

**XII FABC Plenary Assembly
The Call to Synodal Conversion and the Mission
to be Bridges and Bridge-builders in Asia**

“You will see greater things...” (Jn 1:50)

Hotel Mulia Senayan, Jakarta, Indonesia

July 20-26, 2026

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Homily of His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias
Special Envoy of Pope Leo XIV
At the Opening Mass of the XIIth Plenary Assembly, Jakarta
21 July 2026

Your Eminences, Your Excellencies, dear archbishops, bishops, delegates, especially our invited guests and partners in our mission for Asia.

The Gospel passage of today speaks of the Holy Family of Jesus. Family bonds with Jesus are established not merely by blood relationship, but by doing the will of the Father. Our Lord declares that we all become members of His family through our willingness to do the Father's will. The Lord has given us the key to enter into His family.

This meeting is being held in the historic city of Jakarta, in this beloved land of Indonesia. We are deeply grateful to our brother cardinals, bishops, collaborators, and all who have given us such a warm welcome and made us feel so comfortable here.

This family of faith—comprising the leaders and members of the Church in Asia—has gathered here to reflect on synodal conversion and our mission to become bridge builders and bridges.

Each FABC Plenary Assembly has had its own unique meaning and contribution to the pastoral life of the Church in Asia. I am confident that this Twelfth Plenary Assembly will do the same. Prepared as a response to our present realities, it invites us to experience a deeper synodal conversion and to embrace our mission of becoming bridge builders ourselves.

This is truly the response demanded by our times.

Looking at the recent papal Magisterium, we see how our Holy Fathers have consistently sought to respond to the signs of the times, beginning with the Second Vatican Council. More recently, Pope Francis gave us *Laudato Si'*, *Fratelli Tutti*, and many other teachings that continue to guide the Church.

Our previous Plenary Assembly was held in Colombo. Since then, so much has happened—to the Church, to Asia, and to the world. COVID-19 intervened, and the entire world watched with disbelief as the pandemic brought immense suffering and devastation. Time itself seemed to stand still.

Yet we recovered.

On the positive side, we celebrated the first-ever General Conference of the FABC, a luminous expression of synodality, collegiality, and solidarity. At the universal level, we also witnessed the Synod on Synodality, with the participation of a record number of non-bishop delegates. The role of continental episcopal bodies was recognized, and we ourselves held our Continental Assembly in Bangkok.

The *Bangkok Document*, issued at the conclusion of that General Conference, continues to serve as a trailblazer and an inspiration for many pastoral initiatives, including this very Plenary Assembly.

My dear brothers and sisters, our gathering is a response to the realities of our world today.

If we look at the global situation, regrettably—and I say this with a sense of shame—we have to admit that conflict, violence, and war have become dominant features of our times.

Pope Francis repeatedly reminded us that "the Third World War is being fought in piecemeal." At a time when science has made extraordinary advances and human knowledge continues to deepen our understanding of life itself, war has too often become the preferred solution to conflicts.

Violence and conflict continue to spread.

The Holy Father has made incessant appeals for peace. At times, he has seemed to be the lone voice speaking out on behalf of humanity.

Our mission, therefore, is to become bridge builders—to become bridges ourselves. We are called to connect people, bring them closer together, reconcile differences, resolve conflicts, and help build peace in the world.

This is evangelization.

This is building the Kingdom of God.

As we gather here, we must ask ourselves: What is the role of the Church in the midst of all this? What is our responsibility as spiritual leaders in promoting harmony and peace?

Have religious differences sometimes become causes of conflict? Some of us, in our own countries, have personally experienced violence rooted in communal or religious divisions.

The Second Vatican Council encouraged us to build upon the traditions and efforts already made toward dialogue. Can we not bring together religious leaders from different traditions to stand united in promoting peace?

Could an interreligious movement for peace be the calling of our times?

Could this become one of the lasting fruits of our Assembly?

Too often, conflicts arise from misunderstanding, distorted communication, or the breakdown of relationships caused by poor communication.

Does the FABC not have a role to play in addressing these realities?

During the recent Consistory called by Pope Leo XIV, the importance of peacebuilding was once again emphasized.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, may the initiatives inspired by this Assembly bear fruit in our parishes, dioceses, countries, throughout Asia, and indeed throughout the world.

Let us proclaim an end to war, just as Pope Saint Paul VI famously did before the United Nations.

Synodal conversion is also at the heart of our conversations today.

For the Church in Asia, I would say that synodality comes naturally. We need only a gentle encouragement toward an even deeper synodal conversion. The values of family, community, and shared responsibility are treasures that we already possess.

We are accustomed to walking together.

Indeed, "Journeying Together as Peoples of Asia" has long been the spirit of the FABC and is reflected in our documents and final statements.

Long before synodality became a central priority for the universal Church, the FABC and the Churches of Asia were already living many of its values.

Now we are called to deepen them, enrich them, and share our experiences with the wider Church.

We are a rich mix of religions, a rich mix of cultures, a mix of political systems, mix of mentalities. I remember being asked at a conference in Rome; Is there such a thing as an Asian culture? I think there is. Certain values are precious to us, are special to us from, are developed by us.

Synodality is a gift given to us by the Second Vatican Council. But this treasure should not remain just a hidden treasure in the Catholic Church. Synodality is also for the world. The world needs synodality, needs to learn to work together for the common good, as emphasized by *Magnifica Humanitas*.

We should share it with our brothers and sisters in the ecumenical world. We need to share it with followers of other religions. Political leaders need to understand the meaning of synodality, the values of synodality.

If there is true synodality, concern, care and value for the other, this will combat corruption. It can become the critical element for ensuring good governance.

The Church cannot remain silent.

The Church cannot be an island, we need to share our goods with others. The openness, the inclusivity preached so much by recent Popes, beginning already with Pope St. John Paul II, can become also the thinking of our neighboring religions.

This then is the challenge for the FABC: How to be an evangelizing influencer in a continent so open and receptive.

My dear brother bishops, fellow delegates and friends of the FABC. This is also the message of Pope Leo to the FABC: Don't be afraid to dirty your hands, building the walls of Jerusalem like Nehemiah rather than the tower of Babylon. The same allegory is put in *Magnifica Humanitas*.

The FABC has come of age. It has much to contribute to the world. May the Plenary Assembly be for us another new beginning – seeking unity and creating ways to promote peace and reconciliation and teaching all peoples, to walk with people synodally. That is the call of Jesus to all His disciples and all his family.

May God bless you. May God bless the Church.

God bless FABC. God bless ASIA.

Opening Speech
Bishop Antonius Subianto Bunjamin OSC
The President of the Bishops' Conference of Indonesia
21 July 2026

Seeing greater things through Dialogues

Your Eminences, particularly the Special Envoy of the Holy Father, Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Pro Prefect of the Dicastery for the Evangelization of Peoples, Cardinal Antonio Tagle, and the President of FABC, Filipe Neri Ferrão; Your Excellencies, Reverend Fathers, Religious Sisters and Brothers, Distinguished Guests, and Dear Friends in Christ,

Peace be with you all.

With profound joy and gratitude, together with all Indonesian Bishops and the people of Indonesia, I welcome you to Jakarta for the 12th Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, to enjoy Indonesia's colorful culture and beautiful nature while deepening our commitment as a synodal Asian Church. We come from the many nations, cultures, and traditions of Asia, enriched by special guests from Europe, Africa, America, and Oceania, Australia, as brothers and sisters united in faith, hope, and love to walk together.

This assembly is more than a meeting of bishops; it is a synodal and sacred moment of listening – to the Holy Spirit, to one another, and to the cries and aspirations of the peoples of Asia, particularly those who are poor, homeless, and marginalized. Asia is a continent rich in cultural and religious diversity, yet it also bears the burdens of poverty, conflict, environmental degradation, displacement, and growing social inequalities. These realities call us to renew our commitment to the Gospel and to walk together in faith and solidarity.

The theme of this 12th plenary assembly, "The Call to Synodal Conversion and the Mission to be Bridges and Bridge-Builders in Asia" inspired by the biblical verse, "*You Will See Greater Things*" (John 1:50). We are going to deepen our concern firstly for Synodal

Conversion: Shifting towards deeper listening, collaboration, and shared missionary commitment among the Churches in Asia and secondly for Bridge-Building: Fostering dialogue, peace, and interreligious harmony in a diverse and fragmented continent.

Synodality is not merely a process but a way of being Church. It reminds us of what happened more than 35 years ago in Indonesia when the 5th Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), held in Lembang, Bandung in 1990, monumentally formulated a "New Way of Being Church in Asia." as a "communion of communities" with triple dialogues: Dialogue with the Poor: Making a "preferential option for the poor" by standing alongside the marginalized and engaging in their socio-economic struggles. Dialogue with Asian Religions: Respectfully engaging with the profound religious plurality of Asia to promote harmony, peace, and mutual understanding. Dialogue with Cultures: Incarnating the Gospel so that it deeply resonates with the values, arts, and traditions of local Asian communities. The 50th General Conference of FABC in Bangkok added one more dialogue: dialogue with nature and the environment.

In this assembly, we will be listening more than speaking. As Pope Francis has often reminded us, a synodal Church is one that listens before it speaks and accompanies before it judges. Our mission is to proclaim Christ not through domination but through humble witness, compassionate service, and authentic friendship with all peoples.

In the first speech on 8 May 2025, Pope Leo XIV offered us "Peace be with all of you." He invited us to build bridges, saying that "Together, we must look for ways to be a missionary Church, a Church that builds bridges and encourages dialogue, a Church ever open to welcoming, like this Square with its open arms, all those who are in need of our charity, our presence, our readiness to dialogue and our love." In the spirit of dialogue and love, we invoke the Holy Spirit, the protagonist of this Assembly, to see greater things in Asia, as a missionary and dialoguing Church of Asia.

We thank all people who are generously contributing their resources in their own special ways. Our Government, local church, committee, benefactors, particularly Mr. Joko Chandra, the owner of this Hotel Mulia, the venue of the 12th Plenary Assembly. May this synodal

assembly strengthen our local Churches, empower the laity, engage young people, care for our common home, and become ever more credible witnesses to the Gospel and, of course, be fruitful to Indonesia.

We entrust this assembly to the loving intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and Queen of Asia. May she accompany us on this journey of faith and help us respond generously to God's call.

May God bless our work, deepen our communion, and strengthen our mission.

My prayer is "Make me a channel of peace; Make us a channel of peace; make FABC a channel of peace. And we will see greater things!"

Thank you, and may the peace of Christ be with us all.

Ut diligatis invicem,

**Remarks by the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of
Indonesia**

**The Opening of the 12th General Assembly of the Federation of
Asian Bishops' Conferences/FABC**

Jakarta, July 21, 2026

Bismillahirrohmanirrohim,

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

Good afternoon and peace be upon us all.

Your Eminences the Cardinals, Your Excellencies the Bishops,
Reverend Priests, Brothers and Sisters,

Distinguished Delegates of the 12th (twelve) General Assembly of the
Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) from various Asian
countries;

Excellencies and Ambassadors;

Distinguished religious leaders, heads of religious institutions,
distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, I would
like to extend a warm welcome to all participants of FABC to
Indonesia. The presence of Catholic Church leaders from across Asia
is truly a great honour.

This gathering is more than just an internal agenda of the Catholic
Church. The FABC General Assembly is part of our collective effort
to nurture peace, strengthen human solidarity, and build a more
peaceful, just, and inclusive future for Asia and the world.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Asia is a region defined by a vast array of languages, cultures and
religious traditions.

It is also the birthplace of the world's major religions.

Yet, at the same time, Asia faces increasingly complex challenges.
Conflicts, social polarization, extremism, inequality, climate change,
migration, and the rapid development of artificial intelligence have

brought about new challenges that cannot be resolved just by economic or political approaches.

In such a situation, religion carries an even greater moral responsibility. Religion must not merely be an identity. Religion must become an energy that brings a powerful force for peacebuilding and reconciliation.

I believe that conflicts and differences could be solved by using the language of religion.

The language of religion is based on love. Love is kind and caring. It is a soft approach in reducing tensions. It is vital to give the appropriate interpretation to create willingness in accepting differences without creating hate and dislike.

Therefore, the duty of all religious leaders is to ensure that religion remains a uniting force, not a dividing one.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Indonesia was born out of diversity. More than 17,000 islands, hundreds of ethnic groups, hundreds of local languages, and various religions live together in harmony.

Recently in September 2024, I signed the **Joint Declaration of Istiqlal 2024** with the late **Pope Francis**. Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto also inaugurated **The Tunnel of Friendship** connecting the **Istiqlal Mosque** and **Jakarta Cathedral**, which you will visit on **Sunday, July 26**.

It is a showcase of examples and best practices of our experience in managing religious and cultural diversity for others to see, experience and adopt.

A true symbol of how **Indonesia celebrates diversity in religion and culture peacefully**.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The Ministry of Religious Affairs holds the mandate to continuously nurture and build harmony. Harmony can only flourish when faith is translated into action. And that is where we find humanity as the common ground for all religions.

Distinguished delegates of the FABC,

The theme of this 12th General Assembly, "*You Will See Greater Things*": *Synodal Conversion and Mission as Bridge-Building in Asia*, holds a highly relevant meaning for Asian life today.

I believe that the spirit of synodality of the Catholic Church shares common ground with the noble values of Indonesia, namely *musyawarah* (consensus decision-making) and *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), meaning walking hand-in-hand in pursuit of the common good.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I sincerely hope that the 12th FABC General Assembly will strengthen interfaith dialogue, increase humanitarian cooperation, and deepen inter-nation solidarity across the Asian region.

May Jakarta become the birthplace of new ideas for peace. May this gathering foster an even stronger network of fraternity. And may Asia continue to be a region that demonstrates to the world that diversity can be a source of strength, not division.

Finally, I hereby declare the 12th (twelve) General Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences officially open.

May God bless us all. Thank you.

Wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Minister of Religious Affairs,

Nasaruddin Umar

**Message from the President of
El Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM)
at the XII Plenary Assembly of FABC**

**✠ Jaime Cardinal Spengler, O.F.M.
Archbishop of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
President of CELAM
Jakarta, July 21, 2026**

Your Eminence,
Filipe Neri Ferrao
Archbishop of Goa and Daman
President of FABC
India

Mons. **Antonius Subianto Bunjamin, O.S.C.**
Bishop of Bandung
President of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (KWI) Indonesia

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Warm regards,

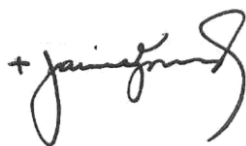
Although I have come from afar, I am deeply grateful to be here with all of you. I have come to listen, share, and learn from your stories. I think the most important question that will guide us in the coming days is to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to our Church today.

We live in a time of change. It is a great privilege for us to be able to live such a historic moment. The new teachings that the Holy Spirit seeks to transmit to us permeate our choices and decisions. The last Synod presented special practices to promote communion, participation, and mission. In fact, this is not entirely new.

The Second Vatican Council had already opened up these horizons. What is new lies precisely in these methods of practice. We pray that we may respond to the challenges of our time by respecting and promoting cultural diversity, and by living according to the gospel of

Jesus Christ, who lived among us and did good. And he did it all so well. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a small cross symbol followed by the name 'Jaime Spengler' in a cursive script.

✠ Cardinal Jaime Spengler

Archbishop of Porto Alegre, Brazil

President of CELAM

**Solidarity Message from the President of the Symposium of
Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM)
on the Occasion of the XII Plenary Assembly of the Federation of
Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)**

**✠ Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo
Archbishop of Kinshasa
President of SECAM**

Jakarta, July 21, 2026

Your Eminences

Your Excellencies,

Rev. Fathers and Sisters

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

With sentiments of profound ecclesial communion, I bring to you the affectionate greetings of the Church in Africa and on behalf of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), and in my own name, I assure you, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), of our prayers and spiritual closeness as you celebrate your Twelfth Plenary Assembly here in Jakarta.

The theme you have chosen for this Plenary Assembly, "*The Call to Synodal Conversion and the Mission of Being Bridges and Bridge-Builders in Asia*," beautifully captures the vocation of the Church in our time. It reminds us that synodality is not simply a method of working together, but a way of being Church, walking together in faith, listening attentively to the voice of the Holy Spirit and to one another, and becoming credible witnesses of communion, reconciliation and hope in a divided world.

Africa and Asia are sister continents. Though marked by distinct histories, cultures, and religious traditions, we share many of the same hopes, struggles, and aspirations. Together, we are home to the majority of the world's young people; together, we witness the extraordinary vitality of the Church in contexts often marked by diversity, poverty, and rapid social transformation. Above all, we share the conviction that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a source of hope capable of renewing societies and restoring human dignity.

The pastoral and social challenges confronting our continents are strikingly similar. Millions of our people continue to endure poverty and inequality. Migration and forced displacement separate families and expose countless women, men, and children to suffering and exploitation. Conflicts, insecurity, and violence continue to wound communities and undermine development. The devastating effects of climate change disproportionately affect those who have contributed least to it, threatening livelihoods, food security, and the future of generations yet to come.

In this context, Africa and Asia are called not merely to face these challenges individually, but to strengthen our collaboration and mutual solidarity. Our Episcopal Conferences can continue to learn from one another, share pastoral experiences, and join our voices in advocating for justice, peace, and integral human development. Together, we can contribute more effectively to global conversations, including the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) on climate change and biodiversity, reminding the international community that care for our common home must always be inseparable from care for the poorest and most vulnerable.

Our communion also invites us to deepen our cooperation in evangelization, formation, interreligious dialogue, youth ministry, and the promotion of synodality. As Churches in the Global South, we have much to offer one another through the exchange of pastoral wisdom, missionary experiences, and prophetic witness. By building bridges between our continents, we strengthen not only our respective Churches but also the witness of the universal Church.

Dear brothers and sisters, your Assembly's inspiration from the words of our Lord, "*You will see greater things*" (John 1:50), encourages all of us to look beyond present difficulties with confidence in God's providence. The Holy Spirit continues to lead our Churches toward new paths of mission, deeper communion, and renewed commitment to serving humanity.

As you pray, discern, and deliberate during these days, please be assured of the closeness and prayers of SECAM. May your Assembly bear abundant fruits for the Church in Asia and inspire ever stronger bonds of fraternity, collaboration, and communion between the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences and the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar.

May Mary, Mother of the Church, accompany your deliberations, and may the Risen Lord bless your work with wisdom, courage, and peace.

Thank you, and may God bless you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a stylized 'F' and 'A' with a small cross symbol to the left.

✠ **Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo**

Archbishop of Kinshasa

President of SECAM

Greetings of Archbishop Gintaras Grušas
President of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences
(CCEE)
XII Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops'
Conferences 2026 Jakarta, Indonesia

Your Eminence Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrão,

Your Eminences and Excellencies,

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is a great joy to be with you once again and to bring you the fraternal greetings and prayers of the bishops of Europe. Thank you for your warm invitation and for the witness that the Church in Asia continues to give to the universal Church.

Your theme, inspired by the words of Jesus to Nathanael, "*You will see greater things*" (Jn 1:50), is both timely and deeply hopeful. It reminds us that the Christian life is always one of expectation—not confidence in our own plans, but trust that the Holy Spirit continues to surprise the Church. As your participants' manual beautifully expresses, this Assembly is not simply about discussing synodality, but about living it through prayer, discernment, listening, and shared mission, so that the Church may become a bridge and a builder of bridges throughout Asia.

The Church in Europe is walking a remarkably similar path. Our upcoming CCEE Plenary

Assembly will gather under the theme of "Evangelization and Synodality: the Mission of Priests Today in Europe." We, too, are asking how synodality becomes not simply a method but a way of being Church—one that renews evangelization and forms missionary disciples capable of bringing Christ to today's Europe.

One of the greatest gifts of the two sessions of the Synod in Rome was precisely this:

bishops, priests, religious and laity from every continent learned to listen to one another's journeys. We discovered that while our contexts differ greatly, the Holy Spirit is at work in each local Church.

Europe's experience helped illuminate Asia's; Asia's experience enriched Europe's; and together we began to perceive more clearly the work of God in the universal Church. Synodality became not merely a topic of discussion but a lived experience of communion.

That experience convinced many of us that diversity is not an obstacle to unity. Rather, when we listen in the Spirit, our different histories, cultures, and pastoral challenges become gifts we offer one another. The Church grows stronger when the local Churches walk together.

This is why your emphasis on becoming "bridges and bridge-builders" resonates so deeply beyond Asia. Our world is increasingly marked by polarization, conflict, and isolation. The Church cannot respond by building walls. She must become what Christ himself is: the bridge that reconciles humanity with God and people with one another. Every local Church, every parish, every bishop is called to participate in that ministry of reconciliation.

I believe that the friendship between FABC and CCEE is itself one such bridge. In fact, each of the continental assemblies in their own context, are walking parallel paths of implementing the *Final Document* of the Synod, seeking practical ways to strengthen communion, participation, and mission. As we continue this journey together, we have much to learn from one another and much to offer one another.

May these days of prayer, discernment, and fraternity help you truly "see greater things" — not only for the Church in Asia, but for the whole Church. And may the Holy Spirit continue to guide us together as pilgrims of hope and missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.

Thank you, and may God abundantly bless your Assembly.

Conseil des Patriarches Catholiques d'Orient (CPCO)
Council of Eastern Catholic Patriarchs (CECP)
Patriarch RAPHAEL BEDROS XXI
Catholicos Patriarch of Cilicia of Armenian Catholics

His Eminence Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrao, President of the FABC,
Their Excellences the Cardinals,

The presidents of the various Asian conferences

Venerable members of this XII Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC).

It is an honor and a deep joy for me to be here with you as a fraternal delegate, representing the Council of Eastern Catholic Patriarchs (CECP).

The CECP is a family composed of seven Eastern Catholic and Apostolic Churches established in the Middle East, namely the Coptic, Maronite, Melkite, Syriac, Chaldean, Armenian and Latin Churches. We see ourselves, through our history, our faith, and our communion, as an integral part of Asia, this great continent of diversity and spirituality.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to this venerable assembly for the invitation. It is a magnificent part of the dynamics of the "exchange of gifts" that the last synod held in Rome highlighted as an essential element of our ecclesial life. It is a strong sign of hope for us to be able to participate in your work for the second time since 2016.

The *Final Document* of the Synod offers us many points of convergence that unite us and strengthen our common journey. Let me mention three aspects of this convergence.

1. First, the style of "**Conversation in the Spirit**": the *Final Document* values its use as a fundamental tool for transforming ecclesial culture. This approach is not limited to a simple exchange of ideas but constitutes a real school of personal and relational conversion. It is based on three stages: a word that is welcomed in depth, an active and prayerful listening, and a collective discernment. This method makes it possible to break

the logic of confrontation to privilege the common search for God's will, fostering the atmosphere of mutual trust necessary for every pastoral decision.

2. Secondly, **the conversion of structures and processes**: it is emphasized that synodality requires concrete changes, not only spiritual but also structural. The need for transparency, accountability, and evaluation is an imperative to rebuild trust within church communities.

3. Third, **a unity that respects diversity**: the document defines the unity of the Church as a "harmony of differences" rather than uniformity. This vision challenges models that would seek to standardize everything under a single sensibility or structure. Synodality, according to the *Final Document*, recognizes that the Christian life is incarnated in various ways in particular cultures, traditions, and charisms. Far from dividing the Church, this diversity is seen as a mutual enrichment and a manifestation of the Spirit's richness. For this harmony to be real, each community must be able to bear witness to its own experience while remaining anchored in universal communion. The synodal challenge, then, is to maintain a balance in which the particular does not isolate itself and the universal does not become overwhelming, allowing each voice to contribute to the common symphony.

I wish your Assembly every success in its reflections. May the Churches of Asia be, according to the theme of this assembly, true bridge and bridge-builders, not only between ecclesial traditions but also between all peoples and confessions in Asia.

May the Holy Spirit enlighten your discussions so that the Church of Asia, in its richness and diversity, may bear strong witness to Christian hope.

With my fraternal sentiments and my prayers.

Beirut, 21 July 2026



✠RAPHAEL BEDROS XXI

Catholicos Patriarch of Cilicia of Armenian Catholics

Federation of Catholic Bishops, Conferences of Oceania (FCBCO)

Father Christopher de Souza

Secretary General FCBCO

My brothers and sisters in Christ.

Reverend sisters, reverend brothers, reverend Fathers, reverend monsignors, my Lords, Your Graces, Your Eminences.

I bring greetings from Oceania and especially our president. Archbishop Ryan Jimenez of the Diocese of Agaña in Guam. Unfortunately, the cyclone that battered his country has meant that he stays behind to look after his people and be a source of inspiration for the recovery.

But I represent the FCBCO, the Federation of Catholic Bishops' Conferences of Oceania. I chose my introduction in the way I did, which is not the usual way because Oceania isn't usual. We represent 1/3 of the earth's surface. But we are mainly water. Some places had too much of it, others not enough. But what we have in terms of synodality is a wealth of indigenous experience of living synodality.

Through the Holy Spirit, we offer our prayerful support to all of you as you engage in the enterprise you do. I might be wrong, but I think this is the first time Oceania has been present at your gathering. And we do so humbly, to listen, to learn, because we are really your younger brothers and sisters, and we have much to learn from you.

We want to be the face of Jesus. We want to be listening to the Spirit. And we look to our elder brothers and sisters in Asia, in Africa, in Europe, in America to teach us. Because the ways of synodality, although customary among our indigenous brothers and sisters, there is still a sharp learning curve for those who aren't and who occupy places of power, both in civil and ecclesiastical society. But we want to change, and we want to learn because we know this is a way of being church that is ever ancient and ever new. It fosters the way for us to be the face of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd.

We come with our prayers, we come with our well wishes, and we come with open hearts and ears to listen to your wisdom, to be inspired by your presence and your teaching, and to ask for your help

in trying to be what God is calling us all to be, His presence in the world. Thank you.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
Bishop Rey B. Bersabal
Auxiliary Bishop of Sacramento, California
USCCB Subcommittee on the Church in Asia and the Pacific
(SCAPA)

Your Eminences, Your Excellencies, dear brother Bishops,

It is both a profound joy and a great humility to address you as you gather for the Twelfth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences here in the beautiful city of Jakarta.

I bring you the prayerful greetings and fraternal solidarity of my brother bishops in the United States, especially our President, Archbishop Paul Coakley, and the Chairman of the USCCB Subcommittee on the Church in Asia and the Pacific (SCAPA), Bishop Earl Fernandes. Together, we extend our best wishes and assure you of our prayers as you continue your important work. May the Holy Spirit guide your deliberations, deepen your communion, and renew your commitment to the mission entrusted to us by Christ.

It is also a personal privilege to be among you. I come not only as a representative of my brother bishops, but also as a fellow pilgrim. It is humbling and enriching to witness the vibrant faith and pastoral wisdom of the Churches throughout Asia. I am grateful for the opportunity to listen, to learn, and to journey with you.

The Church today is called to continual renewal not only in her structures, but above all in the hearts of her people. As we embrace a more synodal way of being Church, we are invited to walk together, listening attentively to the Holy Spirit and to one another with humility, trust, and hope.

For me, the meaning of shepherding has always been found not simply in the responsibilities of the episcopal office, but in the daily effort to remain close to the people entrusted to my care. It is in walking alongside God's people that I have found both strength and fulfillment in my own ministry.

This journey calls all of us - bishops, clergy, religious, and laity - to ongoing conversion. Through prayer, listening, and communal

discernment, we discover the gifts the Holy Spirit has given to each member of the Church, and are strengthened in our shared mission of proclaiming the Gospel.

The growing presence of Asian and Pacific Island Catholics in the United States is a visible sign of the universality of the Church. Through them, we have come to know more deeply the richness of the faith lived in Asia, and we hope in turn to become ever more faithful bridges of communion between our local Churches, so that together, we may proclaim Christ more effectively to the world. We are especially grateful for the many Asian priests, religious, and lay faithful whose leadership, missionary zeal, and rich spiritual traditions have greatly enriched and strengthened the Church in the United States.

In many ways, this Assembly is itself a witness to that journey. Though we come from different nations, languages, and cultures, we are united in Christ, listening to the same Spirit, and sharing the same hope for the church. May the fruits of this Assembly continue to strengthen our communion and inspire us to proclaim the Gospel with renewed joy and courage in every corner of the world.

Please be assured of the prayers and solidarity of the bishops and faithful of the United States. May the Lord bless the work of this Assembly, and may Our Lady, Mother of the Church, accompany you always.

Thank you, and may God bless you all.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA)
The 12th Plenary Assembly of the FABC
20 – 26 July 2026, Jakarta, Indonesia

Rev. Jung Eun (Grace) Moon
General Secretary of the CCA

Congratulatory Address

Distinguished leaders of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

On behalf of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), I bring you warm greetings and heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the Twelfth Plenary Assembly of the FABC.

The CCA and the FABC have had a long and fruitful relationship, participating in each other's programmes, including the Asian Committee for People's Organisation (ACPO), the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism, the Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU), the Asia Conference of Theology Students (ACTS), and the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS). Just last month, in June 2026, Archbishop Felix Machado attended CCA's International Consultation on Ecumenism in Asia: Emerging Ecclesial and Ecumenical Landscapes and delivered a presentation on "Synodality and Ecumenism". (*My sincere gratitude to Archbishop Machado and the FABC!*)

We give thanks to God for the faithful and visionary journey that the FABC has undertaken over the years, and especially for the depth of commitment you have shown in embracing synodality as a way of being Church in Asia. At this important moment in the life of the global Church, your leadership in taking synodality seriously—*not merely as a concept, but as a lived ecclesial practice*—is both encouraging and inspiring.

We recognise with appreciation how the FABC has developed concrete structures, resources, and formation processes that embed

the synodal way into the life of local Churches. It is especially important that the emphasis be placed on both reflection and action. Your efforts demonstrate that synodality is not an abstract ideal, but a transformative path that shapes relationships, decision-making, and mission.

We are especially encouraged by the theological and spiritual depth reflected in the *Bangkok Document* of 2022 and the subsequent processes of discernment. What is remarkable is how, in your context, synodality is not simply received institutionally, but is deeply inculturated. The integration of the synodal method—especially “Conversation in the Spirit”—with Asian contemplative traditions of silence, attentive listening, and communal discernment speaks powerfully to the richness of our contexts. It shows that the Church in Asia has much to contribute to the universal Church in embodying a spirituality of listening and shared wisdom.

We also affirm your commitment to fostering a more collaborative and inclusive ecclesial life. By encouraging open dialogue, active participation of both clergy and laity, and the sharing of experiences across diverse contexts, you are nurturing a Church that truly reflects communion in diversity. Your recognition of the importance of transparency and accountability is equally vital, reminding us that synodality must also reshape the ways we exercise leadership and governance, making them more participatory, responsible, and trustworthy.

The theme of this Plenary Assembly—“The Call to Synodal Conversion and the Mission to be Bridges and Bridge-builders in Asia”, inspired by the promise of our Lord in John 1:50—captures both the calling and the hope of the Church in Asia today. It invites us to be communities that connect, reconcile, and accompany; to build bridges within our Churches, among different traditions, and with people of other faiths. It also calls us to “see greater things” as the Holy Spirit continues to guide and renew the Church.

We are encouraged by your commitment to move beyond reflection into concrete pastoral action. The emphasis on prayerful listening—to the realities of Asia, to one another, and to the voice of the Spirit—offers a path towards a more responsive and mission-oriented Church. In a region marked by diversity, complexity, and many

challenges, such a synodal approach is not only relevant but necessary.

The Christian Conference of Asia stands in solidarity with the FABC in this journey. We share a common calling to witness to Christ's love, to work for justice and peace, and to accompany the people of Asia in their hopes and struggles. Together, we are invited to deepen our collaboration, strengthen our communion, and contribute to the building of a more just, compassionate, and reconciled world.

As you gather in this Assembly, we pray that the Holy Spirit will guide your deliberations, deepen your discernment, and inspire your decisions. May this Plenary Assembly bear abundant fruit – not only for the Catholic Church in Asia, but for the wider ecumenical fellowship and for all the people of our region.

I also want to sincerely thank the FABC leadership for our close fellowship and valued partnership.

In a special way, we give thanks for Archbishop Felix Machado, Fr Bill LaRousse, Fr Clarence Devadass and Fr Gilbert Aranha, whose openness, commitment, and collegial spirit have greatly strengthened the bonds between the FABC and the Christian Conference of Asia. Their dedication to nurturing collaboration, mutual understanding, and common witness has been a source of encouragement and hope for our shared ecumenical journey. We deeply appreciate their friendship and look forward to continuing this meaningful partnership in the service of the Church and the people of Asia.

May you indeed see greater things, as you continue to walk together in faith, hope, and love.

Thank you.

Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrão
President of the FABC
Opening Presidential Address
XII Plenary Assembly of the FABC

(Jakarta, 20-27 July 2026)

Your Eminences, Excellencies, Distinguished Invitees, Dear brother-priests, Religious Men and Women, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered today from every corner of Asia, from ancient Churches and young communities, from places where the Church flourishes openly and where she journeys quietly as a humble minority. We come from diverse languages, cultures, histories and experiences, yet united by something deeper than any human bond: our baptism into Christ and the Spirit who gathers us into communion.

We warmly and cordially welcome His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias, who, although he is one of us, is here with us as the Special Envoy of the Holy Father. We thank the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, for sending him among us as his special representative. We also extend a heartily welcome to Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, as well as His Eminence Mario Cardinal Grech, the Secretariat General of the Synod Secretariat.

As Father Christopher D'Souza, General Secretary of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Federation of the Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania, FCBCO, shared with us this morning, we regret that Archbishop Ryan Jimenez, President of FCBCO, cannot be with us as a super typhoon Bavi, a severe storm, struck Guam and the neighbouring island of Rota, causing widespread devastation. Archbishop Ryan chose to stay back to accompany and support the affected people in this difficult situation. We assure him of our fraternal solidarity and our prayerful support.

We are also sorry that Bishop Dan Parcon, Bishop of Talibon, Philippines, who was a delegate of the CBCP, could not attend our PA due to the serious illness of his young niece. Bishop Dan has informed us that his niece, Joanne, left for her heavenly abode yesterday afternoon. We convey our heartfelt sympathies to Bishop Dan and assure him of our fervent prayers for his departed niece, as well as for the bereaved family.

We acknowledge with joy the presence among us of distinguished representatives from CELAM, the Latin American and Caribbean Episcopal Council, of SECAM, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, of CCEE, the Council of Bishops' Conferences of Europe, of the FCBCO, the Federation of Catholic Bishops' Conferences of Oceania, of the CPCO, the Council of Catholic Patriarchs of the East, the USCCB, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and of the General Secretary of the CCA, the Christian Conference of Asia who is our ecumenical partner in Asia.

This Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences is more than a meeting for exchanging ideas. It is an ecclesial event, a moment of grace and a privileged opportunity given to the Church in Asia to listen, discern and walk together under the Spirit's guidance. We come not merely to discuss the Church's future in Asia but to seek God's will for His people -- with gratitude for the past, attentiveness to the present and hope for the future. Above all, we ask what the Spirit is saying to the Churches in Asia at this moment in history.

The theme -- *The Call to Synodal Conversion and the Mission to be Bridges and Bridge-Builders in Asia* -- summons us to both interior renewal and outward mission. Our inspiration comes from the Gospel encounter between Jesus and Nathanael. When Nathanael asks, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip does not argue; he simply invites: "Come and see."

These words capture the heart of Christian discipleship. The Church begins not by imposing answers but by inviting encounter. She invites people to encounter Christ, experience His love and discover the truth that sets them free. Nathanael's doubt becomes faith, and Jesus rewards that faith with a promise: "You will see greater things." Brothers and sisters, as we begin this Assembly, these words become

a promise addressed to the Church in Asia: “You will see greater things!”

We are gathered here at a pivotal moment. The Synod on Synodality has invited the whole Catholic Church into renewed listening, participation, co-responsibility and discernment. We have the *Final Document* of the Synod and, specifically, the *Bangkok Document*, to guide the Church in Asia in this process. Our task, however, is not only to reflect on synodality, but to live it in the concreteness of our lives. The question is not whether synodality matters, but how it can take deeper root in our dioceses, parishes, institutions, and communities. How can we become a Church where listening becomes a habit, participation is genuine, accountability is embraced, and discernment shapes decisions?

The answer is: “by undergoing a synodal conversion.” Renewal begins with conversion: before structures change, hearts must change. Synodality is not first about methods, but about spirituality. It requires humility to listen, courage to speak honestly, patience to walk together and openness to the gifts of the Spirit. Synodal conversion calls us to move from isolation to communion, from clericalism to co-responsibility, from self-sufficiency to mutual dependence, from control to discernment. This is demanding, yes, but necessary, if we are to become the Church that the Lord desires.

In recent years, we have relied on emails, online meetings and digital platforms. These are valuable tools, yes, but they cannot replace physical presence. Today we have the grace of being together, looking into one another’s eyes, hearing one another’s voices, praying side by side and sharing life together. Spaces will be created for bishops to speak openly to fellow-bishops, sharing experiences and insights on how synodality can be embodied in decision-making, accountability and transparency.

The methodology of this Assembly reflects this scenario. Throughout these days we will pray together, listen together, discern together and share together. This rhythm is not merely part of the programme; it is in itself an expression of synodality. This Assembly is not only about synodality; it seeks to be synodal in the very way it proceeds. Beyond its formal sessions, the Assembly will also strengthen the bonds of friendship and collegiality among the bishops of Asia. This collegial spirit will enhance the unity of the episcopal community in our

continent and enable bishops to inspire one another towards building a truly synodal Church in Asia.

When we encounter one another with openness and faith, we create space for encountering Christ Himself. And this insight has a particular significance for Asia. Our continent is marked by an extraordinary diversity: ancient civilizations, rich cultures, profound spiritual traditions, vibrant religious communities. We witness economic growth alongside poverty, technological advancement alongside fragmentation, globalization alongside renewed identity. Yet the Gospel invites us to see diversity not as a problem, but as a gift. The Spirit does not erase differences; He transforms them into communion.

The Church in Asia has long understood this through her commitment to dialogue. Since the earliest days of the FABC, dialogue has been recognized as a constitutive dimension of the Church's mission: dialogue with cultures, religions, peoples, the poor, and creation. Dialogue is rooted in the mystery of the Incarnation. God did not save humanity from a distance. He entered human history, spoke our language, and shared our joys and sorrows. The Incarnation is God's dialogue with the world. Whenever we engage in authentic dialogue, we participate in that same movement of divine love.

In this perspective, bridge-building becomes deeply significant. The Church in Asia is called to be both a bridge and a builder of bridges. This theme was discussed in the FABC General Conference, and it is in the *Bangkok Document*. We are building upon what was already part of our discussions. Bridges connect what is separated, create pathways where barriers existed, and make encounter possible. In a polarized and fragmented world, the Church must be a sacrament of communion and an instrument of reconciliation. We are called to be bridges and build bridges between generations, cultures and religions, between the rich and the poor, the included and the forgotten, and ultimately, between humanity and creation. This mission reflects Christ Himself, the Bridge par excellence, who reconciled humanity with God through the Cross.

We live in a time of profound transformation. Artificial intelligence, migration, environmental crises, inequality, instability and conflicts are reshaping societies. Many experience uncertainty and anxiety.

Young people search for meaning amid information overload. Families struggle under mounting pressures and communities often experience loneliness despite unprecedented connectivity.

These challenges also reveal our deepest human need: hope. Without hope, uncertainty becomes fear, change becomes a threat, and difficulties lead to despair. Hope trusts that even in difficulty, the Spirit continues to work. This is the hope contained in the Lord's promise: "You will see greater things."

And what might those greater things be for the Church in Asia? Perhaps greater unity among local Churches; deeper collaboration among bishops, clergy, religious, and laity; renewed missionary zeal among youth; new evangelization in the digital world; deeper dialogue with cultures and religions; stronger solidarity with migrants, the poor and the marginalized; a more participatory and synodal Church where every baptized person embraces responsibility for Christ's mission.

We earnestly hope that this Plenary Assembly will help us journey towards that ideal and, in the process, strengthen our relationships. The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences has always been more than an organisation; it has been a communion of Churches journeying together. When bishops listen to bishops and local Churches learn from one another, the entire Church grows stronger. May these days deepen our sense of belonging and renew our commitment to common mission.

And, from day one, let us keep in mind that the final document of this XII Plenary Assembly of the FABC is meant to serve as a practical Vademecum on Synodality in Asia. Let us look forward to owning a personal copy of the same and to diligently following its valuable norms of conduct.

As we begin, let us place ourselves before the Lord with humility and confidence. Let us listen attentively, welcome diversity, remain open to surprise and trust the Spirit who renews the Church. May this gathering become a true Pentecost moment for Asia --- renewing faith, deepening communion and strengthening missionary commitment.

May the Lord bless our conversations, enlighten our discernment, strengthen our communion, and renew our mission, so that the

Church in Asia may shine with Christ's light for generations. May we see in one another the face of Christ, hear in one another the Spirit's voice, walk together as pilgrims of hope.

Anchored in the promise of Jesus to Nathanael – “You will see greater things” – we gather in hope, ready to see and respond to the greater things the Spirit is doing in the Church and the world today.

With confidence in that promise, trust in providence, and hearts open to the Spirit, we usher in the Plenary Assembly. God bless you one and all.

FABC XII Plenary Assembly
Concluding Eucharistic Celebration, Jakarta, 26 July 2026
Homily by His Eminence Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrão
XVII Sunday in Ordinary Time
6th World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly
1 Kgs 3:5, 7-12. Rom 8:28-30. Mt 13:44-52
You Will See Greater Things!

Your Eminences, Your Excellencies, dear brothers in the priesthood, consecrated women and men, lay faithful, and beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

“You will see greater things than these.”

These words of Jesus have accompanied us throughout this Twelfth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences. We have prayed together, listened to one another, conversed in the Spirit, examined the changing face of Asia, discerned the challenges of synodal conversion, shared good practices, and searched for concrete pathways of implementation. We have asked how the Church in Asia can become a bridge and a builder of bridges.

At the conclusion of this journey, the Gospel places before us three simple images: **a treasure, a pearl of great value, and a net cast into the sea.**

These images tell us where the “greater things” of God are found. They are not found only in a distant future. They are already present **here and now**. The Kingdom is a treasure to be possessed fully, a pearl to be cherished above everything else, and a net that demands discernment before the final gathering.

1. The treasure: receiving the Kingdom fully

Jesus says, “The Kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field.” A man finds it, hides it again, and in his joy sells everything he has to buy that field.

The treasure is already there. The man does not create it. He discovers what had been hidden beneath the ordinary soil.

During these days, we have looked at the soil of Asia. It is a soil marked by ancient cultures and youthful populations, deep spiritual traditions and rapid technological change, economic growth and painful poverty, vibrant families and forced migration, religious devotion and political polarisation. It is also a soil wounded by war, displacement, discrimination, ecological destruction and the marginalisation of vulnerable communities.

Yet beneath this complex soil lies a treasure: **God is already at work among the peoples of Asia.**

Synodality begins with this recognition. We do not bring God to a place where God is absent. We learn to recognise the God who has gone before us. The Spirit speaks through the Scriptures and the sacraments, but also through the cries of the poor, the wisdom of indigenous peoples, the faith of families, the hopes of young people, the suffering of migrants, and the spiritual searching of our neighbours of other religions.

To possess the treasure fully means to receive the Kingdom with an undivided heart. We cannot embrace synodality merely as a new method while retaining old habits of domination, exclusion and self-protection. We cannot speak of participation while decisions remain closed. We cannot speak of communion while some voices are continually unheard. We cannot proclaim mission while remaining safely within our institutions.

The man in the parable sells everything – not sadly, but “out of joy.” Synodal conversion also requires letting go: letting go of clericalism, fear, rivalry, excessive centralisation and the illusion that one person or group possesses every answer.

The treasure is worth the surrender.

2. The pearl: cherishing what matters most

The Kingdom is also like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds one pearl of great value, he sells everything and buys it.

The first parable describes someone who discovers unexpectedly. The second describes someone who has been searching. The Church in Asia is both. We are surprised by grace, and we are also a pilgrim Church that continues to search.

What is the pearl of great value for us?

It is Jesus Christ himself: crucified and risen, the face of the Father's mercy and the bridge between God and humanity. Synodality is not the pearl. Structures are not the pearl. Programmes, documents and pastoral strategies are not the pearl. They are valuable only when they help us encounter Christ and reveal him to others.

In the first reading, Solomon is offered anything he desires. He could have asked for long life, wealth or victory over his enemies. Instead, he asks for "an understanding heart" to govern God's people and to distinguish right from wrong.

Solomon's prayer must become the prayer of the Church in Asia: "Lord, give us a listening heart."

A synodal Church is first of all a listening Church—listening to God, listening to the people, and especially listening to those whose voices are easily ignored. Episcopal leadership is not measured merely by the ability to speak, but by the spiritual capacity to listen, distinguish and decide in communion.

The pearl must be cherished above our prestige, security and institutional interests. When Christ is truly our pearl, people are no longer statistics, pastoral problems or recipients of programmes. They become brothers and sisters entrusted to us.

Today is also the 6th World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly – as invited by Pope Francis, with the theme – as proposed by Pope Leo XIV: "I will not forget you." On the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, we remember that the elderly are living treasures within our families and communities. They carry memory, faith, sacrifice and wisdom. A Church that forgets its elderly loses its roots; a Church that does not listen to the young loses its future.

Bridge-building therefore includes building bridges between generations. The dreams of the young need the memories of the old, and the wisdom of the old needs the energy and creativity of the young. God does not forget them; neither must the Church.

3. The net: discerning before gathering

Finally, Jesus says that the Kingdom is like a net thrown into the sea, gathering fish of every kind.

What an appropriate image for Asia—a continent of immense diversity. The net gathers "every kind." The Church's mission is

never narrow, tribal or exclusive. It reaches across cultures, languages, ethnic identities, social classes and religious boundaries.

The Gospel net does not ask the fish to become identical before being gathered. Communion is not uniformity. A synodal Church honours legitimate diversity while remaining united in Christ.

Yet the parable also speaks of discernment. When the net is full, it is brought ashore, and what has been gathered is examined. Not everything that enters our pastoral life is automatically good. Not every new idea is inspired by the Spirit; not every old practice is faithful simply because it is old.

We must discern before we gather into our final pastoral vision. What leads to greater communion, participation and mission? What protects human dignity? What serves the poor? What builds peace? What heals divisions? What allows Christ to be seen?

Saint Paul assures us that “all things work together for good for those who love God.” This does not mean that everything happening in Asia is good. It means that God can work through every reality, even suffering, to conform us to the image of his Son.

The “greater things” Jesus promises are not necessarily larger institutions or more impressive programmes. The greater thing is a Church increasingly conformed to Christ: humble, listening, compassionate, courageous and close to the wounded.

Today, as we leave this assembly, we move from conversations to conversion, from documents to decisions, and from vision to implementation. Our visit later to the Istiqlal Mosque through the Friendship Tunnel offers a powerful sign. The bridge-building we have discussed must now become a path we actually walk.

Let us therefore return to our local Churches ready to uncover the treasure already present among our people, cherish Christ as the pearl above every other interest, and cast the net widely with wisdom and discernment.

Then, here and now, amid the joys and wounds of Asia, we shall indeed see greater things.

Amen.

Closing Speech
Bishop Antonius Subianto Bunjamin OSC
The President of the Bishops' Conference of Indonesia
26 July 2026

We have seen greater things

Your Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Special Envoy of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, Your Eminences, Your Beatitudes, Your Excellencies, Reverent Fathers, Religious, dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we conclude this Twelfth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, we give thanks to God for the grace of these days of prayer, discernment, dialogue, walking and living together. Inspired by the Lord's promise to Nathanael, "*You will see greater things*" (Jn 1:50), we have renewed our commitment as the baptised to walk together as a synodal Church and to become bridges of reconciliation, compassion, hope, and peace throughout Asia.

Together with the bishops and faithful of Indonesia, we express our heartfelt gratitude to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV for his message of encouragement to deepen a Eucharistic spirituality in our local churches, to Cardinal Oswald Gracias for representing the Holy Father, to Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao and the FABC leadership (central committee who entrust the 12th plenary Assembly to the Bishops' conference of Indonesia, to all members of steering Committee under the guidance of Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David, Cardinal Tarcisio Isao Kikhuci, Fr. Bill William LaRousse, and Organizing Committee under the leadership of Bishop Adrianus Sunarko OFM, Father Jatmiko, and Mr. Aristotle, all volunteers, benefactors, delegates and participants who enriched us, and to everyone (all of you) whose generous service has made this Assembly a grace-filled experience. Of course, we also thank the Government of Indonesia, Government of Jakarta, local authorities, religious leaders,

and Cardinal Ignatius Suharto, the Archdiocese of Jakarta and the Catholic Church in Indonesia, for their warm hospitality.

As we are about to end the Eucharist here at Jakarta Cathedral and will walk through the Tunnel of Friendship to the Istiqlal Mosque, may this become a lasting sign of our commitment to dialogue, mutual respect, and fraternity; implementing the spirit of *Laudato Sì* and *Fratelli tutti*, bringing the peace of the Lord to everyone and making our common home better.

The Assembly is ending, but our mission continues. We will go home as the living document, sharing the joyful experience of seeing greater things and spreading out the peaceful message of the Plenary Assembly. May the Holy Spirit send us forth with renewed courage and joy, so that many may indeed see greater things becoming more and more brothers and sisters to each other.

May Mary, Mother of the Church, Queen of Asia, and Star of Evangelization, accompany us always.

Thank you, and may God bless us all.

FINAL MESSAGE
XII PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE FEDERATION OF ASIAN
BISHOPS' CONFERENCES

“You will see greater things...” (Jn 1:50)

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, and to all peoples of goodwill in Asia.

Grace and peace from the Lord Jesus.

Gathered in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 20 to 26 July 2026, as bishops of Asia together with delegates, partners, and friends from many parts of the world, we give thanks to God for the gift of our communion and for the opportunity to journey together in this Twelfth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

The Lord's promise to Nathanael has accompanied us throughout these days: “You will see greater things.” Like Nathanael, we came carrying our own questions, concerns, and limitations, as well as our hopes and aspirations. Like him, we encountered the Lord who knows each of us personally and who gently invites us to lift our eyes beyond our fears, prejudices and unbelief toward the greater horizon of God's Kingdom.

Throughout these days of prayer, listening, silence, and Conversations in the Spirit, we experienced anew that synodality is not merely a method of working together; it is, above all, a path of conversion that is directed towards mission. Before it transforms our structures, it transforms our hearts. Before it renews our institutions, it renews our relationships.

As we discerned together, a broad consensus emerged that, now more than ever, the Church in Asia is called to be a bridge and a bridge-builder through ongoing synodal conversion, embracing the rich diversity of our cultures and peoples.

The challenges we face - polarization, the collapse of global institutions, culture of power, rapid technological change, migration, ecological degradation, shrinking democratic spaces, and widening social and economic inequalities - are not viewed merely as obstacles

to overcome. Rather, they are recognized as opportunities for renewed missionary witness, inviting the Church to embody the Gospel more authentically through education, interreligious dialogue, hospitality, care for our common home, and a deeper commitment to human dignity and solidarity.

Within the Church itself, we also acknowledge the persistent challenge of clericalism, which can hinder communion, participation, and co-responsibility among all the baptized. This calls us to ongoing pastoral and synodal conversion, fostering a culture of listening, shared discernment, and servant leadership.

We leave this Assembly with a renewed conviction that Christ himself is the living Bridge between heaven and earth, between God and humanity, among peoples, and between humanity and our common home. To follow Him is for us to become bridges and bridge-builders in His name, in our own time and place.

In Asia, a continent blessed with ancient civilizations, vibrant major religions,¹ and youthful peoples,² we are being called to be bridges and bridge-builders: bridges of trust and dialogue where others erect walls of suspicion; bridges of peace where violence and conflict divide communities; bridges of compassion where the poor, the vulnerable, and the excluded long for dignity; and bridges of hope for young people searching for meaning amid rapid social and technological change, global fragmentation, and the ecological crisis threatening our common home.

Our journey in Indonesia has given us a powerful symbol of our vocation. As we walked the Tunnel of Friendship, linking Jakarta's Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption and the Istiqlal Mosque, we are reminded once again that our faith calls us to build bridges, not barriers.

As told to us by Pope Leo XIV at this Assembly, stronger communion among the local Churches is essential for the Church in Asia to fulfill its mission as a bridge-builder in culturally and religiously diverse societies.

¹ *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 6.

² *Ibid.*, n. 47; *Bangkok Document*, nn. 90-95.

We now return home inspired to become a missionary synodal Church that listens deeply, opens doors, crosses boundaries, and accompanies all people with humility and hope.

We renew our commitment to walk together in an ecumenical way as a missionary synodal Church with our neighbor-religions and cultures, recognizing them as fellow pilgrims seeking truth, justice, peace, and the care of our common home.

We recommit ourselves to listen to the wisdom of Asia's peoples and cultures, to walk with the poor and vulnerable as companions, and to embrace the urgent call to ecological conversion so that future generations may inherit a world that reflects the Creator's goodness.

May Mary, Mother of Asia and Mother of the Church, accompany us on this pilgrimage. May the Holy Spirit continue to lead us in communion, participation, and mission. And may Christ, the living Bridge, make us instruments of connection and reconciliation so that all peoples may discover in Him the fullness of life.

Let us walk together with the sure hope of seeing greater things.

For the Members of the XII Plenary Assembly of the FABC:

+ Filipe Neri Card. Ferrão



✠ **Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrão**

Archbishop of Goa and Daman
President of FABC

26 July 2026

Published August 2026

FABC Papers:

192. Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Francis in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, and Singapore, 2 to 13 September 2024, September 2024
193. Follow-up of FABC 50 *Bangkok Document*, Workshop for Rectors of the Major Seminaries, 28th April to 1st May 2025. May 2025
194. *Praedicate Evangelium* – Development Process, Hermeneutics, and Significance for the Church. Using the Preamble, Principles, and General Norms of PE as Examples, by Josef Sayer. September 2025
195. Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies, October 24 to 26, 2025, Rome. December 2025
196. Synodal Assembly on the Mission of the Christian Family in Asia. Camillian Pastoral Care Center, 11 – 15 May 2026. June 2026
197. “Synod on Synodality and Ecumenism: Ecclesial Unity for Effective Witness in Asia” by Archbishop Felix Machado, Chairman, OEIA-FABC. June 2026

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 online in PDF format on the FABC website: www.fabc.org. To facilitate access and research of all of the FABC Papers, various indexes are available in FABC Papers Nos. 100, 125, 150, and 183. 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: secretariat@fabc.org.