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Foreword

By Bibiana Joo-Hyun Ro

Executive Secretary of AsIPA(BEC)

Desk of Office of Laity and Family (since September 2010)



Bread broken and word shared in sccs/becs

We have held the AsIPA General Assembly five times since 1996. The theme was on “the Asian Integral Pastoral Approach”, “a New Way of Being Church in the New Millennium”, “SCCs/BECs Empowering People to Serve”, “SCCs/BECs towards a Church of Communion”, and “Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs - Living the Eucharist”. As we see all the previous themes, we have made efforts to implement the vision of a “communion of communities” through SCCs/BECs based on our context today. The assembly has become a solid, inspiring, enriching basis of nourishing SCCs/BECs in sharing the experiences of the grassroots and SCC animating teams from each country of Asia.

On behalf of AsIPA (BEC) desk, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the local organizers and volunteers of the Archdiocese of Davao, Bishops of the Office of Laity & Family of the FABC, the AsIPA Resource Team, our benefactors and all the participants of the 5th AsIPA General Assembly for their participation, openness, sharing, friendship and contribution.

Especially, I sincerely congratulate Cora Mateo and Wendy Louis on completing their ministry fruitfully as executive secretaries of AsIPA (BEC) desk and thank them for their zeal, devotion and commitment to building up the communion of communities in Asia over the last two decades.

We believe God is always among us in the journey of forming Christian communities towards the world. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide us to develop the AsIPA General Assemblies in the light of the Word and encourage SCCs/BECs to practice the Word in memory of Jesus Christ (Lk. 22:19).

Acknowledgements

1. Archbishop Capalla, Archbishop of Davao, our host, for the wonderful hospitality extended to us before and during the General Assembly
2. AsIPA Resource Team for their dedication and hard work in facilitating the Assembly.
3. The Local Organising Team led by Bishop George Rimando and Fr Pete Lamata for their untiring efforts in preparing the welcome, the administration, logistics, local exposure programmes & documentation.
4. The Rector and Staff of REMASE for the great effort put in to ready the place for an international gathering and for handling the registration.
5. To our Mission partners who supported us financially to make this event possible – MISSIO Munich, MISSIO Aachen, Propaganda Fide and the Asian Bishops' Conferences that made generous contributions.
6. Archbishop Orlando Quevedo OMI, secretary general of FABC for always encouraging us.
7. Bishop Luis Antonio Tagle for his inspiring presentation of the Keynote Address.
8. Bishop Fritz Lobinger for accepting to present a topic at short notice.
9. Bishop Oswald Hirmer for accepting to present a topic in spite of his poor health.
10. To our fraternal delegates from Germany, South Africa, Papua New Guinea, Switzerland and the UK who have accompanied the AsIPA process all these years.
11. Bishops and participants attending who beautifully and energetically led our Eucharistic celebrations.
12. The Sisters of the Presentation of Mary for their warm hospitality.
13. FABC AsIPA Desk – Ms Cora Mateo and Wendy M Louis for organizing the event with the local team and for this documentation.
14. Photo credits are all due to Mr. Werty Desquitado.
15. Permission to reprint talks was obtained from all the various resource persons.
16. The team in Singapore who painstakingly deciphered all the handwriting to type and edit, layout and design this publication.

Introduction

By Cora Mateo

Executive Secretary

FABC OLF - AsIPA Desk 1993 - 2009



bread broken and word shared in sccs/becs

The 5th AsIPA General Assembly in Davao was a source of joy to meet again former friends and pastoral leaders and trainers who have used, reflected, translated and renewed the AsIPA process through the years, since 1993. We have had many chances to go beyond distances, cultural and language barriers to share our achievements and struggles because we hold the same vision of a "Participatory Church... a Communion of communities," and our development of a method to move towards that vision.

An equal reason for rejoicing was to see how the vision and the methodology gave inspiration and challenge to those who were new in the AsIPA way. We gained new friends both during the sessions and in our immersion in the parishes.

Like previous General Assemblies, GA 5 also posed to us many challenges. And this one in Davao City was a particular one, being confronted with other methods of starting and sustaining SCCs/BECs. The contrast highlighted areas that we affirm and areas that need more attention and new training modules.

It was a grace-filled event that prompted a deep gratitude to our loving God for giving us this mission to contribute to renewal. And I thank most wholeheartedly the partnership with the AsIPA Resource Team (ART) members, the Bishops who articulated, believed and supported the realization of the vision, the trainers and benefactors with their eagerness to learn and to support, and for GA 5, especially to our host, the Davao Archdiocese who took a venture that brought in new experiences of joint efforts. May God look with merciful love on all those instances of being "bread broken and Word shared..." and allow them to bear fruit in God's time.



Preface

by Wendy Louis

AsIPA Desk 2009-2010

Executive Secretary Office of Laity and Family 2010 –

bread broken and word shared in sccs/becs

The 5th General Assembly of AsIPA held in Davao in the Southern Philippines had its fair share of challenges. It was a rich kaleidoscope of experiences from all over Asia and our partners in Germany. There were a large number of participants from many dioceses in the Philippines who wanted to compare the AsIPA way of building communities and the one they had been using for many years already. The theme also brought many who are concerned that our SCCs are not living the Eucharist and indeed, many have little access to regular Eucharistic celebrations. In this context many wished to hear and see how Small Christian Communities could be “bread broken and word shared”.

A more personal challenge for me in taking over from Cora Mateo as Executive Secretary of the AsIPA Desk was to co-organize the general assembly. Due to frequent interventions from the Holy Spirit and the hard work of many people the assembly went wonderfully well in spite of the heat, many last minute changes required and the security issues. One major hiccup was that half way through the assembly, the main documentation secretary had to leave which meant that the last days of the Assembly were not documented or were just

made up of papers collected from groups and pieced together. This is also the reason for some delays in producing this publication.

The documentation of a General Assembly serves the purpose of continuity from previous assemblies where themes are developed and the growth of SCCs in various countries or regions are recorded although not in any scientific way. The loss of much data during this assembly is much regretted and we apologize to those countries that are not well covered in this report.

The assemblies have grown far beyond the group of friends and pastoral associates that it was at its inception. The assembly as an authoritative body to approve AsIPA Texts has not been possible in the last two assemblies as many participants have not used the materials or entered into the approach. We are delighted by this burgeoning growth of SCCs/ BECs and we would like to find ways to maintain the assemblies as a place for genuine friendship, exchange and mutual encouragement.

This publication has been kept lighter by putting all the country reports onto a CD which is attached to the inside back cover of this publication.

We hope that you will find the talks and processes interesting and useful.

Wendy M Louis
Executive Secretary
FABC OLF and Women's Desk
May 2010 -

“Do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19)
Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs

Programme

Day One - Tuesday October 20th 2009

- 9.00a.m. Registration
- 3.00p.m. Tea
- 3.30p.m. Departure from REMASE to go to the Cathedral
- 5.00p.m. Opening Eucharist at the Cathedral Presider Apostolic Nuncio His Excellency Edward Adams
- 7.00p.m. Welcome dinner & cultural show at REMASE (Regional Major Seminary) Introduction of participants and local staff members

Day Two – Wednesday October 21st 2009 Facilitators Arthur Pereira & Wendy Louis

- 7.00a.m. Breakfast
- 8.30a.m. Bible Enthronement
- 8.45a.m. Orientation – reading of messages
Local team’s announcements
Programme for coming days
Selection of steering committee and drafting committee
- 9.45a.m. Gospel Sharing 7 Steps – Luke 12:39-48
- 10.45a.m. Tea Break
- 11.15a.m. Country/Regional groups report
- 12.30p.m. Lunch (XACOSE)
- 2.30p.m. Country/Regional groups report
- 3.00p.m. Tea Break
- 3.30p.m. Interactive shared reporting
- 5.00p.m. Response to the reports - Archbishop Romulo Valles
- 5.30p.m. Break
- 6.00p.m. Holy Mass – South East Asia 2 -
Presider – Archbishop Paul Grawng of Mandalay, Myanmar
- 7.00p.m. Dinner
- 8.00p.m. Pastoral Sharing: Fr. Albert Rabe and Team from Nueva Segovia

Day Three – Thursday October 22nd 2009 Facilitators Thomas Vijay & Estela Padilla

- 7.00a.m. Breakfast
- 8.30a.m. Opening Prayer
- 8.35a.m. Keynote Address “SCCs/BECs as Eucharistic Communities”
by Bishop Luis Antonio Tagle of Imus, Cavite, Philippines
- 9.30a.m. Country Groups examine how SCCs can become more Eucharistic
- 10.30a.m. Tea Break
- 11.00a.m. Panel of Bishops and Bishop Luis Antonio Tagle who were at FABC 9th Plenary Assembly share insights.
Time for feedback from country groups and further discussion with Bishop Luis Antonio Tagle
- 12.30p.m. Lunch
- 2.30p.m. Gospel Sharing Bible Mirror Method
Introduction & experience in mixed groups
- 5.30p.m. Break
- 6.00p.m. Holy Mass – East Asia,
Presider - Bishop Peter Kang U-il of Cheju, S. Korea.
- 7.00p.m. Dinner
- 8.00p.m. Pastoral Sharing – Fr. Elmer and team of the National BEC office, Philippines.

Day Four – Friday October 23rd 2009 Facilitators Rohan Dominic & Albert Rabe

- 7.00a.m. Breakfast
- 8.30a.m. Gospel Sharing – Bible Mirror Method in mixed groups
- 9.30a.m. Talk: “Evangelization and SCCs/BECs”
by Bishop Fritz Lobinger
- 10.15a.m. Group work for deepening and discussion
- 12.30p.m. Lunch

- 2.30p.m. Introduction to Amos Programs
– Bishop Oswald Hirmer
- 3.30p.m. Tea Break
- 4.00p.m. Amos Programs continued
- 6.00p.m. Holy Mass – South Asia 1,
Presider – Bishop Vincent Kypmat of Jowai,
N. India.
- 7.00p.m. Dinner
- 8.00p.m. Introduction for Exposure
– History of BECs in Philippines
Fr. Amado L. Picardal

Day Five – Saturday October 24th 2009
Facilitators Cora Mateo and Rita Chen

- 7.00a.m. Holy Mass – South East Asia 2
Presider – Archbishop Nicholas Chia,
Singapore.
- 8.30a.m. Breakfast (All at REMASE)
- 9.00a.m. Departure for exposure(DaDiTaMa* Region)
- 10.00a.m. Bishops' Meeting
(Archbishop/Clergy House)
with AsIPA Resource Team
- 12.30p.m. Lunch
- 2.30p.m. Bishops and others leave for exposure

Day Six – Sunday October 25th 2009
Local Organising Committee

Morning Exposure in parishes
(interaction with parish centers)

Afternoon Travel to REMASE/Free Time/Books /Country Exhibits

Day Seven – Monday October 26th 2009
Facilitators Arthur Pereira & Wendy Louis

- 7.00a.m. Breakfast
- 8.30a.m. Gospel Sharing using Amos programmes
- 9.30a.m. Reflection on Exposure in country groups
- 10.30a.m. Tea Break
- 11.00a.m. Plenary sharing of insights
- 11.30a.m. Methodology and modules in AsIPA
- 12.30p.m. Lunch
- 2.30p.m. Methodology and modules in AsIPA
continued
- 3.30p.m. Reading of First Draft of Final Statement

- 4.00p.m. Tea Break
- 5.30p.m. Holy Mass (XACOSE) Philippines,
Presider - Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona
– FABC OLF Chairman, Prelature of Infanta,
Philippines.
- 6.30p.m. Travel to Mergrande
- 7.00p.m. Dinner (Mergrande)
- 7.30p.m. Cultural Evening (Mergrande)

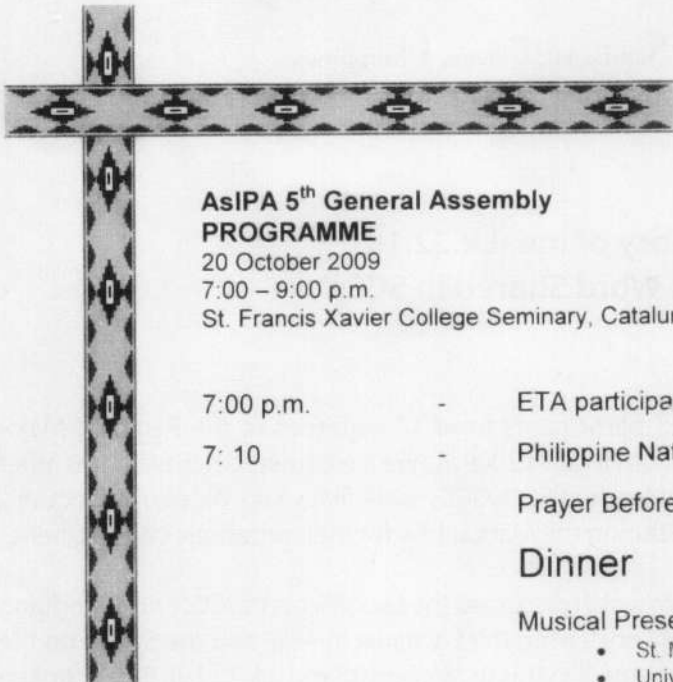
Day Eight – Tuesday October 27th 2009
Facilitators Cora Mateo and Bibiana Ro

- 7.00a.m. Breakfast
- 8.30a.m. Gospel Sharing using 7 step method with
evaluation
- 9.30a.m. Presentation of Progress on Research
Project - Fr. Jeyaraj Rasiah SJ
- 10.30a.m. Tea Break
- 11.00a.m. Planning in country/regional groups
- 12.30p.m. Lunch
- 2.30p.m. Evaluation
- 3.00p.m. Second Reading of Final Statement &
Evaluation
- 5.00p.m. Closing Eucharist– South Asia 2,
Presider – Bishop Kingsley Swampillai of
Batticaloa Trincomalee Sri Lanka
- 6.00p.m. Dinner & Farewells

Day Nine – Wednesday October 28th 2009
Tour/ART Review & Planning Meeting at Retreat House

- 7.00a.m. Breakfast
- 8.00a.m. Departure to Philippine Eagle / ART Team
Meeting & Evaluation
- 9.00a.m. Departure for more exposure
(DaDiTaMa Region*)
- 11.00a.m. Holy Mass & Lunch
(Sto. Nino Shrine) with Davao Team
- 12.00p.m. City Tour (Aldevinco, People's Park)
- 6.30p.m. Dinner at NCC Mall
- 8.30p.m. Back to REMASE

(*) *Davao, Digos, Tagum, Mati Region*



AsIPA 5th General Assembly

PROGRAMME

20 October 2009

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

St. Francis Xavier College Seminary, Catalunan Grande, Davao City

7:00 p.m. - ETA participants from San Pedro Cathedral

7:10 - Philippine National Anthem

Prayer Before Meal

Dinner

Musical Presentations:

- St. Mary of the Perpetual Rosary Rondalla
- University of Immaculate Conception Choir

7:30 - Acknowledgement of Participants

- Choral Rendition
UIC Choir

- The Archdiocese of Davao: A Video Presentation

7:40 - Dances

- Holy Cross of Davao Colleges
- University of Immaculate Conception

8:00 - Welcome Words: The City Mayor of Davao

Welcome Message

Most Rev. Rolando Tirona, DD
Chairman, FABC-OLF

8:10 - A Token of Appreciation to the Apostolic Nuncio
Archbishop Edward J. Adams
By: Bp. Rolando Tirona & Wendy Louis

8:25 - Orientation
By: Wendy Louis, Exec. Sec. of AsIPA Desk

8:50 - Diamond Jubilee Hymn

- Rest!



Final Statement Of 5th General Assembly Of AsIPA

Held at Regional Major Seminary, Davao, Philippines
From October 20th - 28th 2009.

“Do this in Memory of me (Lk.22:19): Bread Broken and Word Shared in SCCs”

1 Preamble

- 1.1 The 5th AsIPA General Assembly gathered 225 participants from 17 countries at the Regional Major Seminary, Davao city, Philippines from October 20th to 28th 2009. As we are gathered here we remember that this is the land where some 40 years ago the seeds of BECs/SCCs were first sown. We also respectfully remember the BEC leaders who were martyred during the Martial Law for their prophetic commitment.
- 1.2 Linking with the previous assembly in Trivandrum which discussed the sacraments in SCCs and continuing the reflections of the 9th FABC Plenary Assembly on, “Living the Eucharist in Asia” and the Synod on the ‘Word of God’ in Rome, this assembly took the theme “Do this in Memory of me (Lk.22:19): Bread Broken and Word Shared in SCCs”. We shared how the Word and the Eucharist were lived in the SCCs and we were challenged as to how SCCs can become catalysts of integral evangelization.

2 Asian Realities in SCCs.

- 2.1 One of the tangible results of SCCs is the interest in the Word of God. Many members own a Bible and make efforts to know the Bible better.
- 2.2 One of the most visible fruits of SCCs sharing and living the Word is the growing sense of belonging in these communities.
- 2.3 Being guided by the Word of God, SCCs in participating countries are growing in their commitment to reach out to those in need in the neighbourhood and are enabled to read the ‘signs of the times’ and respond in the light of the Gospel.
- 2.4 Confirming what Pope John Paul II stated in Redemptoris Missio para 51, in many countries SCCs have become centres for daily catechesis and contextualized faith formation. They are agents of evangelization in their own way in the local context, enabling the community to take responsibility for the mission of sharing the message of Christian hope, peace and joy with their neighbours.
- 2.5 Although participation in Eucharistic celebrations has increased because of active involvement in SCCs; in many parts of Asia the communities are not able to celebrate the Sunday Eucharist regularly due to the lack of ordained ministers.
- 2.6 In some countries especially in the cities, due to the heavy schedule of work and travel, many SCCs have a low attendance for the Eucharist and for Gospel Sharing.

2.7 The experience of Gospel Sharing 'sharing the word' has shown that the Word of God is as important as the 'breaking of bread' in leading SCCs to a Christ experience. The participants also acknowledged the various other methods and approaches used in different Asian countries to break the Word of God in SCCs.

2.8 The experience of the various Gospel Sharing methods and the Eucharistic celebrations during this Assembly made us aware of the social and political realities in the region and how the SCCs are a sign of hope.

3 Theological Insights.

3.1 "Do this in memory of me"

Both the Word and the Bread as sources of eternal life are integral parts of the memory of Jesus that SCCs celebrate in the Eucharist and keep alive in their communities.
(cf. FABC 9, 2009, Message)

3.2 "Word Shared"

SCCs gather for regular sharing of the Word of God, for "human beings do not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt.4:4). The faith of the community is born out of and strengthened by listening to and sharing the Word of God which nourishes their faith and deepens the bond of communion, building up the community. (Ephesians 4:15-16)

3.3 "Bread broken"

"The Eucharistic community is constitutive of the invisible communion with God in Jesus and the Spirit and the visible communion of all people" (Ecclesia de Eucharistia. 35). The one bread and one cup of wine made from many grains of wheat and grapes crushed, is symbolic of the many members of the body of Christ unified in the Eucharist and of the gathering of all the people in the Kingdom. The breaking of the bread celebrates, deepens and fosters communion manifested in the spirit of unity, participation and sharing in the SCCs. The Eucharist makes present the total self-giving and sacrificial love of Jesus (John10:17) so that we may have life in abundance (John10:10).

3.4 "Mission"

At the recently concluded 9th plenary assembly of FABC, the Asian bishops stated "we are convinced that meaningful, contemplative, experiential and prayerful celebration of the Eucharist has the potential to render the Christian communities of Asia powerful witnesses of Jesus, witnesses who are bearers of his presence, his love, and his healing power".(cf. Final Message). The Breaking of the Word and the Bread challenges the SCCs to share all the diverse charisms and gifts given by the Spirit and use them to build up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12) and carry out their mission to the world.

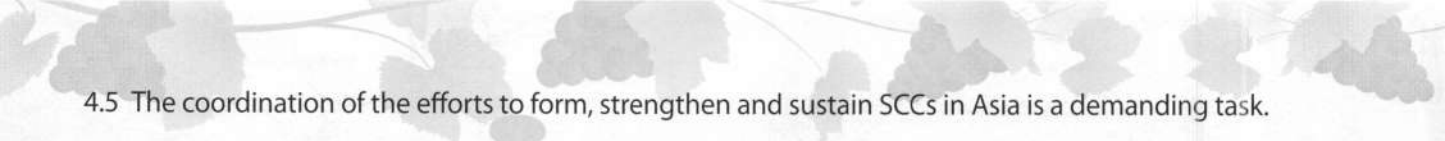
4 Challenges and Recommendations.

4.1 The presence of a large number of passive and un-churched members in our parishes is a great challenge to the SCCs.

4.2 In several Asian countries the socio-economic problems caused by migration, poverty and cultural upheavals are adversely affecting family life. The SCCs are called to respond to these realities in the light of the gospel.

4.3 Impelled by the Word of God, the SCCs are called to get involved in the social transformation of oppressive structures, based on the values of the Kingdom.

4.4 The Church is challenged to face the reality of finding ways and means of making the Eucharist an integral part of the life of the community.

- 
- 4.5 The coordination of the efforts to form, strengthen and sustain SCCs in Asia is a demanding task.
 - 4.6 The spirit of the 'new way of being Church' challenges SCC leaders and other Church leaders to exercise a non-dominating and facilitative style of leadership.
 - 4.7 The SCCs are called to integrate faith and daily life from the Eucharistic celebration so that their lives become sources of healing, unity and reconciliation.
 - 4.8 The SCCs nourished by the Eucharist should become 'Open Doors' for faith seekers.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The Assembly gained a deeper understanding of the significant role SCCs can play both in celebrating Eucharist meaningfully and living it out in their daily lives.
- 5.2 In the light of discussions and sharing during the assembly the participants strongly felt that SCCs be exhorted to work harder to animate its members to take the Word and the Eucharist more seriously into their lives.
- 5.3 We are deeply grateful to Archbishop Fernando Capalla and his local team of organizers at the Seminary & other residence: For the exposure programme and for the SCCs / GKKs for their generous hospitality and hard work. We also acknowledge with gratitude the generous support given to us by MISSIO Germany and others who contributed towards the fund. FABC Office of Laity and Family, AsIPA desk for overall coordination work.
- 5.4 Finally we raise our hearts in gratitude and prayer to our Almighty Father through Jesus his Son and the Spirit that we may be continually led to grow as communities Sharing the Word and Breaking the Bread. We intercede to our Blessed Mother who guided the first community to live out the Word and the Eucharist, to be our source of inspiration and transformation. May we be given the grace to die as a grain of wheat to give new life in and through SCCs. "THY KINGDOM COME HERE IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD"

Welcome Address

By Chairman - FABC Office of Laity & Family
Very Reverend Rolando J. Tria Tirona, OCD DD.



bread broken and word shared in secs/secs

Day One - Tuesday October 20th 2009

Your Excellency Most Rev. Archbishop Fernando Capalla, Archbishop of Davao, Your Excellency Most Rev. Archbishop Edward Joseph Adams, Papal Nuncio to the Philippines, Your Excellencies, Archbishops and Bishops of Asia, Fathers, Religious Sisters and Brothers, faithful practitioners and friends of ASIIPA.

Dear Friends,

Mabuhay, Welcome to the Philippines! Welcome again to the Archdiocese of Davao! Welcome to Davao City in the island of Mindanao, the Land of Promise.

Soon after Philippine Independence was proclaimed on July 4, 1946 from the American regime, the newly established Philippine government embarked on a massive program of inviting, and resettling Filipinos living in other island to explore, settle and develop the vast and rich island of Mindanao. The slogan used to draw attention to Mindanao was: Mindanao, the island of Promise!

To date there are 22 million Filipinos who have eventually made their homes and work in this island. For many, Mindanao was indeed a land of Promise. Through sheer hard work, courage and tenacity, through blood, sweat and tears, and especially through their living faith in God, many Filipino settlers have found fulfillment and a home in this enchanted island. Mindanao has fulfilled their dreams. It was a land of Promise fulfilled.

Vatican II, in a similar way, was an event in the life of the Church that offered promise to the faithful. Vatican II, reminds us, that our church, the Body of Christ, is a church of promise. It offered a promise of a new way of experiencing and of being the people of God. It embarked on exploring more meaningful and relevant ways of worship and celebration. It courageously highlighted and encouraged the prophetic role of the Church in situations of injustice and oppression. It confessed its own failures and infidelities, and made this humbling act as the first step to assume vigorously once again its vocation to preach the Good News of Salvation. It humbly recognized the richness and wisdom in other faiths. And, specifically for the pastoral life of the Church, Vatican II became a promise of participation, of solidarity and subsidiarity and communion, to be transformed into committed action. Vatican II was a daring promise of creative fidelity and creative continuity to peoples of different cultures in the world.

Driven by the inspiration and promises of Vatican II, the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) launched a common response to the many challenges of the people of Asia. Dialogue became FABC's pastoral banner. The Church in Asia dared to take the initiative to dialogue with other religious faiths, to dialogue with its diverse cultures, with the majority poor of Asia and with the marginalized indigenous people. Prayer and contemplation became FABC's spiritual impetus recognizing Asia as the well-spring of rich and deep spiritualities.

FABC through AsIPA, its pastoral strategy, appropriates the promises of Vatican II for a more participatory, just, relational and Spirit imbued experience of being the People of God, AsIPA is an approach, a way of fostering and enhancing the New Way of Being Church towards a 'communion of communities' of Christ and in Christ, in the vast and diverse continent of Asia. In its celebration of the Word of God, the Breaking of the Bread, and the commissioning of the community into mission, AsIPA highlights the source and summit of experiencing a New Way of Being a Church, namely: The Most Holy Eucharist. With the Most Holy Eucharist, the Church with its BECs/SCCs, is promised a life that knows how to continue to struggle, to explore, to act and to strongly believe and hope for a relevant present and a brighter future.

As pilgrims from all over Asia, we come together in the Archdiocese of Davao, our generous host, in Davao City, in Mindanao. We come together to reflect on the theme: "Do this in memory of me' (Lk 22:19). Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs". As we gather here for this important 5th AsIPA General Assembly, let us, like the early settlers of Mindanao, be filled with an indomitable human spirit and deep faith in God. Imbued with the life giving spirit of Vatican II and of the original dwellers and pioneer settlers who built Mindanao, may this 5th AsIPA General Assembly be for us a promise and fulfillment of being the Church that the Triune God wants us to be.

On behalf of my brother Bishops and the Executive Secretaries in the Office of the Laity and Family of FABC, and in particular of the AsIPA desk, again I welcome you all to the 5th AsIPA General Assembly!

Mabuhay!
+ **Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona OCD DD**
Chairman, FABC OLF
Bishop of the Prelature of Infanta, Philippines

Welcome Message

From Hon. Rodrigo R. Duterte, City Mayor

*Delivered by his representative City Councilor Edgar Ibuyan.
To the 5th General Assembly of ASIIPA.*



bread broken and word shared in sccs/bees

At the outset, may I, on behalf of the more than a million people of this city, welcome with great pleasure and honor the Catholic Bishops, Priests, Religious and Lay Leaders from 17 countries in Asia to Davao City for your 5th General Assembly on the method of Building Basic Christian Communities called Asian Integral Pastoral Approach.

Davao City is home to over a million people. Based on recent statistics, the most dominant group is the Roman Catholic at 83.83%, other Christian groups comprise 15% and the remaining 1.17% belong to other faiths (Islam, Buddhism, etc.). This perhaps is the reason for the all-pervading influence which the Catholic faith has in terms of molding not only spiritually guided, morally conscious citizens but also in building a better city by bringing good news to its flock.

We take pleasure in your presence here tonight. May I take this opportunity to also highlight what our city can offer with pride to our honored guests. With more convention and exhibition centers being established that have complemented other excellent tourism facilities, our city has steadily positioned itself as the Convention Center of the Philippine South in the 21st Century.

Modern, sophisticated, and state of the art facilities and equipment for conventions and conferences are now readily available. This is equally complemented by the establishment of new first class hotels and mountain resorts bringing the number of hotel rooms from around 500 in 1980 to over 2,500 in 1999. Yet, the demand for more hotel rooms is projected to increase now that the City has more tourism products, services and facilities to offer.

We have exceedingly surpassed the people's expectations and have become billion-peso earners in terms of revenue because of the booming business activities. This commercial success gives us inspiration and prompts us to devote ourselves tirelessly to continue with what we have started and make Davao City the first if not the best business center in Mindanao and in the Asia-Pacific region and as a haven of peace as well.

On this note, may I again extend, with heartfelt amity, a warm welcome to all of you to Davao City and may we share a common vision to make our people truly feel fortunate, happy, prosperous and successful.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!
Rodrigo R. Duterte
City Mayor
Davao City, Mindanao, Philippines



Message

From His Excellency Stanislaw Cardinal Rylko,
Pontifical Council for the Laity

To Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona OCD and 5th General Assembly of ASIIPA,

bread broken and word shared in sccs/bees

March 25th 2009

Your Excellency,

I thank you for your letter of February 24th, with which you, on behalf of the Office of the Laity and Family of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, extend an invitation to me to attend the Fifth General Assembly of the ASIIPA that will take place in the Philippines from 20-28 October 2009.

The interesting theme of the General Assembly- that of sharing the Eucharist and the Word of God in Small Christian Communities – is of great importance for nourishing the life of the laity and the family.

However, the ASIIPA Assembly happens to coincide with the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. Due to my office, I must be present at this Synod and consequently, I regret that I cannot attend the Assembly in the Philippines.

Nonetheless, I sincerely hope that this Fifth General Assembly can be a fruitful moment of reflection for the people of Asia, who, strengthened by the Holy Eucharist and the Divine Word of God, can be the leaven of the Gospel within the society.

Sincerely yours in Christ
Stanislaw Card, Rylko



Message

from Rev. Joseph G. Healey, M.M

Moderator – Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative
Website

To the 5th General Assembly of ASIIPA



On this first day of the 5th ASIIPA General Assembly in Davao City, Philippines I am delighted to send greetings from the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa. Our 90,000 SCCs in the eight countries of Eastern Africa, namely Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia are in solidarity with you and support your important discussions and planning. A Ugandan proverb says: One hand washes the other. May the continents of Asia and Africa join together in promoting SCCs as a new way of being church and a new model of church in our contemporary world.

Message

From Bishop Bosco Penha,
auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Bombay
To the 5th General Assembly of ASIIPA



bread broken and word shared in sccs/bcs

October 6th 2009

I am writing to send my greetings and prayerful good wishes to all those who are attending the 5th ASIIPA General Assembly. I had the good fortune to attend one of the earlier Assemblies and it was a beautiful experience. Unfortunately due to pressures of work, I am unable to attend this meeting. I thank the organizers for their kind invitation.

I have been very deeply involved with Small Christian Communities ever since 1980 when I was appointed Director of SCCs in my own Archdiocese of Mumbai. In 1989, I was elected as the Chairman of the Laity Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India. In that capacity, I worked systematically to spread SCCs throughout the country. Our work in Mumbai over the last twenty-five years has paid us rich dividends. We are now celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the SCCs in Mumbai. The recent survey shows us that there are over 2,000 communities and approximately 13,000 lay animators in this archdiocese.

I have thrown myself wholeheartedly into this programme during the last twenty five years because I believe that it is the only way to renewing the Church. To me, the Church has no meaning without the "love one another as I have loved you." I have been pained, at times, to find so little love in the Church. Many masses, many sacraments, many processions, many ceremonies, much of theology and bible reading but comparatively little love!

The SCCs challenge Catholics to place love at the heart of parish life. The miracle that is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 4:32-37) is wonderful "There was not a single person in want." I dream of a world where there is no one in want. It is difficult to reach the goal but we have to keep on trying and the SCCs are a means of getting there. I recall, with joy, numberless acts of love that take place in SCCs all over the archdiocese. They ensure that the Eucharist is not merely celebrated but lived out in every corner of the parish. We must continuously strive to wipe away the tear from every eye and bring a smile to every face.

All over the Asian continent, there is, thank God, an increasing army of people who work day in and day out to make this New Way of Being Church a reality. Many of them will be at this 5th ASIIPA General Assembly. I salute you all as collaborators in making a wonderful dream come true. May the Lord bless us and keep us working in building this Church of caring, sharing and mutual concern, as a specific catholic contribution to building a new world.

+ **Bosco Penha**
Director of SCCs
Archdiocese of Bombay, India

Press Release

Davao Catholic Archdiocese Hosts 5th Asian Church Leaders Assembly

bread broken and word shared in sces/bees

ARCHDIOCESE OF DAVAO **20 October 2009**

Beginning today, 20 October 2009, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Davao is hosting a week-long 5th Assembly of Asian Church leaders numbering almost 300 from 17 countries including a few from Europe. Thirty (30) of these are bishops. The rest are priests, religious and lay persons.

The opening liturgy starts at 5.00pm at the San Pedro Cathedral presided by the Pope's ambassador, Archbishop Edward Joseph Adams, apostolic nuncio to the Philippines. Archbishop Fernando R. Capalla will welcome the participants. City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte was invited to welcome the group in the name of the City Government.

Considered a big Church event in Asia, the assembly is the 5th gathering of leaders who are engaged in promoting a special methodology of building basic communities. The method is known as ASIIPA or Asian Integral Pastoral Approach, a program of the Office of Laity (OL) of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). The Chairman is Bishop Rolando Tirona of Infanta, Quezon. The OL staff headed by Cora Mateo and Wendy Louis and the local organizing group headed by Bishop George Rimando and Father Pedro Lamata have been preparing this assembly for several months. The main venue is the St. Francis Xavier Regional Major Seminary and College Seminary in Catalunan Grande, Davao City.

The main focus of the assembly is for the participants to share community building projects and experiences in the context of the Eucharist and the Word of God. The principal speaker is Bishop Luis Antonio Tagle of the Diocese of Imus in Cavite.

The participants will have the opportunity to visit our own basic communities or Gagmay'ng Kristohanong Katilingban (GKK) here and in Tagum City. It should be noted that the GKKs originated in Tagum Diocese some 40 years ago by the Maryknoll missionaries.

Our Realities – SCCS Living The Eucharist

Country and Regional Sharing and Discussion

bread broken and word shared in sccs/becs

Day Two - Wednesday 21st Oct 2009

Questions for Reporting:

1. How far has Eucharistic Celebration as breaking of the Bread and the Word been realized in the life of SCCs/BECs? Explain.
2. What perceptible change do you find as a result of the years of work done in your SCCs/BECs in the field of political participation, social transformation, facing fundamentalists difficulties, environmental issues, participative leadership and etc.?

Indonesia

1. Mass and breaking of bread and word is done as an obligation only and not in action. People come to mass just to follow an agenda. So the fruit of the Eucharist does not reach the life of the people.
2. Very few live the message of the Eucharist, Gospel reading and sharing done during mass although it prolongs the mass sharing of experience of the word is successful - Though not common among the faithful- some like it and Mass becomes lively.
3. Gospel sharing in small groups makes it possible to do charity such as a poor man gets capital to start a small business with the money collected and given to him.

Japan

1. First we would like to apologize because we cannot give the assembly the contribution expected from us. The Seven Step Gospel sharing is practiced mainly in Nagasaki and in Hiroshima's YAMAGUCAI-SHIMANE district but we have not yet succeeded in forming BECs.
2. Difficulties encountered in Japan concerning AsIPA
 - a. Besides the Bishop of Nagasaki, it seems that no other bishop is promoting it.
 - b. Only a few priests know what it is about
 - c. Things coming from abroad are looked upon with suspicion
 - d. Sense of community is weak
 - e. Sunday mass is separated from daily life
3. Some form of bible sharing is being done by different groups in the church (e.g. Legion of Mary, St. Vincent de Paul Society), but these groups are not as strong as in the past.
4. We admire the fact that many bishops, priests & sisters from other countries are in this assembly – and we feel that the Japanese church need to know the experience of the other Asian churches in order to realize her own place in Asia.
5. We have come here to learn and not so much to teach but it is our hope that in the future the Japanese church might contribute more to the AsIPA Assembly.

Korea

Reported by Fr. Michael Riordan, Diocese of Cheju, Korea

In the communities there are people of every age. We had concrete examples from the communities where the people as a community gave concrete help to someone within the community;

1 Breaking of Bread – Service to Others:

- a. There were many examples where upon discovering elderly people in the community the members of the BCC took it upon themselves to help the elderly with shopping, house cleaning, cooking etc. While they would have been aware of the people before it was only through the community they found a way to help.
- b. One elder lady who lived alone was hospitalized for a knee operation and the community visited her regularly; one member took it upon herself to keep her house clean, to make sure that anything she needed was brought to the hospital and later when she returned home they continued to help her with shopping etc.
- c. Another community had an elderly person living alone and they visited her daily to make sure she was all right and that she had anything she needed. Later when she was ill her family came and was embarrassed by the fact that their mother was being helped so much but appreciated it when they saw the relationship between their mother and the people. When the lady was dying it is usually a place for close family members only but some members of community stayed with her and the family when she was dying. The family had the sense that their mother had another family apart from them and were glad of it.
- d. In an area where there was a redevelopment plan – a situation that can lead to a lot of violence and anger and hurt one community decided to get involved but in a Christian way. They decided to work for justice for those who were in danger of being evicted, but not using violence and in a peaceful way.
- e. In a place where people were meeting once a month there was a burden on people to provide food or snacks for those who came – as a result of this some people didn't feel free to invite the community to meet in their house. Later as the meeting became more frequent (once a week) people decided that there would be a limit to the snacks. Through this and through the build up of trust among the members through bible sharing, members who were at first embarrassed to invite people to their home later felt free to do so and so felt more a part of and became a more active member of the community.
- f. In modern society many of the values of the past have been lost among them the value and importance of relationships. When some BCCs decided to meet once a week rather than once a month, many complained that once a month was already a burden on their time and so many felt it would not happen. When the once a week meetings were tried people developed deeper relationships and they realized the importance of relationships in their lives so in fact the attendance at meetings increased rather than diminish. It also got many members to work on relationships within their families as they realized what they had lost or neglected.

2 The Word

- a. Many Catholics in Korea had a sense that the Bible was a Protestant book. Through the BCCs they became close to the Word of God and began to link it to their life; in some cases it became a tool for reflection – realizing that they were living contrary to the values in the Gospels.
- b. People who were district leaders before the bible sharing took place wanted to quit but since the sharing became part of the process some felt the desire to continue to serve the community as leaders – they had been affected by the prayers.

- c. There was an example of no one wanting to be the district leader (over a few BCCs) and so the former person continued for a year until through prayer and sharing one of the members out of the blue offered to take on the task. She had been moved over the period by the prayer and sharing of the Word.
- d. There has been much opposition to the introduction of the BCCs by some priests and this in spite of the fact that the rationale and the need for the BCCs were explained in detail. One in charge of motivating the priests felt that having the vision was not enough – prayer and faith were also necessary.
- e. In a parish where the men district leaders nearly all wanted to quit as they felt the burden of contacting people about meetings who didn't want to be contacted and dreaded when the next meeting was coming up. The priest listened to them and showed that he understood their predicament and encouraged them to pray and to realize what they were doing was God's work and not a social event. At the next meeting of men leaders one reported that the change in attitude within himself made the task of contacting others easier and resulted with more people coming to the meeting than before. The need for faith and prayer among the leaders is essential.
- f. The German Bishops on their visit to SCCs in Korea were visibly touched not so much by the lectures and input but by the experience of attending the meetings in the people's homes. They could sense the work of the Spirit at the meetings and could see the depth of the faith of the people. The Word had an effect on the people and in the bishops present.

3 Question 2: Influence on the wider society

- a. Examples:
 - i. Members of the community taking turns in meeting children coming home from school on a particular street which was dangerous for them. As a result of this the atmosphere in the street changed.
 - ii. Communities involved in contacting and helping foreign workers and advocating on their behalf.
 - iii. Getting involved in the situation of people being threatened with eviction due to redevelopment.
 - iv. Helping the Homeless.
 - v. Helping foreign workers get their rights from local government.
 - vi. Involvement in protesting about the building of a naval base on the Island of Jeju and being involved in solidarity with other groups in the process.

Malaysia & Singapore

1 Question One

- a. People live as "My Family & I" with weak sense of community
- b. BECs tend to be very religious
- c. Members don't trust each other sometimes
- d. Poor attendance at BEC gatherings
- e. Some BECs at infant stage
- f. People don't see BECs as the small church
- g. The strengths obtained from Eucharist:

- i. The Eucharist has become the essence of their living and the Word broken has become a reality in the many activities e.g. community breakfast, assisting the poor and needy, assisting the aged by providing transport, by bringing communion to their homes, providing provisions, conducting the 7-step bible sharing, conducting rosary etc. These are organized and carried out consistently. Also seen in the BEC members, the hospitality and support provided to both migrant and illegal migrant workers. The generosity is also seen in their support towards the "orang asli" native people.
- ii. Some BECs raise funds on their own by selling candles during Easter eve Mass, selling flowers during X'mas, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day etc.. and use the money for formation and spiritual growth.
- iii. Their active participation during BECs sponsored Masses is absolutely remarkable as they spend time and take the initiative to practice so that everything goes smoothly on the day.

Therefore in conclusion, we are absolutely sure that the work of the Holy Spirit and the Eucharist lived and shared amongst all people are the roots of all good deeds carried out in BECs. In fact some BECs had the opportunity to have priest celebrating the Mass and explaining every part of the Mass so that people find the true meaning of sacrifice and love.

2 Question two: Influence on the wider society

- a. Illegal immigrants don't have the opportunity to attend Mass and so the BECs bring them together at their BECs and give them hospitality, share the Word of God, assist them to get the proper documents, find jobs for them, shelter and in some cases food.
- b. Some BECs visit the "Orang Asli" and buy them provisions, clothing and also share the Word of God.
- c. Some BECs work with the Prison Ministry to visit the prisons.
- d. Coming together to organize church events is a sign of unity. The BECs also get together in vigil to pray for peace and justice to prevail in the country, particularly in Malaysia.
- e. We are restricted and prohibited in exercising our faith openly, e.g. we are not allowed to use the word "Allah" and so the BECs offer prayers for divine intervention.
- f. The BECs also organize Christmas parties & caroling at BEC level and invite people of other faiths to join. They also work hand-in-hand to give support to the neighbourhood when the need arises.
- g. The BECs have come together to raise funds for church building, and disasters.
- h. Though all activities are done under the supervision of the Parish Priests normally the proposals and suggestions come from the people. So, in terms of leadership we have either nil or minimal challenges.

Myanmar

1. Breaking the word is realized to some extent. The other question to be asked is how fruitful it is. Do the homilies delivered relevant to the life of the people?
2. Freedom of expression even during mass is restricted and so it becomes an obstacle in breaking the word to reflect the real life situation.
3. Small actions done after the 7 step Bible sharing make it possible to visit the sick and giving a sack of rice to the needy.
4. Pastoral visit to the rural areas could be very lively as people are close to each other, very different from the people from urban areas where people are strangers to each other and they come to church as guests. The rural people have the opportunity to have services in their mother tongue.

Papua New Guinea

1. People living in far remote areas in Papua New Guinea have mass only once or twice in a year. So SCCs are already breaking word in cells and in communities as the priests cannot come. The SCC's in groups of families break word. They know the upbringing of the SCC's. When in some communities the enthusiasm wanes the animators go there to revive it.
2. Breaking bread is symbolic when the priest is there he does everything. So now at the absence of a priest the people do everything from a priest centered church it has become a people's centered church.

Philippines – Visayas region

Archdiocese of Palo; Archdiocese of Cebu; Diocese of Naval; Diocese of Maasin; Diocese of Kabankalan.

Reported by Enriqueta P. Quijada

1. Question One
 - a. Increase in Mass attendance.
 - b. The eager longing of the faithful to be in the Eucharist Celebration.
 - c. Active participation even non-Catholics, example Protestants, etc.
 - d. People become aware, easily contribute, donate when calamity occurs; easy to mobilize.
 - e. Helping one another, concern/love for one another becomes the norm, feeling of empathy and sympathy.
 - f. "Agape"- sharing of goods and goodness.
2. Question Two
 - a. Political Participation
 - i. Politicians consider SECs/BECs as a threat since the people have learned to stand for what is right & now the obligations of the political leaders to serve their constituents.
 - ii. Volunteer as watchdog during election.
 - b. Social Transformation:
 - i. Creative in livelihood activity; small IGPs (Income Generating Projects for the poor); communal farming, etc.
 - ii. Love offering during Bible Sharing sessions.
 - iii. Cooperatives initiated; consumers stores; credit & loan for (poor) members.
 - iv. Fundamentalist difficulties – in one of the dioceses someone shared that other sects became a competition in organizing BECs.

- c. Environmental Issues:
 - i. Aware of environmental issues, promote, campaign & carried out tree planting.
 - ii. campaign for non-burning of wastes.
 - iii. Practice waste management segregation.
 - iv. Promote natural farms/organic method.
- d. Leadership Style:
 - i. Shared leadership/participatory leadership.
 - ii. Clergy do Bible sharing themselves as model of BECs to be followed.

Philippines - Luzon Area

reported by Adel Lacasandile

1 Question One

- a. Eucharist central to the life of the BEC is actively participated in by families –parents, youths & children that leads to a prayerful life, happiness, deeper understanding that leads to the reconciliation within the family and with the families in the BEC/SCC. Having shared responsibilities. Eucharist to be more meaningful is of life & faith.
- b. Eucharistic Celebration – celebration of life giving, living, loving, sharing and transforming, building closer relationship – knowing, understanding, feels the needs, concerns, problems of each one.
- c. Eucharistic Celebration – becomes a way of life of the BEC/SCC activities, formation session in rooted to the Word.

2 Question Two

- a. Political Participation
 - i. Develop formation sessions, awareness sessions on political issues like political dynasty, unopposed candidacy, money-controlled politics, in the light of the gospel values/principles for political transformation.
- b. Environmental Issues
 - i. Formation session/Information dissemination on O-Waste Management. 3 Rs, Organic Farming, Sea Mining, segregation of waste
 - ii. Concern for caring Mother Earth life planting trees is integrated in the sacramental formation – Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, 1st Communion.
- c. Participative Leadership Style
 - i. Emerging leaders, couple leaders from the grass roots-facilitate in a participative, liberating and transforming way of learning.
 - ii. team of couple leaders
 - iii. lay empowerment



Panel Plenary Reporting on Country and Group Sharing

1. Representative #1 - Sri Lanka

- The SCCs/BECs in their regions/country reflect on the Word of God during the week. Their Gospel sharing on weekdays truly enhances their participation in the Sunday liturgy. There is a sense of fulfillment in the SCCs as participation is active. Many attend the bible sharing and the Sunday liturgy.

2. Representative #2 - Korea

- There are now many Catholics in Korea who do Gospel sharing in SCCs/BECs. They reflect on the Word of God and attend masses. SCC/BEC members share their resources with each other. Some have activities to express/show their concern for the old and the dying.
- The Gospel text which states that "You are no longer servants but you are my friends" as said by Jesus captures what the SCCs/BECs show for the people.

3. Representative #3 - Myanmar, Indonesia, PNG, Germany, Switzerland

- People participate in Mass that runs for 2 hours. It is a vibrant celebration.
- In PNG, there are Sunday services but no communion. SCCs/BECs break the Word of God.
- In Myanmar, people in rural areas reflect on the Word of God using their mother tongue. In that manner, the Word is enfolded in their situation.

4. Representative #4 - Malaysia and Singapore

- There is an observation that in larger cities, the lifestyle of the people is more "family-centered". There is poor attendance in liturgies and this is a challenge. Everybody seems to be too busy. People work overtime while children go to school.
- There appears to be better attendance in liturgies when a priest celebrates mass in local areas. When there are BECs/SCCs, the crowd is huge. We find breaking of the Bread in these areas as tremendous. The Eucharistic celebration plays a very important role in these gatherings. When a priest comes to a BEC/SCC, there is a big turn-out in attendance. They felt that Jesus is coming to them personally.

We also feel this whenever a church personality such as a bishop enters a house, there is radiance on the faces of the people especially the elderly. This "breaking of the Bread" with people comes from the Eucharist which flows into relationships.

5. Representative #5 - Central Visayas, Philippines.

- There is an increased attendance, during Sunday masses even for liturgies in the absence of a priest. In many places, we need to construct new chapels, relocate or extend due to this increase in number of church-goers.
- Among BECs, there is an increased participation in sharing the Word of God. They are moved from within. There is an increased awareness within them to participate more. The invitation comes from Jesus.
- One concrete example is that before when there were no BECs, there were seat assignments as politicians sat up front. They bought the church benches and pews. This is diminishing now.
- People now in the BECs partake in preparing for the Eucharistic celebrations. They prepare the prayer of petitions, readers, and others.
- The BECs express the desire to celebrate masses as often as possible. Some BECs contribute so as to collect an amount for the priest's motorcycle fare so he can have mass in the BEC.
- Truly, the BECs have enriched the life of the church in the Visayas region.

6. Representative #6 - India

- Among the SCCs/BECs, the sense of belonging is strong. Sunday liturgy is celebrated very well. The number of people who go to the Eucharist has increased. After the Sunday liturgy, there are acts of goodness that flow especially for those in need. Social work projects are done.
- People read the Word of God more and more. A sacrificial element is noted as people extend help more. There is change in the lifestyle of the people because there is more participation and a sense of belonging to the church.

7. Representative #7 - China

- There are more Christians now. The churches are growing. On the other hand, the churches are still priest-centered. This poses a difficulty for setting-up BECs. This is a hindrance because a lay person cannot lead because he/she is not a priest. A person who attended a lay leaders' training expressed how difficult it is to work against this prejudice.

8. Representative #8 - Mindanao, Philippines

- In Mindanao, a small BEC may have 300 families and up to 2,000 families for bigger ones. A parish may have 40,000 or more Catholic members.
- The celebration of the Eucharist is in the parish center. In the BECs, is Liturgy of the Word, where there are clusters of families sharing on the Word of God.
- In remote villages or barangays, there is a Liturgy of the Word with the distribution of Holy Communion. Holy Communion is given by trained and commissioned lay ministers. The priest comes to the BECs in the periphery once a month for the monthly masses.
- In the liturgies, many of the people participate in the preparation as well as in the actual celebration.
- Those in far off places like islands could not be visited as often so the lay ministers and BEC leaders minister to their respective communities.

9. Representative #9 - Korea

- Before only priests run the parish. In the districts now there would be persons who get instructions from the priests as regards to what should be done. However, this local leader can make decisions for the local area. A bigger district composed of these small groupings may have a higher local leader to coordinate with.
- There were no lay leaders before but now there are such persons who help. These could be a beginning for SCCs.

10. Representative #10 (Sri Lanka)

- Before, people participate in Sunday masses as a pious devotional activity only. With SCC now, there is sharing of the Word of God, the Living Word. Thus, the community's Sunday celebration of the Eucharist becomes meaningful and participative.
- SCCs also prepare the Sunday masses and also catechism for the children. SCCs are life-giving.

11. Representative #11 (Thailand)

- There are 8 dioceses in Thailand. There are 800 thousand Catholics who are a small minority in a Buddhist country.
- BECs/SCCs, a new way of being church in Thailand is still in kindergarten stage but already, it is bearing fruits.
- Through the BECs and its activities, members get to know each other. There is improvement among the relationships of the members. There is sharing of experiences and there is also an increase in sensitivity to others' needs. Unity among members is visibly strengthened. BECs in Thailand are growing slowly but surely.

12. Representative #12 (Japan)

- It seems that there is no place for SCCs in Japan. There are lots of difficulties. It is the Nagasaki diocese alone that is starting to promote SCCs. There is difficulty in getting the approval of priests in the diocese.
- There is also difficulty in setting-up SCCs and to connect peoples' lives in Sunday masses in a society that is too busy. There is great tendency to forget what God is telling them in the Scripture.
- "We don't know how to go on. We need to learn and get some wisdom from you..."

13. Representative #13 (Northern Luzon, Philippines)

- The Eucharist is the central to the life of the BECs. Families participate - adults, youth, children and elderly. The BEC attempt to develop and enhance family relationships where there is reconciliation within and among families in the BECs.
- There is sharing of responsibilities in the BECs. The Holy Eucharist is inculturated in life. Members try to practice what they believe in. They share resources. The Eucharist becomes a way of life rooted in the sharing of the Word of God and breaking of the Bread.

Plenary Discussion

Points raised:

1. Gospel Sharing reflecting on the Word of God enables the SCCs to be collectively changed.
2. The SCCs enable the communities to be People of God, to be faithful to God. It is a community that is discerning the will of God that is, developing a sense of what God's purpose is for that SCC.
3. Sunday celebrations become more meaningful as SCCs reflect on the Word of God during the week. Some people's lives in the neighbourhood are improved.
4. People are better prepared for the Sunday Liturgy as they share the Word during the week.
5. With SCCs represented on Parish Pastoral Councils there is a greater sense of co-responsibility among the priests and laity.
6. SCCs in cities help people establish and strengthen relationships that would otherwise be very difficult.

Fr Arthur – Facilitator asked the Plenary Assembly:

We are all pastoral workers, how have SCCs changed us? How have they impacted our leadership style?

1. I have a greater appreciation for people I work with since I established SCCs. I truly felt the wisdom of the people which I appreciate very much. "I use to think that there are many good things in myself, but since I worked with the people in SCCs I find that there are many good things in them too."
2. An Indian participant shared: I am in my third year of working with SCCs, previously I taught philosophy in the Seminary. Previously I also reflected on the word of God in preparation for Liturgy and for teaching but now, with the SCCs I have gained a deeper understanding of the Word of God.
3. I want to share a story of a priest from my area. He shared with me that he used to be a very dominating person. When he came to work with the SCCs, he trained to be a facilitator and this changed him. He became much more participative.
4. Previously when we discussed in priests meetings any problems of the people we would say "Let us put a stop to this" but now we say "Let us listen to what these people have to say... what is it that they are craving for?"
5. When we priests allow ourselves to be touched by the Word of God, there is no turning back.
6. Lay leaders emerge who are enabled but they are afraid to take on bigger tasks. However, after reflecting on the word of God they no longer feel burdened but do their tasks as an expression of faith.

The discussion went onto the problem of dominating leadership in the Church which elicited the following response from two bishops:

Here in Asia our society and church are hierarchical with respect for elders and seniors. The priest is often seen as the head of the tribe.

The ASIIPA way is a shared leadership but the ecclesiological reality is of a hierarchical leadership**.

Bishop Tirona gave the following reflection:

1. It is important to remember that the Holy Spirit has been given to us to enable us to grow. There may be obstacles and blocks in our situations but we keep in mind always Jesus who walked with his people. Regarding the culture of our people, we are missionaries and we come to a place with an intention. One may be to bring the SCC concept as a pastoral approach. But the most important thing is our spirituality that we give ourselves to the Spirit. Thus, prayer is important. It is also good to consider the systematic formation of SCCs. The papal encyclicals are a treasure that can be a resource for the SCCs too.
2. St Paul is our model. He changed his mindset when he realized his original faith was not wide enough and that Jesus wanted him to help him build a wider community.
3. The people we work with are simple people and at times it is we who complicate matters.
4. Be humble, be modest, listen to the people, just as Jesus did when building the first community of disciples.

Bishop Manuel Reyes made the following points with regards to leadership in the Church:

1. Our church represents Christ. The clergy and the laity are part of One Body of Christ.
2. Pope John Paul II in his letter on the role of the clergy called them the head and shepherd of the community. We should trust the Holy Spirit and believe that the Spirit speaks through our leaders.
3. In the Canon Law, the Pastoral Council is a Consultative Body. It is ultimately the Parish Priest who makes the decision.
4. The empowerment of the laity means more participation in decision-making.

On the question of participation in political issues as a result of being in SCCs:

1. The illegal immigrants and foreign workers who have problems are invited to SCCs and help is extended to them to get them proper documentation etc.
2. SCC members join advocacy and political education work in cooperation with church groups for example, giving sessions on choosing good candidates in elections. SCC members also act as watchdogs for elections.
3. Some Catholic leaders stand for election after being in SCCs.
4. For those of us in minority situations it is much harder to be so active.
5. SCCs working with Caritas also gives social awareness sessions to members and others. For example, awareness of the electoral process, the constitution and so on.

****A clarification is needed here:**

There is no opposition between the leadership that is shared in Small Christian Communities and the leadership exercised by the clergy and Bishops in the hierarchical reality of the church. The real tension and opposition is between dominating leadership and co-responsibility or shared leadership in the church. AsIPA in its processes and materials has no difficulty with the teaching authority of the Church and its duty to lead.



Response to the Reports & Plenary Discussion

by Archbishop Romulo Valles, Prelature of Tagum

bread broken and word shared in sccs/becs

Reports & Responses were based on the following two questions:

1. How far has Eucharistic Celebration as breaking of the Bread and the Word been realized in the life of SCCs/BECs? Explain.
2. What perceptible change do you find as a result of the years of work done in your SCCs/BECs in the field of political participation, social transformation, facing fundamentalist difficulties, environmental issues, participative leadership and etc.?

Response:

I have been asked not to summarize the discussion and reports but to comment on the points discussed. I am from the Prelature of Tagum where BECs started. There is a long history of BECs in the Mindanao region beginning in the 60s with the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conferences.

I liked what I heard about the Sunday Liturgy and the BEC experience of sharing the Word of God. "It is beautiful enough". In the Catholic Tradition the Sunday Liturgy is very important.

From the sharing I gleaned the following:

1. BECs / SCCs sharing the Word of God lead to a beautiful Sunday Liturgy. The SCCs are able to share on the Word of God through a weekly Bible Sharing, thus the Sunday Liturgy is celebrated more meaningfully and is energized.
2. In the Philippines, the experience is that many SCC communities do not have the chance to celebrate the Sunday Liturgy. Thus a leadership situation emerged – a liturgy leader facilitates a liturgy but not a full Sunday Liturgy. A Liturgy where there is celebration of the Word and at the same time having communion.
3. The implication of this second point is that we need to train the leaders in the SCCs / BECs which do not have the chance to celebrate the Sunday Liturgy.

On the second question, as regards the changes that resulted from engagement with the Word of God. I think the intervention of Bishop Manuel Reyes is timely regarding the church teaching on leadership in the parish. The priest as the head and shepherd of the community.

In this same question, relating to the impact of reflection on the Word of God on political issues, there was a lack of any concrete illustration of this. Does this mean that we are presuming that when SCCs reflect on the Word of God this moves them to advocate for social action.

I am struck by the question – how SCCs can advocate for political change in areas where freedoms are explicitly curtailed. The other question that was striking was how SCCs could gather in non-Catholic settings.

Keynote Address

BECs/SCCs

as Eucharistic Communities

by Bishop Luis Antonio (Chito) Tagle,

Bishop of Imus in Cavite – (since appointed Archbishop of Manila)



bread broken and word shared in scCs/bCCs

Day Three - Thursday 22nd October 2009

Thank you for inviting me to this AsIPA 5th General Assembly.

I come to give a talk "not to present a final word on the topic but to generate more reflection on the experience" in a critical and meaningful way, and hopefully, in an interactive way.

This sharing focuses on "BECs/SCCs as Eucharistic Communities." BECs as Eucharistic Communities pose fundamental questions. One question (thinking aloud) is, 'What is the Eucharist?' 'What is then an adequate understanding of the Eucharist?'

Another question is 'What is the Church of the Eucharist?' As we use the word "Eucharistic" as qualifier, what type of church emerges out of Eucharistic Communities? We are building a bridge between Eucharist and Community. What type of communities may be considered Eucharistic?

Another question is 'How do we understand the interplay between being Church and the Eucharist?' 'What is its dynamic interplay?' 'Are they incidental to each other?'

Still another point is 'How, are all of these – Eucharist and Community situated in the BECs/SCCs?'

I do not pretend to be able to provide an answer to all these questions. Looking at the key words: Eucharist, Community, BECs/SCCs; all of them give definitions that go beyond a monochromatic or single-faceted approach. The word Eucharist for example, has so many aspects: memorial, sacrifice, community... To reduce such a rich and complex reality is called reductionism. This is unfair to such a complex reality.

In this topic we are putting together 3 complex things: BECs/SCCs, Community and Eucharist. The depth and breadth of these realities are expansive and deep. There is the tendency to clarify and in so doing, we miss some important parts of the realities. We are handling here not only deep human realities but also pastoral and spiritual realities.

For example, we may say "everything is the Eucharist!" We smile at each other - it is "Eucharist"? We plant a tree, its Eucharist! When everything is the Eucharist, then Eucharist is gone!

And then BEC/SCC. So what is BEC? Defining BEC is a sure way of losing the complexity of a reality. Eucharist too is not only a topic but a reality. Real discernment means that we can be critical of ourselves.

Reflecting on the Eucharist as community life lived in the BECs/SCCs, here are just some points.

The Federation Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) just finished in August 2009 the 9th Plenary Assembly, with the theme "Living the Eucharist in Asia". I am happy that this AsIPA 5th General Assembly flows with this same theme.

Part I Context

1. Our Legacy

We are coming from the Year of the Eucharist declared by Pope John Paul II, in the year 2004. That year saw a lot of initiatives with regards to living the Eucharist in the church. Emerging from 2004, we have a body of teachings on the Eucharist: *Mane Nobiscum Domine*. Here it speaks of the intimate relationship between the church and the Eucharist. The Pope called for a Synod on the Eucharist. But Pope John Paul II died before being able to convene the Synod in 2005.

Pope Benedict XVI then convoked the Synod on the Eucharist in October 2005. The post synodal encyclical: *Sacramentum Caritatis*, *The Eucharist as the Sacrament of Love*. This is the encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI that follows the first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, *GOD is Love*.

From here flow the local, regional and national celebrations of the Eucharist – a worldwide phenomenon. “We are embarking with brothers and sisters all over the world,” reflecting on this mission: what is the meaning of the Eucharist in their context, or what is the meaning of the Eucharist in our lives as Christians?

The FABC recognizes that we are receiving a rich legacy, this worldwide search for the meaning of the Eucharist in the life and mission of the church.

2. The Signs of Hope

We cannot be blind, and deaf and callous towards our context – the signs of hope & groaning that we find in the worlds we inhabit.

When we see the reception in the Church of the Second Vatican Council, we can rejoice at the fruits. We can also rejoice at the signs of hope outside the church - NGOs (non-government organizations), POs (Peoples organizations) etc. who share our values and concerns. “As church, are we attentive to the signs of salvation already present in the world?”

A parishioner once gave me this feedback. She requested that the Bishops infuse Pastoral letters with statements of hope. So from this example flows this question:

“As church, are we pointers to signs of hope? Or are we pointers to signs of damnation?”

Karl Rahner wrote “Do not think of heaven and hell on the same level.” Heaven is greater (weightier) than hell. As such, the church focuses on heaven, and is the sacrament of salvation.

3. Signs of Groaning

Part of the context we find ourselves in is the world we are living in with all its problems. The church is attentive to the signs of hope, but the church is not inattentive to the groaning of the people.

There are new and various forms of poverty. For example I recall the remark of the Bishop of Japan, who reading from the FABC documents, said that people from Japan could not identify with the type of poverty described (in the papers). In Japan, the poor are those who have too much but no meaning in life and who suffer from loneliness. He requested that this type of poverty be included in the description of poverty. In his recent encyclical, Pope Benedict says that even if the demands of justice are met, people will still long for love.

Other forms of poverty are the displaced persons and the millions of refugees we have due to wars and disasters. Another is that resulting from economic poverty, where migrant families, seeking “greener pastures,” go abroad and end up in not so green ones. Thus results the other forms of poverty which is the children without parents, the lost sense or changed meaning of a family.

There are also the realities of the impact of the world on the youth, where youth have grown up in situations of violence and it seems for them normal. Values are so distorted that the abnormal becomes the normal. Among the youth, there is a deep hunger. We need to discern what they are hungry for. What do they crave?

Another illustration is what is called "open economies" embraced in Asia. Here capital can cross borders. Aside from capital that flows beyond borders are the values without boundaries anymore. Look at the youth: "Look at how they walk, look at how they sing." There is a kind of a universal expression. There seems to be a universal bond among them. "Where do the youth find communion nowadays?" How do they forge community? The church must be attentive to the longings of our young people.

Yet another sign of groaning in our world - look at the violence. Even as we speak, there are 200 wars being fought all over the world. We have not learned to live with each other.

To summarize Part 1 on the context:

The church has received a rich legacy coming from the Synod of Bishops and the Papal encyclicals. We have a rich reflection from the Fathers on the role of the Eucharist in the life and mission of the church. In Asia, we too have rich experiences – local, regional and national/country settings. We are looking for signs what are the peoples' deepest experiences? How do they find community? How do they forge communities? We have to discern deeply what communities are hungry and thirsting for.

Remember the Gospel story of the Samaritan woman, talking about the Eucharist, and the thirst of the world. The woman says: "Give me that water..."

In the Gospel text of John 6, the disciples ask..."where do we find this bread that won't perish; the bread that leads to eternal life?"

We need to discover where the hunger and thirst is located.

Part II On the Meaning of the Eucharist

During the 9th Plenary Assembly of FABC, the Bishops reflected on the Papal Encyclical, "Sacramentum Caritatis" The encyclical talked of 3 divisions as follows"

- a) What we believe in: Eucharistic faith;
- b) What we celebrate: Eucharistic celebrations
- c) What we live: Eucharistic life or Mission.

The bishops of the 9th Assembly of FABC, chose not to follow the three divisions since our approach in Asia is more towards harmony, synthesis, blending. "We needed to keep the three as one." Faith impels us to celebrate and live this faith out in mission.

People get in touch with the context of the faith in the celebration. It is a celebration of faith. Otherwise it will be very cold. Celebration without faith is calisthenics. What we believe in and what we celebrate gives life. Life and mission of the Church are not extra curricula activities after the celebration but contained in the celebration of faith. Life and mission are inspired and impelled by faith and celebration. All happens in our worlds we inhabit.

The important questions are "what is the faith?" And "When you celebrate, what are you celebrating?"

We may have beautiful choreography for our celebrations, but, where is the faith? We may have creativity in our rituals, they are good but sometimes lack the faith dimension. The celebration of faith is at times blurred.

In our celebration, we do not abandon the world but bring the contents of the world we inhabit into the celebration. In the profession of faith, the believer brings the world into the celebration of the Eucharist. We do not leave behind the world in our life and mission.

Thus we do not divide the three components of faith, celebration and life/mission. It gives us the mobility and beauty as well as the comprehensiveness and/or the integrality of these three.

The Eucharist is Christ's gift of love. We declare that the Eucharist in the Catholic tradition is Christ's self-gift in love – there are no substitute animals. Christ gives himself. This is the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist, he adds, "It is a love that freely gives of himself. We are saved by love, by this sacrifice of love. We are saved by Christ's gift of self."

It is this love that saves, recreates and transforms us, communities, societies and the whole world, the whole of creation.

Done in obedience to the Father, Jesus gives of himself. The sacrifice is memorialized in a sacramental way. "This is my body for you, this my blood for you," Jesus says. This is celebrated in the celebration of the Eucharist, the celebration of the love of Christ.

This is affirmed by Pope Benedict when he states that it is the love in the Eucharist that will save us.

What Jesus offers is his life:

- a) John 10:15 : "I lay down my life for my sheep."
- b) John 10:10 : "I came that you may have life in abundance"

We celebrate the life of Christ which has become his gift in the Eucharist. The life of Christ becomes the life of the believer. Through the Eucharist we live in the life of Christ. We become the body of Christ. The life of the Head and the life of the Body are the same life. The Head gave his life to be the life of others. The community living by that life of Jesus given, in the process, becomes Jesus.

This life of Christ celebrated in the Eucharist is memorialized through the Word of Life the Liturgy of the Word is also keeping the memory of Christ and is also life-giving. "Do this in memory of me" – memory is also kept in the liturgy of the word, not only in the liturgy of the Eucharist.

As Peter said in response to Jesus "Where will we go Lord, You have the words of eternal life."

Life is communicated to us through the Word. When we receive the Word of Jesus, we remember the life of Jesus. The community is shaped by a common memory. It is the memory of the life of Christ.

Part of the Eucharist is the keeping of the memory. When the word is read, it communicates the life of Christ. Thus in the Eucharist, with the Body and Blood of Christ as well as the word, means sharing the life of Christ that is shared as one. "As the Father has sent me so I send you." As the Father loved me so I love you.

"I give my life to you." This is Christ's mission. This is the life we receive in the Eucharist. This is also our mission. It is the church's mission to share the life of Christ.

In the Eucharist, we hear the word of Life. The Bread of Life is also communicated in the Eucharistic community. That life is for us to be sent ...for us to be life giving. It must be shared so that others might have life and have it to the full. Thus, there is our communion and our communion with God. This is the Eucharist. This is not the final and definitive meaning of the Eucharist. Yet we can say that in our celebration of the Eucharist, where we share and receive the Life of Christ, Christ gives us life and in turn, is our gift to the world - our mission.

Part III Points for consideration

BECs/ SCCs as Eucharistic Communities

We need to make allowance for the diversity of contexts and approaches in terms of where we are.

Remembering that the Eucharist is where the life of Christ is being given to us, the BECs/SCCs, can be seen as keeping the life of Christ alive. Through Memorial, Gathering and Sharing in the one cup. It is not just a matter of having some activities on the Word. The BECs/SCCs as Eucharistic communities keep the Life of Christ palpable, by keeping fidelity to the Word, in fellowship, and in communion.

It is the BECs not only having Eucharistic celebrations but keeping the Life of Christ visible, palpable in the community. It is the BEC expressing fidelity to the Word, fidelity to the Breaking of Bread.

The BECs keep the memorial of Christ alive. The BECs/SCCs through constant retelling of the life of Jesus, that is, weaving the life of Jesus with the stories of their own community.

In the sharing of the Word, the story of Jesus is being retold, in order for the Word of Life to be our life. The Biblical events memorialized breaks into the present.

This would require the BECs/SCCs have an intent, attentive listening to the Word, for "how can we draw the life-giving intent of the Word if we listen poorly?"

The BECs as communities keep the life of Christ in memorial – alive through breaking of the Word and the Bread. The BECs could also keep the life of Christ alive through sharing of resources, goods, services, as Jesus shared his life. This sharing is not just occasional like during moments of crisis but also regularly.

"The life of Christ is sharing. In what spirit? In the spirit of servanthood." Jesus did not share from the vantage point of influence and privilege. This is the sharing of someone who became poor, who emptied himself, someone who descended unto the dead, of someone who himself died.

The quality of sharing - Christ's sharing, is the kind of sharing we want to see BECs living out. The kind of sharing which is done even at risk. This type of community and this type of sharing is counter-cultural, especially at these times of pragmatic individualism.

True sharing is when we give at the risk of our loss. The life of Christ is a life at risk. We want that life to share it with others. We want that life to be shared with others. We want the life of Christ to penetrate all corners of society. We live the life of Christ and we share the life of Christ. We are sharing not only goods and resources but also the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We also attend to the need to share the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the BECs. The gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to us to be shared: this is most important. Christ said "This is my body for you"! This is the Eucharistic memorial. If this becomes palpable in the community, then the world will be a little better. This is the life style that the Eucharistic community ought to live. This is difficult but it warms the heart.

Even if we vowed that "this will be my life, the life of the Eucharist shared with others, at times, one may find it difficult to actualize. It is precarious. Though we opted for such, there will be a movement in us because there is something in society that tells us to be pragmatic. But also there is a sense of fulfillment if lived out. It warms the heart."

Another dimension in the Eucharistic celebration is "the many grains that form one loaf. One bread, one body, one God." The Spirit that animates the Body can be this: being grains forming the loaf that becomes the Body of Christ. There may be loose grains and they are small and not separate but needed! The small grains...they are the bearers of Christ's mission.

Through the BECs, we have the missionary presence of Christ in the local setting. Christ's life in the Eucharist is a life shared in the Word and Bread. This is the life sent by the Father, a missionary life.

The program of mission of the church in Asia is one of dialogue. It is a dialogue of the church with the poor and the non-Christians. This is the characteristic mould of mission in Asia. May the mould of missionary outreach be that of the BECs/SCCs. May the BECs be prophetic! We hope the BECs learn how to be missionary, to be communities in communion, flowing out to be a missionary presence in the local setting, in the neighbourhood.

BECs/SCCs can be agents of healing, in their local setting. They can be agents of healing for those of diverse backgrounds.

In the institution narrative on the Eucharist we find the passage "On the night he was betrayed, he took bread", even at the moment Jesus was being betrayed, Jesus did the act of healing. Jesus transforms the night of betrayal into the dawn of healing.

"Can the BECs be sensitive to the nights of betrayal?" "Can BECs be engaged in healing missions because they possess the body of Christ?"

As exemplified in the life of Jesus – "the body you betray is the body that will heal you." In the life of Jesus, betrayal is transformed into a life of healing, of salvation, of love. "You betrayed me but I love you."

To conclude, what I have shared about the Eucharist, the BECs/SCCs as Eucharistic communities is far from complete. These are only some of its dimensions.

The three questions for reflection in country groups are as follows:

- i. How much does our Eucharistic faith (belief, celebration and life) influence the quality of our BECs? Is the Eucharistic faith significant? How does it influence BECs?
- ii. How have BECs/SCCs been living the Eucharist in their particular setting? (We need stories from concrete experiences e.g. How the people live the Eucharistic faith in their setting...)
- iii. What factors promote or hinder, the formation of BECs as Eucharistic communities? How are the BECs/SCCs handling or facing them?

From notes taken during the presentation by secretary in charge of documentation.

Bible Mirror Method

(Group Response Method)

Participants give feedback on their experience of the Gospel Sharing Method Bible-Mirror-Method

This Gospel Sharing method is found in the Lumko pastoral series No. 20 and in AsIPA Text A/7

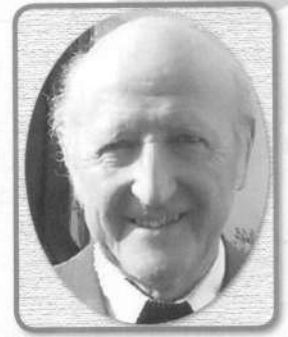
1. We have a good chance to look around at the problems in the community. It is a good method as one is encouraged to go through it.
2. Through this method the problems get highlighted. The group was interested in finding solutions and a social awareness takes place. This problem may help to eradicate the monotony as well as help to solve problems
3. People with many different ideas and opinions regarding a certain matter are helped to reach a kind of consensus.
4. The activity we undertake is based on the word of God. The Word becomes the guide to help the discernment process in seeking a good solution to the problem
5. The "Kingdom Way" is not so much about consensus but the spirit of "true equality" in decision making. The members try to become a community.
6. This method is very good especially if it is integrated with preparing the Eucharist.
7. This method can be used to liturgy. A planning committee may prepare the Eucharist using this method.
8. Steps 2,3 & 4 facilitate God's call for us to be prophetic in a daily way. Every baptized Catholic has a chance to live out their mission.
9. Clarification given here was that the Gospel is not boring as someone earlier observed. The 7-step Gospel Sharing method gives one the discipline to listen to the word and to each other. Priests can find using the Bible Mirror Method very useful for listening to the people and to the Lord.
10. One Bishop observed that it may be better not to try and separate Prayer, Bible Study and Gospel Sharing in the discernment process. There is that element of Mystery and it is an ongoing process as if one solution fails we need to discern again, listen and try again.
11. Bible Mirror method is not for newcomers to Gospel Sharing. It requires some degree of skill and maturity to facilitate and use it.
12. Bishop Oswald Hirmer made the following points:
13. We are a prophetic people. But this prophetic role is gravely missing often. To revitalize the prophetic function of the people, to open our eyes, we use the Bible Mirror method.
14. If one member says "this is what is to be done" while another says, "This is what we ought to do". These two may be opposed, so what do we do?

15. It is important that we have enough information about the problem. Then, there should be a time of prayer, to ask God for what he wants of us. A prophet opens up to God and looks at the situation as God looks at it. An example is when someone, one day declared: "It is not God's way to have slavery"... 'Your will be done', is the attitude of a prophet.
16. Bishop Franco gave the following example: There was an incident when extremists from a different village came and demolished seven houses of Catholics there. A Protestant Pastor got the news and rushed to the place. Members of the families from the demolished houses were gathered under a tree and were listening to one who knew how to read the Bible. They were trying to ask God what to do. The hindus from the neighbouring village were so moved by this reaction that they helped to rebuild the houses for the victims.
17. Whenever there is a problem, a collective discernment can help a great deal. We are not sure if the solution is really what God wants but a prayerful group discernment is closer to God's will. It is not success that matters but the making of a collective discernment and decision with greater consensus that can help build up the community.
18. After experiencing this Gospel Sharing Method I feel I understand what God said when he said that he is close to the poor.

There was no longer any group work, rather there was plenary discussion on SCCs and the Eucharist with questions taken by Bishop Tagle.

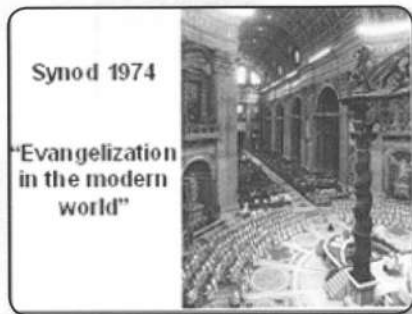
Evangelization & Small Christian Communities

By Bishop Fritz Lobinger,
Bishop Emeritus of Aliwal North, South Africa



Day Four, Friday 23rd October 2009

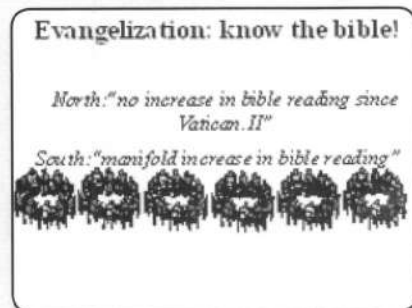
IF somebody asks us to sum up in a few words what the essence is of our many efforts of building Small Christian Communities and of our many efforts to reflect in the best way possible on the Word of God in those communities, then the word, "Evangelization" is the most suitable for such a summing up.



The word "evangelization" was hardly used in the Catholic Church a generation ago. It came into wide use through a World Synod of Bishops in 1974. The theme of that synod was "Evangelization in the modern world". All over the world a few new things could be observed at that time, new developments which needed a response of the Church. "Basic Christian Communities" were suddenly springing up in Latin America and in other parts of the world. At the same time military dictatorships were oppressing people and it was exactly those Base Communities which emphasized that "liberation" had to be the motto of their work. Was "liberation" a correct Christian motto? Was it correct to build up thousands of Base Communities in order to conscientize the people?

Look at the photo of the bishops assembled at the Synod. Many of these bishops came to the synod saying: "We had the bible for hundreds of years and we used it insufficiently. Let us formulate a message of genuine evangelization!"

The result of the synod was a little booklet (an "Apostolic Exhortation") with the title "Evangelization in the modern world". It is this document which still today is most suitable to show the deepest reasons for what AsIPA is doing. Let us look at some of these aspects of Evangelization as they are underlying the word of SCCs and AsIPA.



A year ago another Synod of Bishops met in Rome and it dealt for the first time with "The Word of God in the life and mission of the Church". In the run up to the Synod many Catholic newspapers published articles on what we can perhaps expect of the Synod. One of these articles really shocked me. It was a report on a survey on the extent to which Catholics are today using the bible. The survey was commissioned by an international Catholic Agency, the World Federation of the Biblical Apostolate. The shocking conclusion of the report said "the second Vatican Council's call for wider knowledge of the Bible among Catholics has mostly remained unheeded". The report dared to say that the

beautiful texts of the Second Vatican Council on Revelation and on the bible, have in fact not led to an increase in bible reading!

I said spontaneously: No, that is not true. At least in the Southern Hemisphere, in the young Churches, the Second Vatican Council has led to more than an increase in reading the bible. It has led to something like an explosion with regard to the average Catholics' reading of the bible. The bookshops reported at that time that they are now selling many times the number of bibles they sold before, and the Protestants began saying that the Catholics were now reading the bible more than they did.

If you want to hear the Good News, Know the Bible!

St Paul asked: "And how are they to believe in the one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? (Romans 10:14) and this means today: "How can they be evangelized if they do not know the Word of God in the scriptures?" What an achievement then, if in these last decades thousands of Catholics begin to get familiar with the bible! They are evangelized themselves and are able, in turn, to evangelize others.

Evangelization means: be the Church!

There is thus a profound link between Christ, the Church and Evangelization" (EN 16) said the synod on Evangelization. In simple words: when you meet in your neighbourhood communities with your bibles in your hand and try to listen to God, you become the Church of this neighbourhood. You are "the most local incarnation of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" (AMECEA).

These meetings should have priority over many other kinds of meetings of Catholics, because these meetings are the Church. When the faithful meet in much larger numbers in the large church building of their area, this is of course a much more solemn and more impressive gathering, but it is not as immersed into the place where you live. We must remind these small communities: you are the Church!

Evangelization means participation!

God never wanted a passive humanity. Creation exists for the sake of participation. Still more the New Testament Community, the Church, is formed in order to allow us to participate. It should be a living Body, the Body of Christ where every member has its task.

It is easy to say these great words, but how can it be achieved in a parish? The SCCs greatly increase the chances that everybody can participate. The reason is that you need no membership card to take part, no special education. Every Catholic is invited. Look at our diagram. Each and every member of this little group takes part in discerning what God is saying to us. Compare parishes with SCCs with other parishes that do not have SCCs and you will realize that these communities greatly increase the average participation.

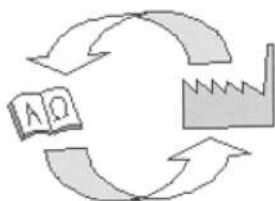
Evangelization and SCCs

- Evangelization: know the bible!
- Evangelization: be the Church!
- Evangelization: participation!
- Evangelization: link faith and life!
- Evangelization: responsibility, your own words!
- Evangelization: the Open Door to faith sectors

**Evangelization:
be the Church!**

**Evangelization means
participation**

Evangelization: link faith and life!



Evangelization means linking faith and life!

That faith and life must be linked, is clear. There can be no genuine evangelization without this link. The question is what form parish life should take, so that it becomes most likely that this linkage will take place.

Many reforms of parish life are in fact linking faith and life. The homily on Sundays tries to link faith and life. The sodalities are linking faith and life. Catechesis links faith and life. Almost all forms of church life try to make this linkage.

What is special in the way SCCs and BECs link faith and life is that each person is involved in this linkage. The careful discernment what the Word of God is saying to us, and what the situation is into which this Word is inserted, that careful discernment process involves each person if we have SCCs. Then it is not a priest who lives far away who tells others how to link faith and life, but it is the individual believer, and it is the individual local community that discerns how the Word and the local situation are linked.

SCCs link faith and life!

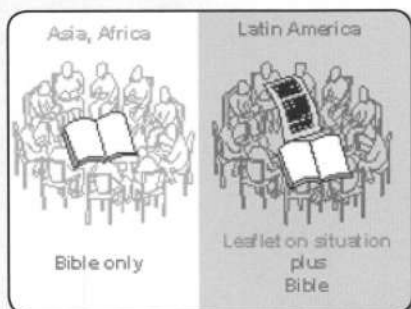


In our drawing the symbol for a life situation is the drawing of a factory. That symbol stands of course for the great variety of situations. That symbol stands for situations of grave illness, or a shocking injustice, or a hopeless suffering or just the confusion of our minds.

The situation to which the Word of God is linked is also our culture. The people which our drawing shows doing gospel sharing with the bible in their hands, have national customs and tribal customs, have values, have ways of living, have hopes and anxieties. They may not even know the concept of "culture", but they live a culture. And they try to listen to what the Word of God is saying to this life situation which others call "culture". Inculturation is a big term but it happens in such humble gospel sharing groups. The SCCs are a bridge built between faith and life'

There is a limitation here for the small communities, with regard to their ability to link faith and life. To link the gospel to the immediate needs of the neighbourhood, this is possible for each and every SCC and this is really what they do best. The limitation arises when it comes to wider needs, to more serious injustices, to sufferings that touch more than the neighbourhood. This is where cooperation with other communities is needed.

Regarding this cooperation with other SCCs we should remember the different ways of bible reflection of the BECs of Latin America. Let us look at this difference. Let us look at what the members of the reflecting community have in their hands for the reflection process. Only the bible?... or also a leaflet?



In almost all of the SCCs the people have only the bible in their hands, nothing else. They follow the steps of the reflection process which they know by heart. The steps of that process lead them to a discernment of what God is saying to each participating member and what action God's Word expects the assembled group to take together.

Experience has shown that this process first of all leads the participating members to that careful, humble, open attitude which surely is the only appropriate attitude we human beings have to learn before God. Even outsiders have noticed this. They say that after some time you can notice who of the church leaders are taking part in seven-step gospel sharing. It can be noticed because they are less self-assured in telling others what God wants from us. Leaders who are not used to humble gospel sharing are sometimes inclined to tell God what he has to say to us.

A further great advantage of this "bible-only" methodology is certainly that it is the easiest one. In inaccessible areas where no leaflet can reach the communities, in places of several languages, in times of wars and chaos, the faithful continue meeting regularly because there is only thing they need, the bible.

Experience however has also shown that this method all too often avoids the big social problems. It is built on free sharing, and there are situations where the participants do not feel free to mention the big social problems. They are afraid to mention corruption, domination, intimidation, injustice. The bible-only methodology does not provide help to the group to touch the untouchable consequences for the one who dares to do so.

Such help is provided in the "leaflet-plus-bible" methods. A leaflet is carefully prepared by experts. It lists all steps of the reflection process. A story is printed on the leaflet which describes the social problem which contradicts the gospel. Although some of the members of the group may themselves be involved in the very injustices described in the story, they will not accuse the one who reads the story because that person does not make a personal accusation. He or she merely reads from the leaflet that was provided by the diocesan centre. An appropriate gospel passage is then read, reflection questions follow, and action planning and prayer complete the session.



Latin America almost always uses such leaflets, but it becomes possible because those countries usually have only one main language in a whole country, either Spanish or Portuguese. A leaflet of this kind can therefore be designed and printed for a whole country. Also in Asia such leaflets have been provided in some places.

It is clear that a methodology of this kind will not so easily lead to the careful humble listening of each person, but will more easily lead to a general awareness of what the gospel is saying to the wider area. It will also lead more easily to joint action of a greater number of Basic Ecclesial Communities.

In many dioceses it is just not possible to produce reflection leaflets for the communities, not even for certain times of the year. In such places we should use some alternative methodologies, eg a change of reflection method. These alternative gospel sharing methods are more easily directing the attention of the group to the needs of a wider area, to challenges beyond the neighbourhood, to cooperation with other communities.

Whatever methods may be used, evangelization can never be a purely spiritual affair. Evangelization must link faith and life. It must touch the needs of the neighbourhood and those beyond.

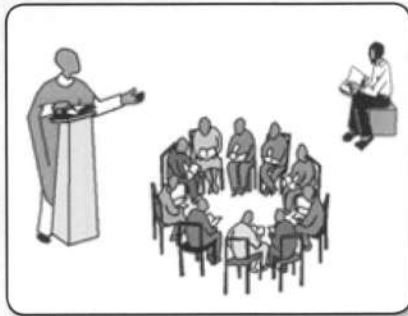
Evangelization: Respond in your own words!

God wants each one of us to personally respond to his Word. Nobody else can take my place before God. This is of course also true for the many times when I do not make my response in words, but respond through my actions.

What is new in SCCs is that the small group setting makes it possible for each person to formulate a response in his or her very own words. Even if it is only a few, poorly formulated words, it is the personal response of this one particular person.



The seven-step gospel sharing method was purposely designed in such a way that even those who would otherwise feel too shy to say anything about Church or bible will be able to do so. In step three of that method each one is invited just to read a short phrase from the bible in their hands, just reading these few words which touch him or her, without any comment. It is something so easy that everybody can do it. And this easy, first utterance will encourage that person to add, in step five, a few personal words to it.



Priests and parish councils that ask themselves why they should introduce SCCs should remember how valuable these personal formulations are. Where else is such a personal formulation of the average Catholic possible? Yes, people hear God's Word in the homily at Mass and they respond to it, but it is a silent response, hardly ever formulated in a person's own words. If there are not SCCs in a parish, in what other ways do the faithful formulate a response to God's Word? Of course by private bible reading, and this is certainly something most commendable. But how many will actually get around to do it? The survey quoted above told us that without SCCs it will only be a small number.

SCCs however, enable a great number of parishioners to formulate, in their own personal words, a simple response to God's Word.

Some who hesitate to introduce SCCs will be quick to point to the danger that such personal responses will lead to inexact and erroneous interpretation of God's Word. To answer them, let us hear what Pope Benedict XVI, when still a cardinal, wrote about the relation between gospel sharing and exegesis:

"Exegesis has given us very many positive things, but it has also given rise to the impression that an ordinary person cannot read the Bible because it is all so complicated. We must relearn that it says something to everyone and that it is given precisely to the simple. On this point I agree with a movement that arose within liberation theology. This movement speaks of interpretation popular. According to this view the Bible really belongs to the people and so they are the real interpreters. The core of this is correct: the Bible is given precisely to the simple. They don't need to know all the critical nuances; they can understand the heart of the matter."

God's word is given to the simple people just as to the learned ones. It is their right to formulate their response to God's Word with their own words. It is our duty to give them a chance to do so. When they say the prayers they have learnt by heart, they respond with words others have formulated for them. When they listen to the homily and accept it in their heart, they do something very good, but it is not quite their own personal word. The response formulated with our own, personal words, has its own unique value.

We are, of course, aware of the interdependence of these different ways of speaking about the Word of God and of responding to it. These ways are complementary. Each needs the other. We need the official proclamation and explanation by those who are ordained for preaching the Word of God. We need the private bible reading. We also need the personal sharing in SCCs.

Evangelization: the open door for faith seekers!

For evangelization it is most important that there is always an easy open door for faith seekers. Where is it? How can a faith-seeker most easily get in touch with people who live the faith? For a faith seeker to go and see the priest will, most of the time, appear as too definite a step. A tentative contact is what many faith seekers want to try first. Moreover, such faith seekers often prefer to meet believers, who are people like themselves first, not immediately an official of the Church. Somebody who is still seeking, still doubting whether to get closer to the Christian faith will find it easier to just go along with a friend to the meeting of a Small Christian Community.

The more people live in large cities the more there will be need for such 'Open Doors' of evangelization. The more anonymous city life becomes, the more this need will be felt. Priests and parish councilors who are evangelizing in such situations should therefore recognize the unique opportunity offered by SCCs as the open door for faith seekers.

Evangelization needs a continuous encouragement of SCCs!

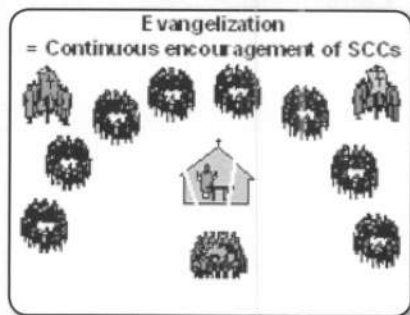
Anything good is in constant danger of getting weaker and weaker, and this also applies to this "New Way of Being Church" by living as a communion of communities.

Those with experience in maintaining SCCs have drawn up a well known list of measures for keeping such a network of SCCs alive and active.

The parish council should be formed by the SCCs of the area, not just by general elections.

The parish council should receive regular reports on the life and work of all the SCCs of the parish.

Pastoral tasks should be entrusted to the SCCs, so that they will be more than prayer groups. The principle of subsidiarity should be observed, whereby other agencies should not fulfill those tasks which the communities themselves can do.



The parish council should help the SCCs to deal with social reflection and social action. This will make it easier for Catholic men and for youth to take part.

The parish council should ensure that from time to time a different reflection method is used in the communities, so that social problems will be discussed.

The parish should have a visitation team which periodically pays a visit to all individual communities. The priest, parish sister or other pastoral workers should periodically pay a visit to the communities.

Ongoing formation should be offered to the leaders of the SCCs, and, if possible, also to members.

Regional meetings should be held for communities or at least for their leaders. Communities and leaders can thus be informed of how SCCs are operating in other dioceses and countries and can receive training.

The decisive evangelizing role of bishops and priests!

The extent to which the Word of God reaches its aim and bears fruit thus depends to a great extent on bishops and priests. One can safely say that it depends more on them than on the members of the communities.

The priest is evangelizing when he gives the homily. He also evangelizes when he animates and guides what is happening in the SCCs. It depends to a large extent on the priest whether the gospel reflection in the SCCs is profound or superficial; is touching only the issues of the neighbourhood or touches the issues of a wider area; creates togetherness or maintains a subservient spirit.

The growth of SCCs also depends on regional structures such as the Bishops Conference and other regional structures. The individual diocese, the individual bishop, priest and pastoral worker has been helped and will also in future be helped by wider Church gatherings. The FABC, the CELAM, the AsIPA Meetings, have provided vision and tools for the parishes and communities.

Conclusion

In conclusion we should call to mind that the development of small communities and their reflection on the Word of God is something that is still under way. It is not a completed development. It is still in flux. The SCCs and BECs have opened a new chapter in the history of evangelization in the Church. The fact that millions of average Catholics have the bible in their own hands and take part in its interpretation has an enormous empowering influence on the average Catholic. It has an equalizing effect in the Church because it is no longer the clergy alone that interpret the Word of God, but it is the whole People of God. The linking of faith and life has taken on forms that were not known before. It is not yet clear where his development will lead us. We pray hard and work hard that it will make us more genuinely the People of God.

Evangelization and SCCs

Maintaining / Sustaining SCCs / BECs

Question for Group Work:

What are you doing to maintain the life of SCCs/BECs?

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

A) On SCC level

- ❖ Regular animation programme for SCCs.
- ❖ Visiting SCCs, bless members and families and have Eucharistic celebration there.
- ❖ Celebrate Patron Saint of SCC with festive mood followed by cultural show and meal.
- ❖ Celebration of Easter and Christmas in the SCC level.

B) On Parish level

- ❖ Animation is given for all the SCC members.
- ❖ During Novena of Parish feast, SCC given feast of Novena Eucharist.
- ❖ Bi-monthly meeting with leaders of SCCs who repeat the meeting in their SCC.
- ❖ SCC day is observed.
- ❖ Blood donation programme is done in SCC.

C) On Diocesan level

- ❖ Diocesan animation team visits all the Parishes.
- ❖ Use common anthem song for all the SCC groups.
- ❖ Diocesan team sits with Bishop.
- ❖ 2 or 3 days awareness session for leaders.
- ❖ Pastoral letters from Bishop that remind about SCCs.

D) At National level

- ❖ Regular meeting in National team and evaluation is done.
- ❖ Promoting SCCs, arrange training programme for YCA, past SSC students, seminarian, novices, catechists, lay leaders and SCC leaders.
- ❖ SCC day is observed.
- ❖ AsIPA booklets are printed and distributed to SCCs.
- ❖ Newsletter (Somajbarta) is published for SCC members.

India

A) On SCC level

- ❖ Visiting families regularly.
- ❖ Continuous Training and Formation Programs for SCC units and leaders.
- ❖ SCC day is celebrated.
- ❖ Regular SCC mass in SCC units, areas.
- ❖ SCC units take initiatives; organize liturgical and para-liturgical celebration.

B) On Parish level

- ❖ Regular Training and Meetings.
- ❖ Formation of parish co-ordination team,
- ❖ Regular evaluation
- ❖ Important occasions are celebrated at parish level.
- ❖ Parish Priests follow closely the working of SCCs.
- ❖ Parish team is empowered in the parishes at Sunday Liturgy.

C) On Diocesan level

- ❖ Encouragement is given by bishops.
- ❖ Constant visit by a particular bishop to his parishes for the promotion of SCCs. Diocesan SCC team, Zonal SCC team, Parish SCC team, Village SCC team.
- ❖ Orientation program in the diocese is organized.
- ❖ In every pastoral letter of bishops, he mentions about the SCCs.
- ❖ Major programs in the diocese are coordinated by SCCs.
- ❖ Bishops are strict for the promotion of SCCs in few dioceses.

D) At National level

- ❖ National Service team at Ecclesiastical regions
- ❖ NST meets with diocesan directors.
- ❖ Produce Training Materials.
- ❖ Role of Pallotne Animation Center for the promotion of SCCs is praise worthy.
- ❖ CBCI pastoral priority.
- ❖ DIIPA Newsletters
- ❖ SCC website : www.pacnag.in/

Japan

- ❖ Japan is still in the process of giving birth to the SCCs
- ❖ Although there are labour pains in giving birth to the SCCs, there is hope for the future
- ❖ For the SCCs to be a reality in Japan there is need to engage the bishops & the priests so that they themselves may realize the importance of SCCs.
- ❖ We can begin with the Diocese represented in this 5th General Assembly.
- ❖ There is also great potential in the foreign community in Japan. The SCCs can also be introduced to them.
- ❖ We have also been helped by other countries especially Korea where we have had the chance to observe firsthand how they run their SCCs.

Malaysia and Singapore

A) On SCC level

- ❖ Establish the BECs at an acceptable level.
- ❖ Seven Steps Gospel Sharing.
- ❖ Reflection paper current issues.
- ❖ Involve the BECs to participate in :-
- ❖ Sponsored Masses (Preparation)
- ❖ Voluntary Works
- ❖ Celebrate Eucharist at BEC level.

B) On Parish level

- ❖ Bible Sharing/ Bible Study conducted by the Biblical Group
- ❖ BEC leaders meet once a month to provide reports & discuss issues and challenges (BECCAT – BEC Coordinating Team)
- ❖ Issues & Challenges highlighted to the (BECCAT). BEC Animating team who then provide guidance & formation to inactive BECs
- ❖ Formation for Sunday School Teachers so that the younger children can attend Sunday school at their BEC.
- ❖ Community Breakfast organized by BECs to raise funds for BEC Activities.
- ❖ New Families registered and referred to the respective BECs.
- ❖ BEC sponsored masses animated.

C) On Diocesan level

- ❖ Prepare and distribute Reflection paper to all parishes.
- ❖ Archdiocese Pastoral Council – To Discuss on BEC Matters.
- ❖ Clergy Annual Pastoral Assembly – The BECs gather to discuss BEC matters.
- ❖ The BECs gather for input & celebration.
- ❖ Diocesan level Seminar for BECs & Core Group.

D) On Country/Inter-Diocesan level

- ❖ Pastoral Council Meet
- ❖ Bishop to encourage priests to promote BECs
- ❖ BEC day for all Churches.

AMOS PROGRAMMES

An Introduction by Bishop Oswald Hirmer

Lumko Programme taken from Pastoral Series No.20

*This is what Yahweh asks of you, only this. That you act justly, that you love tenderly
and that you walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6:8*



Introduction to AMOS Programmes

A Role play was enacted to highlight the role and function of AMOS programmes - reading and listening to the word of God should lead to acting with integrity and justice.

The Bible penetrates all aspects of life. It is the mirror for all that happens in life. We encounter Christ in our Gospel Sharing and our task is to share

this happiness of encountering Christ with the poor, the fisher folk, the politicians, business people etc.

Let us listen to what the Prophet Amos had to say:

Reading from Amos 5:13-25

Amos spoke with courage to criticize the unjust structures of his time. "I will not accept your burnt offerings... let justice flow like a stream.

Amos was not afraid to criticize the religious structures too.

But who was Amos?

"I was not a prophet... I was a shepherd. The Lord took me and said 'Go...'

Amos 7: 14-15

Amos was a herdsman, he had no training in theology but he was called to stand up against injustices and against empty religious practices.

This is what we are called to do... like the Prophet Samuel we also say..."Here I am Lord, Send me."

To answer the call of Christ – to establish the Kingdom of God everywhere

- beyond our churches and SCCs we can use the help of the AMOS programme.

The Amos programme topic must come from a generative theme

- A topic which people are talking about and they are concerned about.
- one that touches the nerve of people's lives – they can be global or local problems.

In step four, the Amos programme helps simple people do deeper social analysis in order to find solutions for their problems and take action.

There are many ready made AMOS programmes but the best ones are those made for your own situation and context. The following page is a reproduction from LUMKO No. 20, Amos Programme structure.



The Structure of an Amos Programme

Step 1: Look at Life – a burning issue / generative theme

Use an effective Code to raise the issue in Step 1

A code can be a story, role-play, picture, drama, song or film.

Step 2: We ask the question: WHY?

We get into the heart of the problem and talk about our understanding, feelings. Then we ask significant questions to analyze our problem in a more general way.

Step 3: We listen to God

We read and reflect on a bible text that helps us get in touch with what God wants us to hear about our problem.

Step 4: Search for Root Causes

We look carefully at many aspects of our problem to find out why the problem exists and what the Church, our Culture, the Media etc say about this problem.

Step 5: Plan with Firmness and Love

We can use the Problem Solving Scheme to help us plan our course of action. We can take some small steps towards solving a problem even if it is a very big problem.

Taken from Lumko No. 20 'Pastoral Use of the Bible' by Oswald Hirmer 1991, Lumko Institute, South Africa.





Meeting of Bishops

with AsIPA Resource Team
In Archbishop's House, Davao City.

Day Five, Saturday 24th October 2009

The bishops were very glad that so many participants could attend the 5th General Assembly. In their discussions they expressed appreciation for the work that has been done to build up the Small Christian Communities (BECs) in Asia. Some expressed regret that they could not attend due to other commitments. The bishops then expressed their disappointment that more exposure was not given to the methodologies that are in use in the region, since it is 40 years since BECs were started.

The team listened carefully to the concerns expressed by the bishops. In particular there was concern that the different ways of promoting BECs be given more visibility and that the methodology of AsIPA be better understood.

There was also a request that there be more opportunities to exchange experience and methodologies. The team acknowledged the lack of time for this and agreed to consider this within the context of the nature of AsIPA General Assemblies. It was felt that perhaps a different kind of gathering could be organized – a world assembly of BECs where all the various approaches would be exhibited and explained.



Exposure Programme

visit to GKKs / SCCs / BECs in the Da-Di-Ta-Ma Region

Day Five & Six, Saturday October 24th 2009 to Sunday October 25th 2009

Fr Picardal and his team helped to prepare the participants.



ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER PARISH
SASA - PAMPANGA, DAVAO CITY
FR. JOSEPH GODBOUT, P.M.E.
MULTI - PURPOSE CENTER

PARISH

ICES

5 P.M.

7 P.M.

10 A.M.

2:30 P.M.

M.7

10:00 A.M.

11:00 A.M.

12:00 P.M.

1:00 P.M.

2:00 P.M.

3:00 P.M.

4:00 P.M.

5:00 P.M.

6:00 P.M.

7:00 P.M.

8:00 P.M.

WELCOME

MARRIAGE BANNERS



Evaluation & Planning

Day Eight - Tuesday October 27th 2009

Task

1. Choose someone to take notes and to report to the whole group later.
Evaluate the GA5 experience using the evaluation sheet. (30 minutes) Do the question on significant learning in the group. Do the rest of the evaluation paper on your own later.
2. Prepare a written report of the group evaluation
3. Discuss the questions below related to your country planning.
4. Be ready to report on question C at 2.30pm.

Questions for country group planning

1. After the assembly and your insights and learning, how will they influence your work with SCCs?
2. What might you do to initiate / promote / strengthen BECs/SCCs and your work of building a Christ-centred, community based participatory church?
3. What suggestions / recommendations could you make for the future work of the AsIPA desk and work with the SCCs /BECs? What would you like to see happening at the next General Assembly of AsIPA?

Countries are listed alphabetically.

Bangladesh

1. **Significant learning was:**
“We got the Theological insight of SCCs and how Eucharist would be connected to faith, celebration and life and SKK experiences. All these will be helpful for us to promote and start SCCs.
2. **Planning for the country**
 - ❖ Build up the Parish structure on SCCs.
 - ❖ Promote SCCs among the newly converted Christians.
 - ❖ Animation for Priests in diocesan level.
 - ❖ Visiting and joining SCCs and gospel sharing.
 - ❖ SCCs day structure
 - ❖ Publication tri-monthly SCCs news.
 - ❖ Regular meeting and evaluation of SCCs activities.
3. **Suggestions for AsIPA desk**
 - ❖ AsIPA Desk may have more communication with the Chairman & Laity Commission for promoting SCCs.
 - ❖ AsIPA Desk may co-operate so that we can organize SCCs assembly in country level.
 - ❖ In next General Assembly of AsIPA, a success story of SCCs can be shared



Submitted by: Father Albin Montu Gomes

India, Tamil Nadu Region

1. Significant Learning

- ❖ Contextualizing the vision of AsIPA into our living condition.
- ❖ Proper understanding and realization of the relationship between the Eucharistic celebration and SCCs /BECs.
- ❖ Deeper understanding of the 7 Step Gospel Sharing Method.
- ❖ Learning the Bible Mirror Method and the Amos Method.
- ❖ Personal enrichment and group enrichment through the meeting and sharing of the people of different countries so as to involve oneself effectively in the local BECs.
- ❖ Understanding and realizing how a diocese and parish can work with the assistance of the Laity. People's involvement in the parishes met during the Exposure.
- ❖ The techniques of combining faith realities and life realities by observing the link between Gospel & life.



2. Improvements of our SCCs with the help of the significant learning.

- ❖ Reaching out to the parishes where the seed of SCCs has not been sown,
- ❖ Using the Methodology in our Gospel Sharing.
- ❖ Fostering of the spirit of lay evangelization.
- ❖ Animation to make people realize the link between the celebration of the Eucharist & the SCCs.
- ❖ Formation of animators to create the spirit of the "New Way of Being Church".



3. SCCs to promote & strengthen Christ-centred Community in the Church of Tamil Nadu

- ❖ Requesting Bishops to prioritize this effort of the BECs.
- ❖ Empowerment of the Laity at all levels.
- ❖ Bringing in the democratic nature of running and organizing parishes, not excluding anyone.
- ❖ Laity are to be identified, respected & empowered & not used.
- ❖ Regional level guidelines matching with that of the dioceses are to be formulated & used.
- ❖ Annual plan of the parish concerning SCCs is to be insisted upon.
- ❖ Strengthening of the efforts and agenda of other structures and bodies such as (Commissions Associations, Movements) existing in the parishes to collaborate with SCCs in the parishes.
- ❖ Zone level Convention on SCCs to be organized.
- ❖ Misunderstanding of SCCs as one of the Commissions existing in the diocese, is to be tackled.
- ❖ Formation of seminarians in line with the spirit of SCCs is to be focused on.
- ❖ Priests' Programmes such as recollection & Ongoing formation are to be done on SCCs.
- ❖ Motivating Religious Congregations, as some of them use the SCCs as the subjects of their social work.
- ❖ Final Report of the 5th General Assembly of AsIPA is to be circulated to Bishops & secretaries of all the dioceses of Asia.

4. Recommendations for the future activities of the AsIPA

- ❖ AsIPA Materials could be made available and widely circulated.
- ❖ Sharing of Lumko Materials to all the dioceses.
- ❖ Souvenir of the General Assembly could be prepared much earlier.
- ❖ Life realities that are unique to each nation could be exposed in order to see the application of the spirit of BECs at the lower level of the societies.

5. Suggestions for the next General Assembly of AsIPA

- ❖ Lot of techniques & skills could be taught.
- ❖ Many input sessions.
- ❖ Panel, success stories, video clipping could be used.
- ❖ Common song could be used.
- ❖ AsIPA Team could also use the interested members of other countries in their animation.
- ❖ Participation of Bishops could be improved.
- ❖ Theme: "That they may be one..." – Jn : 17:22 could be considered.
- ❖ All programmes could be made a little more professional.
- ❖ Clarity in the announcements could be improved.
- ❖ If arrangements are made for the participants to attend GKK meetings during exposure, it would be more useful to the participants to share their experiences with our own GKK at home. Thanking You

Submitted by: M Thomas, India

Japan

- ❖ It is good to have a copy of the lecture to the participants beforehand.
- ❖ Since there are participants from various countries. It is good to have more time for sharing and relaxation, (especially at night)
- ❖ Since everyone's interest is different, we suggest that AsIPA organizes different workshops (for example, AMOS program, Bible-Mirror-Method) and leave them optional to the participants.
- ❖ We hope to see that some Bishops from Japan participate in the next AsIPA General Assembly.



Korea

- ❖ Every day first session must be one hour input session.
- ❖ Plan the whole programme systematically.
- ❖ Announcements and rearrangements were not clear enough.
- ❖ We recommend a subcommittee including representatives from country groups and mixed groups.
- ❖ All diocesan directors must be encouraged to participate in the assembly.
- ❖ Changes of the timetable must be displayed in power-point point, LCD screen.



An Appreciation:

Here is an appreciation from our group - All members of the group said in one voice; Bringing the Asian Delegates together under one shelter is a herculean task, AsIPA desk did it and we congratulate and thank all the members of AsIPA Desk. Everyone said in one voice, hospitality is excellent and we thank the Archbishop of Davao and his team.

Myanmar & Papua New Guinea

Suggestions for the next AsIPA General Assembly - :

- ❖ We would like to hear how the BECs could become Eucharistic communities.
- ❖ To explore the senses in which SCCs could be Eucharistic in the absence of priests.
- ❖ How BEC's can be relevant not only to Catholics but also to Non Catholic Community members.
- ❖ To be more ecumenical.



Philippines, Northern Luzon Region

1. Significant learning:

- ❖ It gives the awareness that we need a sense of MISSION in the community to the world for God, not only prayer on devotion.
- ❖ To have a chance to be a friend of other people of AsIPA and to know similar BEC approaches.
- ❖ It gives learning / refreshing work in the Parish.
- ❖ The exposure witnessed to the actual life of the people in the BEC/SCCs.
- ❖ It gives a widening of perspective.
- ❖ Learn different BEC approaches.



2. Suggestions:

- ❖ Shorten the number of days for the Assembly.
- ❖ Focus on the social transformation of consciousness toward the Kingdom Mission.
- ❖ To give time to have a closer relationship with other people.
- ❖ Need of analysis of context.
- ❖ Respect the appropriate BEC approach.
- ❖ The Speaker should have the actual experience situation of the BEC not only the theory.
- ❖ Make new modules on the Kingdom of God.
- ❖ Need presentation on context of Asia, to discuss the Kingdom Mission.
- ❖ More training modules for the BEC.

Philippines, Mindanao Region

- ❖ We are reminded once again of the importance of sharing of the Word of God and of the Eucharist.
- ❖ Continued/on- going accompaniment of our BECS through facilitating leadership in terms of Training diocesan, parish & BEC teams,
- ❖ AsIPA provides facilitative tool to help emerge the local way of forming, sustaining BECs. More collaborative effort among Mindanao BEC Teams to share systematic resources and experiences that will enhance the diverse ways of living BECs as New Way of Being Church.



Thailand

1. Significant Learning:

- ❖ Able to learn some good points from the seminar, encourage us to bring back what we learn from here.
- ❖ To strengthen SCCs, there are many methods but most important thing is to have clear vision that is to make Christ the Centre of Christian Life.
- ❖ Will make BEC better by building the CORE GROUPS Leaders :-
 - National
 - Diocesans
 - Structures / Parishes
 - Communities



2. Evaluation

- ❖ Time Table - is not clear (keep on changing)
- ❖ Technology should be used more especially power points.
- ❖ Cleanliness both places should be more noticed.
- ❖ Fans are needed due to warm weather for those who stay in the seminary.
- ❖ Good program but lack of good management.
- ❖ Duration of Seminar should/must be short.
- ❖ More chance to be in/with country group sharing.



3. Recommendations from Resource Person

- ❖ Involvement and accompanying the BECs by all priests.
- ❖ Bishops from time to time could write exhortation and encourage priests and religious to immerse themselves in the life of SCCs/BECs and mission.
- ❖ Religious with their skills and availability of personnel could support the dioceses to build & promote SCCs/BECs.
- ❖ In the spirit of SCC/BEC Team Training using AsIPA texts and others could be utilized.
- ❖ The texts of AsIPA follow a specific methodology and to get the best out of them the methodology should be followed.
- ❖ Exposure to AsIPA Way of Being Church for Bishops and priests could be organized (request MISSIO to fund it).
- ❖ Empower BECs to take decision responsibly for the growth of people's sacramental life and mission.



Closing Eucharist

Homily by Bishop Kingsley Swampillai



My dear friends,

We have almost completed the important days of our 5th Assembly of ASIIPA with an intense exchange of experiences, and seen the successes and failures and the hopes that the future holds for our onward journey on this mission.

We have experienced the warmth of fellowship and brotherliness during the past few days – that has given an indication of a community of love...

I must admit that we in Asia caught the mind of the Church, through its post Vatican teachings and its concerns expressed from time to time

towards creating a New Way of Being Church, shedding its dead weight acquired over the past centuries, sometimes in contrast with the church that Jesus had in mind.

The Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences beginning from Bandung in 1990 offered us a dream and a challenge towards renewing the church beginning from the base, i.e. the grass roots of the Church in Asia, leading towards a New Way of Being Church.

The efforts towards building Small Christian Communities of Love and Service were strengthened by constantly experiencing Christ's presence and message through Gospel sharing. Thus was born the concept of an Asian Integral Pastoral Approach. This has been made possible by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as told in the Synod of Bishops held in 2008 on the theme: *Word of God in the Life & Mission of the Church* – which covered all aspects of the Divine Word – but there was a lacuna as told by a participant i.e. a practical guidance or a method to implement diffusion of the pastoral use of the Bible – the Word of God was missing.

Of particular importance is the "encyclical" of Pope Paul John Paul II called "Redemptoris Missio" (Mission of the Redeemer – No. 51) where he prophetically proclaimed, "a rapidly growing phenomenon in the young churches (of Asia), fostered by Bishops and Bishops' Conferences as a "Pastoral Priority" is that of Ecclesial Communities (also known by other names), which are proving to be good centres for Christian formation and missionary outreach."

He also clearly mentions that in that setting they gather together for prayer, scripture reading, catechesis and discussion on human and ecclesial problems with a view to common commitment"...He also calls these "Centres of Evangelization" in communion with their Pastors and the Magisterium.

Further he is also mindful of the problems faced by Christian and non-Christian communities throughout Asia.

"At the same time being imbued with Christ's love, they also show how divisions, tribalism, racism etc. can be overcome."

During our discussions here we did feel the impact of divisions and challenges posed by those against our efforts at building SCC's/BEC's. Yet we do not rely on our own power or skills but in the power of Christ's love that will heal such divisions; after all He is the greatest healer.

The above view has been further endorsed by the Synodal document, "Ecclesia in Asia" (Church in Asia) of 1999 in the run-up to the millennium. "I encourage," said the Holy Father Pope John Paul II. "I encourage the Church in Asia, where it is possible, to consider these Basic Communities as a positive feature of the Church's evangelizing activity."

The above Apostolic Exhortation "Ecclesia in Asia" seems to shed some light on the dynamics of Mission & Communion. It poignantly comes out saying that Communities exist for mission & mission builds communities. The Missionary Community becomes a Communitarian Mission.

The Community is obviously involved in the mission of Jesus – while this mission is to build up communities.

Hence, I am strongly inclined to consider that our AsIPA approach which is geared towards the mission of building communities of love and service is itself another mission – AsIPA mission.

The Readings of today i.e. Letter of St Paul to the Romans & Gospel of St. Luke, remind us of the strength and conviction of our belief.

We have been taught that the process of building is slow and time – consuming, and full of obstacles and disappointments...yet we've got to wait like the growth of the mustard seed and the invisible power of the yeast in the dough.

As St Paul says "Hope is not hope if its object is seen". Hoping for what we cannot see means awaiting it with patient endurance. This is exactly what we experience in the matters of AsIPA; hence our repeated gatherings, assemblies and exchanges are part of the process of hope. Surely we already begin to see...

May God bless you who are ministers of hope and builders of strong communities of faith, love and service.

Circulars and Application forms leading up to the 5th General Assembly of AsIPA

AsIPA 5th General Assembly

**Regional Major Seminary, Catalunan Grande, Davao City, Philippines
20-28 October, 2009**

**Theme: “Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19)
Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs**

30 December 2008

To: SCCs/BECs National/Diocesan Teams

Re: AsIPA Gen. Assembly 5 on the theme: **“Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19)
Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs**

Dear Friends:

As we prepare for the New Year during this happy season, we are glad to announce that in 2009, we will have the 5th AsIPA General Assembly, to be held in Davao City, Philippines.

Why Davao City? It is an Archdiocese with a long history of having BECs. The Suffragan Dioceses include Mati, Tagum and Digos who can speak of many years with BEC experience. Mati and Tagum both have more than 40 years in this way of being Church. We will have our exposure in these Dioceses. Davao Archdiocese is our host and co-organizer, and the General Assembly forms part of its Diamond Jubilee celebration.

Our theme flows from two Church events: The recent Synod on “The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church” (celebrated in Rome on Oct. 5-26, 2008), and the next FABC Plenary Assembly with its theme on “Living the Eucharist in Asia,” to be held in August, 2009.

In preparation for the 5th General Assembly, please ask your SCCs/BECS to reflect on the theme and have sessions with them to arrive at the report you will present. The report of every participating team has two parts:

Part one: A two page (4A size) on the journey you have made since 2006 and how much has been achieved since then. This report will also form part of our documentation.

Part two: A two page (4A size) to present specific features how the Word has become the center of SCCs using Gospel sharing method, and how the Eucharist is lived in the daily life of the members of the SCCs. This report will be your contribution to the theme of the General Assembly.

****Please bring these reports in hard copies as well as in CDs or in a pen drive (USB).**

Enclosed are copies of the letter to the Bishops' Conference, the information flier and the application form to be returned on or before July 31, 2009 to the AsIPA Desk address above.

With best wishes for the New Year and may it bring you more hope-filled signs in the ministry.

In Christ,

Cora Mateo
AsIPA Desk

AsIPA 5th General Assembly

Regional Major Seminary (REMASE), Catalunan Grande, Davao City, Philippines

20-28 October, 2009

Theme: "Do this in memory of me" (Lk 22:19)
Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs

APPLICATION FORM - 5th AsIPA General Assembly

Country _____

National _____ or Diocesan _____ Team

Passport names of team members and please fill up all the appropriate columns:

Names (First one is the name of contact person of the Team) Citizenship Passport no.

<u>Names</u>	<u>Citizenship</u>	<u>Passport no.</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Contact address: _____
(for the Team) _____

Tel no. _____ Fax no. _____

Email _____

Indicate with (*) the members who are planning to join an immersion experience which could be before or after the General Assembly. Several places can be arranged depending on the number of those who want to do it. Those who join are expected to pay for their domestic travel.

Travel plans: Date of arrival _____ Flight number: _____

Date of departure _____ Flight number: _____

Number of members joining separate immersion: _____ before ____ or after ____ G.A.5

N.B. Please send back this application to the AsIPA Desk on or before 30th July, 2009;
fabc.asipa@gmail.com or asipa.tp@catholic.org.tw; fax no. +8862 25234323

AsIPA 5th General Assembly

Regional Major Seminary (REMASE), Catalunan Grande, Davao City, Philippines
20-28 October, 2009

Theme: **“Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19)**
Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs

APPLICATION FORM #2 - 5th AsIPA General Assembly

Country _____

National _____ or Diocesan _____ Team

Short description of your experiences as a team in using the AsIPA method and/or texts:

Any new modules developed to meet local needs:

In what language _____

Titles of modules _____

AsIPA 5th General Assembly

Regional Major Seminary (REMASE), Catalunan Grande, Davao City, Philippines

20-28 October, 2009

Theme: "Do this in memory of me" (Lk 22:19)

Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs

Circular no. 2

30 April 2009

Dear Friends: Greetings from Taipei, during this Easter season!

Our local organizers in Davao City have been concretizing the schedule and the events are better coordinated. But the dates do not change.

Here are some of their suggestions:

- The opening Eucharist will be at the cathedral so the people of the Archdiocese can participate. Our General Assembly falls within the year they are celebrating their Diamond Jubilee as Archdiocese. They request that we put on our native attire for that mass and bring offerings that we wish (voluntary basis) to give to our host.
- The exposure to parishes is in two places: Archdiocese of Davao and Diocese of Tagum so as not to travel too long to the area. They are skipping the two suffragan Dioceses.
- Almost right after our General Assembly, we have All Saints and All Souls feasts. In the Philippines, these are important family affair that starts on October 31st and the cemeteries become "alive" so to say, remembering the beloved dead. This is another good exposure for those who are going for the first time and if you wish, inform us early.
- The temperature in Davao is around 30-35 degrees centigrade and it can rain anytime. Typhoon season should be over by then.
- Departure date can be Oct. 28th if you do not wish to join the tour and other programs.

Other matters to consider:

- Attached is another sheet to fill up as part of the application. Kindly send them early and remember to choose your participants who can benefit and contribute to the General Assembly process which is meant for those who have been using the AsIPA way, not for those who are new and needing initial training. For any inquiries, please send us a mail.
- Please write your passport names and indicate if you need a letter of invitation to apply for visa. The local organizers want these names on or before June 30th. Send your application with the second sheet to: **AsIPA Desk – FABC Office of Laity and Family**

3, Lane 85, Linsen N.Road, Taipei 10441, Taiwan

Tel/fax no. +8862 2523 4323

fabc.asipa@gmail.com; asipa.tp@catholic.org.tw

As many of you might already have heard, the new Asian Coordinator for AsIPA Desk is Ms. Wendy Louis of Singapore Archdiocese, a member of ART since its beginning. For the GA 5, we suggest that you continue using the Taipei address for communications.

Wishing you all Easter hope and mutual remembering in prayers as we prepare for GA 5.

Cora Mateo, for AsIPA Desk

FABC OLF - AsIPA Desk

(Asian Integral Pastoral Approach)

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences – Office of Laity and Family

No. 3 Lane 85, Linsen N. Road, Taipei 104, Taiwan, R.O.C.

Tel/fax no. (8862) 2523 4323 Email asipa.tp@catholic.org.tw and fabc.asipa@gmail.com

Circular no. 3

To: Participants of the 5th AsIPA General Assembly
Davao City, Philippines, 20-28 October, 2009

Dear Friends:

Greetings of peace from Taipei!! This is now our 3rd circular letter to you.

Looking at the dates, you must be already planning your trip to join the 5th General Assembly. Here are some information to take into consideration when planning your trip to the Philippines and finally reaching Davao City:

- ✦ Davao City is in the south and is around 2 hours flight from Manila and one hour flight from Cebu City;
- ✦ The international airport in Manila (NINYOY AQUINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT) has 3 terminals for international arrivals and departure. If you take Philippine Airlines, you will arrive and depart at Terminal 2. If you take Cebu Pacific, it will be Terminal 3. All the other airline companies are in Terminal 1. There could be changes by October and connecting buses or trains could be available without going out of the airport. It is important to check which terminal is your plane coming in and going out and be prepared to move to another terminal either through your airline or by airport bus or taxi. Please check at the information desk before going out of the terminal.
- ✦ There are international flights landing in Cebu (CEBU MACTAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT) and changing to domestic flights is easier here since there is no need to change airport terminal. Cathay Pacific (change at Hong Kong Airport) and Silk Air (with Singapore Airlines, change at Singapore Changi Airport) have direct flights to Cebu.
- ✦ International flights direct to Davao City are only by Silk Air – 6 days a week (change plane at Singapore Changi Airport) and Malaysian Airlines (change plane at Kuala Lumpur Airport) for some days.
- ✦ Domestic flights to Davao City can be done on Philippine Airlines (PAL), Cebu Pacific or Air Philippines. They offer cheap tickets for a limited number if booking is done in advanced and tickets can be bought directly from their website.

Our contact persons in Davao City are:

- Ms. Jing Saniel; Email vergie_saniel@yahoo.com Tel. no. +639177561215
- Ms. Vicky Anghag; Email vk_s2k@yahoo.com; Tel. no. +639196059308
(The Email addresses after vergie and vk are followed by an underscore_)

We hope your travel arrangements go well and for any inquiry, do send us a mail. When you send your communication to AsIPA Desk, please write both email addresses as seen on the letterhead.

With best wishes and looking forward to hearing from you.

Cora Mateo, for AsIPA Desk

FABC OLF - AsIPA Desk

(Asian Integral Pastoral Approach)

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences – Office of Laity and Family

No. 3 Lane 85, Linsen N. Road, Taipei 104, Taiwan, R.O.C.

Tel/fax no. (8862) 2523 4323 Email asipa.tp@catholic.org.tw and fabc.asipa@gmail.com

2 September 2009

To: All AsIPA 5th General Assembly Participants

Theme: **“Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19)**

Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs

Dear Friends:

Greetings from the AsIPA Desk, still based in Taipei. This letter confirms the acceptance of your application to join the 5th AsIPA General Assembly to be held in Davao City on October 20 (arrival) to 28th (departure).

We just have a little more than a month to go before the General Assembly starts. Here are some last minute reminders:

- All reports of each Delegation (national or diocesan), mentioned in circular letter #1 should also be in a CD or in a USB for easy transfer to the General Assembly documentation. This is important to assure that your report is included.
- The opening eucharist will be at the Cathedral at 5:30 in the afternoon of October 20th, and we would like to ask you to dress up in your own native attire. If you wish, you can offer your gift to our host during that mass.
- Each team will be asked to take care of organizing the eucharist and we ask you to bring some indigenous materials (songs, symbols, etc...) for the liturgy of that day. The following is the distribution of days for different teams. The first name is the lead team and hence in charge of gathering all the others:

20 October Davao Archdiocese

21 October Philippines (Nueva Segovia, Bayombong), Indonesia and Myanmar

22 October Korea, Japan, China and Taiwan Teams

23 October India, Germany and Switzerland Teams

24 October Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore Teams

26 October Philippine (Cebu, Palo, Maasin, Naval, Tagum) and S. Africa

27 October Sri Lanka, England, PNG and Bangladesh Teams

28 October (tour day) Davao Archdiocese assisted by volunteers from the Philippines

- There will be space to exhibit locally produced training materials and any local crafts.
- The host families for our exposure are volunteers and we would like to suggest that you express your thanks to them with some small souvenirs from your countries.

With this, we also enclose your travel itinerary form and request for special meals, if any.

AsIPA 5th General Assembly
Regional Major Seminary (REMASE), Catalunan Grande, Davao City, Philippines
20-28 October, 2009

Theme: **“Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19)**
Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs

TRAVEL ITINERARY

NAME _____ Country _____

ARRIVAL:

Flight number	Date	Arrival time at Davao Airport	Flight coming from
_____	_____	_____	_____

DEPARTURE:

Flight number	Date	Time from Davao Airport	Flight going to
_____	_____	_____	_____

Do you want to join any **exposure** after the General Assembly? Yes _____ No _____

If YES, what dates _____ To which place _____

Do you need **special diet**? If YES, please indicate

Are you willing to stay in a **shared bedroom**?

If YES, please indicate possible roommate _____

PLEASE return this form on or before September 30th to the AsIPA Desk in Taipei:

#3, Lane 85, Linsen N. Road, Taipei 10441, Taiwan

Fax/Tel no. +8862 25234323

Email: asipa.tp@catholic.org.tw and fabc.asipa@gmail.com (always use both email to reply)

For emergency and numbers you can give to your families/communities:

AsIPA 5th General Assembly
Regional Major Seminary (REMASE), Catalunan Grande, Davao City, Philippines
20-28 October, 2009

Theme: **“Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19)**
Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs

SCHEDULE

The schedule of days basically remains the same, as it was sent to you with Circular #1. Please note the following:

Oct. 20 (Tues) is opening day

REGISTRATION starts at 9:00 in the morning at the AsIPA GA 5 secretariat

Meals will be served to those who indicated early arrival time

3:30 pm	Tea
4:30	Departure from REMASE to go to the Cathedral
5:30	Opening Eucharist will be at the Cathedral (downtown Davao City) Return to REMASE after mass
7:00	Welcome dinner and cultural show (by Davao troupe) Welcome talks Introduction of participants and local staff members Orientation
9:00	Night prayer Meetings of Steering Committee and others

Oct. 21, 22, 23, 26 and 27: Daily schedule

7:00	Breakfast
8:30	Bible enthronement or Gospel sharing
9:15	Full session until 17:30 (with tea break, lunch and rest)
17:30	Break for Eucharist
18:00	Eucharist, followed by supper
20:00	Evening session on pastoral sharing or other topics
21:00	Night prayer followed by meetings for committees/other groups

Oct. 24 (Sat) 7:00 Eucharist and breakfast

9:30 Departure: for exposure area and Bishops' meeting

Oct. 25 (Sun) ----- At the exposure parishes and return to REMASE late afternoon

19:00 Supper

Oct. 28 (Wed) 7:00 Breakfast (DEPARTURE or TOUR DAY)

8:00 Departure for Philippine Eagle

11:00 Mass at Sto. Nino Shrine (hill overlooking Davao City)

12:00 Return to REMASE for lunch and rest

03:00 Departure to Archbishop's house for tea

04:30 People's Park

06:30 Shopping – NCC MALL; Supper at the MALL

8:30 Return to REMASE

Oct. 29 (Thurs) Departure day from REMASE for all the remaining participants
N.B. Those with further exposure will leave for respective areas

AsIPA 5th General Assembly
REMASE, Catalunan Grande, Davao City, Philippines ⁵

1st October, 2009

Theme: **“Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19)**
Bread broken and Word shared in SCCs/BECs

To: **All AsIPA 5th General Assembly participants**

Greetings on the feast of St. Therese of the Child Jesus!

I just had a quick visit to Davao City, and the venue for the AsIPA 5TH General Assembly. The local organizers wish to express their warm WELCOME to everyone!

You all must have read about the typhoons and rainfalls which have caused great damage in the Philippines. With the unpredictability of the weather, the local organizers wish to advise the following:

- our venue includes 3 to 4 buildings for the sessions, meals, Eucharistic celebrations and dormitories, please bring UMBRELLAS with you, even if there are some covered walks. This might come in handy too for the exposure.
- for evening walks, it will help if you have a small flashlight;
- the seminary will provide beddings and they tell us to bring our own towels;

For your trips, I hope everyone has included a travel/health insurance, with our trust in God's loving care! Please bring your own medicine.

For those arriving in the afternoon of Oct. 20th, you might have just enough time to go straight from the airport to the cathedral which is downtown. Please be ready to do that. There will be provisions for safekeeping of bags and other needs.

Full registration is US\$125 unless previously discussed – whether solidarity fee or minimum fee. The normally accepted currencies in the Philippines, aside from pesos, are: US\$, Euros, Japanese Yen, Chinese RMB and Korean Won.

Kindly continue to use the fabc.asipa@gmail.com address to send your messages.

With best wishes and prayers for a safe and pleasant trip to the Philippines, to Davao City, and looking forward to welcoming you all!

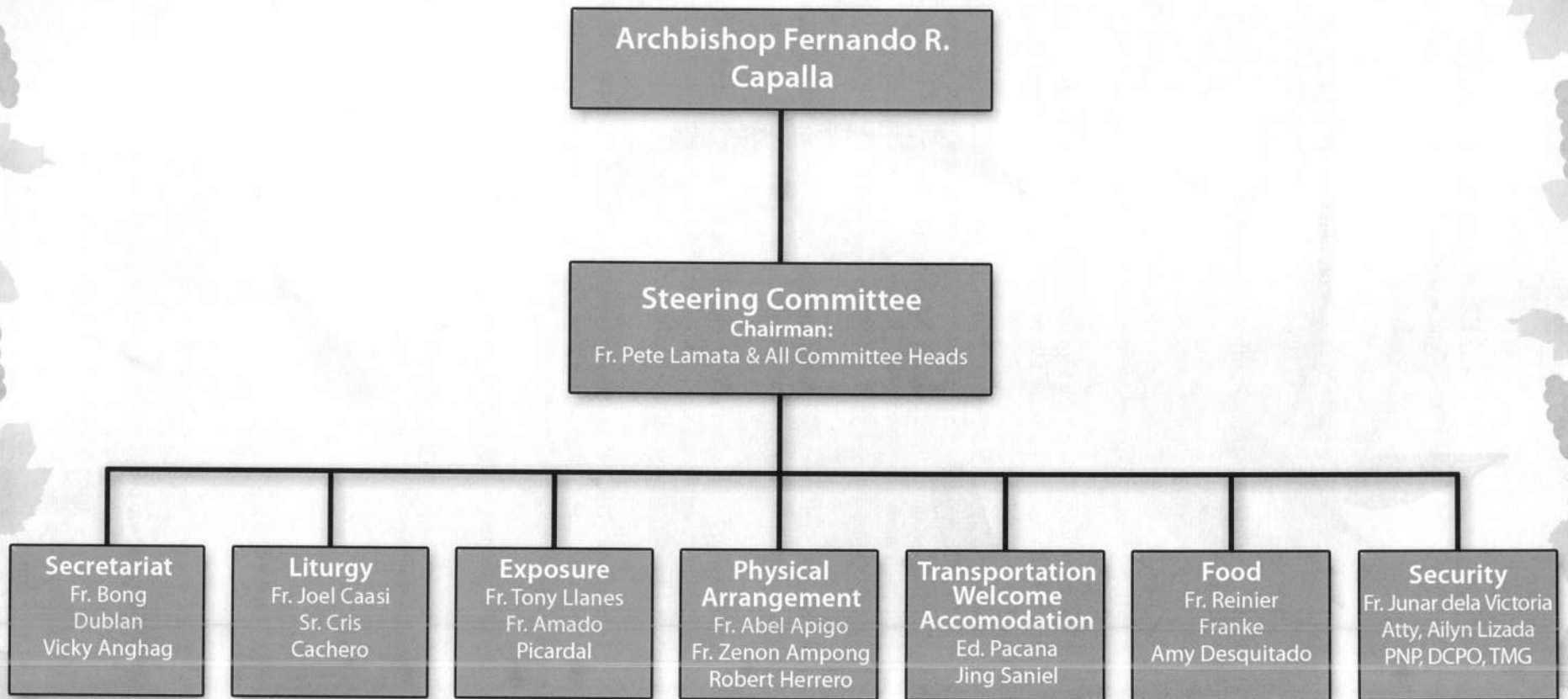
In Christ,

Cora Mateo
For the AsIPA Desk

⁵ AsIPA Desk contact: Email: fabc.asipa@gmail.com; Tel/fax +8862252343; mobile +88693232 2242

20-28 October, 2009
Regional Major Seminary (REMASE)
Davao City, Philippines

LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE STRUCTURE



Appendix B

Guide for the number of participants from each country – GA 5

Some points to consider for AsIPA GA 5:

Per country, per diocese – participation by teams

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Local Host Philippines	40
India	15
Korea	15
Singapore	3
Sri Lanka	7
Thailand	5
Taiwan	3
Japan	3
Indonesia	10
E. Timur	3
Myanmar	5
Malaysia	6
PNG	3
Bangladesh	5
Pakistan	3
China	3
Vietnam	3
Mongolia	2
Germany	5
Switzerland	2
ART	10

Bishops: 10

** around 172 participants

Organizer: FABC Office of Laity and Family, AsIPA Desk, and local host (Davao or Cebu).

AsIPA 5TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

20-28 October 2009

No	ADDRESS	COUNTRY	EMAIL	CONTACT NUMBER
1	Fr. Peter Emmanuel Archbishop House, 1 Ashok Place, New Delhi, 110001, India	India	bropeter@sifymail.com bropeter1@rediffmail.com emmanuelpeter@gmail.com	9871811237 011-23343457
2	Fr. Joseph Aresseril Emmanuel Catholic Church, Vivekananda Marg P.O. Balasore DT, Orissa, India 756001	India	Josekutty jose@yahoo.com	9437174393
3	Puthiyedam Joseph Pambanar Post, Peerumedu, Idikki Kerala, India Pin 685537	India	sujamyslica@yahoo.com	919447132757
4	Xavier Harold St. Michael's Cathedral, Ripon Place Shimla, H.P. India- 171001	India	xaviersml@dataone.on	911772804249 / 9418344569
5	Gordon E. Morris "Marian Villa", Road No. 2 Mallikarjuna Colony, 8-5-131 OLJ Bowenpally Secunderabab 500011 India	India	morrisgordone@yahoo.com/ ccbilaitycom@gmail.com	9104027754420 0091-9391084427
6	Fr. Cassian Pradhan Archbishop's House, 9/16 Satyanagar Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India	India	cassianpradhan@gmail.com	9435682035 9437682035
7	Fr. Joseph Felix Machado Holy Cross Church, Pamboor, BANTAKAL P.O. 574115, UDUPI TALIK & District, India	India	frjosmachado@gmail.com	0820/2559010 945415189
8	Fr. S. Panneer Selvam Secretary- ANPIAM, DEEPAN, PB> 146, Karumandapam, Trichy -620001, Tamilnadu, India	India	scctnbishops@yahoo.co.in	919443094997
9	Fr. Arul Rozario Catholic Church, P.O. Monigram. D.T. Murshidabad, W.B. India Pin 742237	India	Arulrozario2002@yahoo.co.in	919933988094
10	Mr. Edmund Manik Syiem P. Syiem, Madanrtng, Dongpata, Block-C Shillong- 793021. Meghalaya, India	India		098620-14045
11	Fr. Joseph Dias, SVD St. Mary's Church, Mahatabnagar, Burla P.O. Sambalpur District, Orissa, 768 017, India	India	joediassvd@rediffmail.com joediassvd@gmail.com	919437543512
12	Sundararaj Ignatius Plot No. 62 Jeeva Nagar, First main road, Adambakkam, Chennai- 600088, India	India	lggy_nimmy@yahoo.com	Overseas: 00919444122555 Inland: 044:22673225
13	Jayasingh Lissy Lawrence Pallottine Animation Centre (PAC), Anant Nagar, Nagpur	India	lawrencelizzy@gmail.com	9823956881 917122592716
14	Sr. Cissi Peter Thommassery Pallotine Animation Center, Anant NAgar, NAgpur, India	India	cpathom781@yahoo.com	9665367741
15	Bp. Julius Marandi Bishop's House Dudhani, Dumka P.O. @ District 814101 Jharkhand India	India	bspdumka@yahoo.co.in	06424-223377 9431156012
16	Fr. Sebastian Francis Thekkeyil Pallotine Animation Center, Pallotti Nagar, P.B. No. 18, Nagpur - 440013, India	India	sebythekkeyil@gmail.com	9673504572

17	Fr. Wilfred D'Souza	Archbishop's House 1, Ashok Place, New Delhi 110001	India	Wilfyz1@rediffmail.com	9868639490
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AsIPA General Assemblies 1996 – 2009

A Historical Overview

FABC – Office of Laity & Family, AsIPA Desk

Introduction

The Apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II for the new Millennium, made a call for “commitment and planning on the part of the universal Church and the particular Churches: on the domain of Communion (Koinonia) which embodies and reveals the very essence of the mystery of the Church,” (NMI no.42). He presents this as the “great challenge facing us in the millennium ... to be faithful to God’s plan and respond to the world’s deepest yearnings”(NMI no.43). The Asian Integral Pastoral Approach (AsIPA) finds its very reason for existence in this “need to promote a spirituality of communion,” (ibid), which the Asian Bishops have expressed so many times. During FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences) 5th Plenary Assembly, they declared it as the vision for “the New Way of Being Church,” “a communion of communities where laity, religious and clergy recognize and accept each other as sisters and brothers,” (FABC 5 no.8.1.1). With this inspiration, the AsIPA Desk within the FABC Office of Laity and Family was set up in November, 1993, with the aim of producing contextualized approaches and finding materials to meet specific needs of particular churches to move towards the vision of

communion and of a participatory and co-responsible church. Since 1991, workshops were organized. Our initial steps were with the Lumko Institute in South Africa, and especially accompanied by Bishop Oswald Hirmer who was then on the Lumko staff. With him and an initial Editorial Board, four series of booklets (AsIPA texts) were produced on:

- Gospel Sharing (A series)
- Small Christian Communities (B series)
- Our Vision of Church: Participatory and Co-responsible (C series)
- Training of Parish Teams: Pastoral planning, Awareness programs, (leadership series (D series)

The Library topics which deal with specific themes not within the 4 series include : Parenting- Family life, Socio-Economic concerns, Women’s issues and Inter-Religious Dialogue.

We started by giving AsIPA international training courses, both basic and advanced to help the participants to grasp better the AsIPA vision and the methodology. Those who were trained later became trainers in their own countries. After the translation of the texts, basic

courses were given at national levels and international workshops focused on advanced training and exchange. In some countries they included an immersion experience to learn from the local approaches. More texts have since been produced, following the above series and touching on topics like “Evangelization” and “Leadership.”

1996 – First AsIPA General Assembly - Thailand

Our first General Assembly was held in 1996 at Baan Phu Wan Pastoral Training Center, Samphran, Thailand, to “share endeavours in different Asian countries, evaluate their programmes and look to the future.” (Statement of the first AsIPA General Assembly #3). The participants came with enthusiasm to share how they saw communities becoming Gospel-inspired people.

This General Assembly was an experience of deepening on the AsIPA vision and basic approach. The Editorial Board was formally set up to continue the process of producing and publishing materials. In their conclusion they state: “We are fully aware that AsIPA is not the only way to make the Church a communion of communities as desired by the FABC Bandung Plenary Assembly in 1990, we feel nonetheless that

it is a very useful instrument to propel the Church in this direction. It is our humble offering to the Churches in Asia. . . AsIPA properly understood and skillfully used, can be a great help in renewing the Church at the start of the third Millennium." (ibid #10-11).

2000 – Second AsIPA General Assembly - Thailand

While the first one had less than 40 participants, the second General Assembly also held in Thailand (Baan Phu Wan Training and Pastoral Centre) on 17- 21 October, 2000, gathered 105 - bishops, priests, religious and lay leaders from 13 countries. The theme was: "A New Way of Being Church in the New Millennium" and it aimed at deepening the understanding of AsIPA towards becoming a Participatory Church. The dynamics included sharing experiences, examining together AsIPA modules and an attempt to organize structures for networking, coordination and exchanges. They affirmed what the Bishops claimed during the 7th Plenary Assembly, on the AsIPA method: "proving to be a very good help to the growth and development of BECs. . . become the central tool in bringing about this communion marked by authentic participation and co-responsibility." (Final Statement of FABC 7,III.7). This Assembly offered a venue to present new locally produced modules from different countries. The sharing of experiences on how the method has continued in places where it has been implemented for more than five years show:

- The growth in the evangelizing mission of the Church through SCCs and

with the active participation of families

- Genuine participation of all, especially the least and the last, in the renewal process of the Parish.
- The SCCs as a normal way of being one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in a miniature form in the neighborhood.
- SCCs pave the way for the incarnation of the faith in the cultural milieu of the place and in becoming agent of change.
- The new locally produced modules created a deep sense of hope as pastoral teams are empowered to respond to their own pastoral and social realities.
- Sharing of experiences gave a sense of solidarity and became a source of mutual encouragement.

(ref. AsIPA Gen. Assembly 2 final statement).

These insights have also become challenges to move forward. They identified three main areas for further reflection and action:

- spirituality of the SCCs and the parish.
- harmony in the midst of diversity in the Asian way of life.
- new styles of collaborative leadership that animate and empower others for greater participation and lived communion.

The 2nd General Assembly included 8 recommendations for the people and for the leadership in the Church so that all "may have life and have it in abundance," (Jn 10:10).

2003 – Third AsIPA General Assembly - Korea

The third AsIPA General Assembly

took place, after 3 years, on 2-9 September, 2003 with the Korean team as host, at the Hanmaum Education and Retreat Center of Seoul Archdiocese. Our theme was: "SCCs/BECs: empowering people to serve." Its inspiring thought came from the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* by Pope John Paul II, written after the Synod on Asia: "BECs aim to help their members to live the Gospel in a spirit of fraternal love and service, and are therefore a solid starting point for a new society, the expression of a civilization of love," (EA#25).

The keynote address challenged us to focus on the economic and cultural process of globalization which has severely affected several countries in Asia, and it gave us insights for the sub-topics on Family, Spirituality, Ministry in SCCs/BECs and Leadership. The 123 participants including 15 bishops, came from 16 countries and made 3 resolutions:

- (1) the centrality of the Word of God in the lives of SCCs/BECs,
- (2) being evangelized and becoming evangelizers and
- (3) developing the gifts of the Spirit in lay people especially as emerging leaders. Nineteen recommendations were made.

Exposure was integrated in the General Assembly days. It was also a special occasion for the local organizers who gained insights in their tireless efforts to prepare and to attend to the participants, expressed in their words: "... This occasion has paved the way for greater understanding of this new way of being Church and has generated a lot of enthusiasm to work for it – among bishops, priests and lay leaders. I believe that the core of SCC is to be transformed

by the Gospel... nourished and empowered to continue the task and to renew the world through the Word of God."

2006 – Fourth AsIPA General Assembly - India

With those words, we launched ourselves towards the 4th General Assembly of AsIPA at the Maria Rani Centre, Trivandrum, India from 8-15th November, 2006.

The theme was "SCCs/BECs Towards a Church of Communion". Delegates numbered around 200 Bishops, Laity, clergy and religious from 14 countries including many observers from India.

The objectives of this assembly were:

- (i) deepening our ecclesiology of communion,
- (ii) reviewing the implications of integral and pastoral approach through SCCs / BECs
- (iii) discovering existing and innovative structures to initiate and nurture SCCs/ BECs,
- (iv) planning for exchange and sharing of resources.

The meeting was jointly organized by the AsIPA Desk of the FABC Office of Laity & Family, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) Commission for Laity, the CBCI National Service Team for Small Christian Communities and the Latin Archdiocese of Trivandrum. The Assembly was enriched by the presence of delegates from Europe and South Africa.

"This Fourth General Assembly gave us an opportunity to review our efforts in our journey towards a communion of communities. The sharing of experiences showed that:

* The focus of SCCs/BECs is on neighborhood help, especially to the poor.

* There is a gradual change in leadership structure of the Parish Pastoral Council as well as in leadership style.

* Priests have experienced transformation towards non-dominating leadership.

* There is an increasing number of religious sisters getting involved in the SCCs/BECs.

* The participation of women in SCCs/BECs has helped their empowerment and is bringing in gradual change towards equal partnership. It has facilitated women's participation in local government in some cases.

* Men and women from disadvantaged backgrounds have been enabled to participate in local elections through their involvement in SCCs/BECs.

* The gospel sharing experiences are extremely positive in helping people live out their Christian life and mission.

* There is a growing shift towards social change e.g. actions taken to organize co-op credit, protection of the environment and attempts at inter-religious outreach.

The 4th AsIPA General Assembly has deepened our appreciation of small communities as a way to build the Church as a communion in spite of the many hurdles and obstacles. We thank and praise God for all the blessings and graces showered on the Church through

SCCs/BECs. We believe that God is speaking to the Churches in Asia through the signs of the times. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Churches in Asia will fulfill their mission and live up to their vocation through SCCs/BECs." (taken from the final statement of the 4th GA).

2009 – Fifth AsIPA General Assembly – Philippines

From India we moved to South East Asia to the next AsIPA General Assembly in the Philippines in Davao City welcomed by the Archdiocese of Davao and the very kind Archbishop Capalla.

Conclusion

As this publication goes to print the 6th AsIPA General Assembly is being organized in Sri Lanka in October 2012 by a strong local host team and the AsIPA Desk of FABC OLF. We earnestly hope that all those attending these General Assemblies return to their communities more convinced and dedicated to the growth of communion in the Church and strengthening the participation of the Laity in the Mission of Christ in the Church and in the World through the building of Small Christian Communities.

Contributed by
Ms. Cora Mateo,
Executive Secretary of FABC-OLF
AsIPA Desk up to 2009,

Edited by
Ms Wendy M Louis
Executive Secretary of FABC-OLF
from 2009 to 2010.



Dedications

Bishop Emeritus Oswald Hirmer 1930 – 2011

Bishop Emeritus Oswald Hirmer died at the age of 81. On March 5th, 2011, he returned to the Lord at a home near Marianhill, South Africa. He was busy with the translation of his latest book "Our Joy in Being Catholic" and full of joy to the end.

Oswald Hirmer accompanied us in building up our Small Christian Communities and a participatory Church in Asia between the years 1991 and 1997 until he was appointed Bishop of Umtata in South Africa where he had been a missionary since the 50s.

Oswald Hirmer born on Feb 24 1930 was ordained on the 29 of June 1955 and spent the first two years of his priesthood serving in a parish deep in the Bavarian forest in his home country Germany. He heard the call of the Pope to give himself totally to Africa and landed in South Africa in 1957. Diocesan priests who gave themselves to another country were called "Fidei Donum" priests and thus began the long, faithful journey that took him all over South

Africa and the world.

In his 2010 Christmas letter to all his friends he wrote: "I wish to pay you a short visit. You should know you are not forgotten. You belong to my 'extended family' which I assemble before God every morning when I begin to pray." Well, now Bishop Oswald can assemble us before God in a new way and we can be sure he is caring about all the people he served over the years.

The joy and faith that was characteristic of Bishop Oswald are the legacy he left behind. Joy in the Lord and deep faith in God's promises and the people entrusted to him.

May you rest in peace+





A Last Word on Gospel Sharing

Intervention at 2009 Synod of Bishops in Rome on the Word of God
by Bishop Em. Oswald Hirmer, Southern African Bishops Conference

Dear Holy Father,

Dear Brother Bishops and friends,

Article 38 of the Instrumentum Laboris recommends the SEVEN STEP GOSPEL SHARING METHOD as one of the ways for the LECTIO DIVINA.

25 years ago, we developed the SEVEN STEPS (together with three other gospel sharing methods) in our Lumko Institute of Southern Africa. Since then, these SEVEN STEPS have found their way into many countries on different continents.

Allow me to sketch for you the pastoral impact and the theological vision behind the SEVEN STEP GOSPEL SHARING METHOD.

1. Pastoral impact of the SEVEN STEPS

Members of Parish Pastoral Councils in different continents told me: "Since we have started our Pastoral Council Meetings with gospel sharing, the meetings themselves have become shorter as we now talk differently with one another."

In Ghana, a professor in Sacred Scripture shared with me: "My mother in Holland told me Bible stories, five years I studied in the Biblicum in Rome, for many years I was teaching the Bible in the seminary– but it was in a gospel-sharing group in Kumasi where, for the first time, I really experienced the power of God's Word in scripture and the presence of the Risen Lord."

Gospel sharing has also become the spiritual foundation of countless small Christian communities in Africa and Asia, as well as in some dioceses in Germany.

2. The theological vision behind the SEVEN STEPS

2.1 Gospel sharing is not another Bible study method but a continuation of the Service of the Word at the Eucharist

What is the difference between Bible studies and gospel sharing?

In academic Bible studies at universities we talk ABOUT Jesus who lived long ago - as we may talk ABOUT Napoleon in a history lesson. Bible study groups in parishes often become a popularized continuation of such academic Bible studies.

GOSPEL SHARING, however, is a continuation of the Service of the Word at the Eucharist, a celebration where we do not merely TALK ABOUT Jesus but get IN TOUCH with him.

At the Eucharist and in gospel sharing we use the words of scripture as sacramental signs of Christ's presence and not merely as a historical record.

2.2 What are the spiritual dynamics of SEVEN STEP GOSPEL SHARING?

In step ONE we open ourselves to the presence of the Lord by inviting him as a friend as the two disciples of Emmaus did.

In STEP TWO the biblical text is read in a prayerful way.

In step THREE we repeat single words or short phrases from the text. Repeating words is a chance for intense interior listening to the Lord.

In step FOUR we keep silence and dwell with a certain word which has touched us. This time of silence helps us to sense the mystery of Christ's presence within a believing community.

In step FIVE we share with our brothers and sisters how a certain word or message has touched us personally. We have a great example: For me, all letters of St. Paul are a personal sharing on his personal experience with Christ. "It is no longer I who lives, but it is Christ who lives in me" he tells the Galatians (Gal ,20). This we call personal sharing.

Step SIX encourages us to ask the question: "What does the Lord want US to do? Small Christian communities ask themselves in step six: How can we continue Christ's mission in our neighbourhood?"

In step SEVEN all participants of the group have a chance to pray spontaneously.

3. Conclusion

The SEVEN STEPS GOSPEL SHARING, if well celebrated, can become a place of renewing the faith of our faithful and revitalizing our grass-root communities from within.

It can become a school for listening to God,

- a school for articulating the faith,
- a school for learning the art of silence and
- an experience of the mystery of Christ's presence among us.

Thanks be to God.





Bishop Vincent Kympat,
Diocese of Jowai, North India
RIP 30th July 2011



Bishop Vincent was always a strong promoter of the Small Christian Communities and had a heart attack during one of his pastoral visits when he was busy with training. His joy and spontaneous friendship was a hallmark of this kind shepherd. He was always ready to support our efforts in the AsIPA process and attended many General Assemblies. He will be sorely missed.



AsIPA 5th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

20-21 October 2009
St. Francis Xavier Regional Major Seminary (REMASE), Davao City, Philippines



AsIPA
General Assembly V
20 - 28 October 2009

