

**FABC: THE CHURCH IN ASIA -  
EVANGELIZATION, VISION, FUTURE  
DIRECTIONS**

**Orlando B. Cardinal Quevedo, O.M.I.  
Archbishop Emeritus, Cotabato, Philippines  
FABC 50 General Conference  
Baan Phu Waan, Sampran, Bangkok, Thailand  
13 October 2022**

## **Introduction**

The theme chosen for “FABC at 50” refers to “the journey of Asian peoples” to God’s Kingdom, a theme that several FABC plenary assemblies had developed.

The “FABC 50 General Conference Core Group” has prepared an excellent and substantive Guide Document (29 November 2020).

The general objective of this paper is to provide the Guide Document with historical grounding, as seen in various Assemblies from 1970 up to the Plenary Assembly in Colombo in 2016.

It will assist new Asian Bishops to know what Asian Bishops before them have said about the Church in Asia and its mission of Integral Salvation or Integral Liberation.

### **The Inspiration for FABC and the Beginning of an Asian Vision**

On 28 November 1970, during his visit to East and Southeast Asia, Pope Paul VI addressed the Asian Bishops. They were gathered in Manila to reflect on the Pope’s *Populorum Progressio*, while focusing on “the needs and aspirations of Asian peoples.” [I rely here on the excellent introductory Preface to Volume 1 of *For All the Peoples of Asia (FABC Documents from 1970 to 1991)* by Fr. Catalino Arevalo, S.J., co-editor with Bishop Gaudencio Rosales].

In the Pope’s address, we discern the fundamental dimensions of envisioning a renewed Church in Asia.

- Asia’s geographical “vastness and enormous multitudes;”
- “young in its peoples, but rich (in its) civilizations often thousands of years old;”
- The Church, except for certain regions such as the Philippines... is represented by small minorities;”
- The Church “must take up the defense of the poor and the weak against every form of social injustice.” .... Towards the “full development of the whole man and of every man” [PP 42].

The Pope reminded the Asian Bishops that they were the “heirs of the Apostles.” They have received the Spirit “in order to spread the mission of Christ” (Evangelization).

## **The Message of the Asian Bishops, 1970**

The Asian Bishops took their cue from the Holy Father. They deliberated on how they could respond to the pastoral and missionary challenge of Pope Paul VI. As a result, they issued concrete tasks:

- “It is our resolve, first of all, to be more truly ‘the Church of the poor’” [No. 19; see also Resolutions 3 and 4];
- “It is our resolve also, in the continent of the young, to become to them and for them, the ‘Church of the young’” [No. 23].
- “... we are more than fully convinced that dialogue with our fellow Asians whose commitment is to other faiths is increasingly important” [No. 24; see also Resolution 12];
- “We also urge on all a deep respect for the cultures and traditions of our peoples” [No. 24; see also Resolution 13].

The Asian Bishops then committed themselves to collaborate with other Christians churches and communities towards the development of Asian peoples, the eradication of unjust and repressive structures, the just ending of strife and warfare [see Nos. 25-27].

Then a truly remarkable solemn pledge: “We make ours, in the most solemn of ways, their hopes and aspirations for a new Asia” [No. 28].

Of the greatest significance is the Asian Bishops’ resolution that would finally result in the founding of the FABC:

“It has been agreed: THAT THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES HERE REPRESENTED ARE URGED TO AUTHORIZE AND SUPPORT A PERMANENT STRUCTURE FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS MEETING” [Resolution No. 1].

**FABC I, Taipei, Taiwan - 22<sup>nd</sup> to -27<sup>th</sup> April 1974**

**Evangelization in Modern Day Asia**

**Building a “New Way of Being Church”, Vision of a Renewed Church**

In 1972, the Statutes of the new Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences were approved, an event that would be commemorated forty years later in 2012 by the FABC X Plenary Assembly in Vietnam.

With the approval of the statutes, the seed that was sown by Pope Paul VI, watered and nourished by the Asian Bishops, finally bore fruit. This culminated with the First Plenary Assembly of the FABC (FABC I) in Taipei in 1974.

It was at FABC I that the Asian Bishops laid down in some detail the fundamental vision of a renewed Church in Asia on a mission of evangelization. These are the following:

1. "To preach the Gospel to Asia today, we must make the message and life of Christ incarnate in the minds and lives of our people" [No. 9].
2. "The primary focus of our task is the evangelization then, at this time in our history, is the building of a truly local church" [No. 9].
3. "The local church is a church incarnate in a people, a church indigenous and inculturated. And this means concretely a church in continuous, loving and humble dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions – in brief, with all the life realities of the people in whose midst it has sunk its roots deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own" [No. 12].
4. "In Asia especially, this involves a dialogue with the great religious traditions of our peoples... this dialogue will teach us what our faith in Christ leads us to receive from these religious traditions and what must be purified in them, healed, and made whole in the light of God's Word" [Nos. 13-17].
5. "A local church in dialogue with its people, in so many countries in Asia, means dialogue with the poor. For most of Asia is made up of a multitude of the poor... deprived of access to material goods and resources... because they live under repression" [No. 19].
6. "Engaged in tasks of justice with the spirit and demands of the Gospel, we will realize that the search for holiness and the search for justice, evangelization and the promotion of true human development and liberation are not only not opposed, but make up today the integral preaching of the Gospel, especially in Asia" [No. 23].

7. "It is through these three tasks that evangelization is to be carried out in Asia" [Nos. 25-28].
8. Imperatives of evangelization:
  - Prayer and contemplation, ability to discern [No. 31; see also Pope Paul VI, Message to Asian Bishops, where he speaks of the resources of prayer and about the Asian religious spirit].
  - Renewal of missionary formation [No. 32].
  - Construction of a genuinely Asian theological reflection [No. 11].
  - The use of media of social communication for evangelization [No. 34].

The Message of FABC I ends with a prayer [Nos. 43-50] which, according to Fr. Arevalo, encapsulates "the vision" contained in the Message.

The Asian Bishops pray that the Asian peoples may be led more and more to him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life [No. 46]. They pray that Christ sanctify the Church, and be a self-giving Church in love and service to Asia [Nos. 47-48]. They pray to the Lord of history for the peoples of Asia with their histories and traditions [No. 49]. They pray to Mary, the Mother of God, who has accompanied "the heralds" of Christ (missionaries) in Asia [No. 50]. They pray that the love of the Lord may embrace all the peoples of Asia, "that they may have life, ever fuller life" in the Lord [No. 49].

In FABC I, we find the primary lines of a "new way of being Church" in Asia and a "new way of evangelizing" through a triple dialogue:

- with the cultures of Asia;
- with their various religious traditions;
- and with the peoples of Asia, especially with the poor and the oppressed.

The first calls for inculturation. The second calls for Inter-Religious Dialogue. And the third, for a Church of the Poor.

Subsequent FABC Plenary Assemblies would elaborate on this vision and contextualize them in the light of changing situations and new pastoral challenges.

## ECCLESIOGENESIS IN PROCESS FABC II TO FABC III. 1978 – 1982

### FABC II, Calcutta, India – 19th to 25th November 1978

#### Prayer – The Life of the Church of Asia

FABC I had emphasized prayer and contemplation in the proclamation of the Gospel [see FABC I, no. 31]. The reflection of the Asian Bishops on prayer was the follow up of Pope Paul's Message to them in 1970 on the imperative of prayer in evangelization. The Asian Bishops took this up in their own 1970 Message. Consequently, the theme of FABC II was "Prayer – the Life of the Church in Asia. It was no coincidence that the Assembly took place in India, a land of mysticism and asceticism.

The Asian Bishops prayed with new forms of prayer as they confronted the challenges of growing secularism, materialism, and consumerism in the Asian continent. This modern spirit was making inroads on the Asian sense of God and of the sacred [Nos. 8-9]. The Bishops wanted to pass on, especially to the young, the "riches of contemplation and interiority" by way of "translation" into present cultural expressions [No. 10].

Their response to the challenges? "To Become More Fully a True Community of Prayer." The section, Nos. 13-19, is truly a marvelous, yet brief, exposition of Christian prayer. For two thousand years fundamental elements at the heart of Christian prayer remain:

- Christian prayer is our prayer to the Triune God, our communion of heart with the Father, in Jesus Christ – a gift of the Holy Spirit;
- It is the community praying with Jesus, in Jesus, a prayer that reaches its summit in the Holy Eucharist, a prayer of self-offering and self-sacrifice;
- It reaches outwards to the afflicted, to the poor and powerless, the least of Christ's brothers and sisters.

To become truly a community of prayer, we need to deepen and intensify, revitalize and renew the heart of Christian prayer in daily life.

It is as a true community of prayer that we proclaim the Gospel of Jesus credibly and effectively. Prayer is the energy that sustains us in

our development and liberation work among the peoples of Asia, in our Christian witness of life and service.

The renewal of the Christian community's prayer life requires:

- **Inculturation** – the integration of all that is best in our traditional ways of prayer and worship into the treasury of our Christian heritage (No. 31);
- **Inter-Religious Dialogue** – dialogical encounter with the riches of prayer and contemplation in other Asian religions and our discernment of those treasures will enrich our own Christian prayer as well as open ourselves to understanding, peace, and harmony with peoples of other faiths;
- **Formation in prayer** for priestly and religious aspirants, the renewal of animators, and the *interaction of prayer, theological reflection and everyday experience*.

The Bishops committed themselves in prayer to the integral liberation of the poor in their communities.

### **The Asian Colloquium on Ministries, Hong Kong, 1977.**

#### **Renewal of Ministries, Pioneering Ministries in Basic Christian Communities**

- Strangely, the Conclusion of the Colloquium, really its Final Statement, makes no reference to FABC I. Nos. 6-28, were already treated at FABC I.
- In many parishes in Asia, a new grassroots community, called Basic Christian Community (BCC), is emerging. The BCC has ministries and services exercised by lay people, both men and women.
- BCC's respond to the need:
  - for closer relationships of community members,
  - for mutual assistance and support both material and spiritual,
  - for participatory leadership,
  - and for more effective Christian witness of faith.
- In Mindanao, in the 1970's, new ministries for lay people emerged in the BCC's:

- Catechists and liturgical leaders (*kaabags* and prayer leaders);
  - Community leaders and youth leaders;
  - Music ministers, ministers in Family and Life, in Social Action, Health Care, Bible Apostolate, Indigenous Peoples' Apostolate, Inter-Religious Dialogue, etc.
- [The renowned sacramental theologian, Fr. David Noel Power, O.M.I., classic book, *Gifts that Differ: Lay Ministries, Established and Unestablished*, speaks of new ministries for lay people in the new grassroots communities].

### **FABC III, Sampran, Bangkok, Thailand - 20th to 27th October 1982**

#### **The Church - a Community of Faith in Asia**

In 1970, Pope Paul VI stated: "We must strive to make the faith the fundamental driving principle of the Christian life of our communities."

The theme of FABC III elaborates on the meaning of this theological reality, "Community of Faith" and completes "the circle of reflection" on the mission of Christ in Asia, its spirituality, and ministries.

The Bishops express great gratitude to God for the gifts that FABC has received (Nos. 1-5): the experience of solidarity in prayer, discernment and pastoral programs, the establishment of active FABC Offices with their Institutes (BIMA for mission animation, BISA for social action, BIRA, etc.

They recalled the challenges that the Church continue to face, esp. the plight of the teeming poor in Asia.

The results of their theological reflection on "Community" -

- The communion of the faithful is rooted in the communion of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The main purpose of the communion of the faithful is *discipleship in the Gospel* in the realities of daily living in Asia.
- It is guided by the Holy Spirit and nourished by the Sacraments.
- The Christian community is one of authentic participation and co-responsibility,

- United with its pastors
- And linked together with other communities of faith (parish, diocese) and above all with the Universal Church
- It reaches out through dialogue and service to other communities of other faiths.

The Bishops also noted inadequacies and failures, after 10 years of FABC:

- Inadequate praying together, lack of openness in sharing, in mutual concerns and self-giving – a lack of *being with and for others*.
- A spirit of domination rather than of servanthood.
- Structures that image “institution” rather than “community.”
- Organs of lay participation have not been established.
- Lay charisms have not been fully recognized.
- Inadequate personal, pastoral, and theological formation in the authentic ecclesiology of Vatican II.
- Inadequate formation in prayer, and even lack of praying among priests and religious.
- Failure to be communities of dialogue with peoples of other faiths.
- Failure to side with the poor, especially with women, on issues of social injustice; failure to proclaim the social teachings of the Church,
- Inadequacy of a sense of mission to the wider community.

Far from being disheartened, the Bishops make as their own the words of the First International Mission Congress in Manila (December 1979):

We see the movement of the Spirit in the longing for community prayer especially among the young, the growth of vibrant grassroots ecclesial communities, and a missionary spirit among many priests and religious, in the struggles of the poor and oppressed for a better future.

In Part, Towards a Renewed Community of Faith, commit themselves:

- To make their communities authentic communities of faith;
- To address the inadequacies of community and prayer;
- To exercise active option for the poor;
- To actively engage the charisms of lay people;
- To pay “greater attention to the role of women in Church and society”;
- To “translate the primacy of evangelization into deeds;”
- To include inculturation and inter-religious dialogue, especially through the dialogue of life.

A “Syllabus of Concerns” addresses the Bishops’ commitments towards the building of an authentic community of faith.

### **SUB-CONCLUSION**

In the 12 years since the Asian Bishops Meeting in Manila in 1970, the FABC bishops were able to set up step by step the foundational vision of the Church of Asian and its future directions.

#### **A New Way of Being Church**

- A Church set in the midst of Asia’s cultures and faiths;
- A true community of faith and prayer;
- A community of authentic disciples in word and deed;
- A Participatory Church;
- A Church of the Poor;
- A Church of the Young;
- A Church-in-Mission;
- A Church engaged in social transformation;
- A Church accompanying the peoples of Asia to the Reign of God.

The Pastoral Focus of all the above dimensions of the Vision is the building of a truly Asian Local Church.

## **A New Way of Evangelizing through the Triple Dialogue**

- Dialogue with Asian cultures - Inculturation
- Dialogue with other Asian religions - Inter-Religious Dialogue
- Dialogue with the Poor - Integral Human Liberation

## **A New Way of Pastoral Discernment – the Pastoral Spiral or Cycle**

- From Pastoral Situation to Faith Reflection;
- And from Faith Reflection to Pastoral Decision and Action.
- The method is evident in the format of the FABC Final Statements

Subsequent FABC's would contextualize the Pastoral Discernment and the Triple Dialogue according to the evolving and changing Asian situation.

## **FABC IV, Tokyo, Japan - 16<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September 1986**

### **The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of Asia.**

*[A Footnote to the Final Statement of FABC IV -- A Committee chaired by Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi, O.P., was appointed to draft the Final Statement. I was requested to join the discussion and then to draw up an outline of the Draft. The Drafting Committee decided that I should do the Final Statement myself. This was my first experience of writing the Final Statement, a practice that continued up to the 2016 Assembly in Colombo, Sri Lanka on the Family].*

### **Preamble, the Call to Evangelization and Social Transformation [Nos. 1.0 – 3.0]**

The Preamble sets the tone of the Statement. In an Asian world, full of great suffering, the Spirit gives hope. Asia is awakening to great possibilities, given the living spirit of the Resurrection and its hope of “justice, love and peace, integral liberation” [Nos. 1.0-1.5]. The laity's contribution to the life of faith in Asia cannot be underestimated. We recall the history of the Church in Japan and Korea, where for hundreds of years, faith was preserved by the laity. Today, lay men and women all over Asia continue to be active in the mission of evangelization. Together, we face the daunting task of social transformation in every facet of Asian life [Nos. 1.5-3.0.2].

### **Politics and Religious Fundamentalism [No. 3.1]**

In many Asian countries, the greed for power and riches has infected the political arena, a source of corruption and self-enrichment, causing great poverty and inequality. This situation is often aggravated by cultural and ethnic divisions that sometimes erupt in violence [No. 3.1.1]. The imperative of mission is to infuse the political order with the values of the Gospel and of the Kingdom. In a special way, Christ calls his disciples to be a leaven in the world. He calls especially the laity to participate and be involved in politics that seeks the common good. Apathy and indifference allow injustice and inequality to prevail in politics. The need of the hour is for men and women of competence and principled politics to enter actively in the political arena and work for the common good. The Church is becoming more involved in issues involving fundamental human rights and freedom, in business, health, women, the arms race, and in other issues that affect the poor and the downtrodden [Nos. 3.1.2 – 3.1.7]. We also face the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism. Its positive aspect challenges us to deeper renewal of our faith, while its negative aspect of religious intolerance and dogmatism challenges us to dialogue, especially the dialogue of life with fellow Christians, a task that the laity is especially called to because of their day-to-day contact [Nos. 3.1.8 – 3.1.12].

### **The Youth of Asia [No. 3.2]**

Many of the youth lived in poverty, severely limited by lack of skills and knowledge. They are lured to follow ideologies that promise liberation from poverty and injustice. Those who are educated are unemployed or underemployed. To escape their situation, many succumb to drugs and alcohol, pre-marital sex and delinquency [Nos. 3.2.1 – 3.2.2].

On the positive side, many young people are active in social transformation, serve as community health workers, catechists, leaders of Christian communities, organizers, members of pastoral teams. They have idealism, energy, zeal, and commitment to work for the common good of the Church and society [No. 3.2.3]

We need to encourage, support, and empower them to be evangelizers, messengers of God among their peers and elders. They are the Asia today.

The Church in Asia has to be a “Church of the Young” [Nos. 3.2.4 – 3.2.5].

### **The Laity and the Plight of Asian Women [No. 3.3]**

“In general, Asian society views women as inferior.” That is the negative aspect of Asian women. They suffer many injustices. They are exploited and degraded in the tourist and entertainment industries. They are unfairly compensated at work, discriminated in employment policies, abused as domestic workers, forced into marriages, victims of the dowry system and wife-beating. Thousands of female fetuses are destroyed [No. 3.3.1].

On the positive side, a woman is considered the heart of the family. They significantly contribute to the progress of Asian society as doctors, lawyers, managers, accountants, political leaders, teachers, etc. In the Church, they serve in pastoral teams and in various ministries, teaching, healing, catechizing, and organizing [No. 3.3.2].

Women of Asia call out for liberation, for their human dignity and worth to be restored as created in the image of God. It is our duty work with and for them to put an end to unfair and discriminatory policies, cultural injustices and negative attitudes towards women, Likewise, we need to promote the dignity of women, recognize their competencies and skills, give them “significant responsibilities in the ministries and decision-making processes of the Church” [Nos. 3.3.3 – 3.3.6].

### **The Laity and the Family [No. 3.4].**

“The Asian family is the receptacle of all Asia’s problems: poverty, repression, exploitation and degradation, divisions and conflicts” [No. 3.4.1].

Mothers and children doing hard labor, urban migration in search of work, resort to prostitution and abortion, population control programs with contraceptive mentality – all these disrupt normal family life and undermine traditional family values [Nos. 3.4.1 – 3.4.3].

Asian cultural values, such as “close-knit family ties, filial piety, care and respect for the aged,” provide the “most favorable atmosphere for a life of love and communion.” From such a background has come many vocations to the priest and religious life as well as “many lay

persons who are true witnesses to the Gospel in their work and professions” [Nos. 3.4.4 – 3.4.5].

The family is the “domestic church,” where the members interiorize culture, pray together, listen to God’s word, and faithfully practice forgiveness and sacrifice. A “civilization of love” starts in the family with the practice of justice, peace and love, truth and freedom, self-sacrifice, concern for the poor, responsibility and the loving use of power. Thus, evangelization begins in the family. An evangelized family becomes an evangelizing family [Nos. 3.4.6 – 3.4.10].

### **The Laity in the World of Education [No. 3.5]**

Illiteracy and the high visibility of highly reputable Catholic educational institutions, even in non-Christian areas are striking features in the Asian educational scene. Yet many observe that our educational institutions seem to cater to the rich [Nos. 3.5.1 – 3.5.2].

The question for us is this: “How, indeed, can our schools reflect the Church’s preferential option for the poor?” [No. 3.5.3].

The laity in Asia have played and still play a major role in facilitating the growth of Asian youth into mature human persons. Women teachers in primary and secondary education reflect the Church’s identity as *Mater et Magistra*. A spirituality for teachers begins with the idea that in the field of education, the laity express their baptismal participation in Christ’s character as prophet and servant [No. 3.5.4]. Their profession is a call from God to share in the teaching ministry of Jesus. Their teaching is more than the communication of knowledge. It is the formation of values, values that are of the Gospel and of the Kingdom. As in catechesis, they are more than teachers. They are witnesses of the Gospel, witnesses of Christ [No. 3.5.5, see *Evangelii Nuntiandi*].

Our Asian Catholic schools are the ideal setting for the formation of a true community, whose members are of different faiths, cultures, and social classes. “In a non-Christian environment, such a school community becomes a sign of the peace, justice, and love of God’s Reign” [No. 3.5.6].

We also see the contribution of our schools in non-formal education, in the training of out-of-school youth, in literacy programs. This is especially true in the non-formal educational work, being done

among the women and youth in Basic Ecclesial Communities [No. 3.5.7].

### **The Laity and Mass Media [No. 3.6]**

Pope Paul VI noted “the growing role being assumed by the media and their influence on the transformation of mentalities and of society itself” (*Octogesima Adsveniens*, 20). Mass media in Asia today are “predominantly controlled by authoritarian governments or by a handful of economically and politically powerful persons.” Still, the Church still lags behind in using mass media in proclaiming the Gospel [Nos. 3.6.1 – 3.6.3].

But competent and faith-abiding laity who work in media do influence their peers to practice integrity in their profession. *Radio Veritas* in Manila and the lay people working there played a crucial role in the struggle for truth, justice, and freedom that led to People Power earlier this year.

Through mass media the Church in Asia hopes to bring out for the common good of peoples “the seeds of the Kingdom” in diverse Asian cultures and religions. This requires inter-faith collaboration. It is, therefore, imperative for the Church to support the formation and training of the laity so that they can assume more responsibilities in media [Nos. 3.6.4 – 3.6.6].

### **Laity in the World of Work [No. 3.7]**

Through work, we participate in God’s mission of transforming through the Gospel our Asian world and the integral liberation of the poor. But this mission faces a multitude of formidable challenges: the dominance of large trans-national corporations and large local companies, cheap labor and the appropriation of farms for agribusiness, the banning of strikes and trade unions, the exodus of rural workers to the cities, job insecurity, unemployment and under-employment, total dependence on the law of supply and demand, child labor, abused and sexually exploited women workers, maltreatment of Asian workers abroad [Nos. 3.7.1 – 3.7.2; 3.7.7].

The Church’s social teachings are aids in confronting this host of daunting challenges. In these social teachings lie a *spirituality of work* that the Church needs in its formation of the laity. Work has a religious meaning. It is a participation in God’s creative mission. To rise above the monotony of day-to-day work, to organize trade unions in order to defend human rights, to demand higher

compensation and better working conditions – all these are a participation in the redeeming and transforming mission of Christ. Viewed from the optic of a spirituality of work, such actions are fundamentally moral and *religious acts* (see *Laborem Exercens*, 24-27).

In the manner of Christ, the whole Church has to listen with active compassion to the poor, and, with other religious faiths, at all levels of society, help them bring about a transformation of the world of work [Nos. 3.7.4 – 3.7.6; 3.7.8].

### **Social Responsibility in the World of Business [No. 3.8]**

All the created goods and resources of this world are at the service of all humanity. They have a “universal destination.” Global cooperation, inter-faith cooperation, the collaboration of workers and business people are necessary. “Social responsibility on this matter means stewardship of the goods of this world” [No. 3.8.1].

Though the system of free enterprise or capitalism has many advantages for workers, it has not met the Catholic principle of “the priority of labor over capital” (see *Laborem Exercens*, 12). Capitalism has often degraded the worker to a dispensable commodity. On the other hand, centrally planned economies or socialism, while freeing workers from capitalist abuses, has placed them under the domination of the State. A social restructuring of the processes of production is necessary, such as a “small-scale technology that workers can own and control, at least as a cooperative” [Nos. 3.8.2 – 3.8.4].

The Spirit of God calls the laity in the business world to live out their faith and transform their world according to Gospel values towards greater workers’ participation, and a more equitable business society. *A code of business ethics* would be greatly beneficial [Nos. 3.8.5 – 3.8.6].

### **Laity and Health Services [No. 3.9]**

Today the Church, particularly the laity, is seriously concerned about the complex problems in the world of health and medical services. Among these are: the prohibitive cost of medical services, the overconcentration of medical services in urban areas, bio-ethical problems such as abortion, contraceptive mentality and aversion to Natural Family Planning, confusion about the morality of euthanasia, alcohol and drug addiction [Nos. 3.9.1 – 3.9.2]

The Church has to assist medical and health practitioners face these bio-ethical issues through moral formation. For this purpose, Asian bishops exhort our educational institutions to teach medical ethics, to train bio-ethicians, to establish Centers of Bioethics [No. 3.9.3 – 3.9.5].

Most importantly, they urge greater attention to the plight of the poor in rural areas, often deprived of adequate medical and health services. Like the Healing Christ who went out to the poor to heal and forgive, the laity in the world on health services are to reach out to the poor, farmers and workers, the landless and slum dwellers, so that, through their hands, the poor might feel the healing touch of God [Nos. 3.9.6 – 3.9.7].

### **Moving Ahead, Reflection in Faith [No. 4.0]**

#### **Communion with Jesus**

“The call today for us, Asian Christians, is to become a Church deeply committed to Jesus, the Liberator.” By this we become a communion of committed disciples, in communion with Jesus, and in communion with one another, clergy and laity. Together, our Church has to be rooted among our people, in communion and solidarity with them, so that we may become truly an Asian Church [Nos. 4.1 – 4.3].

#### **Communion of Liberation [No. 4.2]**

The Church’s missionary thrust of liberation in Asia is lived and carried out within the dynamism of communion and in the context of dynamic challenges facing the Church.

For this reason, we need to recognize that all the lay members of this ecclesial communion are endowed with human rights and responsibilities, as well as charisms and gifts, for liberation through the values of the Gospel [Nos. 4.2.1 – 4.2.2].

#### **A Messianic Mission [No. 4.3]**

We share in Christ’s Messianic Mission of redemption and liberation. Through Baptism, we are disciples of Christ. We share his vision and imbibe his character. We follow him in his messianic journey and nourish ourselves on the journey, listening to his word, recalling his memory through the sacraments [No. 4.3.1]. But we, as Church, have to renew the Church in the journey with Jesus. So far, we have in general been an “inward looking” Church, intent on self-preservation and expansion. We have to become “outward-looking,” “forward-looking” [No. 4.3.2].

## **Messianic Functions [No. 4.4]**

Through Baptism, we share in Christ's Messianic functions. We are a priestly, prophetic, royal people of faith. Our common priesthood of the faithful, which the ordained also share, empowers us to offer the trials and suffering of our daily lives while we undertake with Jesus the journey of redemption and liberation.

The prophetic or teaching function is shared by all the faithful, although it is exercised by the hierarchy at another level. We are witnesses to the saving truth of Christ and we proclaim it in word and deed. Our *sensus fidelium*, is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Body of Christ. It requires the leaders of the Church to listening attentively to the words of the faithful. Structures of consultation and participation for the faithful in pastoral decision-making are necessary [No. 4.4.3].

The royal function of Christ is at the root of our Church shepherds' power to rule and govern the flock, knowing that "to reign is to serve." But the power is also shared by all the faithful, as they minister to one another, serve and shepherd one another on the journey with Christ, the Chief Shepherd [No. 4.4.3 - 4.4.4].

## **Renewal of Structures: Communion, Collegiality, Co-Responsibility [No. 4.5]**

Vatican II enunciated the principles of Communion, Collegiality, and Co-Responsibility. They are the basis for the renewal of ecclesial structures that should recognize the communion of Laity, Clergy, and Religious. Among them is a communion of human worth and dignity, of charisms and gifts, placed at the service of the entire Body of Christ. Collegiality and Co-Responsibility recognize the charisms and gifts, competencies and skills of the Laity, and thus require consultation and participatory decision-making [Nos. 3.5.1 - 3.5.2].

## **Lay Apostolate [No. 4.6]**

By and large, the various apostolates of the laity remain priest-directed and inward-looking, or parish-oriented. Renewal will require a change towards a world or Kingdom-orientation, looking outward to social transformation. Lay Men and Women are urged to discern the needs of Church and society and, on their own initiative, create new apostolates to respond to those needs [Nos. 4.6.1 - 4.6.2].

## **Pastoral Concerns and Pastoral Action [No. 4.7]**

### **Clergy-Laity Relationship [No. 4.7.1]**

In the light of communion, collegiality and co-responsibility, a new clergy-laity relationship has to be forged, no longer one of domination and discrimination, but one of mutual collaboration based on mutual respect for charisms and gifts. Clergy-leadership should make the first step [Nos. 4.7.1.1 – 4.7.1.2].

### **Formation of and for the Laity [No. 4.7.2]**

Three levels of formation are necessary [No. 4.7.2.1]:

- General formation of all members of the Church, especially the laity, in the vision of Vatican II regarding their particular vocation and mission in the Church and in the world [No. 4.7.2.2].
- Particular formation for volunteers and selected lay leaders of our Churches through seminars, week-end courses and the like, courses that are suited to their lay character [No. 4.7.2.3].
- Formation to ministry is needed by the laity, so that they would be trained and formed for the work they are to do [No. 4.7.2.4].

### **Lay Spirituality [No. 4.8.1 – 4.8.11]**

In this section of the Final Statement, the Asian Bishops attempt to describe Lay Spirituality, which should provide the inner energy and inspiration for the vocation and mission of the Laity.

The rich young man asked Jesus, “What must I do to possess eternal life?” (Mt. 19:16). *Radical discipleship, the following of Jesus* - basically this was the answer of Jesus. Discipleship is at the heart of Lay spirituality.

Lay spirituality is Christocentric. It is communion with Jesus, the liberator of Asian peoples. It is to “live in the Spirit” of Jesus (see Rom. 8:1-17). As Jesus was Spirit-led, so must his disciples.

Such communion with Jesus is incarnated in the realities of Asian life, its divisions, and conflicts, is desire to fullness. Such immersion requires Spirit-guided discernment on what leads to life and what leads to death. Here is seen the Asian contemplative dimension which discerns the movement of God in mundane events [Nos. 4.8.1 – 4.8.3].

Lay spirituality is ecclesial, communitarian. It is lived in, and worked out from, the communion of the Church. Discipleship is grounded in the Sacraments that the laity receive, by which they and the whole Church share in Christ's suffering and glory in the Paschal Mystery [No. 4.8.4].

Lay Spirituality is biblical. It is through the word of God that we meet Jesus, the Word. It is the word of God that gathers us together. We listen to God's word in the Scriptures, in the Liturgy, in Church, in the persons we meet, in the events of daily life. We listen to God's word especially in the world and faces of the poor who remind us of God's preferential option for the poor. Our spirituality is one of incarnated "otherness" [No. 3.4.5].

Lay spirituality is sacramental, Eucharistic. The Eucharist, being the sacramental memorial of the salvific Paschal Mystery of Jesus, is the fount that nourishes our communion and discipleship. Our vocation and mission is to be the memory of Jesus, to be poor as he was, to thirst for justice, witness to and proclaim the Reign of God, transform our societies with the values of the Kingdom. To be the memory of Jesus is to immerse ourselves in the harsh realities of our Asian people and participate in Asia's struggle for fullness of life of life in God's Kingdom. For Christian spirituality is a disciple's journey to life in the Reign of God [Nos. 4.8.6 - 4.8.8].

### **Conclusion [Nos. 5.0 - 5.4]**

In this Assembly we have felt the Lord, walking together with us, as he did with the two disciples of Emmaus, opening to us the realities and hopes of Asia in the light of God's word. We repose our hope in Mary, our Mother and Guide on the journey. We commend to her the Church in Asia. May God's kingdom come!

**FABC V, Bandung, Indonesia - 17<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> July 1990**

## **The Emerging Challenges to the Church in Asia in the 1990's: A Call to Respond**

### **Introduction [No. 1.0]**

We, Asian Bishops, gather together in Bandung, where the Non-Aligned Movement was born 35 years ago as a Third Force between the first world of Capitalism and the second world of Communism. The Berlin Wall has just collapsed, ushering a new era. "We tried to

see the new way of being and becoming in Asia and also the spirituality which must inform it" [Nos. 1.1 - 1.7].

## **Challenges and Hopes [No. 2.0]**

### **The Challenge of Ferment and Change in Asia [No. 2.1]**

Dramatic changes have taken place in the world, new hope for Eastern Europe and South Africa, democracy-movements in Asia, the collapse of many nation-states that represented colonial powers, widespread ethnic conflicts, the growing interdependence of nations, the growth of "statism," that imposes artificial harmony through oppressive political power, militant fundamentalism, the seizing of political power by a dominant ethnic majority or by a powerful ethnic minority. A process of modernization is taking place that bring in secularism, materialism, and consumerism. All these extraordinary developments are taking place and are impacting our Asian communities [Nos. 2.1.1 - 2.1.6].

### **The Challenge of Continuing Injustice [No. 2.2]**

In Asia there remains the continuing reality of injustice, including structural injustice: massive poverty, lack of access to natural resources, destruction of the natural habitat of people through environmental exploitation, militarization that deprives the poor of funds for development, traditional discrimination against women, women and child-prostitution because of exploitative tourism, poverty-driven search for work in urban areas and foreign lands, graft and corruption, denial of the right to life through abortion, child labor (even bonded labor), cultural imperialism where the values of the majority or those of controlling minorities are imposed, discrimination because of religion, gender, or social class, imprisonment of protestors against human rights violation [Nos. 2.2.1 - 2.2.3].

### **Hope at the Crossroads [No. 2.3]**

But there is a new consciousness for change is emerging, in the new movements for democracy, participation, and human rights; in the growing sense of solidarity. There is the great promise of movements: ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, ecological, of women and youth movements. They demonstrate the striving of different faiths and civil groups for solidarity and an inclusive community [Nos. 2.3.1 - 2.3.3].

There are great signs of hope in the convergence of different religious and contemplative traditions in Asia, the cradle of the world's major religions. There is, too, "a theology and spirituality of creation in the ecological movement that sees creation as the handiwork and place of the Divine Presence." The great desire for community is seen in the growth of BEC's, of prayer groups, of assemblies that gather to defend human rights. They are reactions to the breakdown of the traditional community. "In cities, the caste system is gradually weakening" [Nos. 2.3.4 - 2.3.8].

In all the ferment, we see the stirrings of the Holy Spirit, challenging and hope-giving.

### **The Evangelizing Mission of the Church in Contemporary Asia [No. 3.0].**

#### **A Renewal of the Sense of Mission [No. 3.1]**

The renewal of the sense of mission begins with the renewal of our faith in Jesus. He is God's Son sent on mission. He became one of us and went about doing good, healing those in the power of evil, and preached the Good News of the Kingdom by word and deed. Lifted up from the earth on the Cross, he draws all things to himself, through the Church and through other ways unknown to us, and planted through his Spirit "the seeds of the word," found in cultures and in other religious traditions.

Our mission continues that of Jesus. It involves being with the people, responding to their needs. Mission involves dialogue with Asia's poor, with Asia's cultures and religious traditions.

Renewal of mission involves a deepening of our motivation for mission. We evangelize because we are profoundly grateful to God for his abundant gifts. A personal experience of God's love is imperative to renew our motivation.

We evangelize because it is a mandate. Jesus sent us to go forth and make disciples of all nations. We evangelize because we believe in Jesus. We are his disciples. Our faith is to be shared. Mission is our vocation. We believe because we are members of his Church which is missionary by nature, the result of the missions of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit. We evangelize because our Asian world needs the values of the Kingdom of justice, peace, joy and love for integral liberation [Nos. 3.2.1 - 3.2.6].

The acting subject of mission is *the local Church*, the local members of the Church. It is the local Church that is in touch with local cultures and religious traditions, with the needs of people. In this light, we become aware of the imperative of forming *fully participatory communities*, that accept their mission with zeal and dedication [No. 3.3.0 - 3.3.3].

### **The Mode of Mission in Asia [No. 4.0].**

For the Church in Asia, “the proclamation of Jesus Christ is the center and primary element of evangelization” (Statement of the FABC All-Asia Conference on Evangelization, Suwon, South Korea, 24-31 August 1988).

But proclamation in Asia is first of all by the witness of Christian life and deeds. “Proclamation through dialogue and deeds - this is the first call to the Churches in Asia” [No. 4.1]. The Church seeks to dialogue with the cultures, the poor, and religious traditions in Asia in order to serve. But when God opens the doors for us, “we shall not be timid to proclaim the Lord Jesus explicitly as the Savior and the answer to the fundamental questions of human existence” [Nos. 4.2 - 4.3]. Our preaching has to be followed through with *effective actions* that would assist in dismantling oppressive structures of sin, in collaboration with peoples of other faiths [Nos. 4.4 - 4.6].

### **The Role of the Lay Faithful [No. 5.0]**

In the midst of Asian societies, our lay people are the primary evangelizers of cultures and of the whole fabric of society. They are to be leaven in Asian society. This calls for the education and formation of the laity in the social teachings of the Church, formation to justice and compassion [Nos. 5.1 - 5.2].

### **The Face of the Church in Asia [No. 6.0].**

What should the Church be, in an Asian society, marked by massive poverty, injustice and divisions, in the diversity of its cultures and religious traditions? The Church has to be a *companion and partner* of Asian peoples in their struggles for a better life. She must be a *servant of the Lord and of humanity*, ministering to Asian peoples in the common journey to the Reign of God and welcoming all those who are led to her fold by the Spirit. Such service is with *compassion*, to be with the poor and powerless, the exploited and deprived, in Asian societies. As a compassionate companion and servant of Asian

humanity especially of the poor, the Church's proclamation of Jesus as Savior and Liberator becomes credible [Nos. 6.2 – 6.6].

### **Living in the Spirit: Pastoral Response [No. 7]**

Our pastoral responses to the challenges of Asia result from: dialoguing with the realities of Asia; *discerning* the movement of the Spirit in Asia; *translating into deeds* what we discern through the Spirit [No. 7.1].

Among the pastoral imperatives are [No. 7.2]

- Keeping Christ at the center of our proclamation
- Empowering people for mission
- Credibility in lifestyle

Among the specific pastoral directions [Nos. 7.3.1 – 7.3.3]

- Formation of the laity for mission
- Inculturation of the Liturgy
- Setting up Biblical Apostolate in every episcopal conference
- Social and cultural analyses to be subjected to faith reflection
- The social doctrine of the Church to be part of formation for everyone
- The formation of faith-inspired social conscience
- Justice and Peace programs of episcopal conferences to help form values for peace and active non-violence
- Networking with world episcopal conferences in issues of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation
- Ways of prayer to be integrated into catechetical programs, and relevant to youth
- Religious Congregations to be prophetic leaders in living the Gospel

### **A New Way of Being Church in the 1990's**

#### **Response at the Level of Being [No. 8.0]**

Some major dimensions of a "new way of being Church" (see 1977 Colloquium on Ministries and 1982 FABC III):

- A Communion of small basic communities

- A Participatory Church
- A credible Witness of Christ in dialogue of life with peoples of other faiths
- A prophetic sign of the Kingdom that is “now and not yet” [Nos. 8.1.1 – 8.1.4]

### **A Spirituality for Our Time [No. 9.0]**

#### **Response at the Focal Point of the Spirit (see 1978 FABC II and 1986 FABC IV)**

- Authentic spirituality consists in authentic discipleship, the following of Jesus-in-mission.
- Authentic spirituality is the credible living of and witnessing to prayer, a profound sense of the holy, simplicity, renunciation, humility, solidarity with the poor – values that are dear to Asian cultures – a spirituality of the *anawim*, of the powerless
- A return to the sources of Christian life, the Scriptures, the living tradition of the Church, the spiritual wisdom of our ancestors in the faith – all these in dynamic interaction with the realities of Asia
- A spirituality of harmony with God, with people, with creation.
- In its depth, lived in Asia, such spirituality is already a powerful proclamation of the Lord Jesus [Nos. 9.1 – 9.7].

**Conclusion** – We began with pastoral imperatives and deeds, we end up with the response of spirituality. This is our conviction: Being has the primacy over doing. “The Church has to become what it really is for the doing to begin.” Mary is our guide for the *Way* [Nos. 10.1 - 10.2]

### **FABC VI, Manila, Philippines - 10th to -19th January 1995**

#### **Christian Discipleship in Asia Today: Service to Life**

*{Fr. Luis Antonio Tagle, now the Cardinal Papal Legate to our FABC at 50, did the theological dimensions of this Final Statement}.*

#### **Introduction**

We give thanks to the Lord for this most significant year, 1995:

- 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Pope Paul VI's visit and his address to the Asian Bishops Assembly in Manila in 1970;
- 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Radio Veritas Asia;
- 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Archdiocese of Manila and its suffragan dioceses: Nueva Segovia, Nueva Caceres, and Cebu;
- 10<sup>th</sup> World Youth Day in Manila;
- Visit of Pope John Paul II to Manila.

The Bishops take note of the absence of Bishop-Delegates from China, whose visas were denied.

### **20 Years of FABC Commitment to Life**

From FABC I to FABC V, the Asian Bishops constantly defended and promoted the right to a dignified human life for every Asian, especially for the poor. The over-arching objective has been the building of a "new way of being Church." We still have a long way to go.

Through prayer, dialogue, discernment, and deeds, the Asian church has collaborated with peoples of other faiths in God's own work of leading the Asian peoples towards fullness of life. Thus, the theme of FABC VI on *service to life*: Christian Discipleship – Service to Life [Nos. 3-5].

### **A Vision of Life Amid Asian Realities**

Asia's vision of life is set among the many realities of Asia – the subject of many FABC social and cultural analyses in the light of faith. Many of these realities degrade and dehumanize, and even destroy lives, the lives of the poor and the displaced, victims of terrorism and religious extremism, the lives of women and children, of migrant workers, refugees, and IP's. We say "No" to these death-dealing forces. On the other hand, we affirm the many signs of hope and the striving for a better life among the youth, multi-faith groups, small Christian communities. We say, "Yes" to the many efforts of ecological movements to preserve the integrity of creation [Nos. 6-9].

From such realities, a vision of life emerges. It is a vision of:

- Communion of life among various cultures and religious traditions

- A holistic life, the fruit of authentic integral development of every Asian
- A life of integrity, solidarity, and compassion
- A life of justice and freedom, of mutual respect and peace, of friendship and harmony

At the heart of our vision is the Asian sense of mystery and transcendence, of deep interiority, that discerns the sacred in each person and in all things.

Such is the broad sketch of our vision of Asian life. How can we, as Church, as disciples of Christ, contribute to the achieving of this vision? [Nos. 10-11].

### **To Life in the Footsteps of Jesus**

The Spirit-filled and Spirit driven Jesus expressed his mission in terms of life.

“I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly” (Jn. 10:10). It is his own life that he shares, a life that consists in:

- Communion with *Abba*, his Father, the center of his life and love
- A Liberating and Re-Creating Communion among neighbors. Jesus makes his own the aspirations of Israel for life. He incarnates *Abba's* life-giving love, restores and renews our communion with God and our neighbor.
- Death for the life of the many. On the cross, memorialized sacramentally in the Eucharist, he suffers death and restores life to all.
- By rising from the dead, Jesus conquers death. He is the life. To Asia, God offers the life of the Risen Christ, the Word and the Bread of life.
- The gift of the Spirit of Life. Jesus promised to give his Spirit and he fulfilled the promise. We are imbued with the Spirit, “the Lord, the Giver of life” [Nos. 12-13]

### **Discipleship in the Spirit of Life [No. 14].**

The Spirit calls us to follow in Asia the footsteps of Jesus and his self-giving love, at the service of full life, to live in the Risen Christ, “live

and walk by his Spirit" (Gal.5:25). The Spirit of Jesus sanctifies and unifies, forms communities, and impels us to mission.

In brief, to achieve our vision of life, we need nothing more and nothing less than by being faithful disciples of Jesus and his Spirit. Mary, the Mother of Life, who, like his Son, was Spirit-filled, is our guide in following Jesus to full life.

### **Major Pastoral Areas of Discipleship [Nos. 15 - 16].**

We face five major pastoral concerns:

- The *Asian Family*, facing bio-ethical issues, a contraceptive mentality and bombarded by secular and materialistic values
- The complex issue of *woman and the girl-child*, the defense and promotion of their God-given dignity and fundamental human rights
- The empowerment of the *youth*, the issues that confront them, their participation in Church and society.
- *Ecology*, the continuing massive destruction of our environment, water, forests, plants, animal life, air – where the support system of life is sacrificed for short-term economic and development gains.
- *The displaced*, political and economic refugees, migrant workers -- marginalized and exploited.

FABC VI ends with a prayer to Jesus, the Holy Spirit and Mary for Service to Life [No. 17].

## **FABC VII, Samphran, Thailand - 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2000**

### **A Renewed Church in Asia: A Mission of Love and Service.**

#### **Introduction**

We are at the threshold of a new century and a new millennium. We gather in this Year of Jubilee. We give thanks for the Special Assembly for Asia and Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia*.

But while we note the many positive developments in the Asian milieu, we also observe the continuing dark shadows of the Asian landscape, the impact of globalization without juridical and moral

norms on the poor, the poverty of millions of Asians, the degradation of women, the deprivation of IP's, disharmony of cultures, religious extremism, etc.

The Spirit of the Lord calls us to renewal, to a renewed mission of love and service.

## **PART I, RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH IN ASIA - VISION, MEANING**

### **A. A Vision of Renewal**

Our vision of Church renewal consists of 8 movements, spanning the past 30 years of FABC history:

- A movement toward a *Church of the Poor and a Church of the Young*
- A movement toward a “*truly local Church*”
- A movement toward *deep interiority*
- A movement toward an *authentic community of faith*
- A movement toward *integral evangelization and a renewed sense of mission*
- A movement toward the *empowerment of lay men and women*
- A movement toward active *involvement in generating and serving life*
- A movement toward *the triple dialogue* - with the poor, the cultures, and the various religious faiths in Asia

### **B. The Meaning of Renewal**

Renewal is both God's gift and our task. The Spirit is already renewing Asia in his own mysterious ways. He is renewing our Church, always in need of renewal, and its members constantly needing purification. We have fallen short of our vocation and mission to love and serve. Our Renewal means:

- Discarding the “old self”
- Being formed in holistic spirituality
- Taking up our mission with deeper commitment and greater vigor
- Creatively renewing our religious traditions

- Being able to tell the story of Jesus with more conviction and credibility to our Asian brothers and sisters and to announce his gift of new life
- The renewal of our ecclesial structures and the empowerment of the laity, especially the poor, to participate more widely in the Church
- A movement of the levels of the Church, from above and from below, in a communion of participation
- An enhancement of the quality of Church membership, the quality of our witnessing as disciples of the Lord

It is through renewal that we are able to discern the movement of the Spirit in Asian societies and the ways by which we can effectively proclaim the Good News of Jesus.

## **PART II, ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN THE MISSION OF LOVE AND SERVICE**

- A. **Globalization** - Many Asian nations are unable to hold their own in the global economy and make even poorer.
- B. **Fundamentalism** - A form of fundamentalism, *religious extremism* in some parts of Asia threatens the harmony of various religious traditions and causes conflict among cultures
- C. **Political Situation** - Centralization of power, corruption, the dominant political role of vested interests, the marriage of economic and political power, the subservience of governments to the policies of the world's economic organizations, lack of participation by the poor in political affairs -- all these challenge the Church's mission of love and service
- D. **Ecology** - much has already said about ecological degradation and destruction
- E. **Militarization** - The Church proclamation of peace in the Kingdom of God faces the challenges of the arms trade, land mines, nuclear proliferation, the rise of military states, internal armed conflicts.

## **PART III, THE CHALLENGES OF DISCERNING THE ASIAN WAY**

For the past 30 years the Church in Asia has been developing its “being Asian,” its rootedness in the cultures and religious traditions of its peoples, especially of the poor, its *new way of being Church*, and its new mode of evangelization by way of triple dialogue.

Pope John Paul II’s captures this *being Asian* remarkably. “The innate spiritual insight and moral wisdom in the Asian soul” is the “the core around which a growing sense of ‘being Asian’ is built.” It is in complementarity and harmony that the Church can communicate the Gospel, “which is both faithful to her own Tradition and to the Asian soul” (*Ecclesia in Asia*, 6).

### **A. Pastoral Concerns**

Once again, the Asian Bishops point out, now familiar, major pastoral concerns:

- The Youth
- The Family
- Indigenous Peoples
- Migrants

### **B. The Thrust of Our Response**

Our response to the challenges and issues will have to be holistic and communitarian, not the work of one sector of the Church, but the mission and work of all in mutuality, in co-responsibility and collaboration, characterized by our triple dialogue. More than specific pastoral and social programs, our most effective response would be our witnessing to Jesus and to his love and service by our deeds and lives.

### **C. New Pastoral Directions**

- The collaborative formation of all sectors of the Church in the over-all social, religious, political and economic milieu of the local Church.
- Formation in *being Asian* and in the *new way of being Church*
- Foremost, is formation to spirituality, in the moral values and virtues that Asians cherish.
- The use of mass media for evangelization.

- Faith formation of Catholic professionals in their various professions, health, education, business, politics, labor, etc.
- Advocacy in justice and peace issues, with the use of the Social Teachings of the Church
- Exchange of personnel, collaboration of local churches for the mission of love and service.

**Conclusion** – Our joy in the Church’s mission of love and service is the sharing of the gift we have received, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

## **FABC VIII, Daejeon, South Korea - 17<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2004**

### **The Asian Family Toward a Culture of Integral Life**

#### **Introduction – The Hope of the Asian Family for Life in Fullness**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly is set with the 4<sup>th</sup> World Meeting of Families in Manila in 2003 as the backdrop. The Asian family is the receptacle of cultures and traditions, of poverty and misery, as well as the promise and hope for full life. Our hope rests on the Lord Jesus. We reflect on the impact of Asia’s social, political, cultural, religious ferment on the Asian family [Nos. 1-5].

#### **PART I, PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO THE FAMILY IN ASIA**

As in all past Plenary Assemblies, FABC VIII, uses the Pastoral Spiral in its process of reflection: Social and Cultural Analysis --- Faith Reflection --- Pastoral Decisions.

The Family in Asia faces challenges already described in past Assemblies, with a number of new challenges (in *Italics*):

- *Family traditions and values*
- *A Variety of family forms*
- Poverty and Economic Globalization
- The Poverty of Rural and Urban Families
- The Phenomenon of Asian Migration
- Landlessness and Loss of Ancestral Domain
- *Cultural Globalization*
- *Patriarchy*

- Woman and the Girl-Child, Child-Labor
- Youth
- Population Programs, Bio-Genetic Issues, HIV/ Aids
- Families in the Midst of Conflicts
- *The Family in Basic Ecclesial / Human Communities*

## **PART II, THEOLOGICAL-PASTORAL REFLECTION**

### **A and B, A Culture of Integral Life**

The above multitude of threats confronting the Asian family has to be met with a faith-response. Our religious faith considers life holistically as a gift of God, a sharing in God's life, endowed with dignity and eternal destiny, life today in active interaction with today's struggle for life in fullness. It says no to everything dehumanizes, exploits and oppresses human life [Nos. 50-51].

#### **1. Covenant Love and Life, Communion and Solidarity**

God's love as the Creator and Giver of all life is the basis of a culture of integral life. Formed in the image of the Triune God, human life, no matter how poor it may be, is God's gift. The human person is given the stewardship of creation, that is in solidarity with one another. At the pinnacle of creation is Christ, "the first-born of all creation," by whom, through whom and for whom all things are created. By his blood shed on the Cross he reconciled all broken relationships (see Col. 1:15-20) [Nos. 52-53].

The Old Testament describes the Covenant relationship between God and the Chosen People in terms of intimate family love, between father-mother and child (Hos. 11:3-4; Is. 66:13), and between bride and bridegroom (Hos. 2:16, 19-20). Limitless patience, kindness, constant call to renewal, mercy and forgiveness characterize God's love for his Covenant people. He required his to love and serve others in return, especially the poor, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger [Nos. 54-56].

#### **2. Christ the Life: Shared Love, Communion and Solidarity**

Christ revealed himself as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (Jn. 14:6) His mission was that we "might have life and have it abundantly" (Jn. 10:10), and he fulfilled it by the sacrifice of his own life on the Cross. His life for ours. Again and again he related fullness of life to the Reign of God, a life for the lowly and the humble (see the

Beatitudes, Mt. 5:3-10). At Baptism this new life begins in us. At the Eucharist, he is the “Bread of Life,” eaten for eternal life [Nos. 57-58].

### **3. Covenant Life in the Spirit: The Family of God, the Church**

Covenant Life brings about a new commandment, the commandment to love one another, the sign of authentic discipleship (Jn. 13:34-35). When Jesus gives up his Spirit to the Father, by the same act he bequeaths his Spirit to the Church. A new community is born of the Spirit, a “new creation,” the new Family of God (Jn. 19:30; see Xavier Leon-Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 1982). Hence, life in Christ is life in the Spirit [No. 59].

Paul relates Spirit-life to the Reign of God. “...It is not eating and drinking that make the Kingdom of God, but the saving justice, the peace and the joy brought by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). He summarizes our covenant with God in terms of a mission of love and service: “You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only use your freedom... through love to become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Gal. 5:13-14) [Nos. 59-62].

### **C. The Family: Sanctuary of Love and Life, Covenant and Communion**

The of life of the Church is both God’s gift and our task. It is life to be spent for the building of God’s Reign. Pope John Paul II’s words become even more striking and significant as applied to our Asian context: “In the face of the so-called culture of death, *the family is the heart of the culture of life*” (*Centessimus Annus*, 39).

#### **1. Jesus’ Experience of Family with Mary and Joseph.**

Jesus was born and reared in a seemingly ordinary Jewish family, whose fundamental religiosity arose from the home. There Jesus experienced the extraordinary love of father and mother. There he learned the spiritual values of Judaism, a passion for God and an intense concern for others. Up to the very end, Jesus’ filial love was palpable. He entrusts the human person he loves most to the beloved disciple to consider as his own mother (Jn. 19:26-27). The way of the Holy Family is the way of every Christian family [Nos. 64-65].

#### **2. Marriage: a Sacred Covenant between Man and Woman**

Gen. 2:18-25 shows that marriage is the first dimension of the call for man and woman not only to live “side by side,” but also to exist

mutually “one for the other.” Marriage, from which the family springs, is a covenant of mutual love and self-giving for husband and wife, by which they vow together to hold on to each other faithfully, in the total reciprocity of self-giving, until death [No. 66].

### **3. A Sacrament of Christ’s Love**

Communion of husband and wife in marriage is a sacrament of Christ’s own love for his Spouse, the Church. Christ’s loving communion with the Church is also the model for conjugal communion. It indicates the divine presence in married life. That Paul would admonish a husband to love his wife, “Christ loves his Church,” is truly revolutionary in a patriarchal society. The husband must “respect” his wife. The Hebrew word means, “to look deeply into the true good” of his wife, a search into everything that is for the good of the person one loves. The mutual love between husband and wife spills over to the rest of the family and is marked by patience, kindness, respect, forgiveness and mercy - enduring in all times of sorrow and joy [Nos. 67-69].

### **4. Covenant Love in Marriage: Parenthood and Children**

From the very beginning, God mandated the sacrament of marriage to be indissoluble and radically open to the procreation of children, of any children, fully healthy or not, boy or girl. Christian couples have to work together to educate and form their children in their religious faith, giving concrete examples of the values necessary for growth to Christian maturity. The Christian family has to be a school of holiness and discipleship, where the children first experience the love and the presence of God. A family of deep religious faith is a sign of the Church and of the Reign of God.

### **5. Human Relationships in the Family and the Reign of God**

In inter-religious marriages, husbands and wives bring into the covenant of marriage the distinctive riches of their different beliefs, while they journey together with their children to the joy and peace of the Reign of God. Loving communion between spouses and children as they struggle together daily for a better life through suffering and joy makes communion, solidarity and family mission concrete [Nos. 73-74].

## **D. Vocation and Mission: “Family, Become What You Are”**

Marriage is a fundamental orientation to the Reign of God. Husband and wife are called as all Christians to announce the Reign of God to others. Pope John Paul II summarized the family mission thus: “Family. Become what you are!” Fundamentally rooted in Baptism and Confirmation, the call to mission for the family has a sacramental rootedness in the Sacrament of Marriage. The couples’ experience of God in and through their married love calls them to mission. They seek the Reign of God together. They announce to others their experience of God’s reign of peace and joy in their marriage. They teach their children to “seek first the Kingdom of God.” In their daily life, they minister to one another, evangelize one another. It is “in the family where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*. 71) [Nos. 75-76].

“Family, become what you are!” This is a call for mission *ad intra* within the family and for mission *ad extra* (outside the family). The mutual love and concern in the family, its communion, solidarity and harmony concretize the words of Jesus, “It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognize you as my disciples” (Jn. 13:35). Mission *ad extra* calls the family as a domestic Church to help heal the brokenness of other families and to extend the Reign of God to the social, cultural, religious and political milieu of its neighbors [Nos. 77-80].

This it does in the following issues:

- Economic and cultural globalization [Nos. 81-87]
- Social Communication and Social Transformation [Nos. 88-93]
- Inter-Religious Dialogue [Nos. 94-97]
- Basic Ecclesial / Human Communities [Nos. 98-99]

### **The Family as Prophetic**

By its very nature as a Communion of Love and Life, the family is prophetic. It announces that the Reign of God is here, though not yet fully. It is countersign to the brokenness of families and communities and calls them to profound renewal. It is also a prophet within the Church, calling for its non-participatory structures to renewal and its shepherds to greater fidelity and dedication, to deeper communion with God [Nos. 100-101].

## **E. Family Spirituality toward a Culture of Integral Life**

That the family may become what it really is, a communion of love and life, striving toward a culture of integral life, it has to be formed in its inner being with a spirituality, a spirituality of communion, of discipleship, a Eucharistic spirituality [No. 102].

### **1. Spirituality of Communion**

Marital spirituality is founded on a communion of life with God. Communion with God bears fruit in the communion of love between the spouses. It grows and matures as it is tested in the crucible of daily life, in its trials and sorrows as well as in its triumphs and joys. Its communion of love reaches its peak in the singular joy of the conjugal act, the concrete total self-giving of love by both spouses. By this profoundly human moral act, they comprehend better God's nature as Self-Giving Love (*Agape*). As the family grows, so should the spirituality of communion develop as it extends the union of mind and heart to the children, the elderly, and to the extended family [Nos. 103-105].

### **2. Spirituality of Communion and the Way of the Ordinary**

It is in and through the ordinary routine of life that sanctification is attained through God's grace. From the perspective of faith, doing our ordinary responsibilities to the best of our ability as a following of the will of God bears the fruit of grace. It is what pleases God, brings deeper communion with God, forms family values, and helps achieve a culture of integral life [Nos. 106-108].

### **3. Formation of Conscience and the Grace of Marriage**

Conscience is God's voice in the "sanctuary of the heart." When every member of the family follows conscience, aided by moral norms, the family unites in love with God's own will. Since sin has disordered human freedom to choose what pleases God, God's grace is needed to direct it to the good. God's grace is needed conform freedom of conscience to the law of God. The formation of an upright conscience is, therefore, part of family spirituality. By instruction and by example, parents are to form the consciences of their children. Moreover, the Sacrament of Marriage has a special grace for husband and wife. Greater awareness of this faith-reality will help couples in their communion of love and life [Nos. 109-110].

#### **4. Prayer, the Paschal Mystery, and the Eucharist.**

Prayer in the family, for the family, and by the family is at the center of family spirituality. Prayer has to link the family's everyday experiences with the values of the Gospel. Regular devotions to the Saints, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, listening to the Word of God – these will help the family to be a faithful disciple of the Lord and help make them as practitioners of the culture of integral life. The Eucharist, the sacramental memorial of the Paschal Mystery, the one single source of our salvation, is the summit of family prayer. It is in the Eucharist that married couples discover the source of their communion of love and life. Pope John Paul II reminds us that “the Eucharist creates Communion and fosters Communion” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 40). The Asia Bishops suggest that it would be desirable to celebrate the Year of the Family and the Year of the Eucharist together in the year October 2004 to October 2005 [Nos. 111-114].

#### **PART III, PASTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FAMILY MINISTRY**

The Asian Bishops have a vision of Family Ministry [Nos. 115-116]. This vision is concretely expressed in their *General Program Directions / Orientation*:

- The Family as the Focal Point of Evangelization
- Faith Formation in the Family
- Family Ministry and Vocations
- A Family Ministry that forms and empowers
- A Family Ministry that Cares and Serves
- A Family Ministry that Promotes Social Transformation

The brief Message of the FABC VIII to the People of God in Asia and to all People of Good Will is appended to the Final Statement on the Family towards a Culture of Integral Life.

#### **FABC IX, Manila, Philippines - 10<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2009**

##### **Living The Eucharist in Asia**

*[Archbishop Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila, now the Cardinal Papal Legate to FABC at 50 was the principal drafter of this Final Statement]*

## **Introduction**

In the past 6 years, important Church documents on the Eucharist have been issued. The Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, in 2003, and the Apostolic Exhortation, *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, in 2004, both by Pope John Paul II. The latter document announced the celebration of the Year of the Eucharist from October 2004 to October 2005. To close the Year of the Eucharist, A Synod of Bishops assembled on the theme: "The Eucharist, the Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church." Upon Pope John Paul's holy death, Pope Benedict XVI wrote his Post-Synodal Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 2007. These are the resources that FABC IX on Living the Eucharist in Asia used.

## **General Asian Pastoral Context**

- Discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit in the developing realities of Asia, both lights and shadows.

### **A. Theological-Pastoral Flow of the Eucharistic Celebration**

#### **1. The Eucharist: The Life of Jesus in our Life and Communion**

- The Eucharist is the very life of Jesus given to us to become our life. He is the Bread of Life, the gift of the Father to us with the *mission* to give eternal life.
- In eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood, a communion of life with the Triune God is forged, new Covenant is sealed with his Blood.
- The Eucharist is a new experience of dialogue of life and love.
- The Eucharistic Liturgy is the liturgical form of this dialogue of love and life.
- The Eucharist is not only the sacramental memorial of the Paschal Mystery. It is the sacramental memorial of his whole life of sacrificial self-giving love. "His life was Eucharist."

### **B. INTRODUCTORY RITES**

#### **1. Centered as a Family in God: A Countersign to Division**

- At the very beginning of the Liturgy, God calls us to gather together *in his name*.

- We come from different cultures, educational and ethnic backgrounds, social and economic classes, states of life. God's call makes us one community, *ecclesia*, a counter sign to divisions.
- We share the same dignity as children of God. We are brothers and sisters.
- God is the host of the meal. We get a "taste" of the Reign of God.

### **Pastoral Implications**

- Gathered as one community in the Eucharist, we are to strengthen community life among various cultures and different faiths. We are to be welcoming families and communities, ready share food for the poor and the hungry, no matter what creed or caste or class.
- We need to support the building of communities, BEC's, Basic Human Communities, ecclesial movements. Our homes should welcome the poor and the hungry. Priests should develop a sense of community among their flock. The internationality of religious congregations make it possible for them to witness to the power of the Holy Spirit people from different races, tongues, and cultures.

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

- The Church is the Icon of the Trinity. The People of God is the Body of Christ. Yet still, we are aware that we are community of sinners.
- So we come to the Father and before our brothers and sisters. In humility, we acknowledge our sinfulness and beg for mercy and prayers.

### **Pastoral Implications**

- We deplore the prejudices and discrimination that afflict our peoples, while we will foster the Asian values of humility, non-violence, patience and harmony that contribute to peace.

- For the many dark shadows of Asian life, Beg the Lord for forgiveness. For its rich resources of peoples, cultures, faiths, and ecology, we glorify the Lord. “Glory to God in the highest and peace to all people of good will!”

## C. LITURGY OF THE WORD

### 1. Listening to the Story of Jesus

- Recall “Telling the Story of Jesus” as a mode of Evangelization, The Asian Mission Congress, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2006.
- The Bread of Life is received from the Table of the Word and the Table of the Bread. It first involves listening to the Word of God in the Scriptures.
- From hearing the Word, comes Faith (cf. Rom.10:17). Faith comes listening to and accepting the Word of God. It is equated with *obeying* God. It transforms our life. It becomes our life.

### Pastoral Implications

- Asians revere their sacred scriptures as guides to life. They listen and adhere to their sacred word.
- But we also believe that we must be true to our word. Words should evoke trust and foster relationships.
- The Word of God is our guide to a life of faith and love. It fosters our bond of love with God and with others.
- Formation in faith should inculcate a spirituality of listening to God’s word that leads to actions for justice and peace.
- The homily transmits the meaning and practical application of God’s word. It should be well prepared as the priest’s own experience of the Word and of his faith. The homily is the witness of his life.
- Lectors should also be formed in faith and in the spirituality of listening to God’s word.

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

- The yearly cycle of the Scripture readings is meant to kindle and rekindle the faith. The Word of God becomes part of our living memory. We become part of the Church's living memory of Jesus, the Word of God, and his saving action.
- By being part of that memory, we are united by the Spirit to the Eucharistic communities of the past that listened and celebrated in faith.
- Our common memory of the good things that the Word of God has done strengthens communion in God's family.

### **Pastoral Implications**

- Asians love to tell stories and epics especially about family. This reservoir of memory serves to renew family bonds and builds relationships with others.
- Deplorable is the fact that common meals have become less common due to pressures of modern work. Verbal family communication has been disrupted by digital technology.
- We need to make time to listen to the Word and retell the stories of his saving acts.
- We remember and pray for those who have been erased by human memory, those we no longer remember, and those who no longer remember. They are forever in God's living memory,

## **3. God's Authorship of the Word**

- Human authors, like the prophets, Paul, Mark, Matthew, wrote the Word of God in their own styles at certain periods of time and in different circumstances.
- But it was the Holy Spirit that inspired them. God is the author of his own word. This is why we say at the end of a Reading: "The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God."

#### **4. Suppressing Stories in Asia**

- Our faith grows as we listen to God's word in the stories of our people.
- Yet there are many stories that are being suppressed. Stories of communities and individuals fighting for freedom, for justice and truth. They are suppressed by dictatorial regimes, by political threats, by those whose self-interests are threatened, by suspicions of ideology, by the revising of history.
- We need to retrieve those suppressed stories. They are part of God's memory. They should be included in our common memory.

#### **5. A Joyful but Risky Act (the Profession of Faith)**

- The Creed, our profession of Faith, is our response to the word of God. "I/We believe." The Creed is the fruit of prayerful reflection on the Word of God, the development of our understanding of the nature of the Triune God and their saving action. They in the are kept and treasured in the Church's living memory.
- Yet to publicly profess our faith is extremely risky in some Asian countries, where religious extremism and religious intolerance actively operate. The profession of one's faith, other than their own, can, and often does, lead to imprisonment, persecution and even death.
- We remember the multitude of Asian martyrs through the centuries, Popes from what is now called the Middle East, priests, religious, lay men and women, missionaries, who remained faithful to Christ in the face of death.
- Formation in faith should include the memory of these courageous witnesses of faith, as well as the lives of our other Asian Saints.
- Parents should be the first teachers of the faith for their children.

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

- Our faith is in a God who listens to the cry of his people. We trust in him to answer our needs. He is the Giver of all good gifts. Our prayers acknowledge God's presence in our midst. And our stance is one of humble submission to God's will and wisdom.
- The Prayers of the Faithful express our communion with creation, with humanity, with those who have no one to pray for them.

### **Pastoral Implications**

- Our faith, our Church, should impel us to listen to the silent cry of the voiceless, the muted and suppressed voices, the voices of the weak. We become their voice, bringing their needs to the presence of God.
- We also need to bring their voice to the those in power who have suppressed their voices. This is an imperative of communion and authentic discipleship.

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

- The gifts of bread and wine express God's care for our needs. They are the fruits of the earth that God created. They are the work of our hands that cultivated God's gift of earth. There is a unity between the table of the word and the table of the bread. There is communion of God, creation, and humanity in the offering of the gifts.
- Bread and wine will become the bread of life and our spiritual drink, the Flesh and Blood of our Lord, his Paschal Mystery of salvation. That is the sure and undenied hope of our faith.

### **Pastoral Implications**

- The offering of bread and wine reminds of the giftedness of creation, of created goods. We face today sheer materialism that consider created goods as simple commodities for the needs of daily life, subject to a culture of "commodification," and consumerism. Creation and labor cry out to God for redemption.

- Our gifts of bread and wine remind us of the millions of Asia's children, poor and malnourished. They remind us of the widening gap of rich and poor, of the greedy and selfish rich in the stories of Jesus, of the prophetic social messages of the prophets.
- Formation in the stewardship of creation should be done at all levels of the Church.
- And we do hope. The Eucharist restores our belief in the giftedness, the divine finality, of the fruits of the earth and the work of human hands. In the Eucharist, creation and labor will be transformed into gifts pleasing to God.

#### **D. THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

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

- The Preface and the hymn to the Triune God usher in the Eucharistic Prayer.
- The Institution Narrative is a memory of sinful betrayal. "On the night he was betrayed, he took bread." The Eucharist invites us to remember our sinful past, our repeated betrayals of Jesus by sin. The Holy Spirit reaches into our past to heal.
- Most importantly we listen again to the transforming words of Jesus. He says the words changing the substance of bread and wine into his own body and blood. The Body is broken for us, and the Blood is shed for us. This is the ultimate of self-giving sacrifice, of love and service. He invites us to do the very same self-giving sacrifice in our lives.
- The service that he does, the evening before he died, is dramatized by his washing of the Apostles' feet in the Last Supper Narrative of Jn. 13. The Lord acts as a servant to wash the feet of his followers - a Eucharistic act of loving and serving.

#### **Pastoral Implications**

- Eucharist calls us to the healing of painful memories of sin and betrayal.

- The Eucharist likewise invites Asian nations, majority and minority ethnic groups, that have sometimes resorted to armed conflict to resolve perceived injustices. The invitation of the Eucharist is for reconciliation and peace, for mutual respect, understanding and service, for friendship.
- The communion that Asian Bishops have enjoyed in their assemblies since 1970 demonstrates that unity and harmony among different races, cultures, tongues is not only possible but is already a reality.
- The Church in Asia can be a catalyst to transform division and hostility into unity and friendship.
- The Church's religious and educational institutions, enjoying much prestige in Asia, should work toward this objective.

## **2. Communion with the Living and the Dead**

- We invoke the Holy Spirit twice in the Eucharistic Prayer. The first, is over the bread and wine so that they will become the Body and Blood of Christ. The second, when we call on the Spirit to transform the community, "nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ," into "one body, one spirit in Christ."
- The communion, generated by the Holy Spirit, forms one local community and brings into communion with the Universal Church. The mention of the names of the Holy Father and the Local Ordinary is a sign of universal communion.
- Communion extends to the living and the dead, the Communion of the Saints, those already in heaven and those still on earth.

### **Pastoral Implications**

- By remembering the departed, we pray that they may, on the last day, share in the glory of the Risen Christ in heaven.
- In remembering the dead, we should include not only our relatives and friends, but also the many victims of

violence, injustice, natural and man-made disasters, abortions, etc.

We end the Eucharistic prayer, by entrusting everything that we have said and done to the Triune God, to him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

## **E. THE RITE OF COMMUNION**

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

- The Lord's Prayer and the exchange of peace are preludes to the climax of the Rite of Communion, the receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion.
- Jesus told us to address God in the same he did, *Abba*. His own address of the Father was a scandal to his fellow Jews. God must not to be addressed in such a familiar, irreverential way. But they did not understand that he is the Son of the Father. He and the Father are one, in a communion of self-giving love, called the Holy Spirit.
- And so we dare to say, *Abba*, our Father. We pray that his Kingdom may continually be realized in history, and that his divine will may be done on earth.
- We pray he may provide us with our daily sustenance. In a sacramental way, our daily bread is a sign of Jesus, the Bread of Life, whom we shall receive at Holy Communion.
- We pray that God will forgive as our sins. And surely in hope, we say, for some, the most difficult words, "as we forgive those who trespass against us."
- We pray that we may delivered from all evil.
- The exchange of peace that we give each other is a sign of God's love that binds us together in a communion of love and service. God give us peace. We share that peace with each other.

## **Pastoral Implications**

- God, indeed, is our Father. He is the Father of all humanity, that God loves inclusively. We cannot call God, *Abba*, unless we love all his children. Our receiving the Body of Christ judges us if we do not love and share with the members of the one Body of Christ, the Church (cf. 1 Cor. 11:29).
- Peace is God's gift. Christ is our Peace. The sharing of peace has to be done first in the home.
- In Asia, there is a dire need for peace and reconciliation between diverse cultures, ethnic and power groups. The Church has to use its her spiritual and moral resources to assist in this task.

### **2. Superabundant Love (Receiving Communion)**

- After confessing our unworthiness, our sinfulness, with great humility and reverence, we approach Christ, the Bread of Life. He himself calls us to his supper, "the supper of the Lamb."
- He gives himself to us in Communion. He shares his very life with us, totally undeserved gift.

### **3. "Amen!" To the Bread of Life: Commitment to Mission**

- Eucharist is mission. We are to share the Bread of Life with others.
- The Gospels tell us that Jesus gave of himself to the sick, the poor, orphans and widows, strangers, the neglected, the unwanted lepers. To them he gave the promise of the Kingdom. If we are to share Christ's life with others, then it has to be with those whom Jesus preferentially loved.
- That is the mission of evangelization. "The Spirit has anointed me to proclaim the Good News to the poor." We can fulfill this mission if we have an abiding faith and love of Jesus.

### **4. A Mission to Witness to Jesus Christ**

- Jesus sent forth the Apostles to proclaim the Good News and be his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

- In the words of John, “This is what we proclaim to you: what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and what our hands have touched – we speak of the word of life” (1 Jn. 1:1).
- The Eucharist is mission. At the Eucharist, we have heard Jesus the Word of Life, we have seen, touched, and tasted Jesus, the Bread of Life. It is our experience of Jesus, the Good News, that we proclaim. At the Eucharist, lived Spirituality and Mission meet.

### **Pastoral Implications**

- The Eucharist renews the Church in its missionary calling. As Jesus was sent by the Father, so Jesus sends us “for the life of the world” (Jn. 20:21).
- That is the mission of the Church in Asia, where millions are deprived of adequate resources for life, where the lives of thousands are suddenly stilled by violence and extremism.
- Here the Church is to share her experience of a full life, received from Jesus. The witness of a faithful Christian life is the silent and eloquent proclamation of the Lord Jesus, in areas where explicit proclamation is forbidden (*Ecclesia in Asia*).
- Hence, the Church in Asia has to evaluate the quality of its witnessing to Jesus so as to be a credible missionary.

### **5. A Gift and Promise of Presence**

- The Eucharist fulfills the promise of Jesus as he sends his Apostles to mission. “Know that I am with you always, until the end of the world” (Mt. 20:20). Even after the Eucharistic celebration is concluded, the Eucharistic species remain as a living sign of the abiding presence of Jesus.
- So, the Eucharist remains to be adored, to be given as Communion to the sick, Even in the remotest or unwelcoming part of Asia, there Jesus is present, when and where the Eucharist is celebrated.

- This faith-reality should remind us that Jesus is present in the faces of the poor of Asia, that the Holy Spirit hovers over the cultures, religious traditions and peoples of Asia and influences their history in ways known only to God (*Ecclesia in Asia*, no. 15).

## CONCLUSION

The FABC IX Final Statement ends with recommendations on formation to Eucharistic life, the celebration and adoration of the Eucharist, living the Eucharist, and Missionary Formation. To the Final Statement is appended the Message of the Plenary of Assembly.

### **FABC X, Xuan Loc and Ho Chi Mihn City, Vietnam - 10<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2012**

### **FABC At Forty Years: Responding to The Challenges of Asia – A New Evangelization**

#### **Introduction**

- “Asia is a continent experiencing the hopes and joys of constant rebirth in the Spirit” (see Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, 1999, No. 18, for the work of the Holy Spirit in Asia).
- The Asian Bishops gather at a propitious time:
  - 40 years after the approval of the FABC Statutes (1972)
  - The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Opening of Vatican II (1962)
  - The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
  - The Year of Faith, October 2012 to October 2013), announced by Pope John Paul II and declared by Pope Benedict XVI
- The Asian Bishops to dialogue on the Asian situation, to reflect in faith and make pastoral decisions [the classic pastoral spiral, FABC’s method of pastoral discernment]

## **A. REMEMBERING, WE GIVE THANKS**

- The Asian Bishops recall the key concepts of Vatican II that have become the fundamental dimensions of the Asian vision of a new way of being Church:
  - People of God, Kingdom of God
  - Integral Evangelization
  - Communion, co-responsibility, collegiality, participation
  - Dialogue
  - Liturgical renewal, clergy-religious renewal
  - Engagement with the world of Asia
- They describe the themes of the 9 Plenary Assemblies and once again describe their vision of a new way of being Church in Asia.

*[The Introduction, Nos. 4-42, is a very useful summary of the themes and Pastoral Discernment of the Assemblies of Asian Bishops from 1970 to 2009]*

## **B. DISCERNING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, WE PRAY FOR WISDOM**

### **Megatrends in Asia and Ecclesial Realities [Nos. 17 - 33]**

- The megatrends are quite similar to the pastoral situation already described in previous assemblies:
- Economic and cultural globalization
- Cultures and Inculturation
- Poverty, Migrants and Refugees
- Indigenous Peoples
- Population and Bioethical Issues
- Religious Freedom, Persecution, Inter-Religious Dialogue
- Threats to Life, ethnic conflicts, terminations of unwanted lives
- Social Communications
- Ecology
- Women and Youth

- *The Significant Rise of Pentecostalism* – a new entry into the list of pastoral issues
- Vocations

### **C. REFLECTING IN FAITH ON THE PASTORAL SITUATION, WE PRAY FOR GUIDANCE**

The Asian Bishops offer some directions on how we are to respond to the pastoral situation

#### **God’s Word and Creative Spirit – Love, Goodness and Harmony**

##### **The Creation Story [No. 34]**

- The 2 creation stories in Genesis provide us with realities of faith relevant to our Asian situation
- From the very beginning the creative Spirit was at work
- God declared everything that he created as “good”
- At the pinnacle of creation is the human person, the image of God, man and woman. Their joy of communion, their gift of stewardship over creation, the universal destination of created goods, communion between humanity and creation

##### **Rupture by Sin [No. 35]**

- Pride and Self-interest break the beautiful order of relationships between God and humanity, man and woman, humanity and creation.
- Suffering enters the world. But the glory of creation remains.

##### **Fundamental Principles from the Creation Story**

- Communion and Solidarity of all Creation [No. 36]
- God, the Source and Sustainer of Communion [No.37]
- The Centrality of the Human Person, Universal Communion [Nos. 38-39].
  - *Imago Dei* – Human dignity and worth – countersigns to human economic and social inequalities, discrimination, caste system, the poverty of the many, the wealth of the few
  - Broken marriages and families, abuse and exploitation of women
- The Universal Destination of Created Goods [No. 40].

- That all of humanity would share equitably in all the goods created by God “under the guidance of justice tempered by charity” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 583; see also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 299).
- A countersign to the control of created goods by economic powers and groups, the destruction of the environment for short-term economic gains
- Responsible Stewardship of the Integrity of Creation [Nos. 41-42]
  - The mandate to cultivate creation and care for it for the good of all.
  - The violation of the mandate is an injustice to creation and to generations yet to come
  - The human causes of global warming and climate change are examples
  - Humanity’s stewardship of creation includes the whole cosmos
- Telling the Story of Jesus – God’s Gratuitous Love

### **Proclaiming the Kingdom of God**

God’s gratuitous love in creating us and our world is most dramatically demonstrated by the Christ-event.

- He proclaimed the Kingdom of God, God’s reign of justice and peace, the restoration of universal harmony.

### **Human Dignity, Solidarity and Communion, Preferential Option for the Poor [No. 45].**

- Born of a poor Asian family, Jesus takes the side of the poor, lives and walks with the poor, demonstrates God’s preferential love of the poor.
- He calls the poor “blessed.” To them he promises the Kingdom.
- He reverses the order of the world’s values, restoring human dignity to the poor and the outcast.
- The power of the Kingdom is in him as he heals the sick, restores life.

- He calls the poor, his disciples, and all who believe in him to communion and solidarity with him and his Father. He insists on faith and love

### **God's Universal Love, the Harmony of Creation [Nos. 46]**

- In stories and parables, Jesus describes God's love for all creation, plants, seeds, birds of the sky, rain and sun, but he focuses on God's love on the human person, especially the poor.
- His listeners learn of God's gratuitous universal love, his providence, the nature of the Kingdom, the beauty and harmony of creation, the transformation of the entire world into a "new creation."

### **Justice, Integrity, and Service Beyond Conventions [No. 47]**

- He acts beyond conventions to help the needy. He touches the untouchable lepers, speaks with prostitutes, heals during the Sabbath, He drives out merchants and money changers from the Temple precincts, denounce the hypocrisy of religious and political leaders, condemns the selfishness and injustice of the rich, telling them that they have forgotten the "weightier matters of the law, namely justice, mercy and faith." He tells them that they cannot serve both God and Mammon. His teachings are profoundly relevant to the moral disorder in Asian societies.

### **Paschal Mystery, Redemption, New Creation [Nos. 48-50]**

- The Paschal Mystery or the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ is the climax of God's freely given love. Christ loved us so much that he was willing to die a humiliating and excruciating death by crucifixion along with two criminals for the sake of giving us eternal life.
- But his crucifixion is not only for our sake. It is also for the sake of creation. By his suffering and death, he restored the order of creation that was broken by the sin of Adam and Eve. 'God reconciled to himself all things, whether in heaven or on earth, by making peace through the blood of the Cross' (Col. 1:19-20).
- All broken relationships between God and humanity, between all human beings, between humanity and creation

are restored. God has brought in a “new creation.” Cosmic harmony is restored.

- But human freedom does not always conform to God’s will. Pride, selfishness, and greed continue to destroy creation, to disrespect the human person, violate or suppress human rights, cause wars and violence, oppress the poor and the needy, and destroy the harmony of relationships. Still, Jesus – the Compassion of God – offers hope of redemption.

#### **D. RESPONDING TO THE PASTORAL SITUATION, WE PRAY FOR GENEROSITY AND COURAGE**

Basic Postulates of the Church’s Response [Nos. 51-56].

1. **We are a Prophetic Church.** We have a prophetic identity. We have to be conformed to Christ. Our attitude is that of Christ. We have also a prophetic world-view, i.e., to view our prophetic role and our discipleship as interacting with the realities of Asia, while adhering to values that are of the Reign of God [No.52].
2. **A New Evangelization.** In most of Asia, as in Mongolia, where Catholic presence is negligible, our evangelization is one of “first proclamation.” But “new Evangelization,” a new proclamation of the Gospel is needed in regions where the faith has been weakened by rising secularism and materialism [No.53].
3. **The Word of God, the Mystical and Liturgical Dimension of our Pastoral Response.** Our encounter and experience of Jesus, the Word of God, through prayer, is basic to the New Evangelization. This contemplative dimension is deepened at the Liturgy, especially by the Eucharist.

In the light of Asia’s profound sense of the sacred, we need holy evangelizers, men and women of deep God-experience [No. 54].

#### **4. Spirituality of Communion**

A spirituality of communion is rooted in our communion with the Trinity. It is the spirituality for our time. It is likewise a spirituality of discipleship, of following Jesus in his communion with *Abba*. With such spirituality, we become credible new evangelizers, men and women of deep God-experience. Our communion of love with God flows into communion with our neighbor and with creation. It

responds to the brokenness and disharmonies of Asia's harsh realities [No. 55].

### **The Holy Spirit and New Evangelization**

As Jesus was Spirit-filled and Spirit-driven as he proclaimed the Reign of God, so must we, his missionary disciples. The Apostles, gathered around Mary, received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and, filled with the Spirit, they immediately began evangelizing the Jews in Jerusalem. They dispersed to different parts of the diaspora and beyond, still driven by the Spirit to proclaim the Good News of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is ever present in the new Evangelization and in new Evangelizers [No. 56].

### **CONCLUSION**

The Asian Bishops conclude their Final Statement with a beautiful prayer to our Blessed Mother. The prayer is a prayer for New Evangelizers. They then end with Pastoral Recommendations related to the Megatrends and the engagement of the Church with the modern world. Then follows the Message of the FABC X Plenary Assembly.

**FABC XI, Colombo, Sri Lanka - 25<sup>th</sup> November to 6<sup>th</sup> December  
2016**

### **The Family in Asia: Domestic Church of The Poor On A Mission Of Mercy**

*Some Notes on the Theme*

- The Assembly was held in the wake of Pope Francis Apostolic Exhortation, 20165, which was the post-synodal exhortation of the 2015 Ordinary Synod on the Family.
- The Final Statement begins with the usual Cultural and Social Analysis of the Pastoral Situation that impacts the Asian Family, proceeds with Reflection in the Light of Faith.
- The Reflection includes a treatment of the Nature Identity of the Family as a Domestic Church of the Poor, the Family as a Missionary Disciple, its Mission *ad intra* and *ad extra*.
- It then concludes with Pastoral Imperatives for the Catholic Asian Family

- Noteworthy are the pastoral imperatives for the family to respond to the dark shadows of the Asian landscape that affect Family Life, and the process of collaboration between the diocese of *terminus a quo* of migrant workers to the diocese of *terminus ad quem*.
- Significant, too, is the formulation of family spirituality as a Spirituality of Communion, a rubric followed with regard to the Spirituality of the Laity in FABC IV (1986), Family Spirituality in FABC VIII (2004). Eucharistic Spirituality in FABC IX (2009), Spirituality of New Evangelizers in FABC X (2012).

## FINAL CONCLUSION TO THE SUMMARIES

### Pastoral Discernment

FABC Final Statements invariably use the Pastoral Cycle or Pastoral Spiral as a method of Pastoral Discernment: from social and cultural analysis of the situation to reflection in faith, and ending with pastoral decisions.

### Challenges in Asia

Thus, the Asian Bishops discerned Asian realities that are fairly constant, but with nuances in the developing ferment of Asia. Such challenges are:

- the rich mosaic of cultures and faiths;
- the multitudes of the poor and oppressed among Asian peoples;
- patriarchy;
- discrimination, abuse and exploitation of women and girls;
- refugees and migrant workers, child labor;
- population programs and bio-ethical issues;
- religious fundamentalism, violent religious extremism;
- persecution of the Christian minority;
- military regimes and violent suppression of fundamental human rights;
- ecological threats;

- and most recently, the rise of Pentecostalism.

### **Lights in the Asian Landscape**

Through all the FABC Plenary Assemblies, the following have remained constant:

- the triple dialogue with cultures and faiths, with the poor;
- the dynamic action of the Holy Spirit in the Asian world;
- the centrality of proclaiming Jesus in evangelization;
- the paradigm of “journeying together” with Asian peoples;
- hope in the fullness of life in the Reign of God;
- the Local Church as the acting subject of evangelization;
- the family as the focal point of evangelization;
- envisioning a *a new way of being Church* in Asia;
- the Basic Ecclesial Community/Basic Human Community as a concrete reflection of the new way of being Church;
- Communion, Participation, and Mission as the fundamental dimensions of Asia’s vision of Church;
- the necessity of authentic discipleship to be credible in evangelization;
- empowerment of the family, the laity, especially of women and youth, in the mission;
- Asian martyrs as examples and inspiration for courage and fidelity to Christ.

### **Future Directions**

The future directions for FABC:

- to make more explicit the thrust of new evangelization as the underlying purpose of FABC Offices;
- to address the new threats to ecology in programs inspired by and aligned to *Laudato Si’*,
- to inculturate the Liturgy in the Local Church;
- to exploit the power of mass media for evangelization;
- to provide integral faith formation for lay professionals;

- to address the threat of Pentecostalism through concrete programs in the Local Church;
- to address the inroads of secularism, materialism and consumerism in families and youth;
- to be a more pro-active advocate in justice, peace and ecological issues;
- to renew church structures, clergy and religious mentalities to be more participatory and consultative, agents of service rather than of power;
- to deepen Asian spirituality for all sectors of the Church;
- to deepen communion with Asian cultures, religions, and the poor;
- and to foster the role of the Church as a prophet, a sign of the Reign of God, in the Asian world.

Asian spirituality is described in the Final Statements of FABC II, FABC IV, FABC VIII, and FABC X. It is noteworthy that Cardinal Roche, the present Prefect of the Dicastery for Worship and Sacraments expressed at the recent Consistory his stance of *nihil obstat* for efforts by the Local Church to inculturate the Liturgy.

To synthesize the principal elements of the Final Statements of the FABC Assemblies, may I present a personal formulation of Asia's vision of life and vision of Church.

### **Vision of Life**

Asia dreams of a life of integrity, solidarity, and compassion. It is a life of justice and freedom, of mutual respect and harmony, a life of integral development. It is a life of interiority, grounded in loving communion with the Lord, that deepens Asia's innate sense of the mystical and the sacred.

### **Vision-Mission of the Church, a New Way of Being Church in Asia**

Set in the midst of Asia's mosaic of cultures and faiths, among the multitudes of Asia's poor and its young population, the Church envisions itself as a Church of the Young and a Church of the Poor, with a preferential love of the poor.

It is a faith-community, a community of contemplation and deep interiority,  
a Church-in-mission, driven by the Spirit to proclaim Christ  
and his Good News of integral liberation  
with conviction and courage.

Ours is a Church  
that journeys together humbly and compassionately  
with the peoples of Asia to full life in the Reign of God.  
To fulfill this mission effectively,  
it strives to be a faith-community of authentic disciples,  
a credible witness of the message it bears,  
a prophet and sign of the Kingdom of God.  
Our vision of Church is concretely reflected  
in the Basic Ecclesial Community and in the Basic Human  
Community,  
a new way being Church in Asia.

Published October 2022

## FABC Papers:

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 Alphonsian 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
161. *Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Thailand and Japan*, 19 – 26 November 2019, organized by Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand and Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, edited by FABC Central Secretariat, December 2019
162. *Awakening Climate Change Concern in Seminaries: For Bishops & Seminary Formators of Priests in Asia*, 4 – 8 November 2018, Salesian Center Of Spirituality, Hua Hin, Thailand, FABC Office of Clergy (OC) and Office of Human Development (OHD), submitted by Fr. Philip Lazatin, SDB, Executive Secretary, OC, April 2020
163. *FABC 2020, Preparatory Workshop for General Conference Workshop Report*, 1 – 3 February 2020, Mindol Metta Karuna (JRS), Siem Reap, Cambodia, FABC Office of Human Development / Climate Change Desk, submitted by Fr. Joseph Gonsalves, Executive Secretary, OHD, September 2020
164. *Migrants, Refugees, the Displaced and Human Trafficking and Renewable Energy Options in the Asian Context*, FABC Office of Human Development (OHD) in Collaboration with the Episcopal

Commission for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) & the Asia-Pacific Justice and Peace Workers Network (APIPWN). Hotel Beach Way, Cox's Bazaar, Chattogram, Bangladesh, 11 - 17 February 2019, submitted by Ms. Deepika Singh, Project Coordinator of OHD, December 2020

165. FABC 50 General Conference Guide Document 29 November 2020, *Theme: FABC 50: Journeying together as peoples of Asia "...and they went a different way."* (Mt 2:12), edited by the FABC 50 General Conference Core Group, July 2021
166. Responses to the Guide Document for the FABC 50 General Conference, 29 November 2020, *Theme: FABC 50: Journeying together as peoples of Asia "...and they went a different way."* (Mt 2:12), submitted by the Episcopal Conferences / Countries of the FABC, Central, East and South Asia, August 2021
167. Responses to the Guide Document for the FABC 50 General Conference, 29 November 2020, *Theme: FABC 50: Journeying together as peoples of Asia "...and they went a different way."* (Mt 2:12), submitted by the Episcopal Conferences / Countries of the FABC, South-East Asia, August 2021
168. The Body of Christ in the Pandemic: Theological Reflections from Asian Perspectives, submitted by FABC-Office of Theological Concerns (OTC), edited by Estela Padilla, Executive Secretary, OTC, August 2022
169. The Body of Christ in the Pandemic: Theological Reflections from Asian Perspectives, submitted by FABC-Office of Theological Concerns (OTC), edited by Estela Padilla, Executive Secretary, OTC, August 2022
170. Country Reports: FABC 50 General Conference, submitted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB), Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), The Syro-Malabar Church, The Syro-Malankara Catholic Major Archiepiscopal Church, compiled by the FABC Central Secretariat, September 2022
171. Country Reports: FABC 50 General Conference, submitted by the Vicariate Apostolic of Nepal, Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference (PCBC), Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka

(CBCSL), compiled by the FABC Central Secretariat, September 2022

172. Country Reports: FABC 50 General Conference, submitted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Indonesia (KWI), Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei (CBCMSB). a. Malaysia, b. Archdiocese of Singapore, c. Apostolic Vicariate of Brunei, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar (CBCM), Catholic Bishops' Conference of Philippines (CBCP), compiled by the FABC Central Secretariat, September 2022
173. Country Reports: FABC 50 General Conference, submitted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Timor Leste (CET), Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand (CBCT), Catholic Bishops' Conference of Vietnam (CBCV), compiled by the FABC Central Secretariat, September 2022
174. Country Reports: FABC 50 General Conference, submitted by the Diocese of Hong Kong, Diocese of Macau, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan (CBCJ), Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea (CBCK), Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference (CRBC - Taiwan), compiled by the FABC Central Secretariat, September 2022
175. Country Reports: FABC 50 General Conference, submitted by Missio Sui Juris Afghanistan, Apostolic Administration of Kyrgyzstan, Apostolic Administration of Uzbekistan, Prefecture Apostolic of Ulaanbaatar - Mongolia, compiled by the FABC Central Secretariat, September 2022
176. Synthesis Reports, Synod of Bishops 2021-2023, submitted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB), Catholic Bishops' Conference of Central Asia (CECAC), Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), Syro-Malabar Church, Syro-Malankara Catholic Major Archiepiscopal Church, compiled by the FABC Central Secretariat, September 2022
177. Synthesis Reports, Synod of Bishops 2021-2023, submitted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB), Catholic Bishops' Conference of Central Asia (CECAC), Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), Syro-Malabar Church, Syro-Malankara Catholic Major Archiepiscopal

Church, compiled by the FABC Central Secretariat, September 2022

178. Synthesis Reports, Synod of Bishops 2021-2023, submitted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei (CBCMSB), Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar (CBCM), Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference (PCBC), Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), compiled by the FABC Central Secretariat, September 2022
179. Synthesis Reports, Synod of Bishops 2021-2023, submitted by the Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference (CRBC), Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand (CBCT), Catholic Bishops' Conference of Timor-Leste (CET) compiled by the FABC Central Secretariat, September 2022

**FABC Papers is a project of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), published continuously since 1976, designed to bring the thinking of Asian experts to a wider audience and to develop critical analysis of the problems facing the Church in Asia from people on the scene. All of the FABC Papers are freely available on-line in pdf format on the FABC website: [www.fabc.org](http://www.fabc.org). To facilitate access and research of all of the FABC Papers, various indexes are available in FABC Papers Nos. 100, 125, and 150. The opinions expressed are those of the author(s) alone and do not necessarily represent official policies of the FABC or its member Episcopal Conferences. Manuscripts are always welcome and may be sent to: [fabccentral@yahoo.com](mailto:fabccentral@yahoo.com)**