were changed.

JESUS. In the dialogue between the Samaritan woman and Jesus, the woman called Jesus by three different names - Jew (verse 9), then as conversation deepens, she calls him prophet (verse 19) and at the end of the story, she called him the CHRIST (verse 29). These designations illustrate a deepening of how she is coming to know him: Jew is the name of the other, the enemy. Prophet is a more personal name, manifests that she is getting affected already by what Jesus was saying. Messiah of course is a very personal naming, an intimate naming. Jesus has saved her.

SAMARITAN WOMAN. The woman, on the other hand, also went through a process of changing names. She was referred to initially as the ‘a woman from Samaria’ (verse 7), a name laced with historical prejudices. In verse 17, Jesus called her a woman with five husbands and living with a sixth man who was not her husband, a description laced with socio-cultural bias, tantamount to being called a woman of ill-repute. In the end, Jesus calls ‘woman’ (verse 21) a nonjudgmental word and even a word that shows respect (in the same way Jesus calls her mother ‘woman’ in Chapter 2).

SAMARITAN VILLAGE. The village as well changed identity, from a village or a people known as the enemy of the Jews, they became friends and followers of a Jew, Jesus.

In the end of the story, the woman will be known as witness and evangelizer. Before the dialogue, the village people were distancing themselves from her. From a wide gap between her and the village, she became a bridge of reconciliation between historical enemies and helped them cross so many years of noncommunication to an intimate communication to the point that they see this Jew as their own life's Savior.

DIALOGUE:

The encounter, the authentic dialogue was life changing for all involved - the Samaritan woman, Jesus, the village. Their identities changed, and the change of identities flow into a changing of life ways. Conciliar documents have noted the importance of dialogue in the mission of the church and recognizes its importance and its value in continually shaping the church's identity as well as its mission.

The Church recognizes pluralism as the hallmark of our times. Yet it believes that true pluralism is impossible unless "communities of different origins and culture undertake dialogue."¹⁷ The church calls on all Christians to do their best to promote dialogue between people of *every* class although it encourages dialogue with people of other faiths. "Christians wish to establish dialogue with men who do not share their faith in order to build up mutual reverence and esteem, in order to search together for the truth in different areas, or in order to solve the more urgent problems of our day by social action."¹⁸

The church furthermore believes that dialogue can be called a 'true form of teaching'. "The object of dialogue is that one side should come closer to the other side and should understand it better. Mutual enrichment is the purpose of dialogue."¹⁹

¹⁷ Dialogue with Unbelievers (Humanae Personae Dignitatem) #1.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

However, dialogue in conciliar documents explore not just dialogue between peoples but most importantly, dialogue between church and the world, recognizing its 'mutual relationship'. The church believes it has profited much from the history and development of humankind: "It profits from the experience of past ages, from the progress of sciences, and from the riches hidden in various cultures, through which greater light is thrown on the nature of man and new avenues to truth are opened up."²⁰

"Whoever contributes to the development of the community of mankind at the level of family, culture, economic and social life, national and international politics, according to the plan of God, is also contributing in no small way to the community of the church in so far as it depends on things outside of itself." Even more, the church also recognizes that "it has benefitted and still benefitting from the opposition of its enemies and persecutors."²¹

2. *A Sociological Perspective*

Recent years saw complexity theories as helpful for engaging communities to change. I wish to use complexity theory because it theorizes that communication/interaction is the key to change. Supporting the insights from the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, dialogue and interaction are not just simple activities that one enters, but a process that changes and transforms actors and partners who enter such.

The basic premise of complexity theory²² is that there is a hidden order to the behavior and evolution of complex systems. A complex system is defined as one in which many independent agents interact with each other in multiple (sometimes infinite) ways. This variety of actors also allows for "spontaneous self-organization" that sometimes takes place in a system. This self-organization occurs without anyone being in charge of planning

²⁰ GS # 44.

²¹ Ibid.

²² This section (five paragraphs) is taken from Encyclopedia of Business, 2nd Edition.

the organization. Rather it is more a result of organisms/agents constantly adapting to each other. The complex systems are also adaptive (that is they always adapt in ways that benefit them). As an analogy, Waldrop suggests analogy to the way the human brain adapts to learn from experience.

Another important concept in complexity theory is that there is no master controller of any system. Rather, coherent system behavior is generated by the competition and cooperation between actors that is always present. And the components of a system do have different levels of organization- like an organization made up of divisions, which contain different departments, which are comprised of different workers. But the important differentiation from this 'organization', made by John Holland in *Complexity*, is that "complex adaptive systems are constantly revising and rearranging their building blocks as they gain experience".

While complexity theory is strikingly similar to chaos theory, complexity theorists maintain that chaos, by itself, does not account for the coherence of self-organizing, complex systems. Rather, complex systems reside at the edge of chaos - the actors or components of a system are never locked in to a particular position or role within the system, but they never fall completely out of control. As M. Mitchell Waldrop states in *Complexity*, "The edge of chaos is the constantly shifting battle zone between stagnation and anarchy, the one place where a complex system can become spontaneous, adaptive, and alive."

One of complexity theory's leading proponents is Stuart Kauffman, author of *At Home in the Universe: the Search for the Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity*, who said: "Life exists at the edge of chaos. I suspect that the fate of all complex adapting systems in the biosphere - from single cells to economies - is to evolve to a natural stage between order and chaos, a grand compromise between structure and surprise."

Stacey, Griffin and Shaw expound that there are four types of Complexity Theories.²³

- *Chaos Theory* shows how particular parameters, determined outside the system, caused the system's behavior to move toward a new state called an attractor.
- *Dissipative Structure Theory* highlights the role of fluctuations, which are small variations in the movement of the entities comprising a system. The amplification of small fluctuations can cause the system to reorganize in an unexpected way.
- *Complex Adaptive Systems Theory* gives more attention to the interaction between agents. Differences between agents and in their interactions lead to spontaneous reorganization.
- *Complex Responsive Process Theory* sees novelty emerging primarily through human communication.

At the heart of them all is that change is not directed from the top but emerges from the system as a whole. It comes about in an unplanned way. It occurs through the amplification of novelty. A chance mutation in nature or a human intervention rolls like a snowball through the system, growing in influence as other elements or individuals in the system react positively to them. In response, agents 'spontaneously' combine to create new patterns of interaction.

I want to focus on the *Complex Responsive Process Theory* where change happens primarily happen through human communication. This is what we see in the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman – how their conversation changed them and the people around them. We also know this from our personal experience. When we share our stories with someone, the very

²³ Ralph Stacey, Douglas Griffin and Patricia Shaw, *Complexity and Managements: Fad or Radical Change to Systems Thinking?* (London: Routledge, 2000), quoted in Michael Moynagh, *Church for Every Context* (London: SCM Press, 2012), p. 52 ff.

conversation itself can change the interpretation of our own stories and we come out of a conversation with a different story – we see something positive in a negative experience; we find hope in our difficult situation after listening to someone else’s story; we are challenged to change directions and decisions after our conversation partner asks us helpful questions. In work contexts, when problems and even crises come, keeping the communication process open and healthy provide window and doors to change our situation.

C: Dialogue at the Well: Pastoral Challenges

Jesus came to the well because he was thirsty. The Samaritan woman also came to the well to quench her thirst. As someone said, thirst makes friends of us all. Evangelization is not as a message but an experience, an experience that builds deep friendships, an encounter with Jesus that is life-changing. New Evangelization is not a program but a relationship. We church ministers are called to facilitate an experience of God, not talk about, not teach about, the word of God.

How is this paradigm of life-changing dialogue challenging us pastoral ministers to the youth? In the youth survey, we learned that one of the effects of this fast transition happening in our world and affecting the youth especially in their identity-building. Are we helping our youth in their identity-building, in their search for meaning in their lives, through the way we dialogue with them?

1. Are we ready for dialogue?

Do we facilitate authentic dialogue with our young people? From the biblical and theological context, we understand that dialogue is a relationship between partners of equal standing where there is mutual respect and reverence. Do we take the youth as an equal partner in dialogue? Or do we feel the youth are inferior to us because we are older and we are supposed to know more? Perhaps most of us grew up hearing our parents and other leader figures saying the children and the youth should not take part in adult conversations. Do we take the

wisdom of the youth as wisdom in its own right, not something that has to be corrected or guided? Are our young people subjects, and not objects, of evangelization?

Dialogue is not advocacy but an environment for mutual understanding. We do not want to enter into dialogue with the youth so that we could influence them and convert them to our side - which we think is the right side? The intention of dialogue is to provide a space for mutual understanding. When we dialogue, do we put ourselves in the shoes of the other? Do we interpret from our own perspective or try to understand deeply their own perspective and interpret from the other side?

2. Where are we in the continuum between structure and surprise?

From the sociological perspective to change through the complexity theories, we learn that change happens through the communication/interaction between elements in a system, especially as it deals in a free and spontaneous way to 'attractors' that enter the system and brings it to the edge of chaos. In these theories, we see how a complex system obeys experience and the wisdom gained from such experiences. If we look at the realities of our churches and put them in a continuum between structure and surprise - with 'structure' as metaphor for the attitude of sticking to what we have become used to and 'surprise' for the capacity to take risks - where would our churches be? Near 'structure'? In the middle? Near 'surprise'?

Since this continuum is about attitudes, what hinders us from changing? What will open us up to change? As we are preparing to celebrate Pentecost, it is good to ask ourselves what doors remain locked in our Upper Rooms?

3. Change reflects depth of dialogue

As church teachings emphasize that dialogue is a teacher, how much is dialogue teaching us? Learnings from authentic dialogue results in transformation in both parties. When we look at our churches - its people, leaders, programs, teachings, rituals

- can we see change happening? Or we see the same old structures and systems?

We saw in the conversation between the Samaritan woman and Jesus that their dialogue built up and nourished each others' identities and eventually each other's life ways. Does dialogue with the youth change us? Do we built up each other's identities in the dialogue? Can we take the wisdom we get from this dialogue to influence our systems and structures – our liturgies, our catechesis, our decision-making processes? The amount of change happening in our churches is simply a reflection of the dialogue we are engaging in, within our own communities, with others who are different from us, as well as with the wider society, the world. If our systems and structures have not changed or has changed minimally through the years, perhaps it is also a reflection of the way we have responded or not responded to the call to dialogue.

PART III “I MET A MAN...” WORLD ASKS YOUTH

Connecting to Jesus and to his body the church does not make us inward looking but propels us to go out to the streets, to the wider community, to the world. How does evangelization link to mission, especially mission of, with and for the youth?

A. New Evangelization as Mission Shaping the Church

The last part of the story saw the woman excitedly running around in the village and enthusiastically announces to the village people she was trying to hide from or did not want to relate with that she met this Man... And people, knowing her background, must have initially misunderstood her (“You met another man?!?”). They knew she was still the woman they were gossiping about (perhaps) yet something has changed in her. And even if they looked at her maybe in a condescending way before, they believed her. Scriptures says they looked for Jesus after hearing what the woman said.

Mission then is another thread that ties up this story. Jesus' sense of mission made him decide to pass by Samaria, a village hostile

to the Jews. He breached many barriers to be able to do his mission - religious, cultural and political barriers. The conversion experience of the woman propelled her to reach out to others, to mission out to others. As St. Paul EG says so clearly: "The love of Christ urges us on!" (2 Cor:5-14). Indeed, to be evangelized is to be a missionary. Mission is an integral part of following Jesus. Our Church is basically missionary. To be a disciple of Jesus is to take part in his mission of extending the reign of God in our time.

(Sometimes we ask if mission is a second step, after we have become a community. Church teaches that communion and mission are so integrally connected that one cannot say one proceeds the other, in the same way that Love is the identity of God. Love is by nature both the energy of relating - communion, and reaching out to others -mission. Our mission is to build up communion and our communion naturally energizes us for mission).

Dialoguing with the wider community or even the wider society pushes us out of our inner church worlds and our response to the challenges we encountered shape our way of being church. Prejudice, bias and disunity reside in the hearts of the people of the village as well as their Jewish visitors. The communion that transpired between Jesus and the Samaritan woman became the impulse for the mission of reconciliation, healing and unity in this village. Mission shapes our being church, as the first statement of *Gaudium et Spes* so clearly reminded us:

"The joy and the hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time are the joy and the hope, the grief and the anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men, who united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onwards toward the Kingdom of the Father and are bearers of salvation intended for all men. That is why Christians

cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history.”²⁴

The Church recognizes very well its mission, its concern for the evangelization of the youth... “We sense in our youth deep aspirations for authenticity, truth, freedom, generosity, to which we are convinced that the adequate response is Christ. We want to support them in their search and we encourage our communities to listen to, to dialogue with and to respond boldly and without reservation to the difficult condition of the youth. We want our communities to harness, not to suppress the power of their enthusiasm; to struggle for them against the fallacies and selfish ventures of worldly powers... The world of the young is a demanding but also a particularly promising field of New Evangelization. This is demonstrated by many experiences from those that draw many of them, like the world youth days, to the most hidden – but nonetheless powerful – like the different experiences of spirituality, service and mission. Young people’s active role in evangelizing first and foremost their world is to be recognized.”²⁵

How does mission then with, for and of the young shape our being church in these challenging times?

B. Frameworks for a Mission-shaped Church

The following two models will give us an idea how mission starts and shapes what it means to be church, especially to be a church of the young, guided by the encounter experience between Jesus and the samaritan woman.

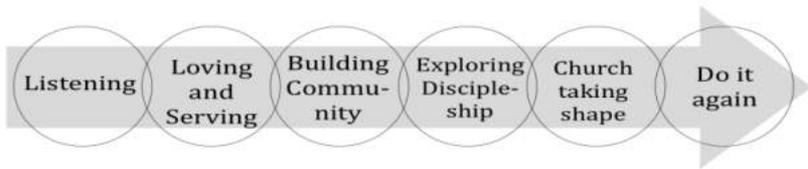
²⁴ GS # 1.

²⁵ Final Message # 9

1. *Fresh Expressions of Church (Anglican model)* ²⁶

The journey starts with listening to God and to the people the

A Serving-first Journey **FRESH EXPRESSIONS OF CHURCH**



founding community feels called to serve, which is an act of love itself. The community begins to build loving relationships and engage in acts of service, as Jesus did. This might range from a spirituality-at-work group, to hanging out with friends, to a ‘Saga’ group for the over ‘50s, to an environmental campaigning group, to a drop-in center for homeless people, to a regular discussion-over-curry.

An example is the Earlybird Café for parents and carers dropping off children at the St. Paul’s Church Nursery in Dorking. By providing a weekly place to chat, it became the first step to a café church on the first Sunday of the month, which in 2011 was attracting 80 children and 175 adults (www.freshexpressions.org.uk/stories). As St. John of the Cross said “Mission is putting love where love is not.”. This is a love that serves people not by creating Aqua dependency but by making them flourish. It is a participation in the self-giving love of God.

²⁶ Fresh Expressions of Church is a church movement that started among Anglicans in Britain and has since spread to different parts of the Western world, also in Catholic Church settings such as United States and Europe.

Community develops around the relationship and activities the founding team establishes as individuals get to know each other, trust each other and develop a sense of belonging. Building Community is valuable in its own right. It is what Jesus did as he ate meals with his followers, travelled with them and develop periods of special time to them. But it is also important for mission. Loving relationships reveal something of Christ, they give people a partial (though important) experience of church and they create a climate of trust within which to share the Gospel.

Low-key evangelism may continue throughout the initial circles, but when the need arises, more intentional opportunities will allow individuals to explore becoming disciples of Jesus. Individuals maybe mentored on a one-to-one basis, until there is a sufficient number to form a small cell. Or there could be enough people to form an explorers' group. The founding team might use or adopt a published course, or develop its own material.

Some people may come to faith quickly, others more slowly. Once they start to believe, they will be encouraged to see discipleship as a life-long process affecting the whole of their lives. They will also consider what it means for them to be church in this context. Church guided by the gospel and appropriate to their culture will take shape around them.

Once established, the new church will reach out and serve its context. This may include reproducing – doing it again.²⁷

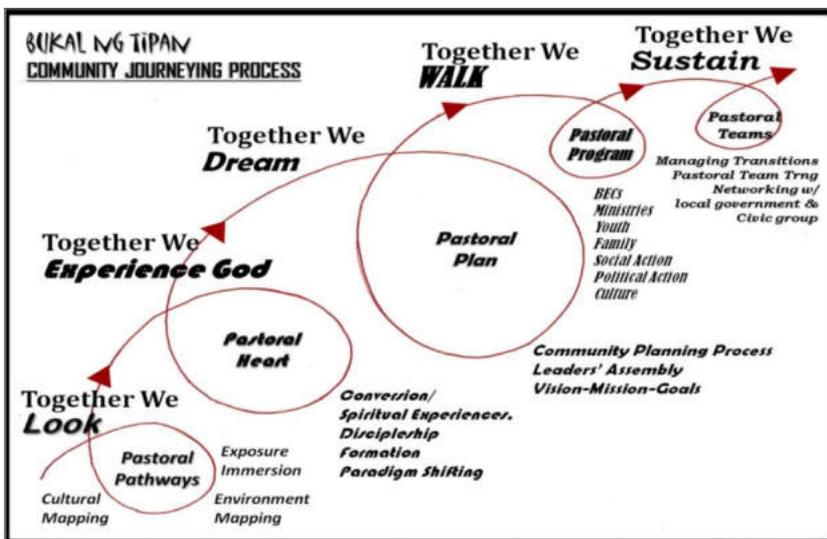
In this 'Serving First Journey' Framework of the Fresh Expressions church, we notice that they start 'church' by listening to the people, go the community that they want to reach out to. Knowing their community a bit through these conversations, they then start with different acts of kindness and service – for example, set up a place where people can use the Internet for free and also get coffee and donuts; a place for those

²⁷ This portion is taken directly from *Church for Every Context* p. 208-210, so as to be faithful to their own process in their own language.

interested in music and dancing; or cooking different menus or learning different languages. They have a group of skateboard youth that meets regularly in or near skateboard rinks. It was able to reach out to a group of punk motorcycle enthusiasts who attended a motorcycle blessing led by a lady pastor with tinted hair and tattoos on her arms. A quick look into their website would show different shapes of church and mission and different processes of building them.

2. Journeying Process (*Bukal ng Tipan*)²⁸

As we can see from this framework designed and used by the the pastoral center I coordinate (*Bukal ng Tipan*), we always start with immersion and culture research BEFORE designing



any pastoral program. When a diocese invites us to work with them or even sometimes to simply give a talk, we will request first if we could visit them and get to know their diocese a bit. Even if it is a short immersion time, we make sure we encounter

²⁸ Journeying Process is the framework and working principle of the pastoral training center I coordinate, *Bukal ng Tipan*, in working with different dioceses from a micro (e.g. Designing a formation program) to a macro perspective (e.g. Revisiting the Vision-Mission).

center and periphery places, get a sense of context and culture, be exposed to people and programs. From the very start we make it clear that we are *not* there to give a program but to journey with them as they build up their local churches. Being oriented to and grounded on local contexts, cultures and challenges help *Bukal* to be relevant, responsive and mission-oriented.

We have developed some tools to help us do immersion and culture research TOGETHER with the local teams who have invited us. Even if we are invited as resource persons and pastoral consultants, we do not presume that we have the answers for these dioceses' concerns or challenges. We want to listen to people and we make it a point to listen especially those who are far away from the church center, those at are periphery and margins, especially the poor. Togetherness is the key word of this working framework. Togetherness necessitates a deep respect for every one, especially those without a voice in the usual center-based set-ups²⁹ of most dioceses.

Togetherness is also manifested in our community life. Because we promote community/BEC, we in *Bukal* believe we also need to witness as a community. We strive to live as a community in *Bukal* and want to build community with the diocesan teams we work with. Most importantly, we want to be *together* with the people closest to Jesus' heart, the poor, that why we want to involve them. We believe that the medium is the message.

Another important step of this journeying process is 'experiencing God together'. We make it a point that our pastoral work is not just social work or effective implementation of pastoral programs. We are conscious that we are called to be family of God following God and extending Jesus's Kingdom mission. Praying, reflecting on God's word, rituals and different forms of worship are integral part of this journeying process. Every church activity – liturgy, seminars, conferences, meetings,

²⁹ Parishes, Cathedrals, Diocesan Centers are usually located in the center of economic, social and political life. If consultation only happens in the center, then most probably we would only be reaching out to the richer, more educated percentage of the population and church membership.

and even planning meetings - should facilitate an experience of God. Pastoral planning should also be a spiritual experience. Time and again we have received the comment - "We didn't expect to experience God in a planning meeting! Thank you for making us feel God is so near!" If church activities do not facilitate experiences of God, whose dream and whose mission are we promoting?

However, spiritual experiences are not simply activities but the intention is to facilitate the shifting of paradigms. To be disciples of Jesus and to take part in his Kingdom mission needs a different perspective, a different attitude and a different way of doing things.

Only after listening to people - especially the poor - (first spiral) and listening to God (second spiral), only then can we dream (third spiral). We have seen some dioceses who would *start* with planning a pastoral program - sometimes even a 5-year pastoral program! - without going through spiral one and two, and they wonder why they could not implement their programs. They find it difficult to see that it was THEIR (pastoral ministers') program, their dream, and not the peoples'. If we do not go through spiral one and two, pastoral programs could be so out of touch with the reality of people's lives, creating a possibility that 'church' becomes a separate compartment instead of a core energy in people's daily living.

The important thing also about this framework is sustainability (fifth spiral). What does it take to sustain this movement? How are former (and traditional) church structures reshaped so as to serve the common vision? What type of formation can bind and link this journeying together? Sustainability ensures that it is the conviction and the commitment of the faith community - not just its leaders, and definitely not *Bukal* - who will sustain this journey. Another valuable element here is networking with those outside church structures - local government units, people's organizations, etc. The longer the church remains inward-looking, the sooner it will die.

C. The Village Well: the Church of the Young as a ‘missionary (pilgrim) community of disciples’

The village well is the source of water for all in the village. The Final Message talked of a village well where everyone can drink of the Gospel and quench their thirst. As we end our reflection, we recognize that the youth is also a village well. They are sources of water; they are not just asking us for a drink. Their very nature and their specific context are sources of wisdom for new evangelization. From our discussion of the thirsts of the youth and how dialogue can help them build up new identities, we are ready to describe what kind of church, of a faith community could help young people in their continuous growth as individuals and as Christians. Describing this faith community of young people could also give some insights on practical pastoral responses we adult ministers in the church can facilitate so we too can come to the village well that is the youth.

I would like to use the phrase from *Evangelii Gaudium* a ‘missionary community of disciples’ and add ‘pilgrim’ – missionary pilgrim community of disciples – to describe the Church of the Young relevant to our times. Let us describe the different words in this phrase.

Both frameworks presented in this section – Fresh Expressions Church and Journeying Process - use ‘journeying’ as metaphor for their evangelization processes. They manifest that church is a church that is on the way, a pilgrim church. Although ‘pilgrim church’ was popularized 50 years ago as a conciliar image of church, perhaps it is most appropriate for the young people of this present age. Maybe especially the young, who are necessarily in transition – from children to adulthood – shaping church with them is an exciting journey, a pilgrimage of discovery and learning. The youth face incessant changes, especially cultural, brought about by every new generation. Evangelization and mission with, for and of the youth necessitate a pilgrim spirit, certain fluidity - spontaneity, open to new ideas, experimentation, risking new things, content with

half answers, taking another track, learning from experience, trying again.

Both frameworks also are mission-oriented. Both start with listening to people and getting to know people. Knowing the needs, concerns and interests of people (of the youth) shape their mission as the community seeks to respond and serve. This serving and missioning flow from the calling the community receives from Jesus. They are a community in mission because they feel in their hearts that this is what they are called to be and to do by Jesus.

Pope Francis reminds us that mission shapes the way we become church: “I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all whom Jesus summons to friendship with him. As John Paul II once said to the bishops of Oceania: “All renewal in the church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion.”³⁰

Let us describe this community further so that we can see better what it entails in terms of creative responses to evangelizing and building up the Church of the Young.

1. A Sensing Church/Faith Community

The Church of the Young as a ‘missionary pilgrim community of disciples’ is a sensing church. To be a sensing church is to use the senses: seeing, smelling, tasting hearing, touching in understanding the context and culture and challenges of the

³⁰ EG #27

young. A sensing church is a very apt description for the youth as the world of today glorify the senses. We see how the youth is so attached to their music. We also notice how visuals attract them. We can also see in the world of the youth that the body as a whole has become very important. We see their concern for the body – for beauty, fashion, and health. To be a sensing church is to enter and understand the world of the youth.

To be a sensing church is to seek to know what makes the youth tick – what attracts them, what bores them, what energizes them, what disappoints them. A sensing church can ‘read’ the youth because it understands and speaks their language, their culture. It will be challenging for us pastoral and youth ministers to design liturgies and formation for young people that makes use of the senses so that they whole body is engaged and affected.

Jesus is a person who has senses people very effectively. He senses the deep sadness of the widow of Nain, the desperation of the blind man of Bartimaeus, the pain of the synagogue official whose daughter died, and of course, the deeper thirst of the Samaritan woman at the well. It will be interesting to bring sensing back to the body of the Christ, the Church. If it fails to use its senses, then the body of Christ becomes a cadaver, a dead one, because it is unfeeling. Perhaps the youth is pulling us back to this sensing body of Christ that hear and feel and see and touch the joys and pains of our world, especially the world of the young. Exercising our sensing and sensitivity in pastoral ministry and mission will also contribute to the building up of the the collective wisdom of the church – the *senses fidelium* – because like Jesus, our senses, our sensing of the people we are serving and of the world we live in lead us to deeper wisdom we need for community-building and missioning.

2. *A Dialoguing Church/Faith Community*

The Church of the Young as a ‘missionary pilgrim community of disciples’ is a dialoguing community. Communication is the new face of development. More than that, it is the specific style of Jesus’ leadership. Encountering and dialoguing with people,

especially with the poorest and outcasts were the marks of his ministry.

Dialogue necessitates mutual respect among dialogue partners. Both parties are sources of wisdom and inspiration. When church leaders, especially clerics, dialogue with the youth, it means a member of the body of Christ dialogues with another member of the body of Christ. It is not the head talking to the toe. Both are sources of wisdom and inspiration for church life and mission. When we do pastoral planning and decision making, do we dialogue with the youth? Do they have a voice and a place in our church systems?

In the faith community of the young, dialogue happens at different levels - with their inner selves, with others, with the world around them, but also with the environment. But the most important dialogue of all is our dialogue with Jesus. The grace and the strength, the joy and comfort, the affirmation and challenge that keep us going come from this dialogue.

3. An Emerging (responsive) Church/Faith Community

The Church of the Young as a 'missionary pilgrim community of disciples' is an emerging church. I prefer to use 'emerging' than 'responding' church because when I use responding, there is a connotation that there are two worlds - the church and the world. The church sees something challenging in the world and therefore the church wants to respond to it. But there is only one world. We, the church, are not outsiders in this world. We belong to it and live in it daily, intimately. An outsider perspective can be judgmental. A judgmental attitude sees the world, especially the world of the youth as materialistic, secularistic, no interest in God, individualistic. Although that may be true, I find it more helpful to challenge myself as a pastoral minister to look at the world as an insider, to try to understand it from the inside. What attracts young people to social network sites? What deeper needs of the youth do they reveal? What do gadgets symbolize beyond the material? How do the things we buy say something about us? What deeper values do they reveal?

An emerging church therefore emerges from this desire to seek deeper what makes sense to people, to young people especially? And allow insights gained from that honest searching to shape the way we build up community and ministry/mission with and among the youth.

To know the culture of our communities, youth communities in particular, would be the greatest challenge to those ministering to the youth because they need to understand this culture as an insider so that they make sense to the youth – in their images, language, ways of life. In pastoral settings, what ministries could be set up that makes sense to the youth and would invite not just their interest but their commitment?

EG challenges us not just to know the culture of the young and to be culture-shapers also. “New cultures are constantly being born in these vast new expanses³¹ where Christians are no longer interpreters or generators of meanings. Instead they themselves take from these cultures new languages, symbols, messages and paradigms which propose new approaches to life, approaches often in contrast with the gospel of Jesus. A completely new culture has come to life and continues to grow in the cities. The Synod noted that today the changes taking place in these great spaces and the culture which they create are a privileged locus of new evangelization. This challenges us to imagine innovative responses and possibilities for prayer and communion which are more attractive and meaningful for city dwellers. Through the influence of media, rural areas are being affected by the same cultural changes, which are significantly altering their way of life as well.”³²

“What is called for is an evangelization capable of shedding light on these new ways of relating to God, to others and to the world around us, and inspiring essential values. It must reach the places where new narratives and paradigms are being formed, bringing the word of Jesus to the inmost soul of our cities.”³³

³¹ referring to cities, EG 71.

³² EG # 73.

³³ EG # 74.

4. *A Journeying Church/Faith Community*

The Church of the Young as a 'missionary pilgrim community of disciples' is a journeying church. I have already noted earlier the spirit of the pilgrim community and its characteristics fit here. However, pilgrim or pilgrimages, even in their spontaneity and openness to whatever the road presents and even to surprises on road bends, the pilgrimage is not an aimless wandering about. It is always on the way to a pilgrim site. A journeying church is guided by a vision of church. And for us who follow Jesus, that vision is always the Reign of God in our midst. Our parishes and dioceses which design their vision as a local faith community rearticulate this vision responsive to their own context and its attendant challenges. It will be interesting for pastoral planners facilitating a visioning process in a parish or diocese to include the youth in an authentic participation.

Being directed to a vision of church does not make the church inward-looking. The vision of the Reign of God is in the world. The task of the church is to network, to link in solidarity with people of goodwill in the world around us, in the society where we find ourselves in. For the young people who have lived in the web world, networking is natural for them.

A vision is not static, it is dynamic. A vision has to be revisited, especially if we want to include the youth all the time. In the process of implementing the vision, there are lessons learned along the way, new challenges faced, new roads taken - and these could all be absorbed in the revisiting process that will make a vision responsive to our world and faithful to the Jesus tradition.

Perhaps, it is good to end this reflection quoting the description of EG of a community of missionary disciples as a good way to summarize our description of the church of the young as integrates communion and mission in the faith life of the youth communities.

"The church which goes forth is a community of missionary disciples. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has

taken the initiative, he has loved us first, and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcasts.

And evangelizing community gets involved in word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distance, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in the others. An evangelizing community is also supportive standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. An evangelizing community is always concerned with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient at the weeds. He or she finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life.

Finally, an evangelizing community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates at every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization.”³⁴

II. THE YEARNING OF THE MIGRANTS FOR INTEGRATION

**- Most Rev. Isao Kikuchi, SVD, Bishop of Niigata, Japan,
President of Caritas Asia & Caritas Japan**

I was a missionary in Africa. I was ordained a priest in 1986 and was sent to Ghana, West Africa, as I belong to the Divine Word Missionaries. I was there in Ghana for 8 years. For the entire period of my stay in Ghana, I worked on my own in a bush parish with more than 3,000 parishioners. We had a main Church and some 20 out-stations. There was no running water or electricity, even in the main village where I had my Parish rectory. Any difficulties you might conceive of as present in Africa were present in that community - poverty, a very lengthy list of diseases, lack of education, tribal conflicts, migrant workers, and no local job opportunities for young people.

³⁴ EG # 24.

However, in Ghana, the people were optimistic, they always had hope. Despair was not present, despite all the difficulties they faced. And people were very much open to religion, both traditional and other faith denominations, such as, the Catholic Church. We provided education, medical care, and many other practical support for the daily lives of the people. I had, every year, more than 100 adult baptism, and the church was more than full on Sundays for Mass or prayer services, which usually took two to three hours to complete. There were lot of success stories and painful experiences. But I was happy as I spent fulfilling time as a missionary priest.

Then, here I am now as a bishop of Niigata Diocese with only 7,000 Catholics out of 4 million people. One day, when I was visiting a parish in the northern part of my diocese, the parish priest, an old German missionary, was so happy to welcome me. Just before Mass in the sacristy, he told me this, "Bishop, because of your visit, there are so many people today in the chapel." So I expected to see "many" in the chapel. But, as I entered into the chapel for Mass, I saw only ten people, including little kids singing the entrance hymn. Only 10 people was enough for the parish priest to refer as "many." So when we completed Mass, I asked the missionary, "Father, you told me there were many, but we had only ten people there. What did you mean?" Then he told me, "Bishop, I have only 2 or 3 people for usual Sunday Mass."

This is a reality of a parish in my diocese. Yes, we do have a number of parishes with more than 100 people attending the Mass, yet we also have a number of small parishes like this. What a difference from my missionary life in Ghana to this reality in Japan!

These numbers of annual baptism would tell you something. This could be number of baptism of one of my stations in Ghana. But this is for the entire diocese.

cf. Baptism

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Infant baptism	50	56	48	43	29	30	25
Adult Baptism	75	65	72	53	67	46	56
Total Baptism	125	121	120	96	96	76	81

Working in Ghana was something satisfying for me, as it was really my ambition to be a bush missionary. With a very good attendance in Masses, people waiting for my visits, plenty catechumens, and a lot of baptisms, I could easily feel that I was doing something good. And I thought I was evangelizing very well.

It was easy for me to talk about hope for the future of my parish, when I was in Ghana, but compared to now, it is quite difficult for me to find hope, if I were to refer to the number of people attending mass, or being baptized in my diocese in Japan.

In December 2007, I went for my first Ad Limina visit with other Japanese Bishops. During a private audience with the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, he asked me, "what is hope in your diocese?"

I said in my heart that I could talk for hours of my "hopeless" stories, but the Holy Father was asking of hope. Where was it? But probably, the Holy Spirit worked at that moment, because suddenly I found myself talking to the Holy Father about hope in my diocese. And that is the story that I want to share with you today. It will be the first part of my presentation, then, after that, I would share with you our experiences on how Caritas Asia responds to migration and trafficking issues in Asia.

In Japan, after almost 200 years of persecution period, missionary activities resumed with MEP missionaries in January 1862, with the establishment of a Church in Yokohama. Then, on the 17th of March 1865, the Hidden Christians were discovered in Ohura, Nagasaki. So this year in March, we celebrated the 150th

anniversary of the discovery of the Hidden Christians in Nagasaki with Cardinal Quevedo as Holy Father's delegate.

At the beginning of the re-establishment of the mission in Japan, missionaries moved around villages to evangelize and establish a lot of churches. They went around in order to find Hidden Christians to integrate them into the "true" Catholic Church. Then in 1890, 25 years after the re-establishment of the Catholic Church in Japan, the very first meeting of the Japanese Catholic Church, with 4 Bishops or Mission Superiors, was held in Nagasaki.

During that first meeting, those in charge of the Japanese mission made a historical paradigm shift on their priorities on evangelization. They decided to abandon village visitation efforts as their priority, and introduced educational institutions as means of evangelization, so that they could make contact with those people in leadership class or the Establishment. That is why the Japanese Catholic Church, up till today, does not have any strong hold in rural areas. In my diocese, almost all of our parishes are located in major cities. We do not have any contact with local farming communities, though majority, out of more than 4 million people, are farmers in three prefectures in my diocese.

At the end of 2013, there were more than 2 million expatriates residing in Japan, with official residence permission. Out of these 2 million, three hundred and eighty thousand originated from Korea, and residing in Japan for historical reasons after the WWII. The biggest majority of them are from main land China, with six hundred and seventy thousand, followed by those from the Philippines and Brazil, with two hundred thousand each. By the way, this is why the Catholic Church in Japan says we have more than a million Catholics residing in Japan.

According to the official statistics, there are around four hundred thousand Catholics in Japan. This number is according to the Parish membership registration system. However, as there are more than half a million foreign born residents from the Philippines, Brazil and Peru, we estimate that there are more

than a million Catholics - four hundred Japanese and more than half a million expats, residing in Japan. So the pastoral care for those migrant Catholics are one of the highest priorities for the Japanese Catholic Church.

Before I was appointed as a bishop of Niigata, my understanding of the situation of migrant residents in Japan was quite limited. I thought they were residing in big cities of industrial centers such as Nagoya, where Toyota has a main factory; Hamamatsu, where Yamaha is; Saitama for Subaru; or, of course, Tokyo, where you find everything.

Niigata diocese is in charge of 3 prefectures in the northern part of the main island facing the sea of Japan. As I have mentioned, there are more than 4 million people residing in Niigata, and majority of these are farmers. There are no big industries, as such. So I thought pastoral care for migrant Catholics were not my problem. But it was not so.

One day after my episcopal ordination as a bishop of Niigata, a missionary priest in Yamagata city made a request for a pastoral visit to a town called Shinjo, a hundred kilometers north of Yamagata, and so I went. We did not make a visit of a church, as such, but we went to one of the public facilities of the town. There, I met more than one hundred people. Majority of them were Filipino ladies, and the rest were their Japanese husbands and kids.

After the Mass, I asked the ladies to count the number of Filipino friends residing in the area. The answer was more than one hundred. Who were they? They were all married to Japanese farmers. Some of them, have been in the rural villages for more than 20 years now, as wives and mothers in traditional rural Japanese settings. Why are there so many Filipinos in the rural farming villages of the northern part of Japan?

In the late 70's, local governments all over Japan started to realize future shortage of brides in the farming communities, because children of farmers except first-born sons tended to leave the rural areas to go to industrial centers for job

opportunities. In the early 80's, one of the villages in Yamagata prefecture had 240 males, who were already in their 30's, but did not have wives. In that village, the proportion of married men was one in every three men.

The local government, after a long debate, decided to invite ladies from China, Korea and the Philippines to be wives of these farmers. So it was an initiative taken by the local authority, and not by private enterprises.

Because of this background in Yamagata prefecture, local governments in the northern part of Japan, together with local communities offered significant assistance to foreign-born brides to be integrated into Japanese culture, including Japanese language lessons. That was the key of success to overcome cultural differences of both sides, not only husband and wife but also family members of the husband.

However, one point was missing - their spiritual welfare. Japanese public authorities did not include any religious activities into their action plans, because of the Constitution. So there were no provisions for migrants to go to Church on Sundays and, moreover, there were no Churches existing for them in rural areas.

When I met them for the first time, they requested me to establish their own parish church. I agreed but thought that it might take a long time to build a church, since the diocese did not have enough funds to even renovate other old parish buildings. So I promised to start fund raising campaign in the diocese. It was in 2005.

And lo and behold, in October 2010, we managed to erect a new parish church. How did it happen? In my surprise, the entire parish communities in my diocese contributed a lot, and these Filipino mothers also made significant contributions.

On the day of the dedication of the new church, one of the leaders of the Filipino community shared her story...

According to her, the local government and the local community were pretty much supportive of the newcomers from other countries. There were friends nearby. Her husband was so kind and his family members were very welcoming. Even as works in the rice fields were hard and time consuming, from early morning to late evening, she was spending a happy life.

But after sometime, she felt something was wrong with her life. Having graduated from a Catholic college in the Philippines, first, she thought it was because of lack of academic elements in her life. So, she started to organize English lessons for local kids. Later, this initiative developed into an English learning institution. She was happy, though teaching English also made her busy. But still, she felt that something was missing.

Then she realized that what was missing was attending Sunday Mass. She found out there was a Catholic Church in a nearby city, but it was more than an hour drive away. One day, she gathered up her courage to ask her husband to drive her to the Church on Sunday. Her husband was happy to drive for her, and she managed to attend Mass on that Sunday with a deep feeling of satisfaction. So she asked him again and again and again to take her.

In Japan, Sunday is just a holiday. After a week-long hard work in the farm, Sunday should be a time for family to be together to rest and enjoy. But she continued to travel more than an hour just to attend Mass. After sometime, one of her husband's relatives, who was feeling amazed at what she was doing every Sunday, asked her, "are you not able to survive without going to Church on Sundays?" All of the family members, except her, were Buddhists, and as such, they do not have regular gatherings in temples, like what we, Catholics, do.

"Are you not able to survive without going to Church on Sundays?" First, she could not answer this question because attending Mass on Sundays has been a part of her life back in the Philippines. But at the same time, this question from relatives gave her a golden opportunity to reflect on her own faith in God.

She asked herself why she wanted to attend Mass, which led her to meditate about the very reason why she is a Catholic.

Then after sometime of reflection and deepening of her faith, she was confident enough to answer the question. She did not have to wait for the next chance to answer because all the members of the family were just curious on her Sunday movements. So one Sunday afternoon, when she came back from Mass, someone asked her again, "are you not able to survive without going to Church on Sundays?" She answered, "I am not able to survive without going to Church on Sundays, because that is everything of my being"

That was the beginning of the establishment of a Catholic community in the area. Whenever she met Filipinos, she invited them to join her to go to Sunday Mass. Later, they started to hire public facilities on Sundays and invited priests. After 20 years of their efforts, they managed to dedicate their own Church. Today there are more than one hundred members in the community, composed not only Filipinos but also some Japanese, their kids and several husbands who had been baptized.

Are they not doing evangelization in rural Japan where no Church activities were found through their very existence and words and deeds?

I have more stories to share about these Filipino ladies doing evangelization in rural areas where traditional Catholic Church in Japan are non-existent. We still do not have any access to these areas but they do. Yes, they are missionaries sent by God. This is the providence of God. He wanted to accomplish his own evangelization through his own way. These ladies are missionaries sent by God to Japan.

The Catholic Church in Japan provides all kinds of pastoral care and services to migrants in Japan, not only for Catholics but also to any one in need of help. Some need legal protection, because of visa status; some need financial assistance, because of loss of jobs; some need psychological assistance, because of broken marriage; some need shelter, because of domestic violence. It is

not only the Catholic Church but there are also a lot of NGOs working on these issues.

However, it is only the Catholic Church that is able to provide spiritual and pastoral care to migrant Catholics in Japan, and they need it. Through providing pastoral care, they are able to deepen their faith and find their own vocation of being missionaries in Japan in spite of all different reasons and status of being in Japan. And at this moment, at least in my diocese, they are the ones providing opportunities to evangelize people through their own existence and witnesses of daily lives in the villages, even to make others question them, "are you not able to survive without going to Church on Sundays?"

I do not have to repeat and stress on this point here with you, as you all are experienced missionaries, but let me just quote one passage from the *EVANGELII NUNTIANDI* of Pope Paul VI...

18: For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new:

How are we to influence humanity so that it would be transformed from within? I think it is through our witnesses of the Gospel message, and through our words and deeds in everyday life.

We can make this transformation through our own witness of love. The Catholic volunteers in Tohoku area, after the March 11 quake and tsunami disaster, are now called with affection from local people as "Mr. and Ms. Caritas." This is a concrete example that we can make our witnesses of love through our charitable activities.

As nationalistic tendency has been increasing in Japan, the general public has quite strict and sometimes hostile opinion over status of migrants in Japan. Sometimes, Catholic Migrant Commission members who help un-documented migrants are severely criticized by our own Catholics that they are supporting illegal criminals. This tendency may continue for some time. Are we to stop helping people in need because of these criticisms?

No, we should continue providing service and assistance to those in need, regardless of one's legal status and this persistence would be our strongest witness in future time.

At the same time, we should not forget to provide pastoral care to Catholic migrants in Japan so that they themselves are able to deepen their faith and find their own vocation as missionaries in Japan to promote new evangelization.

Now let me go to my second point, which is about the regional program of Caritas Asia in the field of anti-human trafficking.

According to the sources, there are 2.5 million people who are in forced labor at any given time in the world. Out of these trafficked, 1.4 million are from Asia & Pacific. And majority of victims are between 18 to 24 years old. Then 32% of victims are used for forced commercial sexual exploitation.

(cf.:

<http://www.caritas.org/includes/pdf/coatnet/traffickingfacts.pdf>

Human trafficking flourishes in Asia, and thousands of women and children are trafficked for various exploitative ends every year. Nepali and Bangladeshi women, for instance, are trafficked to India and Pakistan, primarily for commercial exploitation in the sex industry. Women from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Myanmar are trafficked through Pakistan to the Middle East.

In Southeast Asia, one of the main hubs for trafficking is the greater Mekong sub-region. This mainly involves human trafficking into Thailand from Myanmar, China, Laos and Cambodia. Thailand, India, Philippines and some other Asian Countries have come to be known as the origin, transit and destination country of human trafficking.

Clearly, human trafficking has become the fastest growing criminal activity in modern society. It has been victimizing millions of women, even men and children, all over the world, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. It has brought so much

pains and sufferings to countless victims, as well as, griefs and anxieties among our people.

It is at this backdrop that the Anti-trafficking regional program of Caritas Asia aims to respond to various issues and problems associated with migration and human trafficking. Grounded on the Catholic Social Teaching, Caritas Asia finds it necessary to respond to the griefs and anxieties of our society. In this context, Caritas Asia, in its service to the region, finds direction and guidance from the pastoral constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, that begins with this famous phrase:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor, or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise and echo in their hearts.

Caritas Asia is one of the seven Regional Offices under the Confederation of Caritas Internationalis (CI). It covers the 23 Caritas member organizations that are operating in 23 countries and territories in the Asian continent, and are subdivided into the four sub-regions of Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

Since 2008, up to now, Caritas Asia has been building and strengthening the capacity and competency of its Member Organisations in the field of preventing, responding to, or combating the incidence of trafficking in persons. It is also facilitating its members to implement different programs and activities that promote awareness among vulnerable groups and communities, while forging partnership, collaboration, and cooperation with other local, regional and international institutions that also work on the fight against trafficking in persons.

Through the Anti-Trafficking program, Caritas Asia provides opportunities for member organizations to do analysis of existing national laws and policies on trafficking, and keep

abreast of countries in Asia that are either the source, destination, or transit areas of trafficked victims.

Caritas Asia regularly organizes Asia level or national level conventions, meetings, or forums on anti-trafficking. It provides technical trainings and workshops that aim to sharpen the capabilities and capacities of Caritas members and partners involved in curbing trafficking issues in their respective countries. Caritas Asia also maintains and joins regional anti-trafficking networks and is a member of the United Nations Action for Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons (UN-ACT). It maintains communications, and establishes collaboration and networking with local, national, and international organizations, that are also working against trafficking in persons

In the field of raising community awareness, Caritas Asia engages in the campaign against trafficking in persons through publication of campaign posters, stickers, banners, or other information, education and communications materials that are widely distributed at the local, national, and regional levels. Working with or lobbying with local or national governments, as well as regional and international government bodies, is also among the major strategies that Caritas Asia pursues, in order to boost its regional program on anti-trafficking.

On an annual basis, the Caritas member organizations are given the chance to share their experiences and relevant information about their respective efforts against trafficking in persons. This is done through the annual meetings that Caritas Asia organizes. As part of its information and experience sharing, the program also organizes exposure visits to areas where Caritas workers/volunteers can have first-hand encounters with trafficked persons.

Very recently, Caritas Asia, through the support of Porticus and other partners, has formed an Anti-Trafficking Task Force in the Greater Mekong Sub-region in order to boost collaboration and cooperation among the Caritas members in Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Task Force, which sprang

as one of the outcomes of the roundtable discussions conducted in 2014 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, serves as the tink tank and the advisory body that looks after the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation aspects of the action plans crafted by the participants of the Siem Reap meeting.

These activities, among others, are part and parcel of Caritas Asia's program on anti-trafficking, which is one of the embodiments of our commitment to be part of the mission of the Church. It is one of our ways in Caritas to take part in the essential dimension of the Church's mission of proclaiming the word of God (kyrygma-martyria), celebrating the sacraments (leitourgia), and exercising the ministry of charity (diakonia). I firmly believe that it is in this taking part in the fulfillment of the Church's mission that we are able to commit ourselves and have courage to work for people who are locked in the bond of human miseries, such as those who have fallen victims to human trafficking.

With this, I would like to end by expressing my sincerest gratitude to all of you for having given me this opportunity to impart with you some of my views and experiences on migration and trafficking. I hope that my sharing today will inspire you to continue caring for the migrants, especially those who fall victims to trafficking.

III. THE THIRST OF THE "WOUNDED" FOR HEALING IN THE CONTEXT OF NEW EVANGELISATION

- Fr. Clarence Devadass, Executive Secretary, FABC Office of Theological Concerns

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is probably one of the most dramatically constructed encounter in the Gospel. There is Jesus, the Samaritan woman, the disciples, and the people of the town all forming this great story. However, except for Jesus, there is much anonymity in this encounter even though the author goes to great length in describing other details. We neither know the name nor the age of the Samaritan woman. But what is clear is that her

conversation with Jesus is his longest one-on-one chat recorded in Scripture. This in itself gives us enough reason to look at the account of the woman at the well a fresh look.³⁵

“It was high noon on a hot day. Jesus, tired from traveling, chose a sensible rest stop—Jacob’s well outside the town of Sychar—while waiting for his disciples to go into town for food. When our unnamed woman appeared with clay jar in hand, Jesus made a simple request: “Will you give me a drink?” (John 4:7). The encounter itself begins with some obstacles: (1) Jews weren’t supposed to speak to Samaritans. (2) Men weren’t permitted to address women without their husbands present. And (3) rabbis had no business speaking to shady ladies such as this one.”³⁶

Many of us in the course of our ministry have come across people who have been hurt in more ways than one. In fact, all of us carry within ourselves certain hurts that we may have either been able to be healed or otherwise. We are not speaking of physical hurt but rather hurts of either the soul or spirit of a person that are carried and experienced within that person himself. They are hurts on the inside that have been suppressed and hidden. Most often, they are invisible and they affect the mind, beliefs, emotions, will, relationship with God, and relationships with others. In themselves there are already some obstacles that that prevent us from going further.

In the Jubilee Year of 2000, Pope John Paul II led the Church through a process of asking forgiveness of God for the sins committed by members of his church over the past 2,000 years, especially those which caused division among Christians. At the same time the Pope reaffirmed the sanctity of “Mother Church.”

³⁵cf. Flanagan, Neal M. “John.” *The Collegeville Bible Commentary: Based on the New American Bible with Revised New Testament*. Ed. Dianne Bergant and Robert J. Karris. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1989. 986.

³⁶ Higgs, Liz Curtis. “The Woman at the Well: Thirsty for Truth.” *Today’s Christian Woman*. July 2008. Web. 3 Mar. 2015.

<<http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2008/july/woman-at-well.html?start=2>>.

The document on which the confession is based stresses that while the church always remains holy, its members can make mistakes.

The Pope sought pardon for seven categories of sin: general sins; sins in the service of truth; sins against Christian unity; against the Jews; against respect for love, peace and cultures; against the dignity of women and minorities; and against human rights.

It is not my intention to channel this discussion to revisit the sins of the past but rather to look at how can we as Church, bring about healing to the many people who “thirst” to be reconciled with God but are unable to do so because of circumstances. But yet, circumstances need not be an obstacle for experiencing the love of God because the love of God as we know is unconditional and limitless.

From experience we know that there are many different intensities of hurt and that some hurts may be caused by an on-time incident. However there are those hurts that are on-going and therefore they need on going healing. Some of these hurts are self-inflicted but there are also those who by no fault of their own have been hurt by others that may have been caused by words and actions.

The purpose of this forum is to explore further how can we as ministers of reconciliation can bring about healing to those who continue to hurt: those who feel “marginalised “in the Church because of their social status (the poor), their marital status (divorced, remarried, unwed mothers), sexual orientation (lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender), theological position (conservative, progressive), gender (women), ethnicity (race relations, indigenous people) and the many others who long to be part of the Church but are too hurt to come back. There are also those who would like to return but the “rules of the Church” can sometime prevent this from happening. There are those who are put off by the judgmental attitude of those in leadership and the harsh words used to describe groups of people.

The challenge of the New Evangelisation is to find ways to bring this healing to the many people who seek for it but sometimes do not know how. As ministers of healing and reconciliation, it is our duty to find ways to make this happen as traditional Catholic doctrine, which is certainly based on the person of Jesus himself, and pastoral practice are not at odds (as some people may perceive) with genuine mercy and compassion that Jesus sought out to accomplish.³⁷

The call of the New Evangelisation must include the zeal to extend a hand of love and reconciliation: “The ecclesial community must support such people more than ever. It must give them much respect, solidarity, understanding and practical help, so that they can preserve their fidelity even in their difficult situation; and it must help them to cultivate the need to forgive which is inherent in Christian love...”³⁸

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, in many ways epitomises the encounter between the Church and the wounded. This encounter, which for many may just be like one of the many encounters of Jesus with different personages during his public ministry, provides the Church with a paradigm for pastoral ministry. In fact, on the third Sunday in Lent, we read this gospel passage in the context of the need to be transformed and be renewed in the spirit of Lent.

This encounter, which is found only in the gospel of John, is set within the context after the intriguing encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus. Even though both these encounters are about faith responses and have similar themes which includes water, Spirit, eternal life and testimony, each of them bring their own value to the message that Jesus wanted to communicate.

³⁷cf. Dodaro, Robert, ed. *Remaining in the Truth of Christ: Marriage and Communion in the Catholic Church*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2014.

³⁸Pope John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation On the Family (Familiaris Consortio)*. 1981. no. 83.

We are all aware that the Samaritan woman, who is not named by John, represents a larger community. While Nicodemus is a well-known and well-educated Jewish religious leader, the Samaritan woman is anonymous and she belongs to a community that is utterly despised by the Jews. Over and above, this Samaritan woman that Jesus encounters by the well of Jacob, is even despised by her own community because of her questionable lifestyle (Jn 4:16-18). This explains why she chooses to go to the well to draw water at noon when no other person would go. For those of you who have been to the Holy Land, you would know that the water source for the village is often situated away from the village. She was alone and the rest despised her - it is represents a total rejection.

One may wonder why Jesus headed in a direction that passed a Samaritan village, as it is rather strange because for most Jews, going from Judea to Galilee would try to avoid Samaria. However the historian Josephus records that it is not unusual for the Galileans during the festivals travel through Samaria to get to Jerusalem.³⁹ There is no indication in this early part of John's gospel that Jesus was headed towards Jerusalem. It would only seem that Jesus deliberately took this path so as to make this encounter possible. In other words, Jesus "crosses geographical, ethnic, religious, social and gender barriers in order to meet this complex character - a Samaritan, a woman, and a social outcast".⁴⁰

Despite the woman's anonymity, John goes to great lengths to provide details about his encounter that seems encrypted with so many symbolisms. Not only did this encounter bring a fruitful conclusion, it also meant that "Jesus broke three Jewish customs: first, he spoke to a woman; second, she was a Samaritan woman, a group the Jews traditionally despised; and third, he asked her to get him a drink of water, which would

³⁹Brown, Raymond E. "The Gospel According to John: Introduction, Translation, and Notes." *Anchor Bible*. Vol. 1. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966. 169.

⁴⁰Bennema, Cornelis. *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014. 162.

have made him ceremonially unclean from using her cup or jar".⁴¹

The interaction between Jesus and the woman can be seen in two parts: firstly, the discussion about the water and secondly, the discussion about the Jesus' identity. Scripture scholars point out that both these parts form a chiasmic structure. However it is not my intention to enter into its details. For the purpose of this discussion, it would suffice to say that each part complements the other.

In the first part of the encounter, the theme of the "water" is somewhat a continuation of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus. From a literal request for water, Jesus goes on to discuss a metaphorical offer for water. However it must be noted that "living water" has four possible meanings in the Jewish tradition: "(i) life or salvation (Isa 12:3; 35:6-7; 55:1-3; Jer 17:13; Zech 14:8; 1QH 16:4-23); (ii) cleansing or purification (Lev 14:5-6; Num 19:17-22; 1QS 3:4-9; 4:21); (iii) the Spirit (Isa 44:3; 1QS 4:21); (iv) divine wisdom or teaching (Prov 13:14; 18:4; Isa 11:9; Sir 24:23-29; 1QH 12:11)."⁴²

The Samaritan woman did not fully understand what Jesus was trying to communicate as she was speaking from an earthly level whereas Jesus was speaking at a spiritual level. However Jesus does not give up on her. In the way John presents this encounter, one can see that there is a slow progression of her understanding. Her request for the "water" demonstrates that she understood, though not fully, that Jesus was offering more than just the water from the well.

The second "part" of the woman's interaction with Jesus focuses on his identity. Knowing that the Samaritan woman did not fully grasp what he was offering her, Jesus now focuses on gradually

⁴¹Zavada, Jack. "Woman at the Well: A Story of God's Love and Acceptance." 23 Mar. 2015. <<http://christianity.about.com/od/biblestorysummaries/a/Woman-At-The-Well.htm>>.

⁴²Bennema, Cornelis. *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel*. London: Brunel U, 2001. 182-84.

revealing his identity to her. Perhaps, in the mind of Jesus was that since the woman did not grasp fully the gift that was being offered to her, now it was time to reveal the giver of the gift and maybe she will accept it knowing who the giver is. In other words, “when she recognises the true identity of the giver she will also recognise the nature of the gift”.⁴³

What ensues is totally fascinating. Jesus makes no attempt to discuss about the morality (ethics) or the woman’s lifestyle that was known to the people of the village, rather Jesus goes on to show that he knew her life even though this had been their first encounter. It was neither the intention of Jesus to castigate the woman for her lifestyle nor was he interested in passing a judgement. In doing so, Jesus succeeds in capturing her attention: from addressing him as “Sir”, she now considers him to be a prophet. Now, the Samaritan woman slowly begins to understand that Jesus was not speaking on an earthly plane but rather on a heavenly plane. The whole dynamics of this encounter begins to change.

The response of the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:27-42) indicates that something has happened and she begins to respond to Jesus: “First, she leaves her water jar behind (4:28), possibly indicating that her thirst has been quenched. Then, she invites fellow villagers to *come and see* this man whom she tentatively believes is the Messiah (4:28-29)... Subsequently, many Samaritans believe in Jesus on the basis of her testimony (4:39), and their climatic confession of Jesus as the Saviour of the world in 4:42 probably include the woman’s confession. The woman struggles for understanding throughout the dialogue, but Jesus helps her progress. This progress is reflected in the titles she uses for Jesus: she goes from a *Jew* (4:9) to *Sir* (4:11, 15, 19) *prophet* (4:19), *Messiah* (4:29), and lastly *Saviour* (4:42).”⁴⁴ It is worth noting that this Samaritan woman who has been marginalised by her own

⁴³Bennema, Cornelis. *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014. 165.

⁴⁴Bennema, Cornelis. *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014. 167-168.

community turns out to be a model disciple: she not only is convinced of Jesus but she also brings others to meet him.

The “New” Samaritan Woman

The Samaritan woman who in many ways was at a disadvantaged and marginalised because of her geographical, ethnic, religious, social and gender background, she can be considered the archetype of the “wounded Catholic” that we are here discussing. It is highly probable that the Samaritan woman, though of ill repute, she must have longed for an opportunity to be reintegrated into her community life. Imagine a life being the talk of the villagers, of not wanting to be seen talking or associated to her, and of not being invited to any communal celebrations. She may be physically alive but to her community she was “dead”. Though she knew that what she was doing was wrong, she must have longed for acceptance and perhaps the only way that this was to happen is through a process of healing – a healing not just on the part of the Samaritan woman but also of the villagers.

There are many today who seek for “healing” because of geographical displacement (caused by wars, natural disasters, unjust development, poverty), ethnic or religious persecution (caused by ethnic clashes, religious extremism, oppression of the minority), social marginalisation (caused by economic imbalance, class distinction, race discrimination), gender inequalities (caused by gender discrimination, sexual orientation), and theological variances (caused by different opposing views, stereo-typing). These are only but some of the areas that people seek for “healing”.

The ministry of healing has always been an integral part of the ministry of the Church. Jesus himself went about healing and preaching and therefore it was only expected that the Church founded of him should be interested in the sick and those in need. There are many accounts of healing in the gospels: “There is clear testimony in the Gospels that Jesus practiced healing. Wherever he went he ministered healing to hurting people. Though there are only forty-one distinct instances of physical or

mental healing recorded in the four Gospels, the texts record innumerable cures that took place during his three and a half year ministry... Nearly one-fifth of the Gospel accounts is devoted to Jesus' healing ministry. Out of 3,779 verses in the four Gospels, 727 relate specifically to the healing of physical and mental illness and the resurrection of the dead. It should be noted that the attention given to the healing ministry of Jesus is far greater than any one kind of experience recorded, including salvation."⁴⁵

It can be asked 'why did Jesus heal?' A cursory reading of the healing accounts would show that many of them wanted to be free of their physical ailments. However, Jesus did not only heal the physically ill but a large part of his healing ministry included the restoration with God and with humanity. In Old Testament theology, many of the illnesses were considered a "curse" from God and even due to the sins of the ancestors. It would have been difficult for Jesus to break this mentality: "And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" (John 9:2). Therefore, the Jesus' ministry of healing was not purely physical but it also had a life changing spiritual dimension.

Today, more than ever, we are confronted with many people who carry in themselves hurts against the Church that requires healing. We are at the crossroads of making the Church either relevant or extinct in reference to the human experience. In the days leading up to the Extraordinary Synod on the Family, we could not help but hear and read of the expectations of many sincere and devout Catholics who were waiting with bated breath for some "healing" that would bring them restoration to their current situation with regard to family life. As one journalist puts it, "some will have experienced the pain of divorce and the exclusion from the Eucharist of family members and friends who have remarried. They will surely want to lead

⁴⁵Cauchi, Tony. "Healing in the Gospels." *The Voice of Healing*. Revival Library, Nov. 2011. 25 Mar. 2015. <<http://www.voiceofhealing.info/02history/gospels.html>>.

us in prayer that healing may be done so that we [the Church] truly reflect the God of love in our faith."⁴⁶

Models of Doing Morality

Looking back at our own "theological traditions", there could have been five ways in which we could respond to the situation of the Samaritan woman. These models⁴⁷ are not exhaustive but rather it gives us an indication of the journey that we have taken through the centuries.

1. *Legal Model*:⁴⁸ Within this model, morality is mostly seen as obligations that are to be fulfilled by persons. Persons feel obliged either because of the persons' conviction or for the fear of punishment. There are no grey areas and therefore every person is obliged to follow the law. In this context then, every person is knows the law and is compelled to follow it for a fear of punishment. God is seen as the supreme law giver and for this reason then, adherence to the law is never compromised.

In this context, the Samaritan woman would have had no other option but to incur the punishment that the law prescribes. Her circumstances would not have contributed to the "innocence" but rather she would have to incur whatever punishment that the law has laid down. Perhaps this could have been the reason that the Samaritan woman isolated herself from the community that was judgemental of her way of life.

2. *Love-Discipleship Model*: In the love-discipleship model, the foundation of doing morality is based on love and since love is the foundation, it is always concerned about the welfare of others. This love then leads to responding to Jesus' invitation to imitate him and have a personal relationship with him.

⁴⁶ O'Hanlon, Joseph. "Listen and Learn." *The Tablet* [London] 10 Jan. 2015: 18.

⁴⁷ cf. Fagan, Seán. *Does Morality Change?* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1997. 34-46.

⁴⁸ Karl Rahner calls this the *forensic model*. This model has reward as its ultimate goal. It is like a father rewarding the child for good behavior, for passing an exam, etc.

This is perhaps the fundamental model in which Jesus operated on when engaging in a discussion with the Samaritan woman. Jesus looked at her with the eyes of love rather than a judgemental one as did her community. Throughout the encounter, Jesus was opening doors for the Samaritan woman rather than closing them down. This then led the woman to explore further through her conversation with Jesus.

3. *Liberation Model*: The voice of God has to be heard in the experience of the people, especially the poor, oppressed and the rejected. Here it calls for action and reform in order to bring about change.

In the liberation model, the Samaritan woman would have represented the many people that found themselves in a similar situation – those who have been neglected by society. The objective in this model would have been to set them free of this oppression so that they can experience the freedom to seek reforms that would bring about liberation. The liberation here is not only structural but also includes a liberation that brings about an inner transformation.

4. *Inner Conviction Model*: This in no way means that each person is free to do as one wishes. A conviction that is guided and directed by an external source. The inner conviction may be helped and directed by the law but the maturing process helps the person to accept the values enshrined in the law and these become the ultimate basis for human action. Personal conviction leads to personal commitment.

The conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman did conclude with a personal conviction. Jesus is no longer just an ordinary Jew but she is convinced that he is a prophet. Perhaps it was when Jesus revealed to her about her life that this conviction occurred but more than that, the conviction came about through the non-judgemental attitude of Jesus that was revealed not only by his words but also by his

actions. This conviction was not imposed but through a process of self-disclosure (dialogue).

5. *Relational Model*: Morality begins with an encounter with another since “no man is an island”. Moral action begins with an encounter with another, that every person who crosses my path is a gift to me and at the same time journeying together. Emphasis is on personal growth rather than blind obedience. Rules and principles are still required to assist discernment process.

The whole encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman was based on an encounter – an encounter that started merely on the basis of asking for a drink. The “conversion” of the Samaritan woman happened when a relationship was established. In that short period of time, Jesus was able to engage with her in such a way that it developed trust – she knew that she wasn’t being condemned by this prophet. Her community had rejected her but here is a prophet who was willing to give her another chance. It was made easier by the fact that the Samaritan woman was willing to be open and honest with Jesus and this then facilitated the change that Jesus was hoping for.

The Way Forward

It is true that there remains a constant tension between pastors and theologians who choose pastoral approaches over a theological one. However, St Paul showed that both the heart and mind are not opposed to each other but rather seeking always to be engaged: “To remain faithful to the Church of the apostles, mind and heart must always be engaged to ensure that the churches are preserved in faith (pastoral) and fit to embrace the future confident the gospel proclaimed is fit for purpose (theology)... What St Paul, in his time and place, did was to do theology out of the pain of the people, to ask the pain itself what healing is required and to look to the Shepherd of our souls to

come to our aid, to reveal love and mercy, fidelity and forgiveness."⁴⁹

In the second part to the discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, it is clear that Jesus does not press further for water for it would seem "that his initial request merely serves to open their conversation."⁵⁰

The transformation that takes place in this conversation is not just in the Samaritan woman and the villagers but also in Jesus. Jesus and the Samaritan woman have been transformed mentally and socially: "His identity as the Messiah is revealed, transcending his previous and continuous identity as a *Jew*, and her anomalous status as a woman without kin ties and unaccompanied by other females is set aside and she has become the basis for the belief by many on the members of her village in Jesus' role and ministry (Jn 4:39)."⁵¹

The dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman was key to quenching her thirst – a thirst to be reconciled not only with God but also with the community: "dialogue is a conversation where people seek to enter into a relationship with others in spite of their differences. This encounter or dialogue is based on mutual respect, understanding, trust and acceptance of the other."⁵²

What did Jesus achieve in in this encounter? It is this search for mutual understanding and acceptance that Jesus achieved in the encounter with the Samaritan woman. He is challenging us and inviting us to do the same. In the counter, it is Jesus who initiates a dialogue with the Samaritan woman, who probably considered herself a *persona non grata*. Jesus initiates this dialogue to

⁴⁹ O'Hanlon, Joseph. "Listen and Learn." *The Tablet* [London] 10 Jan. 2015: 18.

⁵⁰ Matthews, Victor H. "Conversation and Identity: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 40.4 (2010): 222.

⁵¹ Matthews, Victor H. "Conversation and Identity: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 40.4 (2010): 225.

⁵² Tarhembe, Thaddeus T. "Jesus and the Samaritan Woman: A Model of Dialogue with the "Other" (Jn 4:5-29)." *East Asian Pastoral Review* 40.1 (2003): 44.

“harmonise and heal wounds of the past, accept those considered outcast/unclean and to welcome them into the people of God”.⁵³

The openness that that brings to this conversation is life changing. “Despite the crudeness of her perception, she willingly, unlike Nicodemus, trusted the stranger and made her petition with confidence. This faith, [though] not yet a mature faith, is nevertheless a faith which can become the beginning of understanding.”⁵⁴

To be able to reach out to the wounded is work towards understanding the other and “to understand the *other* it does not require an abstract analysis, but human encounter – emerging from the depth of another person’s life.”⁵⁵

Pastoral Response

It is clear that at the end of the encounter tween Jesus and the Samaritan woman, the “wall” that separated the Jews and the Samaritan has been broken. Jesus seemed to have penetrated a situation that was hindered by historical and cultural obstacles: “Jesus’ open attitude, humility, love, tolerance, acceptance, respect, trust, gentleness, understanding, gradually helped the woman to see him more than a Jew, prophet, Messiah.”⁵⁶ In more ways, Jesus had quenched her “thirst”.

We [the Church] must also be prepared to get into the boat and set out nets into the deep – to step out of our comfort zones and enter the world of the wounded, to see, to feel and think as they do and try and understand the way they think. Does this involve risks? It certainly does because reaching out to heal involves

⁵³Tarhembe, Thaddeus T. "Jesus and the Samaritan Woman: A Model of Dialogue with the "Other" (Jn 4:5-29)." *East Asian Pastoral Review* 40.1 (2003): 46.

⁵⁴Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Light Has Come: An Exposition of the Fourth Gospel*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1982. 51.

⁵⁵ cf. Steng, Frederick J. *Understanding Religious Life*. 3rd ed. Encino, CA: Dickenson Pub., 1985.

⁵⁶Tarhembe, Thaddeus T. "Jesus and the Samaritan Woman: A Model of Dialogue with the "Other" (Jn 4:5-29)." *East Asian Pastoral Review* 40.1 (2003): 57.

risks and in order to be instruments of healing, we need to take some risks in order to effect change.

“The story of the Samaritan woman (John 4) teaches the kind of evangelism that all of us can manage. First, Jesus models it for us. He comes to a town where everyone is a member of a heretical sect and sits down by a well. A woman comes to draw water. Israelites usually don’t talk to Samaritans, much less drink out of their ritually impure vessels. [M]en usually don’t make conversation with women. But Jesus recognizes her existence and affirms her by being willing to accept a drink from her. Once she gets over her shock, a dialogue ensues. It starts out about water, wells, Jews and Samaritans, but Jesus asks her questions that throw her off a bit and make her think. He finally asks a question that leads her to “fess up” and admit her need. She’s hungry [thirsty] for love, and has run through quite a few partners looking for the real thing. Jesus’ soul-piercing glance tells her that his is the love she’s been looking for. She abandons her water jar and returns to town to tell everyone about Jesus.”⁵⁷

We are accustomed to the fact that the *New Evangelization* that we so often speak about calls each of us to deepen our faith, believe in the Gospel message and go forth to proclaim the Gospel. In short, the focus of the *New Evangelization* is for all Catholics to be evangelized and then go forth to evangelize. In a special way, the *New Evangelization* is focused on ‘re-proposing’ the Gospel to those who have experienced a crisis of faith and in that process been wounded, either by persons or circumstances.

The Jesus model of re-proposing the gospel to the Samaritan woman opens for us an avenue to bring healing to the wounded. We encounter many of these who are wounded and seeking for comfort and healing in our pastoral ministry. The New Evangelization that we speak of must be *Christocentric*. It must

⁵⁷D’Ambrossio, Marcellino. "Meaning of Lent & the Samaritan Woman." *The Crossroads Initiative*. 23 Mar. 2015.

<https://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library_article/458/Original_Meaning_of_Lent_the_Samaritan_Woman.html>.

be founded on the person of Jesus Christ and the good news that he offers: "Evangelization will always contain as the foundation, centre and, at the same time, the summit of its dynamism -- a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy."⁵⁸ In fact, in the words of Pope John Paul II, "The new evangelization, is not a matter of merely passing on doctrine but rather of a personal and profound meeting with the Saviour".⁵⁹

It is not to be forgotten that the call to new evangelization is addressed to the entire people of God. The mission *ad gentes* is incumbent upon the entire People of God... missionary activity which is carried out in a wide variety of ways, is the task of all the Christian faithful.⁶⁰ The ministry of healing the wounded belongs to the entire People of God. It is here that we can be ambassadors of hope offering a reconciling hand so as to build the bridge of peace and harmony: "While personal concern is sustained by a continuously growing faith in the value and meaning of life, the deepest motivation for leading our fellow man [woman] to the future is hope. For hope makes it possible to look beyond the fulfilment of urgent wishes and pressing desires and offers a vision beyond human suffering and even death... Hope prevents us from clinging to what we have and frees us to move away from the safe place and enter the unknown and fearful territory."⁶¹

With the declaration of the Holy Year of Mercy, the Church has a great opportunity to reach out to the wounded and find ways to bring this healing that they seek for. Many of those who seek healing, like the Samaritan woman, want to be reintegrated into the community of the Church: "As we can see in Sacred

⁵⁸ Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 27. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 8 December 1975.

⁵⁹ Pope John Paul II, "Commissioning of Families of the Neo-Catechumenal Way." *L'Osservatore Romano*. 14 January 1991. 12.

⁶⁰ cf. Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 71. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 7 September 1990.

⁶¹Nouwen, Henri J. M. *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972. 76.

Scripture, mercy is a key word that indicates God's action towards us. He does not limit himself merely to affirming his love, but makes it visible and tangible. Love, after all, can never be just an abstraction. By its very nature, it indicates something concrete: intentions, attitudes, and behaviours that are shown in daily living. The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible; that is, he desires our wellbeing and he wants to see us happy, full of joy, and peaceful. This is the path which the merciful love of Christians must also travel. As the Father loves, so do his children. Just as he is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other."⁶²

Paradigm for Healing

Jesus occupied much of his ministry to healing. One may assume that there were many people during the time of Jesus who need to be healed in one way or another. There is a certain paradigm that we can see in the mission of Jesus and I would like to use this paradigm to propose a way towards healing. This paradigm is also operational in Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman.

The path towards healing begins with an **invitation** (cf. Lk 9:59). It is an invitation that is free of judgment. The invitation in itself bring with it an openness to all who sincerely seek healing and there will be no prejudice, discrimination, bigotry, partiality, or pre-judgment. The encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman begins with this disposition.

It is the openness of Jesus that evokes a **response** (cf. Lk 18:18-27). The response is not forced out of the wounded but rather it is an expression on a yearning – a yearning that eventually responds to an external stimulus. The Samaritan woman responds to Jesus' invitation and the invitation to encounter him brings with the graces that was being offered by Jesus.

It is the self-giving response that makes the **following** (cf. Lk 9:23) possible. The following of Jesus comes from a personal

⁶²Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 9. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 11 April 2015.

choice and conviction. It is neither coerced nor forced upon another person. Similarly the healing of the wounded must eventually lead towards a following of Jesus. It is a personal encounter that leaves a lasting impact on the wounded. In the course of the encounter with Jesus, the Samaritan became a follower.

From being a follower, the Samaritan woman took the path of **discipleship** (cf. Mt 23:7-8). To be a disciple (Gk. *mathetes*) simply means to be a learner. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to be engaged in a lifelong process of learning from and about Jesus the master. The Samaritan woman chose to learn from Jesus. The conversation in itself demonstrates that there the process of learning has begun. To heal is to be able to lead the person on the path of discipleship.

And finally, to be a disciple is to **imitate** (cf. Jn 13:34) the person of Jesus: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (Jn 13:34). The process of healing becomes complete when the wounded now becomes the healer and this is only possible through the imitation of Christ the healer. Like Jesus who led people to the Father, the Samaritan woman leads others to Him.

Conclusion

The mission to heal is integral to the mission of the Church as it was integral to Jesus. For this reason then, it is not that the Church of Christ has a mission but the mission of Jesus Christ has a Church.⁶³ In the light of the New Evangelisation and if we are sincere and eager to heal the wounds of the wounded, we must work towards creating spaces for people to come to encounter Jesus, to awaken the hunger [thirst] and bring them to the path of discipleship: "Today, our challenge is not so much atheism as the need to respond adequately to many people's thirst for God... Unless these people find in the Church a spirituality which can offer healing and liberation, and fill them

⁶³cf. Mallon, James. *Divine Renovation*. London: Twenty-Third Publications, 2014. 17.

with life and peace, while at the same time summoning them to fraternal communion and missionary fruitfulness, they will end up by being taken in by solutions which neither make life truly human nor give glory to God.”⁶⁴

IV. ENABLING THE CLERGY TOWARDS CREATIVE MINISTRY

- *Most Rev. Thomas Dabre, Bishop of Poona, India*

INTRODUCTION

We are all aware of the difficult phase that the Church is passing through. The participation in the Church worship and services has dwindled. Some are indifferent to and some have left the Church. The current process of globalization with its emphasis on materialism and cultural imperialism has had its damaging impact on the pastoral ministry of the Church.

In this post-modern age we face the challenges to our faith and a way of life: subjective global ethics, deconstruction, natural wellbeing and wholeness, unease with authority, tradition, religion, metaphysics, transcendence absolutes, etc. On the other hand, there is a desire for lasting meaning, fulfillment and happiness which seems elusive.

This is not to ignore the encouraging signs of the growth of the Church in many areas of her life and mission inspired by the Second Vatican Council. Ways and means have to be discovered to further build on these manifold achievements.

The words of Pope Francis are a call to creative ministries.

“The creativity of charity is boundless; it is able to find countless new ways of bringing the newness of the Gospel to every culture and every corner of society.”

Pope Francis speaks of finding “ways to create “alternate spaces”, where the Gospel approach of self-giving, fraternity, embracing differences, and love of one another can thrive.”

⁶⁴Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, 89. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 24 November 2013.

His call to the Religious for the renewal of structures is applicable to all.

“I would hope that structures can be streamlined, large religious houses repurposed for works which better respond to the present demands of evangelization and charity, and apostolates adjusted to new needs.”

The priest must ask what effect and fruit his daily routine ministry has on the people in terms of Christian living with Christ and with one another. And constantly challenge himself to make it more fruitful.

(Creative ministry, Henri J.M Nouwen, United States of America Image Books Edition December 2003)

Divine Immutability-Newness Relationship

Creative ministry is a constant pastoral imperative on theological grounds. The characteristic Catholic formula of divine praise: “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end Amen”, unambiguously firms divine immutability. However, divine reality is not static, stale and dull. God cannot be old because He is infinite reality. Oldness is an indication of finitude.

For us finite humans, the life in God is ever new because limited as we are we can never grasp and possess divine reality in all its fullness. We can always grow in our attainment and experience of the divine. Divine immutability in its infinitude should not be regarded as old and fossilized.. Communication of God, therefore would demand new forms ministry.

Church Identity

The Church being the body of Christ is led by the Holy Spirit lives on the word of God and the sacraments. The Church is a supernatural community of faith though made of us human beings living in history. The Church is “a people brought into unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” As the mystical body of Christ, fashioned by the Holy Spirit the Church has her

identity to which she has to remain faithful all through the vicissitudes of history.(Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, nn.1-17) While remaining faithful to her identity the Church has continuously to renew herself, her mission and therefore her ministry. We have to maintain this dynamic and dialectical equilibrium between the Church's essential identity and the continual need of the novelty of the gospel.

Scandals, abuses, excesses, failures and sins of Church members have disturbed and disillusioned quite many people and rightly so. In truth these only underline the continual need of renewal of the ministry. *Ecclesia semper reformanda* (the Church has always to be renewed) has always been the guiding principle of the Church's life.

The Church on earth is made of human beings of flesh and blood , living in the midst of realities of the world. These do change - history changes - culture changes - new horizons - vistas open up - new operative paradigms emerge in society in its various sectors and complexities. Unexpected developments in the world science and technology have brought about the talk of future shock (Irvin Troffler).

Johann Adam Mohler's 1825' book *Unity in the Church* offered a dynamic and organic vision of the church by emphasizing the locus of the Spirit in the community. The Spirit, which is the interior life-principle infusing every believer permeates the community itself, a dynamic, living organism made possible by God's indwelling Spirit.

Yves Congar emphasizing a pneumatological ecclesiology maintains that the church is not ready-made. Instead it is continually being built by God through the work of Christ's Spirit; it is a living organism. (5)

The operative presence of the Spirit leads to the emergence of the new pastoral presence. Newness in Scripture. The psalms repeatedly speak of the newness of life in God. When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and the face of the earth is

renewed. (Ps.104) Alleluia, Sing to the Lord a new song: praise him in the assembly of his faithful. (Ps 149)

Jesus' clarion call to "conversion" is a demand for continual and all-inclusive renewal. The life in fullness/ abundance which Jesus imparts is a life of continual newness. New wine calls for a new wine. The early Church too was seized with the vision of new life of salvation through Jesus Christ. We are called to walk in newness of life - (Rom 6:4)

'We wait for a new heaven and a new earth in which justice reigns, according to God's promise' (2 Pt 3:13).

Conciliar aggiornamento

The Council sought to promote the desired updating of the Church's entire life, ministry and mission through the implementation of foundational elements, directive principles and programmes presented in the 16 documents of the Council. The Council may arguably be the best example of what the Church has to be at a given stage of history, namely, a blend of continuity with the apostolic tradition and change in pastoral ministry demanded by developments in the world.

NEW EVANGELIZATION

New ardour would demand that we live our Christian commitment with ever growing intensity, depth, enthusiasm and zeal. At the basis of a renewed and creative pastoral ministry is an inner renewal of motivation, commitment, intensification and transformation.

Post- Second Vatican Council reforms were external without a corresponding inner renewal which helps to explain the spate of scandals and compromises in the church. (Pope Benedict XVI, Message, International Eucharistic Congress, Ireland, 2012)

New method would demand that we must devise new ways, structures and forms of exercising the pastoral ministry such as small Christian communities, Focolare, the charismatic-Pentecostal communities, the various religious and secular

communities, interreligious dialogue and various other forms of ministry appropriate in a given context and circumstance.

The new expression would demand that we manifest and witness to the Christian commitment with relevant, meaningful, intelligible thought patterns and categories and language and idioms etc., e.g., simplification of liturgical vestments, ecclesiastical dress, revision of Church prayers, seminary formation, inculturation, use of local languages, adaptation and reform of Canon law, church discipline, modern technology and means of social communication, the style of catechizing, use of local languages, modes of communication, cultural practices etc.

The Church's deepest nature and authentic ministry is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: Worship, proclamation of the word God and the Gospel and service (liturgia, kerygma and diakonia) the fullness of the new life that the Church celebrates and promotes should be devoid of all dullness, monotony and boredom. Instead it should be carried out in such a way that the participants experience its newness and abundance. This certainly would demand that it be celebrated creatively which demands enthusiasm, initiative, drive and dedication on the part of the Church's pastors. (Neuwan)

Like Jesus we will have to combine ministry to large audiences and congregations with to individuals in their personal needs. He cared for the woman at the well, for Mary Magdalene, for Nicodemus, and for the men traveling to Emmaus, etc.

Jesus association with and defence of women, sinners, the poor and lepers, widows, orphans etc. was a movement away from the centre. His encounters with the people on the margins of society was a striking feature of his mission.

His message to his disciples at foot-washing to live a life of service is a call to go away from the centre and reach out to the peripheries; the kingdom of God in which all are brothers and sisters with equality is abolition of the divide between centre and periphery.

On the face of it the Samaritan woman periscope speaks of a one-off personal encounter with people but it must not be forgotten that Jesus had a sustained contact with people to transform them which the priests need to do more intensely in the present-day world.

Demands and Tasks

1. The priest has to enable and form the laity to play their part in the world. (*Christi fideles laici*, no. 15, citing *Lumen gentium*, no. 31). For this the priest has to help the people to possess authentic faith “by which man makes a total and free self-commitment to God, offering ‘the full submission of intellect and will to God as he reveals.’” This faith, which works through love (cf. Gal 5:6) comes from the core of man, from his “heart” (cf. Rom 10:10), whence it is called to bear fruit in works (cf. Mt 12:33-35; Lk 6:43-45; Rom 8:5-10; Gal 5:22) (no. 66; internal citations from Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, no. 5 which in turn cites Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, Chap. 3; DS 3008).

2. In *Familiaris Consortio*, on the role of the Christian family in the world today, promulgated on November 22, 1981, Pope John Paul speaks of following tasks of the family:

(1) building a community of persons, (2) serving life, (3) participating in the development of society, and (4) sharing in the life and mission of the Church. The fourth section, in which John Paul develops magnificently the idea of the Christian family as the “domestic church.”

3. Spiritual Dimension: Jesus said “He who sees you sees me.”

Pope John Paul II said in his jubilee letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, that in the midst of all our planning and initiatives holiness of life is of primary importance. We are called to be holy.” Be holy because God is holy.” (Lev 19:2; Jn 17:17-19, I Pt. 2:9)

“At the centre of this new way of being Church is the action of the Spirit of Jesus, guiding and directing individual believers as well as the whole community to live a life that is Spirit-filled-that

is, to live an authentic spirituality.” (FABC - Bandung Conference (1990))

At the 9th plenary assembly of FABC, The Asian bishops stated “we are convinced that meaningful, contemplative, experiential and prayerful celebration of the Eucharist has the potential to render the Christian communities of Asia powerful witnesses of Jesus, witnesses who are bearers of his presence, his love and his healing power” (cf. Final Message). 3.

4. INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

The population in Asia is 3,629,067,358. The total Catholic population in Asia is 120,860,699 i.e. less than 4% of total Asian Catholic population.

In such a situation to be a Christian is to be inter-religious. People of other religions and cultures are our neighbours and we are called upon by the Lord to love our neighbours as He loves us. Evangelization of necessity demands that inter-religious dialogue in all its integrity become an essential priority, a normal and normative manner of Church life, ministry and mission.

Pope John Paul II stated in his *Redemptoris Missio*, “God's Holy Spirit is active in individuals, society and in religions and cultures”.

Inter-religious dialogue means:

- 1) Knowing our faith and ready to explain it to the others.
- 2) Knowing the faith and culture of others and respecting it.
- 3) Establishing good relationships of peace, harmony and friendship with them and sharing one another's joys and sorrows. People with a sense of mission cannot keep aloof from others.
- 4) Collaborating and networking with them for common activities, concerns and purposes. Particularly in situations of conflicts and tensions to be bridge-builders and agents of peace and reconciliation.

5) Sharing faith –experiences and learning from one another.

5. INCULTURATION

In order to touch the soul of a people their culture is an effective vehicle. Culture is expression of what people value, believe and live by. They will be able to resonate with the gospel, identify with it and feel at home in the Church if we resonate with their culture, identify with it and feel at home in their society. Of course we need a critical approach towards people's culture. The Gospel and the Church teaching are the criterion for our acceptance of a culture. At the heart of inculturation is promotion of the Gospel and human life in and through the good and noble values, traditions and practices and thought patterns of the Asian people.

Inculturation which is necessary for making the faith intelligible and effective will have to be a normal feature of the church in Asia. Pope John Paul II has admitted that Christian mission did not succeed in Asia because there was no proper inculturation of the gospel and faith. The evangelizers did not show due respect to local cultures. (Apology on occasion of Grand Jubilee)

5. Ensuring well-being and social justice: Jesus made His mission credible, acceptable and concrete by healing and by the proclamation of the message of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is a community of justice, equality, freedom and reconciliation. His defense of the widows, orphans, children, the poor and the oppressed was all symbolic of the mission to ensure wellbeing and justice for all. The beatitudes, the sermon on the mountain, the temple-cleansing and his inaugural declaration were all for the promotion of wellbeing and social justice.

6. POLITICS

Through their involvement in politics Christians can fight for religious freedom for all citizens. Besides there is an urgent need to defend authentic moral and ethical values. Abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, surrogate motherhood, use of embryonic stem cells are all being legalized in parliaments and

legislative houses. For the defense of human rights it is necessary for the Christians to be active in civil and political fields.

7. PROMOTION OF MISSIONARY SPIRIT

“We are always ‘missionary disciples’” (EG 120)

A truly missionary church is one not concerned with itself, always going forth, ... (EG 198)... the church as a community that “goes forth” as a “community of missionary disciples” (EG 24).

The Final Statement of the Fifth Plenary Assembly of Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference BANDUNG INDONESIA 1990 proposes pastoral imperatives

- 1) mission includes: being with the people, responding to their needs, with sensitiveness to the presence of God in cultures and other religious traditions, and witnessing to the values of God’s Kingdom through presence, solidarity, sharing the Word. Mission will mean a dialogue with Asia’s poor, with its local cultures, and with other religious traditions.
- 2) The imperative of considering with the utmost concern and sensitivity the relationship between the mission and pastoral thrust of the Church and the pluralism of Asian societies.
- 3) The imperative of empowering people for mission, ministry and the task of integral liberation.
- 4) The need to encourage, initiate and facilitate micro-level initiatives with ripple effects especially at the grassroots level.
- 5) The indispensable necessity for the Church in Asia to be credible in its lifestyle and deeds in proclaiming its faith and in acting for justice and human rights.
- 6) The imperative of re-envisioning and re-planning formation process, with particular attention being given to cultural values and structural factors.

B. Specific Pastoral Directions At the Level of Doing

1. That appropriate formation process for mission and proclamation be developed with emphasis on the laity's participation.

2. That integral catechesis and the promotion of Bible study and reflection toward the building of Word-centered communities be undertaken.

3. That serious concern and care, through intensive inculturation and catechesis, be given toward a meaningful and joyful celebration of the Sacraments and Liturgy, especially the Eucharist that would be creative of fellowship and community.

Serving Asian Societies

Mediated by the Social Doctrine of the Church

1. That social analysis be integrated with cultural analysis, and both subjected to faith-discernment.

2. That the social doctrine of the Church be part of formation in faith for everyone, at all levels of laity, religious and clergy.

4. That the Church, consistent with its social doctrine, investigate and remove from within its own structures and practices whatever obstructs human rights and justice.

2. That Catholic schools integrate into their curricula the formation of values necessary for peace and social transformation, and study how Gospel values can positively influence culture, science and technology.

5. That efforts to have a dialogue of life at the grassroots level be facilitated and promoted so that people of different Churches, religious traditions and persuasions, becoming aware of shared human and spiritual values, may act together for their common good.

6. That the church, as the sacrament of unity of all humankind promote communion with the church, and peace and harmony in the world, especially when pluralism becomes a cause for division.

8.1.2. It is a participatory Church where the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to all the faithful - lay, religious and cleric alike - are recognized and activated, so that the Church may be built up and its mission realized.

D. A Spirituality for our Times

9.1 At the center of this new way of being Church is the action of the Spirit of Jesus, guiding and directing individual believers as well as the whole community to live a life that is Spirit-filled-that is, to live an authentic spirituality.

9.2 the peoples of Asia whose cultures hold the contemplative dimension, renunciation, detachment, humility, simplicity and silence in the highest regard. We would have a message for Asia only when our Asian sisters and brothers see in us the marks of God-realized persons.

The Indian Bishops have identified 5 main priorities for the renewal of the ministry:

- a) Fostering God Experience.
- b) Addressing justice issues.
- c) Ensuring for our lay faithful their rightful place.
- d) Stamping out Discrimination against Women.
- e) Creating a Christian presence in political and public life.
- f) Promoting Dialogue and
- g) Safeguarding Ecology.

8. Servant Leadership

Leadership in the church is for rendering the service of salvation to the faithful and others as well. Jesus said, "I have come to serve and give my life as a ransom for many". (Mk 10:45)

They need to be close to the flock, leading guiding and inspiring them. The church leadership should ensure a full flowering of the laity, enabling them to fulfill their appropriate role in the church and society and to emerge as leaders.

They must see to it that their involvement in administration and assignments and appointments do not alienate or distance them from the flock entrusted to their care. People do not feel the sense of belonging and fellowship if the shepherds do not accompany them. In India and other parts of the world many Catholics have left join other Protestant and Pentecostal communities because they felt they were not cared for nor experienced the spirit community and communion.

Personal dialogue and interaction with people are part creative ministry. It indicates the spirit and the disposition to respond to the needs of the people as individuals and groups and communities; an attempt to make ministry attractive and fulfilling.

IN THE MINISTRY RELATIONSHIP IS of decisive significance on account of the purpose communion. That is why the ministry should be:

BE EVOCATIVE, BILATERAL AND ACTUALIZING WHICH brings about an experience of Christ's liberating life. In such a redemptive ministry there(1) dialogue and availability. 3. THE PERSPECTIVE OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY on the part of the minister. (Henry Neuman)

To practise various prayers such as *Lectio Divinia*, 7 step Lumko, Jesus Prayer etc, it is also Creative Ministry.

On-going faith-formation: Jesus formed His disciples and then sent them to make others His disciples. A suitable formation is needed to achieve all this.

The priests are still sanctuary-bound. They want to function within the traditional mode. They are ready to get out into the rich complexities and varieties of modern-day society. They are also not reflective enough about problems and the impact and the fruits of the ministry.

So appropriate formation is needed for seminarians and priests. Formators in the seminary also must be suitable and formed just degrees and intellectual caliber is not enough. To call them

PROFESSORS makes them behave as indifferent scholars. They must also be pastors involved in pastoral ministry. So also the seminarians be regular contact with the pastoral situation. These are not just students but disciples of Jesus aspiring to communicate His fullness of to the world already in the seminary there should be symbiosis of studies and pastoral spirituality. A creative ministry requires ongoing formation of priests.

So also the laity be given catechesis and formation all through life. This must be given a high priority for which a significant amount of finance be set aside in the dioceses and parishes.

The Bishops will do well to replicate the pastoral ministry of the Pope in the universal church in their dioceses; and the priests can replicate the bishop's style in their parishes.

All this can be translated into reality through the formation of small christian communities.

The SCCs:

- a) Live the word of God
- b) Centred on the Eucharist the SCCs facilitate authentic Christian communion and enable the Church to become a communion of communities
- c) Promote interaction, good relations, collaboration and networking and solidarity
- d) Work for justice, peace, unity and reconciliation in neighbourhood and wider society.

Let me make it clear that these SCCs are not to become ghettos or sectarian. They must by definition be open to other religions and cultures. And thus, they must become Small Human Communities.

OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

“Because the Church is a communion, the new ‘basic communities,’ if they truly live in unity with the Church, are a

true expression of communion and a means for the construction of a more profound communion. They are thus a cause for great hope for the life of the Church (EN. 58)”

“They (basic ecclesial communities) help to live Gospel in spirit of fraternal love and service – They are a starting point for a new society–experience of civilization of love. *Eccl. in Asia* n. 25.

“When formed and guided by people whose motivating force is the love of Christ, these communities have proven themselves to be worthy tools of evangelization” (Pope Benedict XVI in his address to Philippine bishops during their *Ad Limina* visit on Feb 19, 2011, the Pope spoke about the BECs)

“There, they pray and share together the Gospel of Jesus, living it in their daily lives as they support one another and work together, united as they are “in one mind and heart” (FABC – BANDUNG CONFERENCE (1990)

“They (basic ecclesial communities) help to live Gospel in spirit of fraternal love and service –They are a starting point for a new society –experience of civilization of love.” *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 25.

FEDERATION OF ASIAN BISHOPS’ CONFERENCES (FABC)
“We have experienced that SCCs have become an effective means for proclamation through dialogue of life. In this context they explore the possibility of building human communities. Thereby they pave the way for incarnation of the Church in the cultural milieu of the place, making it ever more relevant to the changing circumstances. Transformation of all the intricate systems and structures of the world by bringing them under the purview of the kingdom is made possible also through SCCs.”(AsIPA - Asian Integrated Pastoral Approach- General Assembly II, 2000.)

Within the approved liturgical texts there are so many choices and varieties permitted.

The Advocacy Model

Child Rights Protection Model

Peace Building Model

Relief and Rehabilitation Model

Tribal Rights Protection Model

Resilience Building Model

Farmers Rights and Protection

Women Empowerment Model

Digital Communication Model Different methods:

- Divine Mercy
- Gregorian chant
- Jesus' prayer
- *Lectio Divina*
- Rosary
- Taize
- Charismatic prayer
- Praying Office of the
- Creative Ministry to doctors, lawyers, journalists, professionals etc.

CONCLUSION

“What the world is in particular need of today is the credible witness of people enlightened in mind and heart by the word of the Lord, and capable of opening the hearts and minds of many to the desire for God and for true life, life without end.” (*Porta Fidei* 15) THE priest in the present-day secularized world should be prepared and disposed to lead people to God and true and lasting life in HIM BEYOND what the scientific and technocratic world offers.

V. CHALLENGES TO EVANGELIZATION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

- Most Rev. Jose Palma, DD, Archbishop of Cebu, Philippines

Introduction

A few days ago, our local Church celebrated the 450th anniversary of the finding of the image of the Holy Child by one of the soldiers of the Legaspi expedition. The image was brought to our shores by Magellan in 1521. Magellan gifted the Queen of Cebu, “to replace her idols.” But, as you well know, his expedition returned to Spain without having started a systematic evangelization of our foreparents. Forty-four years later, the Legaspi expedition arrived on our shores and after some stiff resistance from the natives, a soldier went into one house and saw the image (kaplag) of the Divine Infant. It is clear from a letter written by Legaspi that at the time of their arrival in what we now call Cebu, they have not yet decided whether to remain in this island and its environs or to go to other places which the lay conquistadores might have found to be more lucrative. But they interpreted the discovery of this image as a sign that they should remain in this island and evangelize the natives.

A more systematic Christianization followed some years later. The first to arrive were the Augustinians and the last were the Recollects. Together with the Jesuits, Franciscans and the Dominicans, they enjoyed much success in teaching the Christian faith. The success can be seen in, among other indicators, the stories of Saints Pedro Calugsod and Lorenzo Ruiz, who in different circumstances, both offered their lives for the Christian faith.

That was centuries ago. How should Christian evangelization take shape today in Southeast Asia? This is what I am tasked to reflect together with you. Theological reflections cannot start from a vacuum. Our reflections on our sacred scriptures and tradition cannot but be related to our

contemporary experience. Indeed, as Saint Ignatius would remind us, God meets us where we are. Moreover, in our reflections on what evangelization in Southeast Asia means today, we cannot start just by mouthing clichés and platitudes that make some unverified or unverifiable assertions on triumph of secularism and the defeat of faith, or the veiling of transcendence by our increasing dependence on science and technology. There may be some elements of truth in these propositions, but they cannot be our starting point. In order to avoid these pitfalls, I will first try to situate the challenge of evangelization within the context of some observable phenomena. After the initial description of the situation, we proposed some solutions:

The Context:

A. Increasing Globalization and the ASEAN Integration

Broadly speaking, globalization refers to the integration of all local economies, finances, communication, cultures, politics, philosophies, into a worldwide network. It involves, among other things, a freer transfer of capital, greater availability of foreign goods and services, speedier communication and travel from one region to another. There are those who benefit from this trend, like the exporters and call center agents. But globalization has its own share of victims like the rural farmers who cannot compete with cheap foreign farm products and ordinary laborer who cannot compete with foreign laborer who may offer his/her labor at a cheaper rate. Because foreign corporations provide investments, they may have more say in the formulation of laws, with regard labor and the environment for instance, resulting in the marginalization of the everyday Juan de la Cruz. The Philippines and other countries in Southeast Asia have already experienced the lights and shadows of globalization for decades.

Globalization, with its positive and negative consequences, will be experienced more extensively as we move closer to fuller ASEAN integration. In November 2007, the

leaders of Southeast Asian Countries signed an agreement that by this current year 2015, there will be a free flow of goods, services, investment, capital, and skilled labor.

How can the Church respond to this increasing globalization in general, and to the ASEAN integration in particular? Returning to the pre-globalization stage (whenever that was) is as futile as attempting to return the toothpaste back to the tube. The Church can follow neither the knee-jerk reaction against globalization nor the idolization of whatever is global. Thus, it is imperative for the Church to work within this existing context and try to soften for her people whatever the negative impacts are and to take advantage of the opportunities it presents: Perhaps the following questions can guide us:

- What will be the face of the poor and the weak who are not ready to compete in the context of globalization? How can the Church concretize the option for the poor in the context of those who may be marginalized by the ASEAN integration? How do we enable the poor to be a blessing to us? As we witness their deep faith, hope and love amidst severe material limitations, how can we learn from them of God's love and mercy?
- Travel within ASEAN countries will be made even easier than it already is, and jobs will be available to citizens of other ASEAN countries. Will we Filipino Catholics (as well as our Asian neighbors) see this phenomenon as a threat to our national and religious identity or will we look at this as an opportunity for the Catholic faith to interact with other religions and cultures? Will she now concretize what *Nostra Aetate* teaches, "The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions." Will the Church see this interaction of different cultures as a chance to share our Christian story?

B. The Social Media Phenomenon

One extremely interesting, and lifestyle changing ongoing phenomenon today is the social media. Through computerized communications, people exchange opinions, ideas, pictures, videos, or just plain narrations of what happened in the workplace or even in what used to be private and personal domains. Social media can take the form of facebook (whose users are estimated to reach nearly a billion) twitter, or blogs, or comments in some websites.⁶⁵

This phenomenon has democratized discourses and has also made communication cheaper and more pictorial. We hope that days are long gone when the voices of the hoi polloi can only be heard in whispers. But it has its own downsides: Anyone can post any inane comment that is not supported by facts. Netizens under the cover of anonymity do not observe the rules of etiquette in communication. Falsehood and religious prejudices and bigotry can be effectively propagated and reputations can be damaged overnight through social media. Furthermore, undesirable materials can easily be accessed by anyone.

More importantly, this current phenomenon has created a digital divide between people whose wealth and skills do enable them to take advantage of the new technology and those without the wealth and the skills to do the same. Thus, a new form of social inequality and social exclusion is taking place.

If the Church wants to start evangelization from where the people are located, surely she cannot ignore the social media. Indeed, there are local churches, bishops, and Catholic organizations with their own facebook accounts. But it is interesting to compare how many followers different personalities have gathered followers in facebook. The one whose account has gathered most “likes” comes from the entertainment industry. As of the morning of April 16, 2015, an

⁶⁵ Cf. Jan A.G. m van Dijk, *The Deepening Divide: Inequality in the Information Society* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications). Cf. also Dominador Bombongan, “The Deepening Digital Divide an the Concept of Hospitality” *Landas* 26 (2012); 17-36.

entertainer named Anne Curtis has gathered 10, 106, 111 “likes.” Some other entertainers have gathered more than a million “likes.” In contrast, the Church figure who has gathered the most number of “likes” is Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle. This is no surprise since the good Cardinal is articulate and intelligent and his account is managed by the Jesuit communications. But how many can be like the good cardinal.

On the other hand, this should not give much worry to the Church. After all, our task is not to gather our own followers but followers of our Lord. Moreover, as the example of our Lord Jesus has shown, a heroic and committed minority can change the world much faster than a lazy majority who are after mere passing fancies. Obviously, Christianity cannot dilute the radicality of our Lord Jesus’ message to accommodate the whims of netizens. By the very nature of its radicality, the Christian message cannot be embraced by the majority. Still we know that the challenge is how to convey the radical demands of our Lord to people who may also be hungering for guidance, enlightenment and consolation.

One sidelight of the social media phenomenon is that the divisions within the Church can also be exposed. Many netizens have been critical of the Church and they are eager to express their views. Some of their criticisms are well-informed and deserving of hearing. After all, the Church is *semper reformanda*. In Cebu, there was the case of a priest who castigated an unwed mother during the baptism of her newly born-child. The grandmother of the infant took a video of the ranting of the priest, then made the video available in the social media. And in a matter of minutes, netizens all over the world were expressing their disgust. But there are also others who simply engage in Church-bashing.

Here the following questions need to be asked:

- How can the Church embrace this new technology to help in her task of evangelizing the people?
- How can the Church help those victimized by a new form of social exclusion arising from the digital divide?

- Can the Church help in giving moral guidance as the faithful navigate the murky waters of cyber technology?

C. Demand for Transparency and Accountability

Different periods of history manifest different clamors from the people. In the 1960's the demand was for an end to (neo-) colonization. In the 70s, in the Western Hemisphere, the voice against disarmament was widely heard albeit unheeded. In the 1980's, we felt the call to end dictatorships, whether it is right wing dictatorship like that of Marcos or the dictatorship found in communist countries.

What are the clamors in this period of our history? Obviously, there is the recognition of our vulnerability to environmental wrath.

But in this short talk of mine, today's call that I want to stress is the people's demand for transparency. In this demand we can discern one sign of the times. Manifestations of this demand can be seen in the conviction of a Supreme Court Chief Justice over his failure to properly disclose his assets and liabilities; in the clamor for the conviction of those suspected to have channeled government funds to non-existent non-government organizations. Without condoning them, we can include the so-called wikileaks.

The Church will soon feel - if she has not already felt it - that she is not exempted from answering this demand for transparency. The Church cannot but heed this call.⁶⁶ Transparency in the Church, of course, cannot be equated with the surrender of confidentiality in confessional matters. Rather, in the processes our own decision are made, in financial matters, the Church can no longer claim to be answerable only to God. How disposed are we to open our processes to the people?

⁶⁶ An interesting reading is Jose Mario Francisco, "Clerical Power: 2011 Graduation Remarks" *Laudas* 26:2 (2012); 175-178.

Proposals

A. Strengthening of Priestly Formations

Above, we briefly discussed new forms of social exclusion arising from globalization and from new forms of communication.

Indeed, the poor can take different forms in different epochs of history. Even in the Bible, the poor in the Hebrew Scriptures were, aside from the economically impoverished, mostly the widows and the orphans. When we go to the times of Jesus, the poor that he ministered were the sex workers and the tax collectors. In a farming country, the poor can be the peasants. In contrast, the poor takes the form of an industrial laborer in the context of a post agricultural and industrial society.

Seminary formation cannot ignore the changing context for “the faith that theology studies is always the faith of a concrete Christian community.”⁶⁷ Yet, what should always remain in the midst of the changing context of poverty is the Christian calling to opt for the poor. In other words, the face of poverty changes but our commitment to the poor should be constant. It is worthwhile to note that while there could not be a single explanation to the success of the Spanish missionaries in their initial attempt to evangelize the natives, there was one important, though often neglected, factor that led the so-called indios to embrace Christianity. This factor is the perception of the natives that the early batches of Spanish missionaries were defending them against the Spanish lay conquistadores. To repeat, the poor of today may have a different face than the one encountered by the Spanish missionaries of the past. But how can priests continue to live a Christian constant which is the option for the poor? In this context, seminary academic formation that enables future presbyters to relate their lessons on doctrines, biblical exegesis, history, and morals to constancy of the Christian message in the midst of a changing historical context is imperative.

⁶⁷ Updated Philippine Program for Priestly Formation 104

But even more crucial is the need to form presbyters who can live and accompany the people in their marginalization.

Pope Francis in his talk to the Bishops of Brazil makes an exhortation on the formation of priests:

That is why it is important to devise and ensure a suitable formation, one which will provide persons able to step into the night without being overcome by darkness and losing their bearings, able to listen to people's dreams without being seduced and to share their disappointments, without losing hope and becoming bitter, able to sympathize with the brokenness of others without losing their own strength and identity.

This prescription coming from the Holy Father, I believe, necessitates a depth of faith that rejects clericalism that focuses only on one's self. We cannot also focus solely on the ad intra-dimension of the Church. The ad extra mission to the poor and marginalized needs to be addressed. How can we form priests able to offer themselves to God and God's people.

Moral theology, most especially, should not be just a lesson on casuistry but a training in virtue. Rene Descartes once complained that the study of morals praises and prizes virtue but it "does not sufficiently teach us to be acquainted with them."⁶⁸ To the extent that this criticism is still true even today, we need to relate the study of morals, dogma, Scriptures, history and pastoral theology to an authentic spiritual life.

In the context of the ongoing evolution towards greater pluralism, future presbyters also need to study the teachings of the Church in a way that would enable them to dialogue with interlocutors who may not share the faith. The danger is to withdraw into a ghetto by refusing to engage in a dialogue. In a

⁶⁸ Discourse on Method IV.

homily delivered on April 10, 2014, Pope Francis criticizes what he called the dictatorship of a narrow line of thought. The Holy Father explains, “It is a closed way of thinking that is not open to dialogue, to the possibility that there is something else, the possibility that God speaks to us, tells us about His journey as he did to the prophets.”

B. Strengthening of the Family.

On the theme on the effects of globalization on the families, we need to reflect together on the talk given by Pope Francis in Manila. The Holy Father reiterates that it is in the family that we first learn to pray, to know God and to be men and women of faith. But this very institution of the family, the Pope continues, is threatened by what he called a colonization of ideology. He then specifies the problems of the family today: natural disasters, separation caused by migration, poverty of many and the materialistic lifestyle of others, a redefinition of marriage, relativistic mentality, the culture of the ephemeral, and the lack of openness to life. He cited his predecessor for his bravery in proclaiming the need to be open to life while asking professors to be compassionate to particular cases.

In the Philippines and, I suppose, in other Asian countries as well, the Christian family continues to be the locus where the children first learn the virtues and the rudiments of our faith. Evangelization cannot take place without the families. The constant challenge is how to strengthen them and how to develop a mechanism where we can listen to their joy and hope, their grief and anguish.⁶⁹

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⁶⁹ Gaudium et Spes 1

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