

FABC 2020  
PREPARATORY WORKSHOP FOR GENERAL CONFERENCE

WORKSHOP REPORT

FABC Office of Human Development / Climate Change Desk  
Mindol Metta Karuna (JRS), Siem Reap, Cambodia  
1 - 3 February 2020

Submitted by  
Fr. Joseph Gonsalves, Executive Secretary, OHD

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## **I. ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

This report contains the proceedings of the FABC 2020 Preparatory Workshop for the General Conference organised by Office of Human Development (OHD)/ Climate Change Desk (CCD) at Siem Reap, Cambodia from 1-3 February 2020.

We are greatly indebted to MISEREOR for funding the entire Preparatory Workshop, with special thanks to Ms. Beatrice Lauer, Regional Coordinator, Misereor, for her valuable input and presence.

A very special word of gratitude to Msgr. Enrique Figaredo (Kike) for his generosity, hospitality and joyful presence by which we could have the Preparatory Workshop at the Jesuits Refugees Service (JRS), Siem Reap. The assistance and co-operation we received from Sr. Denise Coghlan, the Administrator of JRS through the logistical support and other arrangements like food, transport and touristic visit smoothed the entire itinerary schedule for the whole team and ensured that the team had a wonderful time at Siem Reap.

Dr. Sandie Cornish deserves a special mention and appreciation for her painstaking efforts in documenting the entire proceedings of the workshop which includes results of group discussions, collating the material shared by the resources persons and the participants.

We are grateful to Bishop Allwyn D'Silva for conceptualizing and spearheading the workshop to a sure success destination. He was aptly supported by the Project Co-coordinator of FABC OHD/CCD, Ms. Deepika Singh who did a commendable job in co-coordinating and organizing the workshop.

We thank the Chairman of FABC OHD/CCD Bishop Emeritus Yvon Ambroise, Tuticorin Tamil Nadu, India, for his constant support and guidance. We greatly appreciate Bishop Ambroise, Bishop D'Silva, Fr. William LaRousse, MM and Dr. Estela P. Padilla for being our resource persons and enlightening the direction of this venture.

We are thankful to all the main celebrants at the Eucharist and for all the participants for their meaningful sharing, reflections and active participation which has enhanced the content of the way forward action plan.

## **II. SUMMARY FLOW OF THE PROCEEDINGS**

As a preparation for the FABC 2020 General Conference, a Preparatory Workshop was held at Mindol Metta Karuna (JRS), Siem Reap, Cambodia, from 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 organized by the FABC OHD/CCD.

The invitation for the “FABC 2020 Preparatory Workshop” was extended to the Asian Episcopal Commission for Justice & Peace and the Commissions/Desks for Care for the Migrants, our collaborator - Misereor, Germany, our networking partners namely Migrants Refugees Section (M & R) Vatican, Caritas Asia, Global Catholic Climate Movement and Asia Pacific Justice and Peace workers. There was a total of 27 participants which comprised of 7 Bishops, 6 Priests, and 14 lay faithful (9 women and 5 men) who actively participated in the Workshop. Initially 33 participants had registered but some of them could not attend because of health issues.

The participants were warmly welcomed by Msgr. Enrique Figaredo (Kike), Apostolic Prefect of Battambang - Cambodia and the JRS team at the airport. The evening of 31<sup>st</sup> January at Mindol Metta Karuna (JRS) was an appropriate place to meet and interact with the old friends and get acquainted with new ones at the time of dinner in the dining hall.

**Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 - Day 1** began with an Opening Prayer by Fr. Joseph Gonsalves, OHD/CCD Executive Secretary, followed by a welcome to the participants and the inaugural address by Bishop Yvon Ambroise, Chairman OHD/CCD. In his inaugural address, Bishop Ambroise helped the participants to understand the genesis of the Office of Human Development and the Climate Change Desk. In his brief presentation, he explained the vision, mission and the mandate given to OHD/CCD, the revised strategies used and also the future plan of action. Thereafter a short introduction of the Campus & JRS was by given by Msgr. Figaredo and Sr. Denise the Directress of the Center.

By 10 am the proceedings of the Preparatory workshop were initiated with the session entitled “Orientation & Process of FABC 2020” by Bishop Allwyn D’Silva, Secretary Organizing Committee, FABC 2020 followed by the session “General FABC History” which was presented by Fr. William LaRousse MM, Assistant Secretary General, FABC.

After a short tea break the “Individual Sharing” took place with an objective of allowing participants to share their findings and reflections on ‘what are the emerging realities and challenges of their ministry in their area’. The format of individual sharing was restricted to 7 minutes per participant and after every 5 participants there was a 10 minutes group interaction based on the issues shared. The sharing continued after lunch & Tea break.

A panel sharing was held from 4:45 pm to 5:45 pm on the following themes: “What Are the Emerging Realities in Asia on Migrants, Refugees & The Displaced” by Ms. Naoko Maruyama, the Regional Coordinator for East, South and Southeast Asia, Migrants and Refugees, Vatican City, “My Experience in Asia” by Ms. Béatrice Lauer, MISEREOR, Germany, “Caritas Asia & Emerging Realities” by Dr. Benedict D'Rozario, Caritas Asia Regional President, Bangladesh and “Climate Change In Asia” by Ms. Cheryl Dugan, Coordinator for Asia Pacific Campaigns and Global Volunteers, Global Catholic Climate Movement, Philippines. Bishop Allwyn D'Silva was the moderator for the session.

Msgr. Enrique Figaredo (Kike) was the main celebrant at the Holy Eucharist who shared his vision of an “inclusive” church. He gave each participant a portrait of Mother Mary and a colourful Cambodian shawl known as ‘Krama’.

The Day 1 ended with fellowship and dinner.

**Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020 – Day 2** started with a morning prayer by Fr. Joseph Gonsalves followed by the recap of the previous day by Dr. Sandie Cornish, Publications and Research Officer, Office for Social Justice Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Australia.

The session on FABC Teachings was presented by Fr. William LaRousse MM. This session was prepared by Fr. Clarence Devadass, Executive Secretary, FABC Office of Theological Concerns (OTC), who could not make it for the workshop.

After the tea break the FABC 2020 General Conference Consultation Paper was presented by Dr. Estela P. Padilla, FABC Office Of Theological Concerns (OTC) followed by a group discussion.

After lunch, the group discussion continued with specific “Questions: Role of FABC/Offices and suggestions for FABC 2020”. The reporting of the group discussion took place after a short tea break followed by a Plenary Assembly. The moderator was Bishop Colin Bagaforo, Bishop Chairman, Commission for Justice and Peace, Philippines.

The proceedings of the workshop were concluded by a vote of thanks proposed by Bishop Allwyn D’Silva and Ms. Deepika Singh, Coordinator OHD/CCD.

The day ended with an Evening Prayer and Holy Eucharist by Bishop Yvon Ambroise followed by a fellowship dinner.

**Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 – Day 3** began at 7:00 am with Morning Prayer & Holy Eucharist; the main celebrant was Bishop Ruperto Cruz: Chairman of Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People - Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines. After breakfast, most of the participants visited the tourist attraction of Siem Reap i.e the Angkor Wat temples.

### **III. WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS**

#### **- DAY 1 MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2020**

The day started with an Opening Prayer by Fr. Joseph Gonsalves, OHD/CCD Executive Secretary, followed by Msgr. Enrique (Kike) Figaredo, Apostolic Prefect of Battambang, welcoming the participants to Cambodia and appreciating Bishop Allwyn for choosing Cambodia to hold the workshop.

Bishop Yvon Ambroise, Chairman OHD/CCD, Bishop Emeritus, Tuticorin Tamil Nadu, India extended a formal welcome to the participants and in welcoming the group Bishop Ambroise recalled the origins and the spirit of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC) and of its Office for Human Development (OHD) in particular. Although the statutes for the FABC were not approved until 1972, the year 1970 is understood to be the beginning of the FABC.

Popes rarely visit Asia and so Pope Paul VI’s visit in 1970 was a special occasion which brought together the bishops of Asia and focused their desire for a regular meeting for common reflection and collegiality.

Bishop Labayan was a key figure in beginning the governance work for the establishment of the FABC. He also helped in articulating the Asian bishops' concern for the poor and reflection on a common Asian response.

Even before the FABC statutes were approved its Office for Human Development was formed with funding from Misereor. Bishop Labayan was the first Chair of OHD which was born out of the common reflection of the People of God, including the religious and laity, as well as the bishops.

In the period 1971 - 1988, OHD was the most dynamic of the FABC offices. It ran seven Bishops Institutes for Social Action between 1974 and 1986 and each of these began with exposure experiences for all of the participants, including the bishops themselves. It also ran a number of workshops and seminars. The series of Faith Encounters in Social Action explored and promoted the integration of spirituality and social action and pioneered a new way of being Church.

Questions about distinctions between social service, social action and social transformation and the role of OHD lead to a clarification of OHD's mandate. Its role in social transformation through the animation of local communities was affirmed along with the importance of integral human development while some initiatives and linkages with other groups were phased out. It was made clear that the mandate given to ODH by the FABC is to assist Asian Episcopal Conferences in the area of justice, peace and development through their respective national Justice and/or development offices. OHD, therefore, undertakes facilitation, formation, information, organization and research.

Much of OHD's work is achieved through networks and partnerships, including with the justice, development and peace offices of Bishops' Conferences, funding agencies such as Caritas, ecumenical groups such as the Ecumenical Coalition for Third World Tourism, international Catholic organisations such as the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development (and its predecessors the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples) and the International Catholic Migration Commission.

Bishop Ambrose highlighted four needs for the future:

1. Serious review of current structures and processes for communication and consultation in collaboration with the corresponding National Offices of Asian Episcopal Conferences, the Religious Congregations and Lay Movements and Organisations.
2. A focus on formative processes and pedagogy for the integral faith formation of all in the Church, linking faith and life, Word and witness.
3. New efforts and initiatives to promote a greater sensitivity of all the People of God to the “cries of the new poor and the poorest people of Asia”.
4. More publications and documentation of materials on social realities, social teachings of the Church and matters related to integral human development, justice and peace, making better use of electronic media and websites to reach out.

Plans for the future include:

1. Promoting a deeper understanding of the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church through consultations at the Asian, regional and national levels and the Bishops' Institute for Christian Advocacy (BICA) Series.
2. Bringing together experiences of the involvement of the Church, especially the experiences of the laity in the world of work, politics, civil society and mass media.
3. Collaborating with other partners in Asia to foster more pastoral action in the social field, namely in the areas of charity, development and justice and peace.

A focus for the next three years will be indigenous peoples, climate change-environment, migrants and refugees and people with HIV/AIDS.

## **ORIENTATION and PROCESS of FABC 2020**

By Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, Secretary Organizing Committee: FABC 2020

As the fiftieth anniversary of the FABC approached, outgoing President Cardinal Gracias, felt that it was time for a review, and so it fell to his successor, Cardinal Bo, to convene FABC 2020.

Cardinal Gracias appointed Bishop Allwyn as Secretary of the Organising Committee and Bishop Allwyn gathered a core team to assist him.

The core team consists of:

- Fr. Clarence Devadass, Executive Secretary of the FABC Office of Theological Concerns (OTC).
- Fr. William LaRousse, MM, Assistant Secretary General of the FABC.
- Fr. Enrico Emmanuel A. Ayo, Executive Secretary, Episcopal Commission on Family and Life, Philippines.
- Dr. Estela P. Padilla, Ph.D. Member, FABC OTC.
- Ms. Achara Somsaengsruang, Director of Justice and Peace Department, Caritas Thailand.
- Msgr. Josef Sayer, former General Manager and CEO of Misereor.
- Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, Secretary FABC 2020.

FABC 2020 will not be a synod or Plenary Assembly – it will be a conference and will take place in Bangkok 3 – 20 November 2020. This means that it will not be constrained by the canon law requirements for synods. It will explore three key questions:

- What does it mean to be Church in Asia?
- What are the emerging realities that must be faced?
- How can the FABC more effectively serve and support the bishops and their Conferences in Asia?

The text Matthew 2:12 will be the starting point, inspiring the FABC, like the three kings, to go home by a different way. The purpose of FABC 2020 will be:

- Commemoration, celebrating the journey and the 'stars' that have guided the FABC's path in the last fifty years.



- Becoming aware of the emerging realities and challenges confronting Asia and the Church.
- Envisioning new pathways for FABC to be at the service of the Churches and the peoples of Asia.
- Renew our commitment to search for the face of Jesus in Asia today.

Four phases were described:

- Phase 1
  - Regional consultations
  - FABC office consultations
- Phase 2
  - Prepare a Working Paper based on the consultations
  - Use the Working Paper for broad-based consultations, including online consultation
- Phase 3
  - Collate responses to consultation on the Working Paper
  - Prepare a Conference Document
- Phase 4
  - FABC General Conference 2020

The following points emerged from discussion of the presentation:

- There was some concern about whether the time allowed for sharing is sufficient.
- Bishops' Conferences will elect their own delegates and the number of delegates from each Conference will depend on its size. There will also be invited guests including experts and representatives of agencies.
- Although the invitation list has not yet been finalised, efforts to make a better balance will include the participation of more religious women and lay women.
- It was clarified that neither the conference nor a synod or Plenary Assembly would have an executive mandate. They can only make recommendations.
- There will be no paper or *lineamenta* prepared for the conference but rather a statement will emerge from the collegiality and pastoral sharing at the conference itself. It is hoped that this will lead to greater ownership of the statement and more extensive take up in the local churches.

- There is an online survey through which anyone can provide input to the planning process.

## **FABC Structures**

**By Fr. William LaRousse, MM, Assistant Secretary General, FABC**

While the beginnings of the FABC are usually traced back to the meeting with Pope Paul VI in 1970, Paul VI was only there for the last day of the bishops' meeting. One hundred and eighty Asian bishops had gathered and the need for a permanent structure for such gatherings continued to arise, as it had in other meetings of Asian bishops. For example, a hundred Asian bishops met in 1958 to plan for Radio Veritas. Asian bishops also met at Vatican II and at the Synod of 1969 in Rome. The Presidents of the Conferences also met again in 1970 to prepare for the papal visit. Statutes for the FABC were approved in 1972 but in the meantime its work commenced.

The FABC is a voluntary association of Roman Catholic Episcopal Conferences established with the approval of the Holy See. It is made up of four regions: South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and Central Asia. The members of the FABC are 19 bishops' conferences while some dioceses that are not part of a bishops' conference are associate members.

The purpose of FABC is to foster among its members solidarity and co-responsibility for the welfare of Church and society in Asia, and to promote and defend whatever is for the greater good. Its decisions don't have juridical binding force - their acceptance is a matter of collegial responsibility.

The functions of the FABC are to:

- Study ways and means of promoting the apostolate, especially in the light of Vatican II and post-conciliar official documents, and according to the needs of Asia.
- Work for and to intensify the dynamic presence of the Church in the total development of the peoples of Asia.
- Help in the study of problems of common interest to the Church in Asia, and to investigate possibilities of solutions and coordinated action.

- Promote inter-communication and cooperation among local Churches and Bishops of Asia.
- Render service to Episcopal Conferences of Asia in order to help them to meet better the needs of the People of God.
- Foster a more ordered development of organizations and movements in the Church at the international level.
- Foster ecumenical and inter-religious communication and collaboration.

**The Plenary Assembly** is the supreme body of FABC and is composed of all Presidents of member-Conferences, Bishop-delegates elected by the member-conferences, associate members and members of the Standing Committee. It usually takes place every four years.

**The Central Committee** composed of the Presidents of member-conferences. It oversees the implementation of the resolutions and instructions of the Plenary Assembly. This committee now meets every year. The President, Vice President and Secretary General of the FABC are elected by the Central Committee and the Central Committee approves all appointments within the FABC.

**The Standing Committee** is composed of five Bishops elected from different parts of Asia. It implements the resolutions and instructions of the Central Committee. This committee has not been functioning for a number of years.

**The FABC Leadership team** is comprised of:

- FABC President, His Eminence Charles Maung Cardinal Bo (Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar)
- FABC Vice-President, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith (Archbishop of Colombo, Sri Lanka)
- FABC Secretary General, Most Rev. Stephen Lee Bun-Sang (Bishop of Macau)

**The Central Secretariat** is the principal service agency and an instrument of coordination within the FABC and with outside offices and agencies. The Central Secretariat is supervised by the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General. It has nine offices or desks for specialised areas of concern at present. They fall into three groupings: theology, specific ministries, states of life in the Church.

### **The Offices and Desks are:**

- Office of Evangelization (OE)
- Office of Theological Concerns (OTC)
- Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (OEIA)
- Office of Human Development (OHD)
  - Climate Change Desk
- Office of Social Communication (OSC)
- Office of Education and Faith Formation (OEFF)
- Office of Laity and Family (OLF)
  - AsIPA (BEC) Desk
  - Women's Desk
  - Youth Desk
- Office of Clergy (OC)
- Office of Consecrated Life (OCL)

Each Office has a Bishop Chair, at least two Bishops as members, and an Executive Secretary. Some Offices have desk secretaries as well. There are no paid staff, all position holders are volunteers. Most offices do not have office space and they are dispersed across the region wherever the position holder is based.

A list of the Plenary Assembly themes is included as Appendix A to this report and their final statements are published in a series of books entitled, "For All the Peoples of Asia". There is also a series of FABC Papers that provide critical analysis of issues in Asia.

Some of the key points that emerged from questions and discussion of the presentation were:

- It is important to catch the enthusiasm of 1970 or the FABC Conference 2020 could be just another meeting.
- Opportunities for the bishops to get to know each other and reflect together are very valuable.
- The group affirmed the desirability of keeping links with international organisations that are recognised by the Vatican, and working with them.
- There was concern about the extent to which FABC teachings have reached the local churches and influenced them. Some felt that FABC has more influence in the smaller, less well resourced, Bishops Conferences.

- The FABC's promotion of Basic Ecclesial Communities has influenced the pastoral approach of many dioceses, especially in India and the Philippines.
- It was noted that there have been a number of doctoral dissertations and master's theses on the FABC and that there has been an attempt to collect them. Some scholars such as Jonathon Tan and Edmund Chia have written extensively about the FABC.
- There was a desire among the group for Fr Bonnie Mendes to write a systematic history of the FABC.
- The usefulness of the *FABC Papers* issued by the Theological Commission and the *Info* newsletter that OHD used to publish was also affirmed.
- It was recalled that the FABC offices were not modelled on Vatican structures but rather developed in response to needs as they arose.

### **Sharing by Participants on Emerging Realities and Challenges**

Each participant was invited to share the emerging realities and challenges in their context. Key points from the sharing are noted below. PowerPoint presentations used by some of the participants are available from the OHD.

#### **Mr. James Tan, Asian Centre for the Progress of Peoples, Hong Kong**

Mr. Tan highlighted the trend of fear fuelling ignorance and creating hate which is amplified and accelerated by the use of social media. There seems now to be wide acceptance of economic, social, cultural, civil and political human rights abuses against individuals and groups who are the subject of this dynamic. Hate has replaced sympathy, empathy and compassion.

#### **Bishop Yvon Ambroise, Chairman OHD, Tuticorin, India**

Across South Asia rightist groups are taking over democratic processes and civil society is in decline. The electronic eye is now focussed on everyone and people who are anti-government can be identified and may be harassed and imprisoned. Even student demonstrators wearing masks were able to be identified and targeted.

While considerable development is taking place in India, the poor are not benefiting. In fact, they are the victims of all of the emerging trends. Improvements in science and technology are being used to destroy, exploit and harass people. They are being used against the poor.

**Fr. Nandana Manatunga, Director, Human Rights Office, Kandy, Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka is a Buddhist country with a small Christian minority and Catholics are a minority among the Christians. The Easter Sunday attack raises many questions - why attack the Catholics who are not anyone's enemies? The Defence Secretary swiftly assured the public that he could provide security, and now he is the President.

Political and economic interference in Sri Lanka by foreign powers is a concern with both China and India exerting influence. Extreme groups are active in the country. Some of them are external and treating Sri Lanka as a strategic asset. These include Indian groups and Buddhist monks from Myanmar.

**Msgr. Enrique (Kike) Figaredo, Apostolic Prefect of Battambang, Cambodia**

Cambodia is experiencing rapid change in a young society - 50% of the population is under 35 years of age. This is creating conflict with traditional society. The way of living with the war has also resulted in a lack of trust.

There is a lot of investment in Cambodia by the United Nations, NGOs and companies. While there is a lot of money coming in, not much reaches the people. New sectors are developing, including textiles, tourism and hospitality. These also encourage a rural - urban shift.

It is a new era of high speed. Everything is moving fast, including the growing divide between the rich and the poor. Jobs with dignity for the people are needed. Social media and the speed of communication mean that the communication of the young people cannot be controlled.

There are major environmental challenges including plastics, deforestation and water management, but little understanding of sustainable development.

The need for reconciliation goes beyond the war, it is not just political but needs to be social as well. The participation of the poor must be promoted, and the Church must be a Church in dialogue with other religions.

**Dr. Estela P. Padilla, Office of Theological Concerns, Philippines.**

The President used the war on drugs to run for office and this has led to many extra judicial killings. While the government figures indicate 5,000 deaths, NGOs estimate that approximately 20,000 people have died over the last three years. This is equivalent to the number killed over the twenty-year period of martial law. None the less 75% of the population support the President. Violent language has become very common, and also a culture of silence. While some Church leaders are speaking up, many are silent.

The village structure is the most important social structure but trust in local village leadership is being undermined by their complicity in denouncing people in the war against drugs. This raises a question of values. The culture of distrust and the culture of silence are creating confusion in a sense of moral guidance.

**Ms. Achara Somsaengsuang, Director of Justice and Peace Department, Caritas Thailand.**

A multi-party coalition that has close ties with the National Council for Peace and Order formed government after the March 2019 election - it is in effect an 'elected' military regime. National security is used as an excuse to restrict rights, especially freedom of opinion and expression, and there has been an attempt to use the courts to dissolve the Future Forward opposition party. The flash mob activity 'chase after uncle' (a run against dictatorship or those who slow the progress of the country) is an example of the creative ways in which people seek to express their opinions.

Links between the military and large corporations lead to the establishment of Special Economic Zones which have resulted in large areas of land falling into the hands of Chinese investors and weakened competitiveness for small and medium enterprises. The expansion of industry has been accompanied by increased human right violations, especially pushing villagers off their land. At the same time, the

economic downturn is causing unemployment and the situation of migrant workers has not improved.

The impact of climate change is seen in a long summer, drought, conflicts over water use, forest fires, and dust pollution. Increased awareness about garbage and electronic waste from abroad have led to a widespread campaign to reduce the use of plastic at many hospitals, tourist attractions, department stores and schools as well as by individuals. A network has been created focussing on the development of national policies to care for the environment.

Traditional family life is under pressure from economic change, the influence of modern values, new kinds of family formation, the influence of social media, especially on the young and increased intolerance fostered by media that are influenced by the government.

The Justice and Peace Department has responded by training human rights defenders, providing capacity building for justice and peace offices at the diocesan level, and disseminating information through a website, Facebook page and journal.

**Fr. Liton Hubert Gomes, Executive Secretary, Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace, Bangladesh.**

The Sermon on the Mount encapsulates the reality and the challenge to the Catholic Church in Bangladesh - to be poor, meek and humble, but happy. The people dream of a leisurely life but there are threats from trafficking, drug smuggling and internet abuse, abuse of the environment, and water quality issues.

Even though it is a small minority, the church is well regarded because it is able to contribute to the country through schools (more than 90% of students at Catholic schools are non-Christian) and the Caritas social service agencies which have more than 6,000 staff.

The Church is responding to the abuse of minors by relatives by holding workshops and forums for mothers and school principals for prevention. Fake marriages and the number of street children are rising. The prisons are full to capacity creating delays in justice.

There is internal migration as people move to the cities to work in industries. The lay people make a big contribution to the Church and



society. When they move to the cities, they hire places for worship and call the priest, so they become missionaries. Some go into politics.

**Bishop Colin Bagaforo, Chair, Commission for Justice and Peace, Philippines**

Bishop Colin identified seven key challenges for the Philippines:

1. Poverty and gross inequality - great inequality across income brackets, regions, and sectors, is considered one of the key factors constraining poverty reduction efforts.
2. Graft and corruption in government and business - the government leans towards dictatorship and there are political dynasties.
3. Overseas Filipino(a) Workers and labour migration - a deeply rooted and pervasive culture of migration has made moving abroad common, acceptable—even desirable—as an option or strategy for a better life.
4. The climate emergency has become the ‘new normal’.
5. Extreme weather conditions with an increasing number and intensity of typhoons.
6. Continuous environmental degradation, for example mining.
7. Peace and armed conflict - the communist movement is still strong in rural areas and there is terrorism in Mindanao.

Although Christians are a majority, many practice a ‘split level Christianity’ with a focus on devotions but lacking a sense of witness in their lives, especially in relation to the social teachings.

**Bishop Dominikus Saku, Chair, Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace and Migrant and Itinerant People, Indonesia**

Indonesia has six religions, which is a richness but also a problem - there is social conflict based on religious claims of truth. Other challenges include the ecological crisis, trafficking and unsafe migration, refugees, and economic issues.

Pastoral and social responses in the seven ecclesiastical regions is coordinated by Commissions and the Bishops’ Conference coordinates with the laity, religious and NGOs. Deeper education in integral human development is needed together with dialogue with

governments about growth and the ecological crisis. Another challenge is how to make the youth an integral part of the Church.

**Bishop Ruperto Santos, Chair, Pastoral Care for Migrants and Itinerant People, Philippines.**

Approximately 2.3 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) worked abroad during the period April – September 2018. They go to more than 200 countries however the main destinations are West Asia (54.9%) East Asia (18.7%) and South East Asia (9.0%). A new trend has developed since 2014 - women now make up the majority of OFWs (55.8%). The main demand for their labour is in household and service work.

OFWs face issues such as contract substitution, non-payment or underpayment of wages, verbal, physical and sexual abuse, long working hours, lack of accommodation, and there are an increasing number of stateless children.

The church is engaged in anti-human trafficking campaigns in partnership with community groups. It is also pursuing systematic links and building networks with receiving countries and is sending migrant chaplains and arranging frequent pastoral visits to destination countries for listening and dialogue with the migrants. Support systems for children left behind such as a formation program for the sons and daughters of OFWs is being strengthened. This program is channelled through diocesan migration commissions in partnership with Catholic schools. The Church is also offering scripture and social teaching programs.

**Bishop Gervas Rozario, Rajshahi, Bangladesh.**

The tribal people are the poorest of the poor in the diocese. Their land and properties are being grabbed leaving them homeless. Because of this many of them are migrating to the cities and living in slums in sub-human conditions. The government, and society in general, forget about them but the Church tries to do something.

Rich people are taking out large loans, buying the land of the poor, and putting in palm estates and industrial developments. As a result, the poor are also pushed out and migrate. Although government projects

are flourishing, the rich/poor gap is getting bigger. A lot of infrastructure is being built by government, and the rich are building industries, but the poor have nothing. Who benefits from this development? It is not sustainable. A mentality of exclusion and selfishness has grown.

We need to reflect on how we can bring about integration and a mentality of sharing and development together.

**Fr. Bonnie Mendes, Education Consultant, Catholic Board of Education, Faisalabad, Pakistan.**

Fr. Mendes noted the emergence of social media and of rightist governments. He asked how we can bring Pope Francis' mind into Asia and give it an Asian face? Can we envision FABC as the Asian face of Francis bringing the joy of the Gospel into the dioceses and parishes?

We need to reflect on our method of social transformation. What kind of social transformation do we want, and how will we achieve it? It will be opposed to rightist governments, so how can we develop a model that is non-violent but also effective?

There are many vocations to the priesthood in Asia. The challenge is to provide better formation in the face of rising costs of living and providing professors.

**Mr. Zar Gomez, Regional Coordinator, Caritas Asia.**

Caritas Asia has 25 member organisations and its regional office is in Bangkok. Its subdivisions follow those of the FABC. Caritas Asia provides services for the development of each member organisation and collaborates with the FABC and other church and non-church organisations in Asia. It promotes exchange among member organisations and provides regional continuity.

Caritas Asia is about to embark on its next strategic plan. Being a region of Caritas Internationalis, it will develop the plan within the context of the Caritas Internationalis strategic framework.

**Ms. Linda Noche, Program Coordinator for Advocacy, NASSA, Philippines.**

Ms. Noche noted the shrinking political space in the Philippines with executive government interfering with the legislative and judicial arms. Red tagging and legal cases against church leaders feed a culture of fear and silence. Servant leadership rather than 'king leadership' is called for. NASSA has responded with education on good governance and an anti-dynasty campaign.

Economic challenges include the inequality of opportunities and of impact, and the commoditisation of people. They raise the question of how to coordinate advocacy campaigns better and how better to work with the poor.

Social challenges include upholding people's rights and responsibilities in the face of fear, apathy and silence. The politicisation of religious leaders (in the sense of being partisan) presents a cultural and spiritual challenge.

Ecological challenges include environmental degradation, dams being built to provide water for the cities to the detriment of indigenous peoples, and the throw-away mentality.

**Rev. Dr Francis Kodiyan, Catholic Bishops Conference of India Secretary for Prison Ministry, India.**

Fr. Kodiyan's presentation listed a large number of social, political and economic issues facing India. They included: Poverty and growing inequality, terrorism, Islamization, religious disharmony, religious fundamentalism, a lack of sanitation, human right violations, people losing faith in the judiciary, the arms and ammunition trade, slums, homelessness, people with disability, the high incidence of rape, organised crime, prostitution, drug and alcohol addiction and human trafficking.

**Mr. Cyprianus Lilik Krismantoro Putro, Secretary, Archdiocesan Commission for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, Semarang, Indonesia.**

The key challenges or 'miseries' in Indonesia were identified in the following way:

- Catholics are a small minority of the community and religious intolerance and religious fundamentalism, especially Muslim fundamentalism, are rising.
- The local autonomy effect – local government is controlled by family dynasties and local politicians function as local ‘kings’.
- Social media is functioning as a divisive and distorting machine and is used as a tool of propaganda.
- Decay of social fabric and social virtues.
- Living with environmental disasters.
- The indigenous people are unprepared to cope with the pace of infrastructure projects and big developments and are excluded from their benefits.
- Families lack the capacity to support the new generation.
- The digital divide and the loss of ‘undigitized’ realities.

The major sources of hope are:

- The growth of the middle class through economic development.
- Positive use of digital technology as a tool for social development, public control and democratisation.
- Infrastructure that promotes greater social justice, for example health, education, social welfare, and local economic development.
- The birth of the post-sectarian generation in the student protests of 2019.

**Mr. Shahid Anwar, Diocesan Coordinator, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace Faisalabad, Pakistan.**

Pakistan is on the verge of an environmental/climate change disaster. Some manifestations include weather extremes and the scarcity of water while responses include a ban on plastic bags, and tree planting. Religious extremists are targeting civilians, officials and religious minorities at places such as schools, markets, government institutions and places of worship. Prime Minister Imran Khan is seeking to bring the country’s 30,000 madrassas under government control and to rehabilitate thousands of former militants.

Corruption is a significant issue with Pakistan rated 122 out of 180 countries in Transparency International’s Global Corruption

Perception Index. The anti-money laundering systems that are in place are inadequate.

There are significant population pressures. Family planning is taboo, and children outnumber adults in the population. There are food shortages, energy and resources crises, disease outbreaks, pressure on water supplies, and no government plan of action.

The rights of minorities are not respected and women from minority communities are abducted, forced to convert to Islam and to marry. About 159 such cases were reported from 2013-2019. A parliamentary Committee on Forced Conversions has been formed to protect minority girls and young women from forced conversions. They may be involved in fake blasphemy cases, theft cases and other cases just because they belong to a minority group.

NGOs are hindered in their work by the red tape involved in registering in order to be able to seek donations. These restrictions were imposed because some international NGOs were involved in financing terrorists.

There is a lack of volunteerism as people become more concerned about material benefits.

**Ms. Deepika Singh, Program Coordinator, OHD/CCD, India.**

Ms. Singh identified the major trends in India as:

- Sexual violence, including attacks on minors - even those with disabilities - and the spread of rape videos on social media.
- The climate crisis and resource depletion. Slums are increasing with villagers moving to the cities because of the collapse of livelihoods in the rural areas.
- In the political scene, the government's 'marketing strategy' uses the social media 'pile on' to attack anyone who says anything that is anti-government.
- More positively, social media is being used to organise youth protests and the language of activists is being picked up by the common people.

## Discussion and Reflection on the Sharing of Participants

The main points rose in discussion of and reflection on the sharing of the participants were:

- While people rejoice that development is happening, this development is not for the poor and this creates conflict. Those who raise objections are labelled anti-national and governments have impunity – ‘call it a mad dog and shoot.’
- There is a rise of nepotistic dictators and people turn to ‘strong leaders’. Even ‘benevolent’ leaders can become dictators.
- Leaders within the region influence and encourage each other, for example some would like to import the death penalty.
- On the other hand, Christians can influence others through their leadership. In Sri Lanka the Cardinal appealed to people not to react violently to the Easter Sunday bombing and the calm response of the community impressed people. Some labelled the Cardinal’s reaction ‘presidential’.
- Faith leaders are also divided, and so interfaith dialogue is very important. The Church is often the one promoting integral humanism and a spirit of coexistence. It would be helpful if governments would invest in promoting interreligious dialogue in school and university education.
- The power of social media is feeding a belief that the majority must be right.
- We have to correct ignorance and misinformation with education and hold the mass media accountable. This responsibility starts in the family – why do we comfort babies with cell phones?
- There was an overarching theme of gaps – digital, moral, economic, ethical gaps, and a gap in understanding. Perhaps this is because of a leadership gap?
- It would be good to write a history of Caritas Asia.
- Caritas Asia collaborates both through programs and regular communication. It sees itself as the social action arm of the Church and FABC as the Church in Asia.
- There was some discussion of how Caritas Asia deals with the two churches in China. Caritas Asia is a confederation that relates with both diocesan and national bodies but mainly works

with national bodies. Some parts of China have a good relationship with Caritas in Hong Kong or Macau, and so Caritas Asia mostly works through them.

- We need to reflect on the situation and be as strategic as the people traffickers.
- We need to develop an ethical framework for reflection and engage in deeper analysis.
- We should also pay attention to the positive forces and look for the prophetic signs of the times.

### **Discernment of Major Emerging Trends**

Reflecting in small groups on the sharing of the participants and on the reporting to the whole group lead to the discernment of the following major trends across Asia:

1. Climate crisis - links with migration, trafficking, local displacement.
2. Digital world and the youth - church needs to respond, cope with issues, learn to use new technology.
3. Political governance - political leadership, we can do something - church needs to respond to lack of leadership.
4. Urbanization.
5. Religious discrimination - minorities
6. Environmental Justice and social injustice
7. Commoditization and relationships as transactional e.g. Sexual tourism
8. Violence - growing.
9. Migration - issues related to it.
10. Trafficking and proliferation of illegal drugs.
11. Destruction and abolition of cultures, languages.

### **Presentations from international agencies**

**Ms. Naoko Maruyama, Migrant and Refugee Section Regional Coordinator for East, South and South East Asia, Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development.**

We need to build stronger cooperation and a unified voice within the Church in Asia. There are a lot of common struggles across Asia. The FABC and the Migrant and Refugee Section really have the same



mandate and concerns - to serve Bishops in Asia by providing awareness, animation, and support according to the local Church's contexts and needs - and they should collaborate according to subsidiarity.

The mission of the Section is to support the Church locally, regionally and globally as she accompanies people in the important choices that they make to move, especially those who are in one way or another forced to flee. It concentrates on the most vulnerable and seeks to change the narrative from a negative one that sees migration as a terrible thing to understanding it as a natural response to humanitarian crises and the inner wish to be happy and enjoy a better life.

The Section works in four main areas:

1. Data and Evidence: the Section observes migration phenomena worldwide, focusing on those forced to flee, and collects the best possible information.
2. Understanding and interpretations: the Section formulates scientific assessments and theological reflections with the assistance of experts in these fields.
3. Deciding on strategies and priorities: the Section develops pastoral directions for the Universal Church and Local Churches with the assistance of experts on the ground, taking into account the social teaching of the Church and the direct guidance of the Holy Father.
4. Practical Action: the Section promotes and stimulates prompt, effective and coordinated pastoral responses to be carried out by Local Churches, in dialogue and collaboration with trusted organizations and institutions.

The Section assists local churches in the following ways:

- Training their pastoral coordinators and agents.
- Elaborating pastoral action plans.
- Undertaking pastoral actions and spiritual development.
- Building trustworthy and effective networks among partners.

Two pastoral orientations have been published and the next ones will address climate change and internally displaced people. The Section hopes to streamline materials and programs but cater to local church contexts and needs. Because the Holy See is also a state, it also has an

avenue for action at the United Nations. The Section acts as the liaison between the Bishops, Bishops' Conferences, Local Churches, Religious Congregations, Catholic Organizations and the Holy See. Hence the aim is to have the FABC (mainly through the OHD-CCD) as the main coordinator/platform of all Catholic actors working with the most vulnerable on the move in Asia with the assistance of the Section.

**Ms. Beatrice Lauer, Regional Coordinator, Misereor.**

We are at the beginning of a new decade and it is just the right moment to meet. We need to be woken up and the world needs our wake-up call.

People in rural and urban areas are heavily affected by climate change and will suffer from its effects even more in the future. If global warming can be limited to 2 degrees, around 20 million people in India, who live in coastal areas, will be threatened by the rising sea level. If global warming is limited to 4 degrees, as many as 55 million people in this country alone need to find new places to live.

Urbanization is taking place rapidly. It is urgent to meet the needs of a growing urban population, namely of the poor, who need shelter, livelihood, health care and education for their children. Energy saving and eco-friendly infrastructure and transportation systems are required.

Discrimination against different groups such as indigenous people and women is alarming. We need to ask how the Church can contribute to including these groups in decision making processes in society and within the Church itself.

The Church in Europe is undergoing a serious crisis, due to the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and the way how Church institutions have dealt with it. The Church in Asia can draw valuable lessons from this.

The FABC inspires people in Asia and in other places, such as Germany. It encourages us to read the signs of the times and to respond, to serve the poor and to protect our common home.

## **Dr. Benedict Alo D'Rozario, President, Caritas Asia.**

Dr. D'Rozario recalled how he learned from attending his first FABC event that FABC cares more about 'being part' of a person (by way of reflection, education, formation, etc.) and Caritas concentrates more on 'doing part' of a person (providing humanitarian services, initiating development intervention, etc.). Both have a common goal - integral human development. This led him to actively consider steps to improve 'being part' of Caritas Staff, Volunteers and Community Members that Caritas Organizations reach through various services.

In the development of its strategic plan every four years Caritas Asia consults the regional bodies as well as examining the documents of the local churches, FABC and Holy See. The FABC Consultation Paper will be one of the valuable tools to study and reflect on as part of the process of developing the Caritas Asia's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan.

The six emerging trends in the Consultation Paper for this workshop and the issues Caritas Asia have been addressing under its current Strategic Plan are quite similar. Caritas Asia has been addressing the following Asian realities: poverty, natural and man-made disasters, unsafe migration, human trafficking, moral degradation, climate change, social conflict and intolerance. Many of the thematic areas covered by Caritas Asia fall within the purview of re-emerging realities identified by the FABC.

Some of the new or re-emerging realities that the new strategic plan might address include:

- Exclusion (of nameless, voiceless, stateless, powerless, people from the periphery, people unborn or born without full potential, dying people)
- Identity crisis (Catholic identity, Caritas identity, understanding of the mission of Caritas as a pastoral instrument complementary to others, localization - Asian Way, image of Christian faith, potential for missionary Church)
- Inadequate safeguarding systems and standards (organizational risks, protection of vulnerable, abuses and harassment)
- Today's youth (future leaders, and future of the Church)
- Environmental injustice (environmental migrants, lifestyle - abuse and overuse of earth's resources)

- Modern technologies that can help the Church in its mission (social media and other new channels of communication)
- Recently the whole world has been concerned about the Novel Corona Virus that originated in China, so we as a church should also have a serious conversation on this health issue.
- The increasing numbers of people living beyond eighty or ninety years is a new reality that brings new challenges for Asia.

**Ms. Cheryl Dugan, Coordinator for Asia Pacific, Global Catholic Climate Movement.**

The Global Catholic Climate Movement seeks to empower Catholics to care for creation. A key way in which it does this is through education and formation programs. Over the past three years the movement has trained over 1,000 people through their online *Laudato Si' Animation Program*. These animators then partner with their parishes and other Catholic organisations to organise educational events and action. In person training has been conducted in the Philippines and Cheryl is exploring offering online training at times better tailored to Asia Pacific time zones.

Future plans to leverage the global movement to promote ecological conversion include collaborating with the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the encyclical *Laudato Si'* during *Laudato Si' Week* beginning from 16 May 2020 and marking the Season of Creation. The Vatican is now promoting the Season of Creation beginning with the Day of Prayer for Creation on 1 September and finishing on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on 4 October.

A *Catholic Carbon Footprint Program* is also being developed with the Dicastery in order to help people and organisations within the church to shrink their carbon footprint. Ethical investment and divestment from fossil fuels will also be a focus of education and action.

A positive emerging trend is the explosion of youth activism. Within the Global Catholic Climate Movement, young people are calling Bishops and Church leaders to take action through *Laudato Si' Generation*. Information about their current actions can be found at [www.laudatosigeneration.org](http://www.laudatosigeneration.org)

## WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

- DAY 2 SUNDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2020

### THE THEOLOGY OF THE FABC

**Fr. William LaRousse, MM, presented a PowerPoint prepared by Fr. Clarence Devadass, who was unable to attend the workshop**

The Plenary Assemblies have been a *locus* for discernment and an experience of living together as Church. The list of the Plenary Assembly topics at Appendix A of this report reflect the developing concerns and theology of the FABC. It is significant that the FABC Office for Theological Concerns has always been led by a theologian.

The *triple dialogue* - with the poor, with the cultures of Asia, and with the religions of Asia - emerged at the first Plenary Assembly in 1974. The next major development was the integration of spirituality at the 1990 Plenary Assembly with the articulation of *A New Way of Being Church*.

In 1995, five pastoral priorities were identified that have provided a focus for the work of the FABC for some time now. The priority of interreligious dialogue led to the identification of harmony as a topic for theological investigation.

At the 2009 Plenary Assembly, dialogue was named as a mode of the Church's existence in Asia. Fr. La Rousse noted that the Dialogue of Life is a distinctive contribution of the FABC to the international documents of the Church on interreligious dialogue. Now the FABC is also naming harmony with creation as part of dialogue in Asia.

The *Asian Integral Pastoral Approach*, based on the pastoral spiral, has also been a significant theological contribution of the FABC. Through this approach, the local churches of Asia have been seeking the Kingdom of God in the concrete experiences of Asia. The local church is the primary actor in the theology of the FABC. Other distinctive aspects of the theology of the FABC are attention to interiority and motivation for mission.

Future directions for the theology of the FABC include:

- Building on the triple dialogue by adding dialogue with creation to become a four-fold dialogue.
- Moving from the being missions to becoming missionary disciples in Asia.
- Moving from setting pastoral priorities to a focus on missionary priorities.

Fr. LaRousse invited Dr. Padilla to describe the way in which the Office of Theological Concerns works. She explained that after sharing on issues, the group chooses an issue for attention and then looks at how other faiths are experiencing the topic. The Office begins by 'listening to our neighbours' then turns to our Christian sources. Thus the theological reflection produced is a community enterprise.

The main points made in discussion of the presentation were:

- Concern about the extent to which the theology of the FABC reached the local churches and whether or not theology professors across Asia use the theology of the FABC or teach about it. It was felt that the theology of the FABC was used very little in seminaries, and that perhaps language is a factor in this. On-going programs to update priests and bishops on FABC theology were suggested and it was noted that this theology must also be made available to lay people and should speak to them too.
- On the other hand, the positive role of Radio Veritas in disseminating the theology of the FABC was noted. It was also reported that in some places the theology of the FABC was influential and effective. It was noted that the Office for Theological Concerns was also instrumental in the establishment of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians.
- While in some times and places there have been tensions between theologians and bishops, there are also regular dialogues between theologians and Bishops' Conferences in other places, such as India.
- Participants had a sense that this is a fresh time in the life of the church. Pope Francis is leading the way and we need to follow. We need to accompany and support each other, to pray together, to bear with each other. We need to seize the moment and take action, but to act with kindness, flexibility and humility.

## **PRESENTATION OF THE WORKSHOP CONSULTATION PAPER**

### **Dr. Estela P. Padilla**

Dr. Padilla explained that the consultation paper circulated prior to the workshop brought together insights from a variety of talks and preparatory workshops already held prior to this workshop. It identifies the overarching reality as one of globalisation and pays particular attention to massive poverty, missing persons, multiculturalism, religious pluralism and the ecological crisis. Its depiction of the context, re-emerging trends, and challenges is similar to the picture painted by the sharing on the first day of this workshop.

We now face a range of questions:

- In the context that we have described, what kind of church are we called to be?
- In such a church, what role would the FABC and its Offices have?
- What image of the Church and of Christian faith do we propose?
- Is there anything in our Asian cultures that can deepen our being church and living our mission?
- Aware of the context and the vision we have of the Asian church, what are the challenges that the FABC and FABC Offices are facing?
- How can the FABC be a more effective organisation?
- What suggestions do we have for the FABC 2020 General Conference?

The participants divided into four smaller groups to reflect on these questions. The following notes summarise key points made by the four groups. They are followed by the overall reflections of the participants after having heard the reports of each group.

### **Results of Reflection on the Consultation Paper Questions**

#### **Emerging Trends**

- Climate crisis, environmental justice and social injustice - links with migration, trafficking, local displacement, denial of the reality of anthropogenic climate change by some political and religious leaders.
- Globalisation - modernization, urbanization, destruction of traditional ways of doing things, extinction of languages,

culinary traditions, costumes and cultures urges the need of preserving the identity and culture, impact on Indigenous peoples.

- Political governance, military abuses and take overs.
- New liberal economic laws, privatisation.
- Religious leadership - abuse committed by religious Leaders (abuse of minors, women, and vulnerable adults), Church leaders taking party political sides or supporting particular politicians.
- Religious fundamentalism, discrimination, persecution of minorities.
- Breakdown of family life - the rejection of family life, new forms of family, disengagement of youth from the Church and family, the digital world of the youth.
- Relationships - commoditisation and relationships as transactional, sex tourism, violence, trafficking, drug addiction, gender-related violence, forced marriages, surrogacy, exclusion of peoples.
- Migration - exploitation of overseas workers, especially women.

### **What kind of Church can respond to such context? (Vision, Image of Church)**

- The Pilgrim People of God journeying together.
- A Church that adapts to the local context through inculturation.
- Church of Mercy, a compassionate Church; a Church filled with merciful deeds.
- A Church working for equality and justice; a servant Church; an outgoing Church.
- A Church of the Poor.
- A platform for participation, integration and transformation.
- Open, welcoming, and inclusive Church (where no one is left behind i.e. children, people with disabilities, drug addicts, transgendered people, people with mental health issues, single mothers); Church as family; a welcoming Church; Church as home.
- A Church that is in touch with the base - people; a Church that is responsive to the problems/needs of the people; a people-centered Church.



- a Green Church as manifested in *Laudato Si'* by Pope Francis.
- A mystic and prophetic Church.

**What Images of Jesus and the Christian Faith can inspire such a vision of Church?**

- Jesus as brother.
- Jesus as love; not judging others; forgiving.
- Jesus washing the feet of the disciples.
- Jesus climbing the mountain together with us.
- Jesus of Emmaus (listens to marginalized people, shares learning together, incorporation of victim into the Eucharist).
- Praying Jesus, Jesus mystic.
- Eucharistic figure of Jesus.
- A merciful Jesus.
- Jesus the Redeemer.
- Jesus the Healer.
- Jesus in the Parables of Lost Sheep.
- Jesus in the Good Samaritan.
- Jesus gives us new opportunities.
- Jesus in the Parable of the Sower.
- Jesus in full control, containing all situations.
- Christian faith as sharing of God's love; giving of gifts; Christian faith as simple, we need to go back to the origins.
- Church as humble and respectful.
- A Church that is a tool for the conversion of sinners.

**What is it in our Asian Cultures that will help us as Church be more responsive to the context and challenges facing us?**

- Asian culture is predominantly spiritual: mysticism and asceticism; prayer, meditation and contemplation; simplicity, humility; pilgrimage, fasting, service.
- Asians have great respect for the nature, creation, love for animals and plants; see everything on the earth as interconnected.
- Responding to the needs of people; concern and care for the other, neighbour; Asians are generous people, always ready to give, donate for the church and the poor.

- Culture of eating together, talking together; placing value on relationships.
- Smiling, welcomes the other/everyone; hospitality.
- Families living together, taking care of parents.
- Room for diversity.
- Build and manage our own resources.

### **Challenges to FABC**

- Church of the Poor: formation of the young; practicum for the bishops; problem of elite bishops, acting like kings; formation of priests should be renewed.
- Communication gap with FABC and local churches, documents and decisions don't always reach the local churches; communication for example about meetings.
- Need to strengthen FABC Secretariat.
- Inclusiveness in the FABC Offices such as the participation of the laity will be highly appreciated; gender balance.
- The non-participation or unavailability of Bishops (affected by number of Bishops in the country, location).
- Logistical and financial challenges especially in learning new things; money/sustainability; needs to be equipped/ prepared to face new realities.
- People are used to practicing their faith in certain ways; it can be difficult to change from traditional ways
- Humility.
- Question authority.
- To show mercy.
- Decreasing vocations.

### **Suggestions for a More Relevant/Effective FABC**

- FABC documents and decisions should reach the local churches, faith communities; first of all, all Asian bishops should wholeheartedly welcome the teachings of FABC.
- The FABC documents need to be interpreted for the ordinary faithful. A group of FABC staff (pastoral team) could be formed to simplify the teachings and to convey them to the ordinary people.

- Use partnerships and networking with the already existing institutes which promote FABC documentation and studies such as EAPI (East Asian Pastoral Institute), Manila, and ISI (Indian Social Institute) India.
- Dialogue within the Church especially in the seminaries; integration of FABC documents within the curriculum; dialogue between lay theologians and seminary professors.
- Increased collaboration between Federations of Bishop Conferences especially with the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania on common concerns such as migration, ecology and formation in Catholic Social Teaching.
- Support continuing formation of Bishops after they become Bishops; introduce and re-introduce tools/resources to train Bishops; workshops on networking, dialogue, leadership, how to work with laity, women, other organizations; revive BISA.
- FABC to assume the role of inspiring and leading towards the vision of the Asian Church; organizational development as FABC.
- Representation of the grassroots to the higher levels of the Church.
- Use of modern technology e.g. share videos of the FABC 2020 conference presentations.
- Focus on specific topics e.g. migration.
- Youth forum.
- Attitude of the laity towards clergy.

### **Suggestions to the 2020 November Conference**

- Bishops' Conferences to study FABC consultation reports before they come to the 2020 Conference; ensure that the recommendations from this OCD workshop are taken up in the General Conference.
- Every Bishops' Conference should be an occasion of grace and blessing. What spiritual preparation is being undertaken?
- Send information directly to all rather than going through dioceses or Bishops' Conferences – avoid gatekeepers, improve transparency.

- Video or podcasts of the presentations, interviews with participants for Church media, video link ups between participants and people in their own dioceses for dialogue about what is happening; invite Vatican and other Catholic media to report on the Conference; can Radio Veritas Asia play a role in terms of communication?
- Everybody should be represented. How will gender and sector balance be achieved if the majority of participants are bishops? Will gender balance be achieved by including more lay people?
- Youth should be given a platform to dialogue with the bishops and not just be observers.
- Include a short exposure to realities as part of the program so that there is a common experience to reflect on.
- FABC 2020 should have an Asian feel.
- FABC 2020 should be eco-friendly; no single use plastic, no food wastage, simplicity.
- Consider how to prepare the Church for next 2000 years? How to achieve sustainability for the future?
- Use the scenario-building method - ask how the Church can grow in the future, then from this scenario-building, plan ahead.
- Way to build ahead: consolidation of the Church theologically?

### **General Comments after all the Reports**

- Translation of FABC documents into local languages is important - Bishops' Conferences need to take responsibility for this.
- Consultation reports: how to make sure they get into the FABC 2020 itself?
- It will be a challenge to compile the consultation data in such a way as to identify which content is specific to particular countries, and which is pan-Asian.
- Make use of the four words that are key to the Migrant and Refugees Section's work: welcome, protect, promote, integrate.

- The FABC does not seem to have a strategic plan developed in a systematic way, will this be an outcome of or follow up to the 2020 Conference?
- How to engage the laity who work for the Bishops' Commissions? Will they be able to take part in the Conference?
- Dr. Estela P. Padilla noticed that the world of the youth, and concern for the family came up more on the second than the first day of the consultation.
- Ms. Naoko Maruyama and others noticed that the digital world had only been mentioned in passing rather than discussed in any depth. The digital world is transforming our entire life: how do we enter this world/life? One suggestion is that the FABC can invest more in media.
- Fr. Nandana Manatunga was struck by the image of the Church as the People of God walking together (bishops, priests, and laity); maybe the Church may take a wrong turn, but there is time and sense to turn back - it is an image of equality, togetherness.
- Bishop Ruperto Santos was struck by the idea of a green Church and being green - we should be growing and giving!

## APPENDIX A

### FABC PLENARY ASSEMBLIES

- FABC I: Evangelization in Modern-Day Asia  
- *Taipei, Taiwan, 22-27 April, 1974*
- FABC II: Prayer - The Life of the Church of Asia  
- *Calcutta, India, 19-25 November, 1978*
- FABC III: The Church - A Community of Faith in Asia  
- *Samphran, Thailand, 20-27 October, 1982*
- FABC IV: The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church  
and in the World of Asia  
- *Tokyo, Japan, 16-25 September, 1986*
- FABC V: The Emerging Challenges to the Church in Asia in the  
1990s: A Call to Respond (New Way of Being Church)  
- *Bandung, Indonesia, 17-27 July, 1990*
- FABC VI: Christian Discipleship in Asia Today: Service to Life  
- *Manila, Philippines, 10-19 January, 1995*
- FABC VII: A Renewed Church in Asia: A Mission of Love and  
Service  
- *Samphran, Thailand, 3-12 January, 2000*
- FABC VIII: The Asian Family Toward a Culture of Integral Life  
- *Daejeon, South Korea, 17-23 August, 2004*
- FABC IX: Living the Eucharist in Asia  
- *Manila, Philippines, 10-16 August, 2009*
- FABC X: FABC At 40 Years: Responding to the Challenges of  
Asia  
- *Xuan Loc and Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, 10-16  
December, 2012*
- FABC XI: The Asian Catholic Family: Domestic Church of the  
Poor on a Mission of Mercy  
*Colombo, Sri Lanka, 28 November – 4 December, 2016*

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## FABC Papers:

152. Asian Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, Part 1, Bishops' Institute for Religious Affairs – BIRA VI, Edited by Fr. William LaRousse, MM, Executive Secretary, FABC Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (OEIA), June 2017
153. Asian Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, Part 2, Bishops' Institute for Religious Affairs – BIRA VI, Dialogue with Religions in Asia and Interreligious Marriage, Edited by Fr. William LaRousse, MM, Executive Secretary, FABC Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (OEIA), June 2017
154. Asian Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, Part 3, Bishops' Institute for Religious Affairs – BIRA VI, Dialogue with Religions in Asia and Interreligious Marriage, Edited by Fr. William LaRousse, MM, Executive Secretary, FABC Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (OEIA), June 2017
155. Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Myanmar and Bangladesh, 26 November – 2 December 2017, organized by Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar and Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh, edited by FABC Central Secretariat, December 2017
156. Business in the Context of *Laudato Si'* - 1) *Laudato Si'* & Christian Business, 13 November 2016, organised by FABC Climate Change Desk in collaboration with the Christian Business Forum for Climate Change. 2) Business Sector's Response to *Laudato Si'*, 6-7 November 2017, organised by FABC Office of Human Development - Climate Change Desk with FABC Central Secretariat and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand, edited by FABC Office of Human Development – Climate Change Desk. Conferences sponsored by CAFOD, December 2018
157. Shepherding Families in Asia: Contemporary Challenges and Responses for Bishops, Priests and Lay Leaders, 16 – 20 May 2016, Salesian Retreat House in Hua Hin, Thailand by FABC Office of Clergy and Office of Laity and Family, December 2018
158. Meeting of the Presidents of Doctrinal Commissions under the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences and the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF), 15 – 18 January 2019, Baan Phu Waan Pastoral Centre, Bangkok, Thailand by FABC Office of Theological Concerns and Central Secretariat, March 2019

159. Responses to Doubts, Questions and Criticisms with regard to Chapter Eight of *Amoris Laetitia*, Fr. Vimal Tirimanna, CSsR, Pontifical Alphonsonian Academy, Rome, June 2019
160. Catholic Schools in Asia: A Shared Mission among Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful in the Light of Recent Papal Documents, 24 - 28 September 2018, Redemptorist Centre, Pattaya, Thailand, FABC Office of Consecrated Life (OCL) and Office of Education and Faith Formation (OEFF), edited by Pablito A. Baybado Jr., Executive Secretary, OEFF, September 2019
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