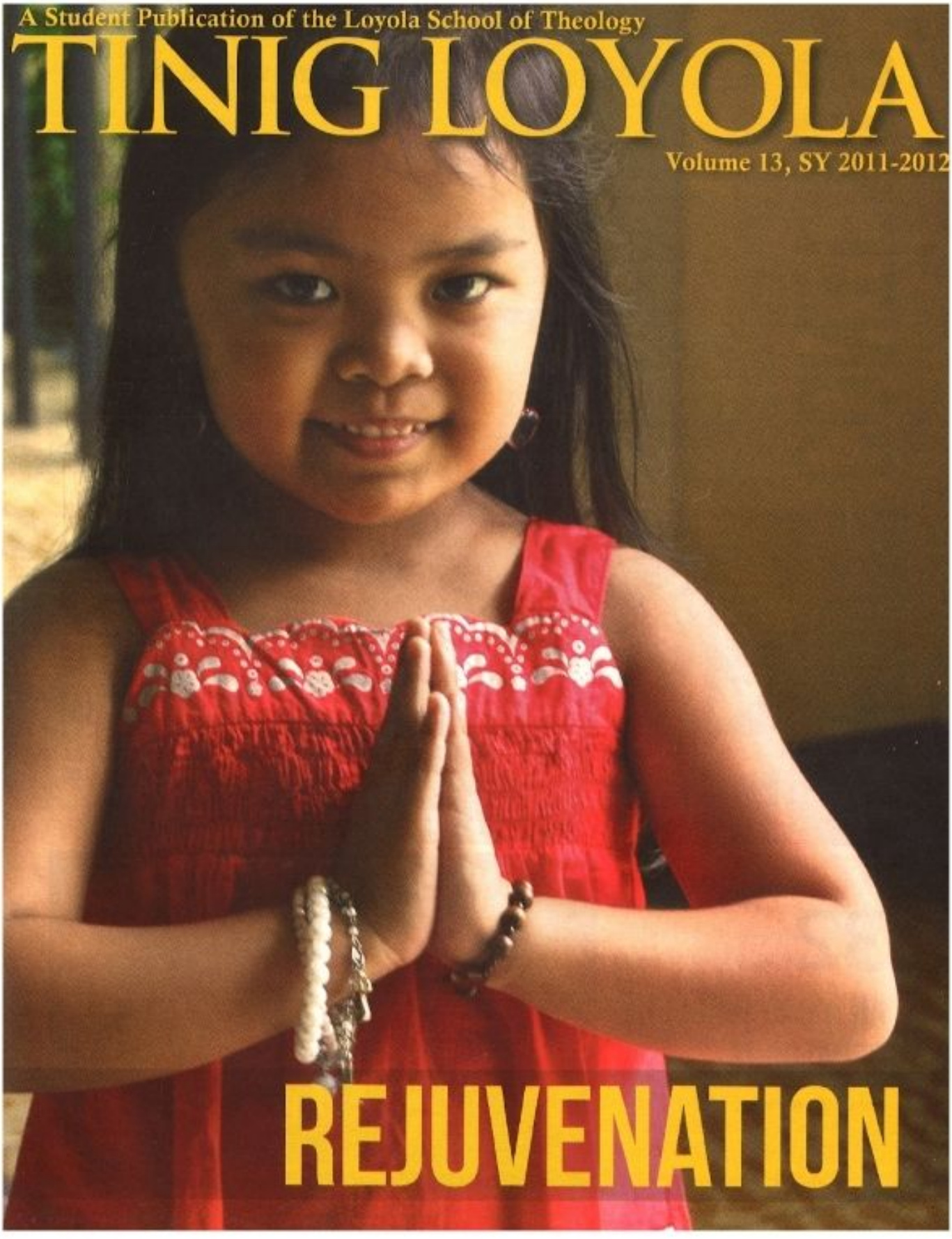
A Student Publication of the Loyola School of Theology

TINIG LOYOLA

Volume 13, SY 2011-2012



REJUVENATION

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EDITORIAL

REJUVENATION

Leo Ocampo, DS

We are ambivalent about ageing. We put a premium on antiquity, custom and tradition. We celebrate anniversaries and name them with the shimmer of precious metals and jewels. At the same time, our sometimes desperate search for the fountain of youth has been the obsession of virtually every generation. This apprehension is certainly valid because of entropy. Without intervention, all matter naturally becomes stagnant, deteriorated and passé. Thus, we use preservatives everywhere from our food to our faces.

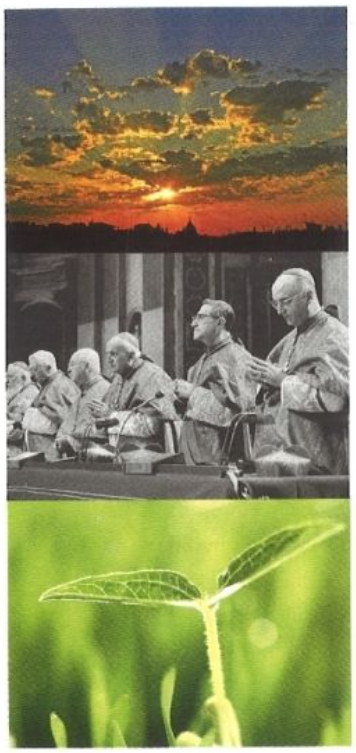
This concern of ours becomes especially true when it comes to keeping our bodies youthful. We spend a lot of time and money on various cosmetic and health products, even psychological and spiritual regimens that promise to arrest our ageing or at least afford us some rejuvenation.

That is why as we mark the twentieth anniversary of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) in this "Year of the Youth" (2011) declared by the CBCP, we are trying to rejoice even as we are filled with trepidation. In this opportune juxtaposition of two celebrations, this issue of *Ting Loyola* hopes to reflect on how far we have gone in implementing the summons of the Council "to renew all things in Christ."

PCP II stood on the shoulders of two landmark events in the life of the Church and of the nation: Vatican Council II which began nearly fifty years ago (1962-2012) and the historic EDSA People Power Revolution whose twenty-fifth anniversary (1986-2011) we celebrate this year. Taking these events into account, it may be good to begin our reflection by looking back to where all these began.

Vatican II struggled for both *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*: a return to the roots and at the same time a needed updating in the light of the challenges of the modern age. The spirit of the Council was fidelity to the Church's tradition and a renewed appropriation of this heritage for people of our time. In the area of liturgy, for example, there was an effort to recover the classical form of the Roman liturgy from the accretions of later periods and a call to habituate the liturgy for our present congregations again. Such is clearly not an easy task, as the continuing debates over inculturation, adaptation and translation indicate. What is good however is that study and dialogue about the Council has not ceased and so our appropriation of the Council, however arduous, has continued as well. Unfortunately, the same does not seem to be the case for PCP II, even here in Loyola School of Theology.

The spirit of EDSA shares the same hopes of return and renewal. Indeed the highway has come to represent the shining moment of our people that we want to recapture. Especially in this time of strife in Mindanao, lingering division



and selfishness among our leaders and people, and misery for the majority of our countrymen who remain poor, we long for EDSA which has become a symbol of peace, unity and hope.

Two years ago, many of us rejoiced at the election of President Aquino who promised to lead us together on the *matuwid na daan*. We soon realized the road to the EDSA we aspire for is not quite as wide as the highway itself, but more like the narrow path described in the Gospel. In the same vein we also realize that PCP II's vision "to renew all things in Christ" (Eph 1:10) has been the Church's vision since that hymn recorded by the Apostle Paul was written in the early Church from which this line was taken. And, it has remained a work in progress until today.

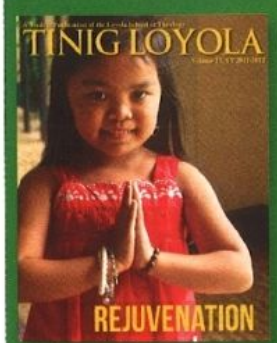
There lies our fear. Supposedly, good things like wine only grow better with age as healing takes time and growth respects process. But without the patient and painstaking work of reception and appropriation, Vatican II and PCP II would naturally degenerate into a ferment of history, stunted forever despite great promise, preserved but only perhaps as mere texts gathering dust in our libraries. What hope do we have to keep the vision vibrant and supple?

In his Letter of Indiction of the Year of Fatih, *Porta Fidei*, Pope Benedict XVI calls our attention tot he alarming phenomenon of the erosion of faith especially among the young. Although the problem is more acutely felt in Eucrope, it has also began to make inroads even in still very Catholic countries like the Philippines. If hte faith is to be kept alive and thriving, we need to take scriously our duty as teachers and pastors to learn the faith and how to communicate it effectively in order to pass it on tot he next generation. Time is of the essence here.

We looked at the faces of our young people who continue to dream of a Church and nation renewed. We looked at their faith and their love for Christ in whom this promise of renewal, Paul tells us, will be accomplished. It is our wish that these pages also start us off in contemplating the long and challenging task before us, not only to keep the seeds of Vatican II and PCP II, but to nurture and see them to fruition. *Tolle, lege.*

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National Youth Cross at the Loyola School of Theology

Ruben Orbeta, SJ



The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Episcopal Commission on Youth (ECY), officially declared the National Year of the Youth from December 16, 2010, to December 16, 2011. Through this celebration the Church hopes to generate efforts to raise awareness about the youth and promote the youth ministry. Part of the yearlong celebration is the "pilgrimage" of the National Youth Cross from diocese to diocese. The Loyola School of Theology/ Loyola House of Studies was privileged to accept and host the last stretch of the cross's pilgrimage in the Diocese of Cubao. The cross was received last September 29, the Feast of the Archangels. The faculty, students, staff, and the Jesuit community accepted the cross from a group of youth from the Diocese of Cubao with a simple rite of reception followed by the celebration of the Mass presided over by Father Jose Quilongquilong SJ, rector of the Loyola House of Studies. In his homily, Father Quilongquilong noted that the cross of Christ is the foundation for communion and mission. He expressed how all are united under the banner of Christ's cross and are therefore sent to share the salvific graces of Christ's cross with the world. It was indeed a grace-filled sight to witness the community actively participate in the liturgy, spend some moments of quiet, and line up to venerate the cross of Christ, the symbol of salvation and sign of communion with the entire Philippine Church in praying for the youth.

The following day, September 30, the Memorial of Saint Jerome, the community celebrated the closing liturgy with Father Jose Mario Francisco SJ, president of the Loyola School of Theology. Father Francisco in his homily exhorted the community to find in the cross of Christ a reason for hope even if our world is ravaged by violence, war, and disease. After the Mass, the National Youth Cross was turned over to the youth members of the Diocese of Antipolo.

Indeed, the short visit of the Pilgrim Cross was an occasion of communion and deep prayer for the LST/LHS community. It was a unique expression of oneness with the local Church, which in the words of Father Rector Quilongquilong, is the Ignatian *sentire cum ecclesia* in action.

JR Orbeta, SJ is a native of Cebu and is now on his second year of Theological Studies. He loves to spend his spare time watching movies and reading books.



JMJ 2011 HOLY PILGRIMAGE OR MASS FRENZY?

Gerald Kong

I am not very fond of crowds, much less massive ones. The thankfully few occasions where I had to inevitably jostle with the swelling throngs to travel by the LRT during peak hours and painfully watch many jam-packed trains roll past before being forcibly "thrown in" from behind by anxious passengers only conjure up awful memories.

"From Madrid to Manila" Vigil. Recently, I surprised myself and voluntarily joined some 12,000 people (mostly Filipino students and youth who had journeyed from as far away as Isabela, Cebu and Davao) for the "From Madrid to Manila" overnight youth vigil held at the Ateneo de Manila University Grade School grounds on August 20-21, 2011. The event was modeled after the JMJ 2011, *Jornada Mundial de la Juventud*, or the World Youth Day (WYD) 2011. As the organizers expressed, many would have liked to go to Spain, but due to the prohibitive costs involved, were sadly excluded from doing so. Hence, they wanted to make it possible for them to experience WYD locally.

At the Ateneo event, I learned to appreciate that there are occasions where gathering in huge numbers can indeed be an uplifting celebratory experience. I was fortunate to have experienced first-hand the unity and universality of being Catholic, the beauty and importance of being affirmed that I am not alone in my Catholic beliefs. Although I come from Catholic-minority Singapore, I felt the closeness of God in an atmosphere of serenity and joy, the grace and fulfillment of witnessing the enthronement of the cross and the icon of our Blessed Mother



and of being in prayer, dance and worship as one believing community, and finally, of being spiritually nourished through well-delivered catecheses and the Mass. Along with the thousands of well-mannered youth, I had to suffer the inconvenience of the sudden heavy rains and the discomfort of being out in the open for the entire night. Yet there was great joy in my heart! Although attending an actual WYD has eluded me thus far, I am convinced that the one held in Ateneo was not very much different from the one in Madrid, for it is not so much the venue as it is about one's renewed personal encounter with God.

Origins of the WYD. The WYD was the brainchild of the late Blessed Pope John Paul II who possessed a special *charisma* for interacting with youth. On Palm Sunday, April 15, 1984, in the Holy Year of Redemption, the Pope invited young people globally to be present for an international youth meeting at Saint Peter's Square. More than 300,000 youth responded! Addressing the crowd, the Pope joyfully exclaimed, "What a fantastic spectacle is presented on this stage by your gathering here today! Who claimed that today's youth have lost their sense of values? Is it really true that they cannot be counted on?" At this very gathering on April 22, 1984, the Holy Father entrusted to the youth the WYD Cross. It was to be carried worldwide as a symbol of Christ's love for humanity and as an announcement to all that only in the death and resurrection of Christ can we find salvation and redemption.

On Palm Sunday, March 31, 1985, coinciding with the United Nations' International Year of the

"Though we could not understand the Mass entirely, to see the hundreds of thousands of people gathering in one square to celebrate Jesus was truly magnificent."

Youth, Pope John Paul II seized the opportunity to welcome the world's youth to Saint Peter's Square once again. On December 20, 1985, he officially instituted the WYD, the first of which was held in Rome on March 23, 1986. The first international WYD was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from April 11-12, 1987. Every Palm Sunday has since been designated as a WYD, alternately celebrated in Rome and in designated dioceses around the world. To date, there have been sixteen WYD celebrations in Rome and outside Rome where youth have participated in astounding numbers. Pope Benedict XVI has since taken over the banner and faithfully carried on the hope of his predecessor for the world's youth, inviting and commissioning them as Christ's disciples to be faithful and living witnesses of God's love.

World Youth Day 2011, Madrid. What exactly happened at the recently concluded Twenty-sixth World Youth Day in Madrid from August 16-21, 2011? I was fortunate to have interviewed some youth from the Philippines and Singapore who participated. Some of them even kept me dutifully updated via Facebook as the rich tapestry of events unfolded. Here are some snapshots of their unforgettable experiences.

Days in the Diocese: August 11-15. To begin with, there were the Days in the Diocese (DID) organized from August 11-15, prior to the official start of the WYD. This is probably the lesser known but just as fruitful part of the WYDs. The DID began in 1997 when the WYD was held in Paris. The Church in France desired that these meetings facilitate the pastoral activities among the youth in the French dioceses. As a result, the entire nation welcomed the worldwide pilgrims and also inspired more French youth to attend the WYD.

The Spanish dioceses this year similarly opened their doors to the WYD pilgrims. The youth that participated were acquainted with both the richness of Spanish culture and the Catholic tradition, the roots of which can be traced to the apostles Paul and James. They either enjoyed staying with families or were hosted in parish halls or schools.

Brother Michael Dimayacyac, MSSP, 26, joined a 72-member delegation composed of priests, seminarians, working professionals and students under the Archdiocesan Commission on Youth (ACY) Manila. It was his first WYD attendance. He recalled that he had a "beautiful and unforgettable experience during the DID of Toledo particularly at the San Felipe y Santiago Apostoles Parish in Cobisa." He "stayed for five days with his foster family, participated in prayers and Masses of the parish, and had picnics together with other families and delegations." For him, "it was always like a big banquet shared together with chats and laughter, with unlimited photo taking, accompanied by beautiful smiles of newly forged friendships." He grew very close to his foster family whom he described as "generous, kind and loving."

In my opinion, the DID were an effective means to reawaken the Spanish people to the generosity, hospitality and joy that comes with their deep Christian roots in a country that has grown cold to the Catholic faith. It drew out the best in them. It was also an invaluable opportunity for youth worldwide to share their love for Christ with their host families and other people they met. Indeed, a case of mutual faith enrichment!

WYD Opening Mass: August 16. After the DID, multitudes of pilgrims arrived at Madrid on August 16. The day's highlight was the Opening Mass in the evening presided over by Cardinal Antonio María Rouco Varela, Archbishop of Madrid and concelebrated by several bishops and a few hundred priests at the central Plaza de Cibeles Square.

A Singaporean friend, Joshua Mark Teoh, 19, who is still serving his fulltime military service was with a 19-member youth delegation from the Saint Francis of Assisi Parish. He shared the following:

"Though we could not understand the Mass entirely, to see the hundreds of thousands of people gathering in one square to celebrate Jesus was truly magnificent. What's more, pilgrims all knelt during the consecration of the bread and wine, and to see such united piety and reverence to God showed me the true meaning of the word Catholic—universal. Jesus said 'where two or three are gathered in my name, I will be there.' He didn't say anything about 400,000, did he? Due to the great number of pilgrims, we were not able to receive Communion. But for me, that didn't change the fact that Jesus was truly present among us, standing next to us singing, dancing and praising God. It was a truly wonderful experience."

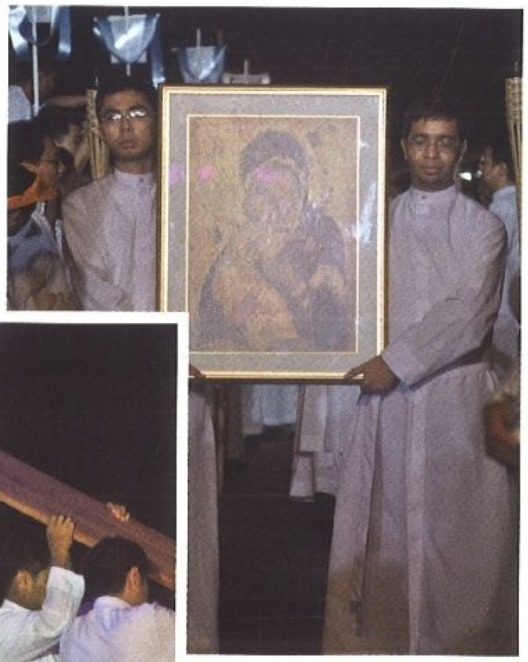
Cardinal Rouco in his homily not only welcomed with deep affection each youth pilgrim and spoke extensively about the powerful witness of Blessed Pope John Paul's life; he also spoke directly to the post-modern youth who belong to "the generation of Benedict XVI":

"Youth of the twenty-first century need, even more than previous generations, to find the Lord through the only path that has proven spiritually effective: that of a humble and simple pilgrim seeking God's face. The youth of today need to see Jesus Christ when He comes to meet them in the Word, the sacraments, 'as well, and most importantly, in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance, the poor and the sick, in those brothers experiencing difficulty and in need of help' (Benedict XVI, WYD Message, 4). They need to see and enter into an intimate dialogue with Him, who loves them without asking anything in return except that you answer with your own love. The intention of the Pope who loves you so much is to guide you in this very way: that you may experience in the Communion of the Catholic Church the truth and the urgency of making the theme of World Youth Day 2011 your life: 'rooted and built up in Christ, firm in the faith' (cf. Col 2.7)."

Catechesis by Bishops: August 17-19. Each morning, catechetical sessions as an integral part of the formation offered during the WYD, were enthusiastically delivered by bishops to different language groups. These were based on a breakdown of the WYD theme: "Firm in the Faith," "Established in Jesus Christ," and "Witnesses to Christ in the World." Some of the bishops who spoke were Cardinal George Pell (Sydney), Archbishop John Michael Miller (Vancouver) and Archbishop Timothy Dolan (New York). Lay speakers included Carl Anderson (Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus), Jason and Crystalina Evert and Christopher West (Theology of the Body). According to Joshua Mark, 19, "most of them could relate to the youth and pitch their talks at a level suitable for both young people and those more spiritually mature."

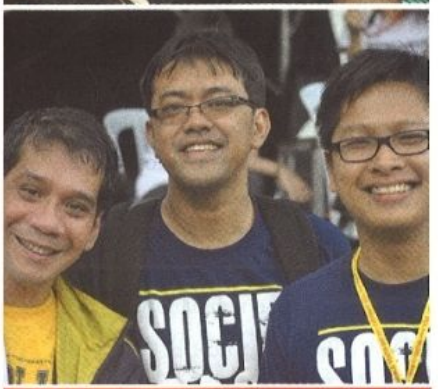
Asian Youth Gathering: August 17. A special gathering of Asian youth was organized so that they who live mainly in countries where Christians are among the minority could be acquainted with the realities of their neighbors. According to a UCANews report, two North Korean refugees now settled in South Korea were the first ever from their country to attend the WYD. Only one mainland Chinese was visibly present.

Neptalie Reyes, 21, a Polytechnic University of the Philippines' student who was together with Brother Michael, expressed that it was one of his most significant experiences during the WYD, because he was able to meet other Asian young people and know their cultures and traditions in their respective places:









"Use these days to know Christ better and to make sure that, rooted in him, your enthusiasm and happiness, your desire to go further, to reach the heights, even God himself, always hold a sure future, because the fullness of life has already been placed within you."



"There were presentations from other countries that exhibited their cultures and revealed something unique in their places. In addition, each country presented their problems and from there, I came to know that others experience challenges in standing firm in their faith. They suffer persecutions because of being Catholic and have to carry out worship and praises to the Lord underground because they are not welcomed in their country. Due to their sharings, I felt the unity of Asian young people especially in standing firm in our faith."

Papal Welcome Ceremony: August 18. Pope Benedict XVI was warmly welcomed by the King and Queen of Spain on August 18 at the Barajas Airport. In the evening, he addressed the youth at the Plaza de Cibeles who greeted him with thunderous cheers. It was the first of several profoundly insightful homilies and speeches that he preached and exhorted the youth:

"Use these days to know Christ better and to make sure that, rooted in him, your enthusiasm and happiness, your desire to go further, to reach the heights, even God himself, always hold a sure future, because the fullness of life has already been placed within you. Let that life grow with divine grace, generously and without half-measures, as you remain steadfast in your aim for holiness. And, in the face of our weaknesses we can rely on the mercy of the Lord who is always ready to help us again and who offers us pardon in the sacrament of Penance."

***Via Crucis* and *Lectio Divina*: August 19.** To help the youth meditate on the Passion of Christ, the *Via Crucis* on the Paseo de Recoletos featured life-sized *pasos* or statues of great historical value from twelve Spanish cities traditionally used in Holy Week processions. They had been transported to Madrid for the first time.

Attending the *Via Crucis* at the Love and Life Center, an alternative venue, where 8,000 had gathered to avoid the crowds, Joshua Mark, 19, described his experience of Lectio Divina after the event:

"The American Bible Society gave a presentation of *Lectio Divina*. Even though I had attended talks it before, they had never been so prayerful and solemn. Instead of teaching *Lectio Divina*, they allowed us to experience *Lectio Divina*, and I could never have hoped for a more fulfilling experience."

Papal Vigil: August 20-21. One of the most memorable and emotional adventures that the WYD youth embraced was clearly the papal vigil at the *Cuatro Vientos* aerodrome where a staggering crowd of two million had gathered. Yet, only 1.4 million could be accommodated.

Our very own LST student, Sister Candy Sanchez, DSA, a member of the Diocese of Cubao's pastoral team of the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MYA), who went with a 25-strong delegation from that diocese had this to say: "It was really a struggle to enter *Cuatro Vientos*, that upon entering the gate that read '*bienvenido*' (welcome), we felt like we were entering into heaven for we were moved to tears."

No sooner had the Holy Father begun to give his address did dark clouds start to form. According to reports, the 84-year-old Holy Father was urged by his helpers to leave and take refuge from the fierce storm. He simply answered: "My place is with those who have come." Departing from the stage momentarily, he returned with the Blessed Sacrament. Incredibly, the thunder, rain and lightning stopped as if the Holy Father had a planned pause. "Thank you for your joy and resistance. Your strength is bigger than the rain," he said as the rain began to settle. "The Lord sends you lots of blessings with the rain." His spontaneous compliments left everyone beaming as he fell on his knees before God.

Sister Candy recalled the complete silence during the Eucharistic adoration when the big monstrance was lifted up: "the silence and the heartfelt prayer of the people were there. . . . The hurricane made our prayers deeper and more concrete. In that moment of prayer, I remembered the apostles who experienced a storm at sea. Once again, I was reminded of the theme: planted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the faith. At times, I was tempted to run somewhere and find shelter, but I remained where I was. . . . We all remained where we were; despite the pouring rain and the strong wind. I said to myself, 'This is what it means to be a disciple,' whatever may come in my way I have to make a stand in my faith; hurricanes and winds cannot stop me in adoring and praising my God who has been loving and always present in my life, especially in my trying moments. My God stands by me, then I shall stand for Him."

Final Mass: August 21. The WYD had evidently been extraordinary days of intense pilgrimage for all who attended, not mere frenetic *en masse* activity. The elements of prayer and worship by means of the Word of God and the sacraments, solidarity and community, solid spiritual formation and the exercise of the embracing of the cross were offered as food for many pilgrim days ahead. To top it all, the Holy Father, with great joy, in the Final Mass commissioned the youth to go forth saying:

"We cannot encounter Christ and not want to make him known to others. So do not keep Christ to yourselves! Share with others the joy of your faith. The world needs the witness of your faith, it surely needs God. I think that the presence here of so many young people, coming from all over the world, is a wonderful proof of the fruitfulness of Christ's command to the Church: 'Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation' (Mk 16:15). You too have been given the extraordinary task of being disciples and missionaries of Christ in other lands and countries filled with young people who are looking for something greater and, because their heart tells them that more authentic values do exist, they do not let themselves be seduced by the empty promises of a lifestyle which has no room for God." TL

> "Upon entering the gate that read 'bienvenido,' we felt like we were entering into heaven for we were moved to tears."

Gerald Kong, is taking his licentiate in Sacred Theology. Hailing from Singapore, Gerald also has a passion for music.



Looking Through the Eyes of Love: Hiccup The Dragon Tamer

Maria Jose Lorilla, FSP

A hiccup, as we all know, is a common involuntary action caused by a contraction of the diaphragm. The contraction leads to a rapid breath inward and the closure of the vocal chords, thus creating a "hic" sound. *Guinness World Records* had Charles Osborne of Iowa as the man with the longest hiccup attack. Osborne hiccupped from 1922 until 1990 (wow, that's sixty-eight years)! He hiccupped twelve times in a minute, adding up to over 17,000 times every day. Another record in 2007 shows Jennifer Mee, a fifteen-year old girl who had hiccupped for five weeks. Ironically, the next to break the record did not have any hiccup attacks at all. He was not included in the *Guinness World Records* nor featured in *Ripley's Believe-It-or-Not*, even if he deserves it. His name is Hiccup, the first Viking ever to ride a dragon! The young Hiccup is the protagonist in the fantasy-animated 3D film *How to Train Your Dragon*.

Hiccup (dubbed by Jay Baruchel) belongs to a tribe of Vikings in the Island of Berk. For more than three hundred years, the Vikings' way of life was all about killing dragons. Each member of the warlike tribe had to prove his/her worthiness as a true Viking by capturing a dragon and killing it. Hiccup, being the son of the village chief, Stoick the Vast (Gerard Butler), is expected to kill one in order to impress his hard-to-please father and to prove himself a true Viking. However, since he was clumsy, wimpy, and scrawny, he could only manage to mess things up, which made his father disappointed and embarrassed. Trying to prove his worth, Hiccup sets out on a journey to find a dragon for a kill. In the forest, he found a hurt and scared Night-Fury, a particularly notorious type of dragon. The animal's tail was so badly damaged that it could not fly. When Hiccup was about to deal the killing blow, he found out that he could not proceed; instead, he let go of the helpless creature.

Without words, a secret friendship developed between him and the dragon, whom he called "Toothless." His frequent visits to Toothless gave him opportunities to discover the nature and characteristics of dragons. Hiccup made use of his discoveries to intuitively decode the animal's behavioral patterns, debunking Viking superstitions that fuelled belief in the bloodthirsty, aggressive nature of dragons. Doing so, he went against his warlike tribe by learning to love the enemy.

Hiccup used his discoveries about the dragon's weaknesses to tame several furious dragons every time he was made to fight them during training sessions. He had his own way of dealing with the dragons without hurting them. He would use his taming tactics to bring down the creatures and make them go back to their respective cages—without hurting them.

During one of the training fights, Stoick, puzzled and at the same time angered by his son's unorthodox ways, meddled in the battlefield which caused the furious dragon to attack Hiccup. Toothless came to the rescue but was caught and tied up. Out of frustration and disappointment, Stoick disowned Hiccup and aggressively set out on a journey toward the Dragon's Nest, where swarms of dragons live, with Toothless as the guide. Hiccup and his friends (Vikings and tamed dragons) followed in order to help put an end to the greediness of the gigantic queen beast, whom the dragons feed, and to save Toothless. The movie ends with



Hiccup losing his right foot but winning peace for all of Berk as Vikings and dragons live and work together harmoniously. Dragons even became their pets—wow!

Hiccup and the Y Generation. Those who enjoyed the animated film, I believe, were not only entertained by the special adventures and the animation in the film but also gained profound insights from the story. As for me, I see a very significant *persona* who seemingly appears to be a weakling in the story but has true power inside.

Hiccup is a representation of our youth today whose values, ideals, lifestyle, and language appear to be different from that of our generation. In the movie, Hiccup is portrayed as a skinny, wimpy, scrawny, and clumsy adolescent boy. He is totally different from the other teenagers in their village. He has the appearance of a misfit, but he possesses a strong sense of humor and ingenuity, as was manifested in his brilliance in coming up with an improvised tail for his friend Toothless. In addition, he was the only Viking who was able to tame and ride a dragon!

Hiccup's character brings us closer to the young people we are serving in our respective ministries—the Y Generation. Neil Howe and William Strauss, American social historians, categorize children born between 1982 to 2000 as belonging to the Y Generation; they are also known as the Net Generation or the Millennials. This generation grew up in the shadow of modern technology and are "tech savvies"—

Just as Hiccup discovered the strengths and weaknesses of the dragons, we too are invited to equip ourselves with the reality of today's youth to whom we minister.

Our Role with the Youth: Are We Gobbers or Stoicks?



capable of skilfully navigating the flow of information provided by the new media. They are plugged in "24/7" to a cell phone, iPad, iPod, or laptop. Social networking is an essential part of their life. Communications are preferably channelled through various Internet sites and programs such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype, and others. The virtual world serves as the "ocean" where they are navigating more and more.

Meanwhile, highly motivated by this "world," it is evident that they find difficulty in building their self-identity. Why is this true? It is because they build their identity through multiple references—which usually absorb figures of their favorite TV or movie personalities whose moral lives are also questionable. Globalization forces them to be more homogeneous at a world level too. The sense of commitment is also weak in them because they are used to instant and quick satisfactions. These young people belong to a generation of quick and superficial passions. Not the type that we were five to ten years ago!

Yes, they are the youth of today. Their behavior and values are somehow different than ours. On the other hand, looking at the positive side of their world, studies have it that visual-spatial skills of the Y Generation are more highly developed. They possess the ability to read visual images. They are able to interpret the meaning or message behind the images even without any explanatory text. As experts of online and mobile games (DOTA, Left for Dead, Angry Birds, Plants vs. Zombies, etc.), they are capable of integrating the virtual and physical world as they learn various strategies and planning from these activities. They are the kind of people who crave for interactivity. They want their activities to be engaging and oriented toward discoveries, hence their love for adventure. Like Hiccup in the movie, these youth are unique but oftentimes misunderstood and not accepted for what they are in their present context.

Our Role with the Young: Are We Gobbers or Stoicks? In the process of Hiccup's search for self-fulfillment, there are two significant figures that contribute something, even if not much, toward building his own identity amidst pressures of being a Viking. They are his father, Stoick, and his friend Gobber, the Viking-trainer. These characters speak to us too, especially in discerning possible attitudes and dispositions that help us do our share in shaping the values of young people today.

Gobber, the "Accepting Affirmer." Growing desperate due to his father's disappointment with him, Hiccup pours out his sentiments to Gobber (dubbed by Craig Ferguson). Gobber, in reply, affirms his worth, saying: "Stop trying so hard to be something you are not." As ministers to youth, we are also invited to reflect on the person of Gobber, the Viking-trainer, who possesses the disposition we ought to embrace. Gobber accepts Hiccup as someone different from his father and the rest of the Vikings. He respects and affirms his uniqueness and demands nothing more than Hiccup's capacity. Like Gobber, we are also invited to do the same toward the youth to whom we minister. We can reach out to them through sincere acceptance of their reality. Acceptance provides an opportunity to recognize our differences and acknowledge their uniqueness. This means that we see their worth as equal to ours, and our hands are readily outstretched as brothers and sisters who welcome them without conditions.

Stoick, the "Imposing Father." Stoick, as Hiccup's father, tries to draw out the Viking in him. In one scene, Stoick hands Hiccup an axe which he would need for his dragon-slaying training, demandingly saying: "When you carry this axe, you carry all of us with you. This means you walk like us, you talk like us, you think like us." What does this mean? Well, to put it simply, he has to be what his father expects him to be. Hiccup should measure up to what Stoick dreams for him—to be worthy to be called a Viking.

The formation of the Y-Gen is a challenging task. It is a ministry that requires us to look through the eyes of love as Hiccup teaches us in the movie.



The character of Stoick is the best reminder that we need not overly rely on our own expectations of our youth. Considering the youth's context today, no matter how they behave differently from us, they deserve the opportunity, time, resources, and support they need for their personal development. As ministers, we can guide them toward a clearer understanding of their fundamental option—becoming the person God wants them to be. Toward the end of the movie, Stoick realizes that Hiccup has his own way of seeing and doing things. He proved himself worthy to be called a Viking, not because he can kill a dragon, but because he can ride a dragon!

Teaching Us How to Tame Our Dragon. For three hundred years, Vikings have been fighting and killing millions of dragons in order to bring peace to their island. For all those years, they have been searching for the Dragons' Nest, so that they will be able to get rid of the destruction the dragons bring to their lives. However, the plot of the story, as it unfolds through the person of Hiccup, shows that the traditional way of killing the dragons is not the best way toward attaining peace in the village.

In the movie, Hiccup familiarizes himself with the different classes of dragons and their characteristics. His first encounter with Toothless provided him with the opportunity of having first-hand experience with dragons. His discoveries of what they are and how they live as dragons, become an avenue for him to understand their nature, characteristics, and limitations. Ingenuous that he is, he utilized all these as a strategy in taming the dragons he encountered during his training, making them back off and thus win them over. More than this, he is able to bring about peace in Berk because he believed that killing the dragons is not the solution to the problem.

As ministers to the Y Generation, the important role we play is that of a guide, mentor, brother or sister who is capable of bringing out the best in them. But how can we do this? Initially, we need to be in touch with their reality, self-concept, aspirations, giftedness, and capacities that will help us in discovering the richness of their person. Just as Hiccup discovered the strengths and weaknesses of the dragons, we too are invited to equip ourselves with the reality of the youth we are ministering to today.

As Hiccup used his knowledge about the dragons to defeat them through nonviolent strategies, we are also to reach out to the youth with gentleness, which is a form of love. Understanding and compassion will reinforce our efforts of reaching out. Through these approaches we provide the youth healthy and positive opportunities for growth, self-discovery, and self-development—all that are necessary in fulfilling their Christian vocation. On the other hand, while we maintain a gentle and loving way of approaching them, we do not, in any way, water down the Christian values we instill in their hearts and minds. We maintain firmness in communicating the values we want them to imbibe.

Indeed, the formation of the Y-Gen is a challenging task. It is a painstaking ministry but a fulfilling one. It is a ministry that requires us to look through the eyes of love as Hiccup teaches us in the movie. If we are able to fulfil our role with our youth today, we surely can make God's grace flow through us. Conceivably, the Y Generation can then tame and ride their own dragons and soar high! TL

Sr. Nina Lorilla, FSP is in her second year of studies in Pastoral Ministry. She spends her free time by watching films which she finds a great tool for learning.



FIDES QUAERENS INTELLECTUM

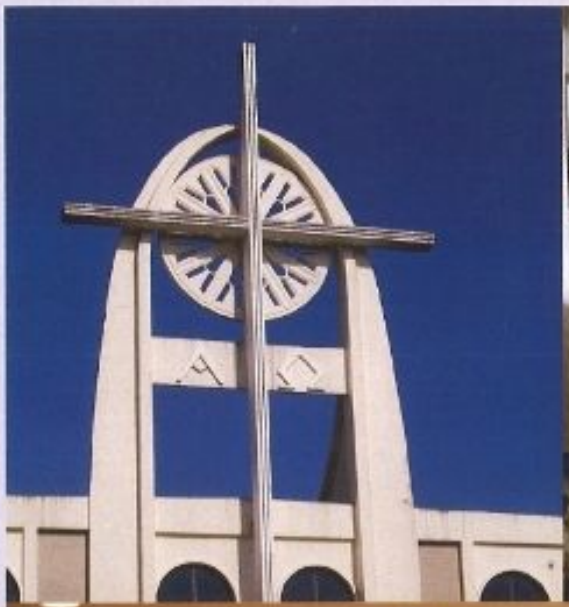
PHOTOS BY ANTHONY COLOMA, SJ

VERSES BY LEO OCAMPO, DS

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Sa lilim ng punong igos
ako'y nananahan,





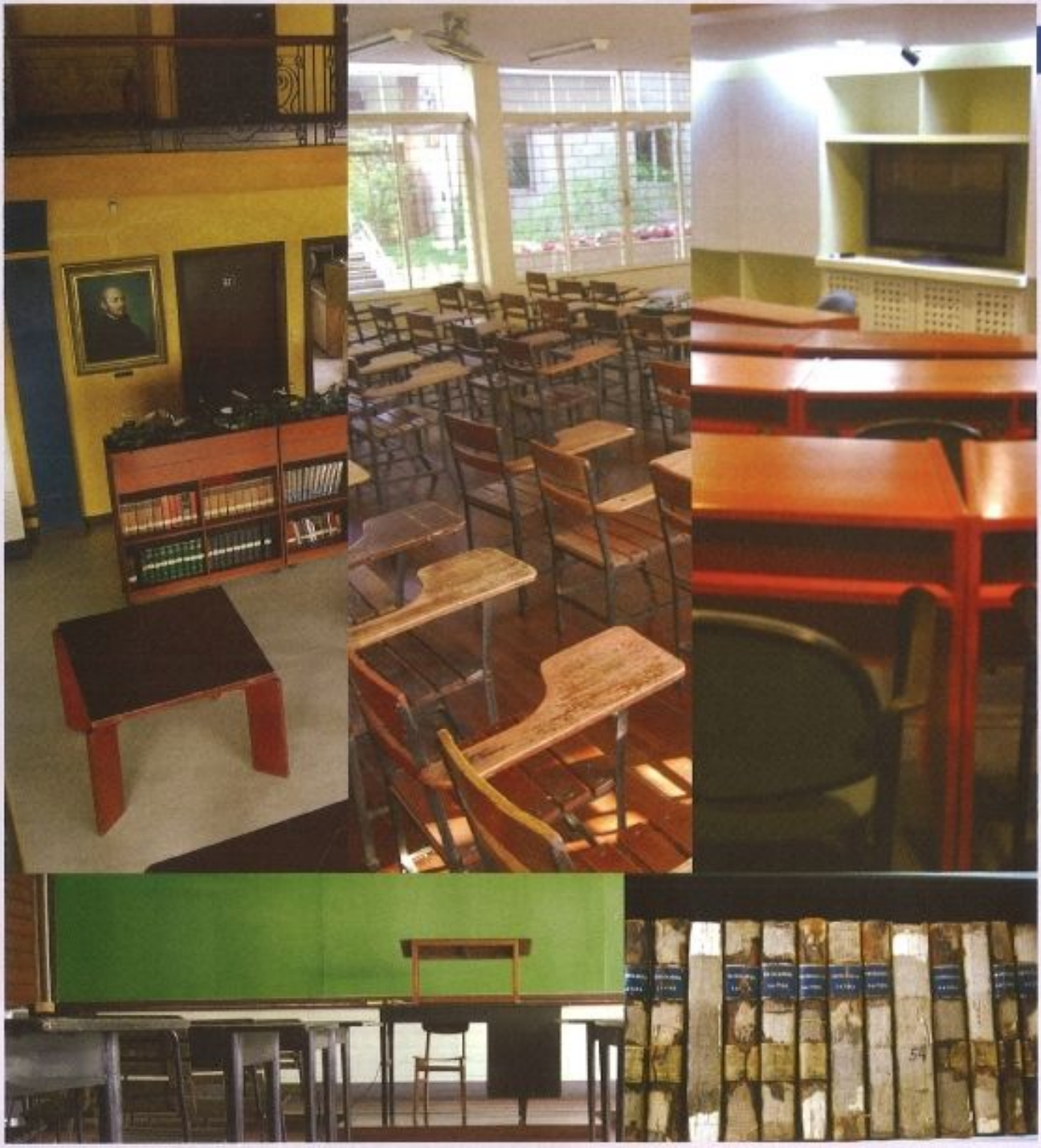






Hanap ka sa bawat sulok ng iyong kariktan.

Through its inculturated courses, programs, and institutional and human resources, Loyola School of Theology seeks to educate in the faith, sustain personal theological growth, and assist in effective empowerment of all who desire to serve God's people by ministries in and of the Church.



Sa aking bawat
pagsisikap at pagpapagal,

ang tangi kong hangad, ikaw sana'y makapisan.

Loyola School of Theology labors so that the members of its academic community may become academically competent, spiritually well-grounded, and apostolically motivated for Christian discipleship, renewed evangelization, social transformation, and responsible stewardship of the earth.



LIVING IN A DIGITAL AGE

TRUTH, PROCLAMATION, AND WAY OF LIFE

Karen Eng, FSP

The Church celebrated the 45th World Communications Day on June 5, 2011. And, I have a confession to make. Before I joined the Daughters of Saint Paul, I never bothered about World Communications Day. It felt like just another day of celebrating "something" in the Church. It was not long before I came to realize how much it does matter. Digital media has become an integral part of our lives. I suspect that one day without texting or "face-booking" might send some into major withdrawal. But, are we media savvy—that is, reflective and responsible users of the media—or is it using us instead?

In 1957, the Church officially acknowledged media as a "gift of God" in Pope Pius XII's encyclical, *Miranda Prorsus*. Of all the issues put on the table for discussion, the Second Vatican Council chose to address social communications in *Inter Mirifica* (1963), thus underlining the growing importance of social communication. Finally, in 1967, Pope Paul VI established World Communications Day, making it an annual celebration coinciding with the Solemnity of the Ascension. Each World Communications Day is an invitation to reflect on the impact of social communication on our lives.

Are we charitable and responsible users of the media? In recent years we all have heard tragic stories about Korean celebrities and teenagers in the United States and in the United Kingdom who committed suicide because of cyber-bullying. Harsh criticisms and *chismis* (gossip) flow freely online. Closer to home, Charice Pempengco was recently reported to have deleted her personal Facebook account to put an end to being cyber-bullied.

The theme of this year's World Communications Day message was "Truth, Proclamation, and Authenticity of Life in the Digital Age." Put simply, Pope Benedict XVI invites us to reflect on our use of the Internet, particularly the use of social networks such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter.

I am sure that 90 percent of the students and staff at Loyola School of Theology have Facebook accounts. As a matter of fact, LST has just launched its Facebook account this semester. Father Rene Repole, SJ, even invited his Synoptics class to participate in a "contest" to see whose research and reflections on the daily Synoptic gospel garners the most number of "likes"! According to statistics, the Philippines has the highest number of Facebook users and has been dubbed the "social networking capital of the world." China is known to have the highest population of the world with its 1.4 billion people. India is not far behind with its more than 1.0 billion people. In "third place" is Facebook with its almost 700 million members. The fact that Facebook has become synonymous with *social networking* attests to its popularity and pervasiveness in our lives.

In the past, the Internet was used mainly as a source of information. Today, it has become a new way of

communication. According to Pope Benedict XVI, the internet offers us "unprecedented opportunities for establishing relationships and building fellowship." He goes on to say, "I would like then to invite Christians, confidently and with an informed and responsible creativity, to join the network of relationships which the digital era has made possible." This is not without credibility. The Vatican showed its seriousness in engaging the youth of today on their turf by launching *Pope2You* (Pope Benedict XVI's Facebook application) and the Vatican YouTube channel in 2009. In June of this year, the Pope sent his first tweet to announce the launch of the Holy See's revamped news portal, www.news.va.

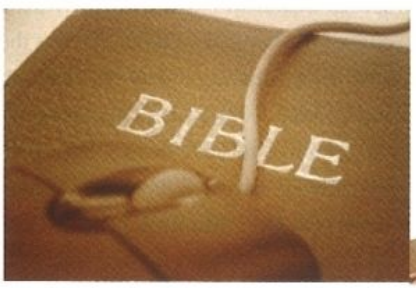
My Digital Profile: Authenticity or Self-indulgence? As the saying goes, "What you see is what you get." This is crucial for proclamation as the first form of witnessing of our faith is not just serving the poor in the slums or social action but to *be* ourselves—allowing others to see Christ in us. Does authenticity shine forth, even in our digital profiles? As Pope Benedict XVI points out, there is a "risk of communicating a false image of oneself, which can become a form of self-indulgence." This often happens subtly when we show only the side of ourselves that we want others to see and to like (no pun intended). The Pope adds that a Christian's digital presence ought to be "honest and open, responsible and respectful of others." We do not have to get all preachy; rather, the very things we post online—our choice of comments, photos, videos, etc.—already witness loudly to the Gospel, *if* we are reflective and consistent in our communication.

Lost in a Digital Wonderland. Pope Benedict XVI also posed the question: "Who is my 'neighbor' in this new world?" Are our online relationships a source of distraction and a form of escapism? Today, one risks over-absorption in the digital world and may spend many hours online without realizing it. At times, inhibitions are lowered and boundaries are crossed when we say things too easily and loosely in the absence of face-to-face communication. Are our online communities a more comfortable hangout than our real communities? To know and to be known is one of deepest human desires. However, the Holy Father cautions that "virtual contact cannot and must not take the place of direct human contact with people at every level of our lives," especially in the fostering of deep and lasting relationships.

As previously noted, the World Communications Sunday is celebrated on the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, where the Gospel passage on the Great Commission is always read: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." As we enjoy the gift of digital media and of friendship, may we incarnate God's presence on social networks by a digital discipleship that offers the reason for the hope that is within us (cf. 1 Pet 3:15). TTL

Music, movies and museums are among some of Sr. Karen Eng's interests. She joined the FSP in Singapore and is now in her final year of studies at LST.









BRINGING THE GOSPEL TO THE DEAF

Erl Dylan Tabaco, SSC

I grew up in Holy Rosary Parish in Agusan, Cagayan de Oro City where many church organizations flourish and the parishioners' dedication in serving the Church amazes me. Among the ones that caught my attention was the deaf ministry, and I was motivated to work with them. Hence, I studied sign language for two months and stayed with the deaf community for a year.

Working with the deaf entails challenges and sometimes frustrations, especially when I find it difficult to communicate with them. However, that year of experience made me feel more at home with the deaf. Seeing them as they begin to express themselves to me more freely, even compared to their own family; this made me happy and at the same time reluctant, especially when they shared about the problems and struggles they have been through; these broke my heart.

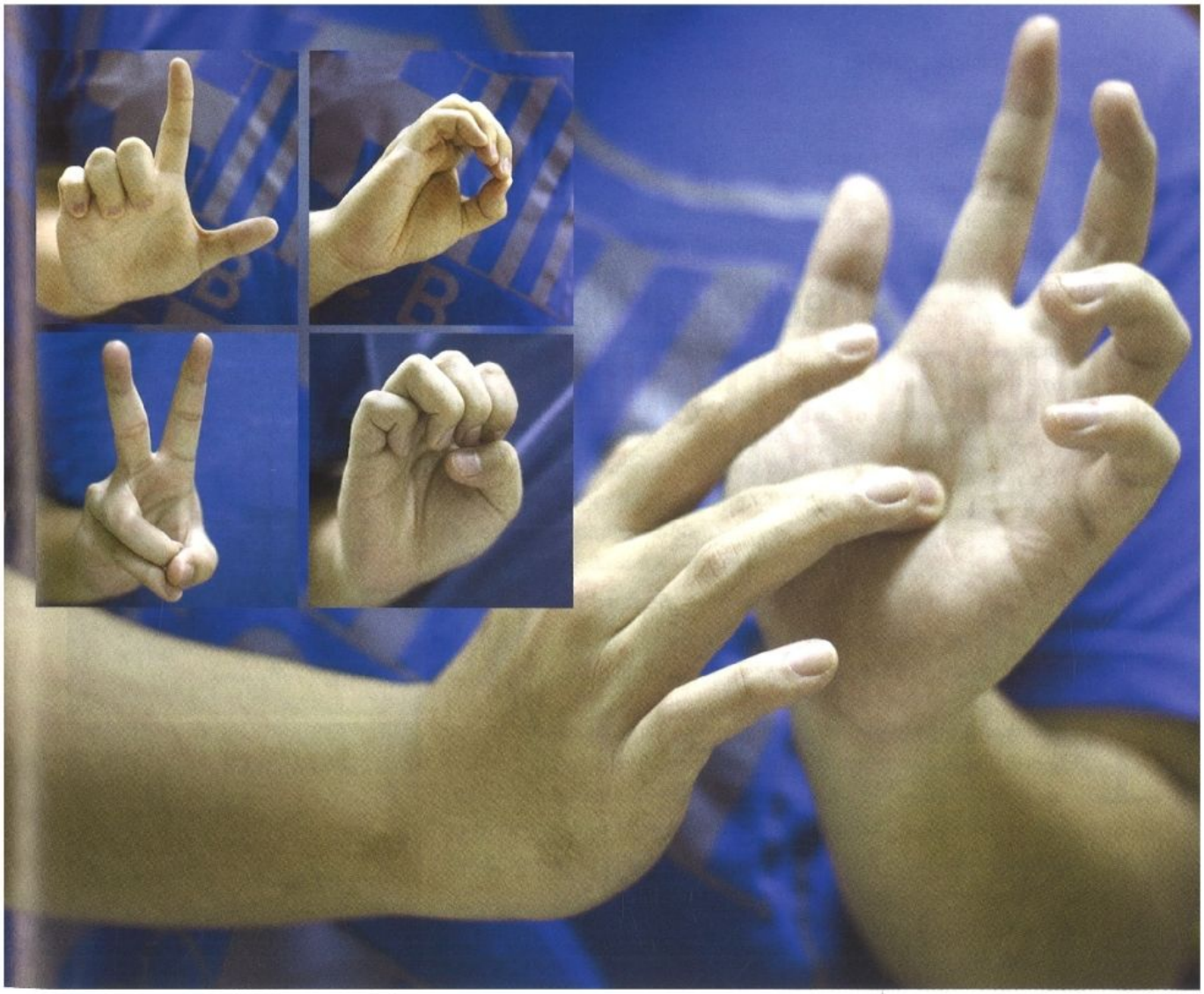
I will not forget a particular time we were sharing about the Sunday Gospel. As I interpreted the reading for them, I also encouraged them to share something about it and reflect on how the Word of God touched them by looking at it through their own personal experiences. They were so vibrant and attentive as the sharing took place.

One of them, a single mother, shared how life for her was very difficult. She had to raise her only child by doing laundry because that is the only work that she can do given her impediment. Although I saw fear in her eyes as she continued to battle with life's challenges, I also saw her deep hope; that was the one thing that struck me most. She may not be equipped with all the knowledge that a theologian has, but one thing for sure is that she is a firm believer in God who continues to look after her and gives her strength and courage to move on.

Reflecting upon it, I have realized that despite their speaking and hearing disability, there are so many things that we can learn from the deaf. I gained their trust and especially their passion to know many things about God.

It was so inspiring to see their dedication in attending Sunday mass and participating in parochial activities. Most of the deaf belong to poor families, and so many of them were deprived of social services like education. Despite their situation, they continue to strive to live a normal life. They go to church, blend with the people outside but are oftentimes neglected or marginalized. In my seven years with the deaf, I realized that speech impediments or physical disabilities neither hinder a person from expressing one's faith nor from living in a community. It only takes a person or two with dedication and love to enable them to build their confidence and self-worth. At first, they may be aloof and shy, but once you show your compassion and sincerity to them, they will treasure you and make you their confidant. On the other hand, if you lose their trust, it would be very difficult to rebuild it.

Thus, I was further challenged to give my share as an individual called to relate to people, including those who need special treatment like the deaf. When I entered the seminary, I thought it was the end of my connection with the deaf. To my surprise, I was even more exposed to opportunities to serve them. I have been to different parishes in Manila where there is a Deaf Ministry such as Paco Church, San Antonio Parish, and Saint



Joseph Parish. I am very happy seeing the deaf as they commit themselves in the ministry. I also had an opportunity to interpret the liturgy for them; it was a grace-filled moment for me in bringing the Gospel message to them.

Recently, I have been handling catechetical sessions with the deaf who are taken care of by the Daughters of Saint Anne; I do this every fourth Sunday of the month as part of my extended apostolate. I assist the deaf persons in their journey of knowing God, since most of them are deprived also in this aspect. These are our brothers and sisters who are prone to exploitation, deception, and all sorts of injustices. I am happy to see them expressing themselves gradually whether inside or outside the church. I find fulfillment as I work with them. And, I believe deep in my heart this is one of my missions in life. This is where I find my happiness. In my own little way, I want to make a difference in their lives. I hope that more churches or parishes will offer programs for the deaf and through them our brothers and sisters who have hearing and speaking disabilities will continue to feel God's compassion. TL

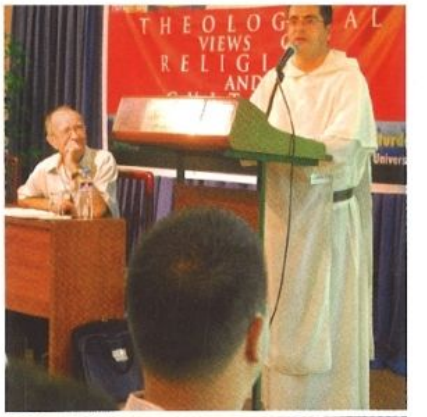
Erl Tabaco, SSC does extensive work as a volunteer for various deaf ministries. He is currently in his first year, taking up his MA in Pastoral Ministry at LST.

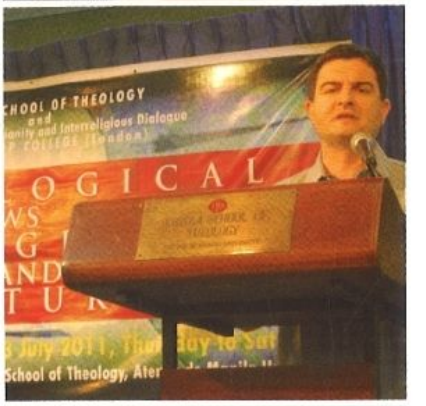


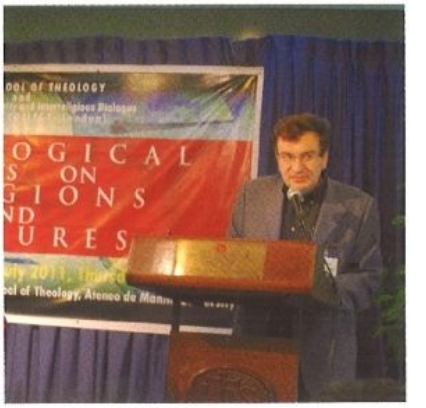
Theological Views on RELIGION AND CULTURE

A Conference by the Loyola School of Theology and Heythrop College

Bernard Falzon, MSSP







The month of July saw the Loyola School of Theology community teaming up with the Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue of Heythrop College for three days of theological reflection on religions and cultures. How can religion dialogue with culture? How do we Christians dialogue with Islam and with postmodern culture? How can we approach the religiously other? These and other pastoral questions painted the background of the discussion. The jam-packed Cardinal Sin Center showed clearly that these questions, and many others, resonated among the student population of LST. Present also at the event were guests from the Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists and representatives from different theological centers in Asia together with other guests.

In his welcome address Father Mario Francisco SJ, President of Loyola School of Theology, expressed the importance of articulating our implicit understanding of religions and cultures and to see how they facilitate or hinder our own theological work and therefore our own preaching of the Gospel in our own various contexts.

Turning Water into Wine

Father Martin Ganeri OP, a lecturer in Theology at Blackfriars Hall and director for the Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue at Heythrop College was the first keynote speaker to take the floor. Father Martin reflected on how the Thomistic or Scholastic approach to theology might help in promoting the threefold dialogue presented by FABC: namely, a dialogue with Asia's cultures, religions and its poor. In doing so, Father Martin made use of the Johannine image of the turning of water into wine—an image used by Aquinas in describing the relationship of Theology with Philosophy.

Aquinas comments on how theology relates to philosophy in his commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate*. He posits that the relationship of philosophy with theology is similar to the relationship between divine grace and human nature wherein, in continuity and transformation, grace perfects nature. This paradigm is reflected also in Aquinas' own work—utilizing the philosophies of Aristotle and Avicenna in order to bring forth a rich Christian theology.

Father Martin gave examples of how Christian theologians have approached other religions in India. Although most Christian theologians in India concluded that the *Advaita Vedanta* (the most influential and most dominant sub-school of the *Vedanta* school of Hindu philosophy) by itself is incompatible with the Christian account, theologians like Father Pierre Johans, among others, attempted a synthesis from different Vedantic schools in an effort to turn the water of the *Vedanta* tradition into the wine of the Thomistic account of God and creation, highlighting the notion of Brahman being immutable, distinctionless and transcendent.

Members of Asian religions have also adopted and made use of Christian ideas. A clear example is the Hindu Renaissance, influenced as it were by western Christian ideas. Gandhi, profoundly impressed by Tolstoy's promotion of passive nonresistance as inspired by the Sermon of the Mount, was led to interpret the Hindu concept of *Ahimsa* in this light. Gandhi equates *Ahimsa* with the law of love, including one's enemies, yet in typical Hindu fashion, extends this to cover not only human beings, but all living creatures.

A Matter of Great Importance

On the same morning, Father Gianni Criveller's presentation led the participants through some of the many challenges encountered by Matteo Ricci and his Jesuit companions in the astounding endeavour of inculturating the faith in China—a matter deemed as one of great importance.

Father Gianni showed that despite their scientific capabilities, their missionary methods did not always deliver the results they had hoped for. They learnt from friends, experience and accidents as they pursued the systematic study of Chinese cultures and religions.

From the very start of the mission, the Jesuits recognized the need to approach the otherness of China's language, cultures and religions in a new way, which was to be known as the *modo soave*. The "gentle way," as opposed to the more forceful and aggressive way others have adopted before, became their missionary policy for Asian missionary activity. Ricci and his companions dressed like Buddhist monks in an effort to distinguish themselves as religious people, distinct from merchants and soldiers.

However, the critical attitude adopted by Ricci toward Buddhism and Taoism led the great missionary to change strategy. Ricci changed his Buddhist robes with the silk robes of the Confucian *literati*. The change in appearance was accompanied by a new missionary method known as Perfect Confucianism and Displaced Buddhism, a method suggested by his friend Xu Guangqi, founder of the Church in Shanghai.

Father Gianni pointed out the parallelism held by Ricci between the relationship of Christianity with the Greco-Roman culture and the relationship of Christianity with Confucianism: Confucianism is now the philosophical instrument that is apt to articulate the Catholic faith in China. One interesting challenge in this endeavor is the search for a working term for "God." Ricci himself makes use of various terms. However, his clear preference lies with the term *Tianzhu*, Lord of Heaven, a term still in use today in reference to the Catholic Church in China.

Father Gianni also noted the interesting method of Ricci's two ways of teaching: an indirect and a direct preaching of Church doctrine. This dual approach, stemming from the distinction between natural revelation and positive revelation (a distinction that Ricci would have been very familiar with through his scholastic background), is manifested clearly in the two catechetical books written by Ricci. The Catechism makes use of reason and natural revelation, while another book instructs the faithful in a more direct manner to the extent of exhorting catechumens to leave Taoism and Buddhism.

Benedict XVI and Interreligious Dialogue: the case of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations

In the afternoon of the first day, Father Rocco Viviano SX, a former professor at LST and a doctoral student at Heythrop College, attempted to answer the question: "Does Benedict XVI contribute anything to Christian-Muslim dialogue?" Father Rocco started by acknowledging some limitations. Firstly, the fact that from the beginning of Benedict's papacy, it was clear that interreligious dialogue was not to be the priority for the German Pope, whose chief concern seemed to be that of Church unity. Secondly, Benedict has not written anything specific on Islam. However, Father Rocco argued that it is possible to get a feel, if not a clear idea, of how Benedict understands the place of interreligious dialogue within the mission of the Church. In order to do this, Father Rocco proposed that all take a look at snippets which form part of much broader themes in order to grasp the Pope's insights on Islam.

The background for Ratzinger's view on Christian-Muslim dialogue lies in the history of the development of religions. Ratzinger points out that the truest development of the human spirit is the monotheistic term, as present in Christianity, Judaism, and by extension in Islam, since it involves a direct entry of God into history. This shared experience of God, even though articulated in different ways, generates a relationship which Ratzinger calls fundamental, between the three religions.

Looking at the recently published interviews, *Salt of the Earth* and *Light of the World*, Father Rocco highlighted some observations made by the Pope. On a practical note, Benedict recognizes that it is very difficult to identify Islam as a monolithic reality. The lack of a central authority and of a central teaching of Islam gives rise to a multifaceted Islam. Ratzinger also recognized that there are strands of Islam that are "'noble" and said that it is with this "noble" Islam that the Church should seek dialogue.

Ratzinger also comments on the difference between the relationships held by Islam and Christianity with the socio-political reality. The *Qur'an* and Sharia Law have a totalizing dynamic and are meant to regulate every aspect of human life. As a consequence, Islam cannot accept to be just one religion among the others because it sees itself as the true revelation and a corrective of Christian and Jewish revelation. Ratzinger also notes that the world has been experiencing a phenomenon of reawakening of Islam, both externally, through the oil money of Middle Eastern Arabic countries fuelling new centers for Islamic studies, and internally through a missioning dimension that goes hand in hand with the moral crisis in the West, read by many Muslims as the failure of Christianity.

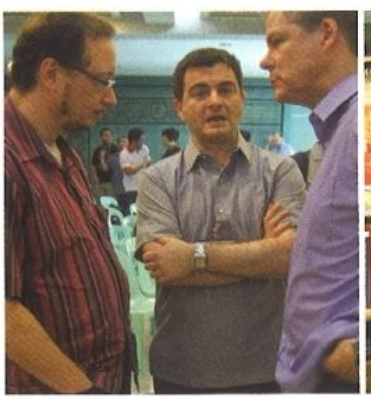
Ratzinger's contribution to Christian-Muslim dialogue ultimately takes the form of a challenge—a challenge for Christians and Muslims to take their faith seriously while perceiving dialogue as a demand of their respective faiths.

An "Asian" Dialogue Decalogue: Principles of Interreligious Dialogue from Asia's Bishops

The second day of the forum was kicked off by a reflection from Father James Kroeger MM. Father Jim, as he is fondly known by students and staff, is a Maryknoll missionary and professor of Systematic Theology and Missiology at LST. Through his knowledge of the wide array of FABC documents stretching back to its foundation forty years ago and his just as enduring presence and experience within the Church in Asia, Father Jim presented ten concrete principles of Interreligious Dialogue which he titled An "Asian" Dialogue Decalogue.

Through a short clip at the beginning of his presentation, Father Jim invited everyone to meet Father Bob McCahill, a Maryknoll missionary and a friend who leads a simple yet prophetic life with poor Hindus and Muslims in Bangladesh.

Father Jim's paper shifted towards a more practical reflection on how engagement in interfaith dialogue can be put into practice. He showed why the Asian Bishops stress that interfaith dialogue is an essential part of Integral Evangelization: a calling to renew the world by bringing the Gospel into all strata of humanity. Indeed, the unique distinctive mode of the Catholic Church in Asia would be its dialogue. This dialogue is prominently expressed in the final document of the First FABC Plenary Assembly in 1974, *Evangelization in Modern Day Asia*, as a threefold relationship: a dialogue with Asia's peoples, particularly the poor; a dialogue with Asia's cultures; and a dialogue with Asian religions. The Asian Bishops







How can religion dialogue with culture? How do we Christians dialogue with Islam and with postmodern culture? How can we approach the religiously other?

further add that the absolute first dialogue that needs to take place is the "Dialogue of Life," or what Father Jim calls "Good Neighborology." Dialogue only begins when we learn to be good neighbors to one another.

Vatican II recognizes that the Spirit of God manifests itself outside the bounds of the Church. In the same way, the FABC promotes an attitude of dialogue with Asia's great religions as "significant and positive elements in the economy of God's design of salvation." On the other hand, the bishops boldly state that "we shall not be timid when God opens the door for us to proclaim explicitly the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior." Certainly, Interreligious dialogue does not do away completely with explicit proclamation.

Different Approaches to Religions: Their Impact on Interreligious Dialogue

Father Manoling Francisco SJ, a Fundamental Theology professor at LST, looked at how different approaches to religions impact interreligious dialogue. He argued that when in dialogue with the culturally or religiously other, while we may be talking about the same reality, we may ascribe different meanings. In approaching the others' religious beliefs, we need therefore to be conscious of our own perspective. Father Manoling presented two approaches to religions.

The first approach is the approach through a theology of religions. Theologies of religions aim at understanding the other religions—what they believe, how they practice their faith, from one's own faith perspective. Looking back in history we observe that different theologies of religion have been present in the Church. Although they can be identified as stemming from exclusivist, inclusivist or pluralist categories, they can still be regarded as *a priori* evaluations of the other. Theologies of religion often face a language problem where absolutist language becomes unavoidable.

A second approach emerges from an effort in studying diverse religions from a detached point of view. From without any religious belonging, the "philosopher of religion" compares and contrasts, categorizes and assesses various religions through the exclusive aid of human reason, unaided by revelation. However, this detached approach carries a methodological problem: common realities across religions, such as God, Redemption and Salvation, do not hold the same meaning!

While there could be more approaches to religions, in addition to the two mentioned above, Father Manoling further proposes a third – Comparative Religions. Such an approach calls for a prior immersion experience into multiple religions, or a participatory knowledge of them, a gift that perhaps only few theologians are blessed with.

We thank the organizing committee and the Loyola School of Theology for this brilliant initiative that has made everyone more aware of the challenge of interreligious dialogue and its key role in the mission of the Church in Asia. As a manner of concluding, I would like to reiterate a comment by Father Victor De Jesus SJ: "Should not interreligious dialogue at Loyola School of Theology be considered therefore as part of the core curriculum"? TL

Bernard Falzon, MSSP, is taking up his MA in Pastoral Ministry. Being a missionary has allowed him to encounter and learn from various cultures.



JAMES H. KROEGER, M.M.

AN ASIAN DIALOGUE DECALOGUE

PRINCIPLES OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE FROM ASIA'S BISHOPS

The most influential body in the Asian Church since the Second Vatican Council is undoubtedly the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). It has strengthened the bonds of communication among the bishops in the region and has contributed to Church renewal and the development of a shared vision about the Church and her evangelizing mission in Asia. Thus, one can validly assert that the FABC is truly "Asia's Continuing Vatican II."

For the Church in Asia to truly discover its own identity it must continually engage in a "three-fold dialogue" with the peoples (especially the poor), the cultures, and the religions of Asia [the focused subject of this presentation]. This programmatic vision of a "triple dialogue" has guided the FABC for nearly four decades. One can assert that as the FABC pursues its vision and practice of dialogue, it forges bonds of unity and builds community in the Asian context.

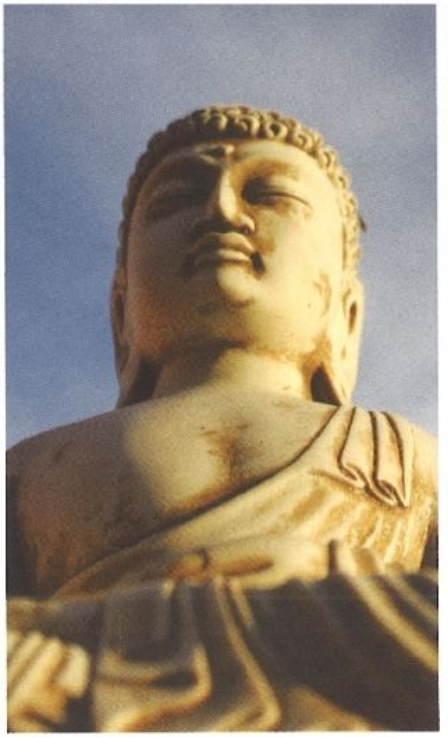
This paper (a synopsis of a much longer study) is presented from the experience and perspective of Asia's bishops (FABC). The presentation unfolds in a systematic manner. First, a clear dialogue principle (expressed in the form of a command or guideline) will be stated. There will be ten of these imperatives; thus, one arrives at a "Dialogue Decalogue." Second, a longer section presents the theological-missiological-pastoral foundations upon which this principle is based. This author finds that the FABC texts themselves are very insightful and eloquent; they are poetic; they are visionary, inspiring, and soul-stirring.

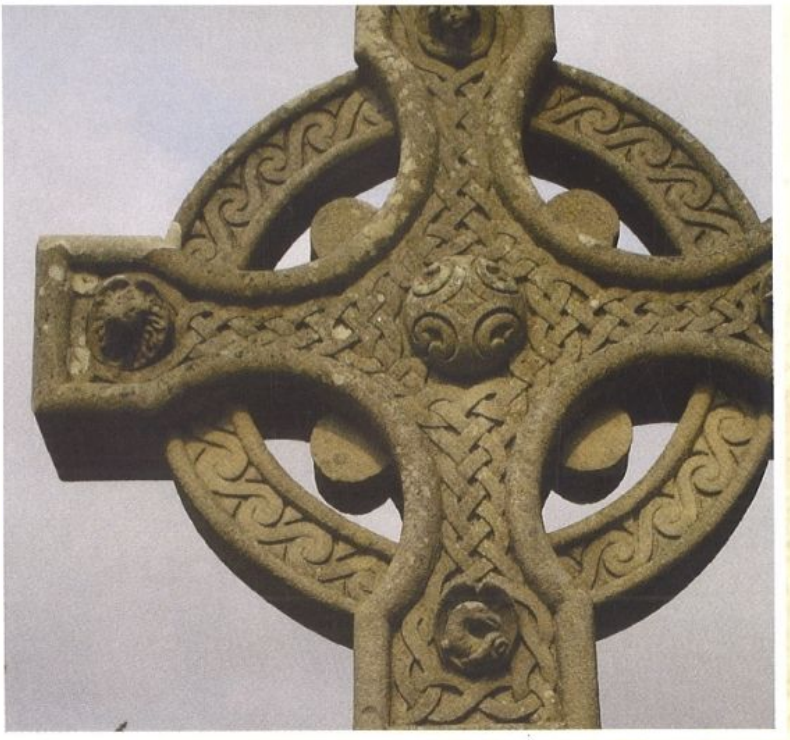
1 TO FACILITATE INTERFAITH DIALOGUE, KNOW WELL THE CONTEXT OF ASIA, ESPECIALLY RELIGIOUS REALITIES.

Asia, the world's largest and most populated continent, constitutes one third of the land area of the whole world (17,124,000 square miles) and is home to almost 60% of humanity. It is a continent of the young (about 40% are below 15 years of age); there are more than 30 mega-cities in Asia with populations ranging from 5 to 20 million. The nine most populous nations (in descending order) are: China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand. The population of both China and India exceeds one billion. With this massive bulk goes a wide variety of diversity and contrasts—physical, ethnic, social, economic, cultural, political, and religious.

Asia is a continent rich in non-Christian cultures. It is the homeland of three eminent world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam; 85% of all the world's non-Christians are in Asia and they adhere to several of the great religions. For example, Islam numbers some 700 million followers in Asia alone; the Catholics of Asia are slightly over 115 million. Significantly, well over 50% of Asian Catholics are found in one country alone—the Philippines; thus, Catholics in most Asian nations are a small—even tiny—minority (frequently less that 1%). The four largest Islamic nations in the world, each with over 100 million Muslims, are found in Asia: Indonesia (216m), Pakistan (161m), (India 147m), and Bangladesh (122m) [2007 statistics]. Other significant religious and philosophical-ethical systems in Asia are Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, as well as many indigenous, traditional belief systems.







2 APPRECIATE THE FABC VISION OF INTEGRAL, HOLISTIC EVANGELIZATION.

The task of evangelization is holistic and comprehensive in its scope; Pope Paul VI noted: "For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new" (EN 18). FABC pursues a wide vision of missionary evangelization; thus, "local Churches, servant and inculturated, are the subject of the evangelizing mission.

The principal elements [are] as follows:

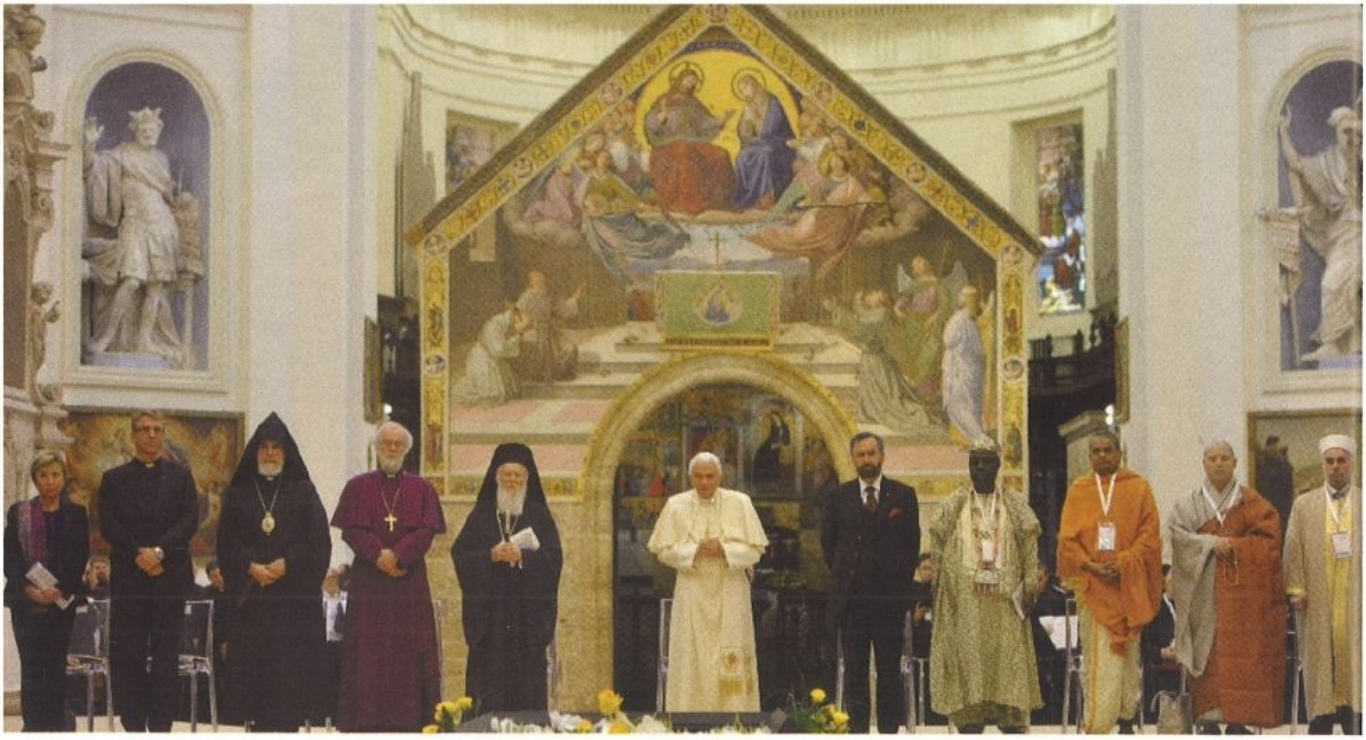
1) simple presence and living witness;
2) concrete commitment to the service of humankind;
3) liturgical life … prayer and contemplation;
4) dialogue in which Christians meet the followers of other religious traditions; …
5) proclamation and catechesis.

The totality of Christian mission embraces all these elements." [Source: CTC (Hua Hin, 1991): 36].

3 ACKNOWLEDGE THAT INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IS A KEY DIMENSION OF HOLISTIC, INTEGRAL EVANGELIZATION.

Asia's bishops have a deep appreciation of the role of dialogue in the evangelization process; they note: "We live in the midst of millions of people belonging to the great religious traditions…. In this context we believe that interreligious dialogue is a true expression of the Church's evangelizing action in which the mystery of Jesus Christ is operative, calling us all to conversion…. We would wish to see interreligious dialogue become a reality at the grassroots level of our Church, through greater openness and reaching out of all their members towards their brothers and sisters of other religious traditions." [Source: BIMA II (Trivandrum): 14].

The Church, the sacrament of God's presence in the world, continues Christ's work of dialogue. Thus, the FABC asserts: "It suffices … to indicate here the continued building up of the local church as the focus of the task of evangelization today, with dialogue as its essential mode." [Source: IMC (Manila): 19]. Since the Church in Asia is a "small flock," the FABC insightfully asserts: "Mission may find its greatest urgency in Asia: it also finds in our continent a distinctive mode: [dialogue]." [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 4.1]. "From our experience of dialogue emerged the conviction that dialogue was the key we sought—not dialogue in the superficial sense in which it is often understood, but as a witnessing to Christ in word and deed, by reaching out to people in the concrete reality of their daily lives…." [Source: BIMA I (Baguio): 5]. FABC asserts that dialogue is key for them in becoming an Asian Church.



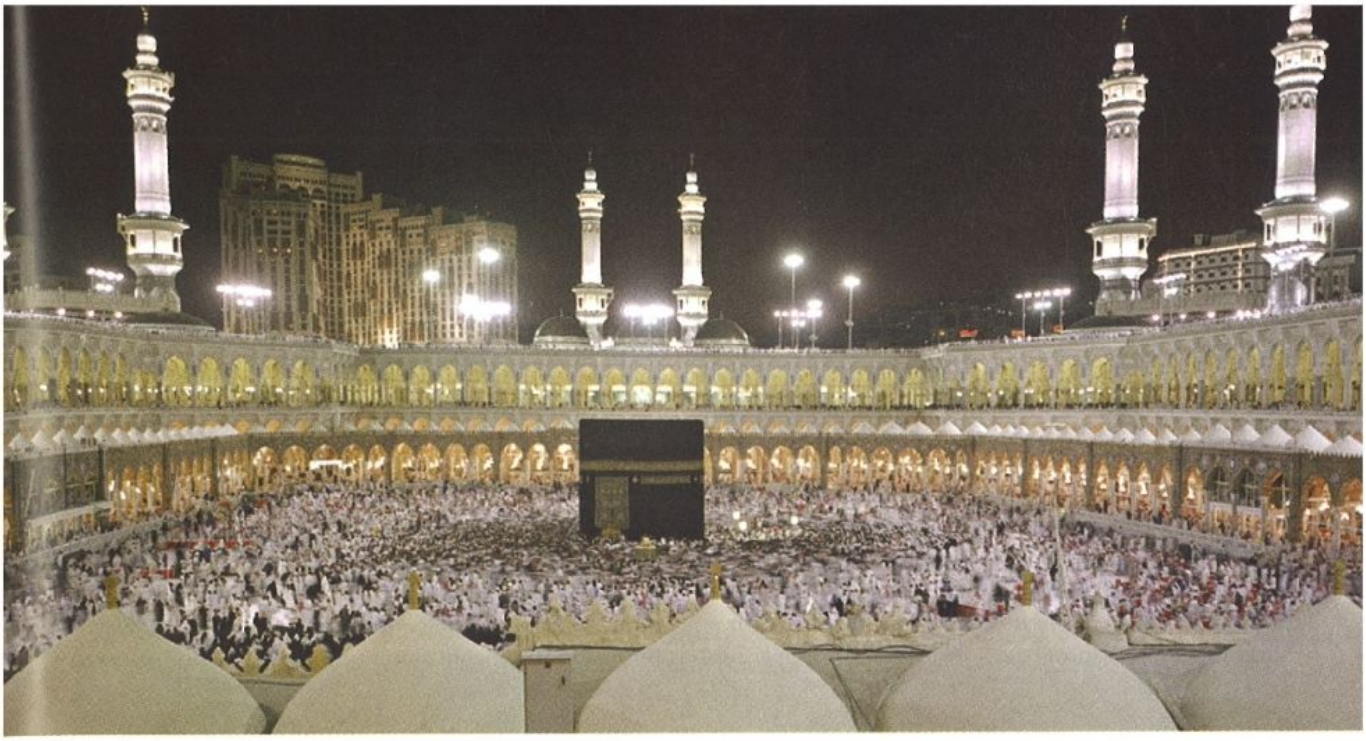
4 DISCOVER GOD'S SAVING DESIGN THAT IS AT WORK IN THE ASIAN REALITY.

"God's saving grace is not limited to members of the Church, but is offered to every person.... His ways are mysterious and unfathomable, and no one can dictate the direction of His grace." [Source: BIRA II (Kuala Lumpur): 12]. FABC continues: "In Asia especially this involves a dialogue with the great religious traditions of our peoples. In this dialogue we accept them as significant and positive elements in the economy of God's design of salvation." [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 14]. Within the awareness of the Holy Spirit's action and their commitment to dialogue, Asia's bishops boldly state: "... we shall not be timid when God opens the door for us to proclaim explicitly the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior and the answer to the fundamental questions of human existence." [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 4.3].

5 UNDERSTAND THE ASIAN CHURCH'S COMMITMENT TO MISSIONARY EVANGELIZATION, INCLUDING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PERSON AND PROMISES OF CHRIST.

The Catholic Church in Asia is committed to bring the Good News to Asia. FABC asserts: "While we are aware and sensitive to the fact that evangelization is a complex reality and has many essential aspects—such a witnessing to the Gospel, working for the values of the Kingdom, struggling along with those who strive for justice and peace, dialogue, sharing, inculturation, mutual enrichment with other Christians and the followers of all religions—we affirm that there can never be true evangelization without the proclamation of Jesus Christ. The proclamation of Jesus Christ is the center and the primary element of evangelization without which all other elements will lose their cohesion and validity." [Source: BIMA I (Suwon): 5-6].

"We affirm ... that 'the proclamation of Jesus Christ is the center and primary element of evangelization.' ... But the proclamation of Jesus Christ in Asia means, first of all, the witness of Christians and of Christian communities to the values of the Kingdom of God, a proclamation through Christ-like deeds. For Christians in Asia, to proclaim Christ means above all to live like him, in the midst of our neighbors of other faiths and persuasions, and to do his deeds by the power of his grace. Proclamation through dialogue and deeds—this is the first call to the Churches in Asia." [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 4.1]. "The local Churches of Asia will proclaim Jesus Christ to their fellow humans in a dialogical manner." [Source: CTC (Hua Hin): 51].



6 ADOPT POSITIVE ATTITUDES THAT FOSTER DIALOGUE IN PRACTICE.

The commitment of Asia's bishops to interfaith dialogue is clear and consistent. The FABC sees that dialogue demands transformed attitudes: "... to be able to engage in genuine interreligious dialogue, we need to deepen our self-knowledge and continuously discover our personal identity ... we need to be continually healed of negativities like suspicion and fear... in order to go deeper into ourselves in this inward journey to the God of the Ongoing Dialogue, we need to integrate Asian forms of prayer ... We acknowledge here the tremendous opportunities we have of learning from the other religious traditions of Asia, especially from the mystical traditions." [Source: FIRA I (Ipoh): 3.2-3.3].

7 APPRECIATE THE SPECIFIC FABC-FOSTERED ATTITUDES TOWARD ASIA'S VENERABLE RELIGIONS.

The FABC in its first plenary gathering enunciated a profound—even poetic—appraisal of Asia's religions: "In this dialogue we accept them as significant and positive elements in the economy of God's design of salvation. In them we recognize and respect profound spiritual and ethical meanings and values. Over many centuries they have been the treasury of the religious experience of our ancestors, from which our contemporaries do not cease to draw light and strength. They have been (and continue to be) the authentic expression of the noblest longings of their hearts, and the home of their contemplation and prayer. They have helped to give shape to the histories and cultures of our nations." [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 14]. "How then can we not give them reverence and honor? And how can we not acknowledge that God has drawn our peoples to Himself through them?" [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 15].

"Only in dialogue with these religions can we discover in them the seeds of the Word of God (*Ad Gentes* 9). This dialogue will allow us to touch the expression and the reality of our peoples' deepest selves, and enable us to find authentic ways of living and expressing our own Christian faith. It will reveal to us also many riches of our own faith which we perhaps would not have perceived. Thus it can become a sharing in friendship of our quest for God and for brotherhood among His sons." [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 16].

8 DEVELOP A GENUINE "SPIRITUALITY OF DIALOGUE."

For nearly four decades the FABC has asserted that spirituality is linked to authentic dialogue: "In Asia, home to great religions, where individuals and entire peoples are thirsting for the divine, the Church is called to be a praying Church, deeply spiritual, even as she engages in immediate human and social concerns. All Christians need a true missionary spirituality of prayer and contemplation." [Source: FABC VII (Samphran): C-2].

"At the center of this new way of being Church [in Asia] is the action of the Spirit of Jesus, guiding and directing individual believers as well as the whole community to live a life that is Spirit-filled—that is, to live an authentic spirituality. It is nothing more and nothing less than a following of Jesus-in-mission, an authentic discipleship in the context of Asia." [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 9:1].

9 BELIEVE THAT DIALOGUE SERVES THE GROWTH OF A NEW HUMANITY AND THE KINGDOM.

FABC asserts that dialogue is always oriented outward in service of people and God's kingdom. "We build the Church in order to build the Kingdom in our Asian societies and cultures.... Our mission therefore must be a dialogue with those of other religious ways that will require us both to proclaim and be proclaimed to, to speak and to listen, to teach and to learn. Through such a dialogical mission, God's Reign will grow in Asia and the Church will become more truly an Asian Church, inculturated in Asian realities." [Source: FIRA II (Pattaya): 3.5].

With clear resolve, Asia's bishops state: "Therefore, we commit ourselves: ...To take every opportunity to make Jesus Christ and his message known in a way that is acceptable to Asians, presenting him to them with an 'Asian face,' using Asian cultural concepts, terms and symbols; ... To present the Gospel message as humble servants of the Kingdom of God, always sensitive to the religious and cultural traditions of the people where the Spirit leads us to make Jesus known." [Source: AMSAL I (Tagaytay): 2].

10 CONCRETIZE A CLEAR COMMITMENT TO DIALOGUE BY ESTABLISHING MINISTRIES AND SERVICES WITHIN THE LOCAL CHURCH THAT FOCUS ON THIS PRIORITY.

To promote and concretize this dialogical vision, the FABC links its implementation with Asia's local Churches and their ministries. "Each local Church is determined by her human context and lives in a dialectical relationship with the human society into which she is inserted as the Gospel leaven. Since each local Church should embody into the context the task entrusted to her by the servant Lord, she has to discover time and again what ministries and what ministerial structures she requires in order to fulfill her mission to offer to a human society the salvation brought about by Jesus Christ...." [Source: ACMC (Hong Kong): 25].

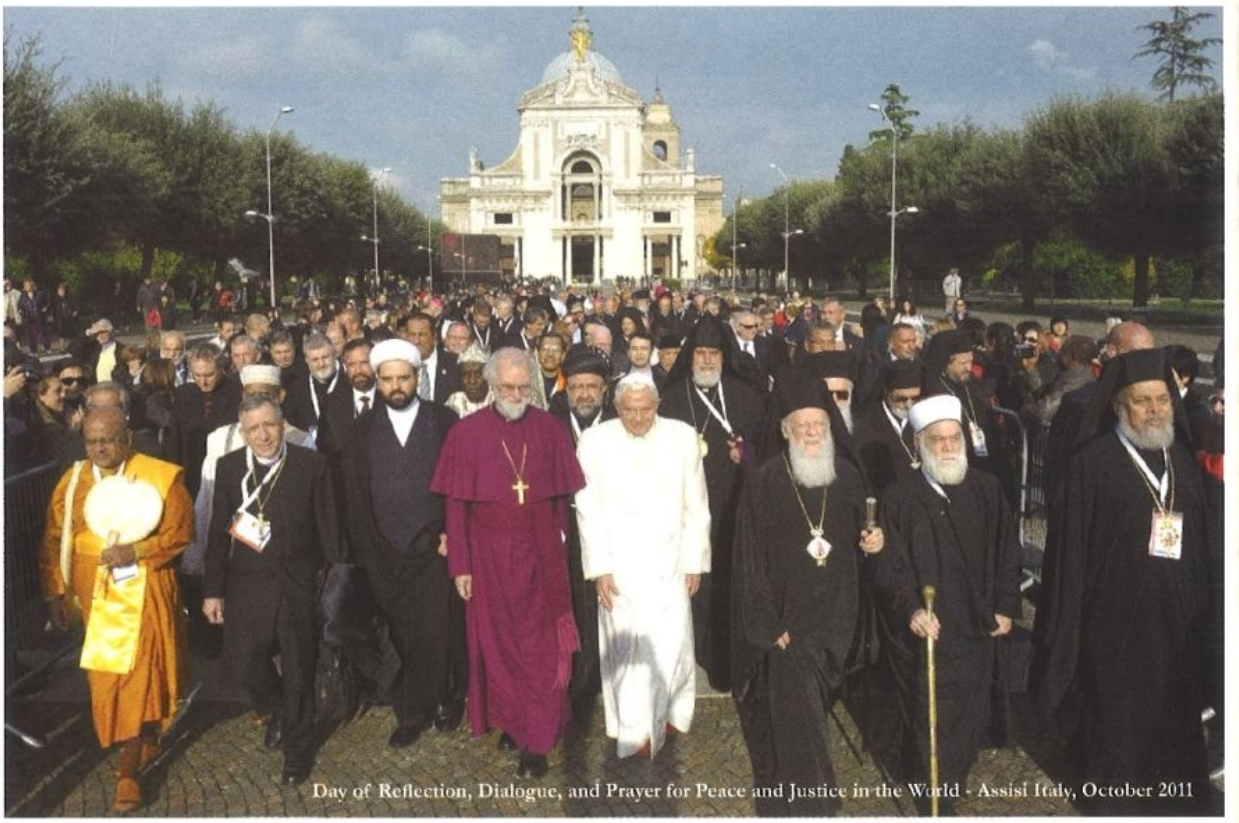
"The renewal of our sense of mission will mean ... that the acting subject of mission is the local church living and acting in communion with the universal Church. It is the local churches and communities which can discern and work out ... the way the Gospel is best proclaimed, the Church set up, the values of God's Kingdom realized in their own place and time." [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 3.3.1].

The FABC forcefully asserts: "Asian Churches then must become truly Asian in all things. The principle of indigenization and inculturation is at the very root of their coming into their own. The ministry of Asian Churches, if it is to be authentic, must be relevant to Asian societies. This calls on the part of the Churches for originality, creativity and inventiveness, for boldness and courage." [Source: ACMC (Hong Kong): 26].

With great conviction, Asia's bishops state: "... the decisive new phenomenon for Christianity in Asia will be the emergence of genuine Christian communities in Asia—Asian in their way of thinking, praying, living, communicating their own Christ-experience to others. The consequences will be tremendous ... [in] all aspects of their life.... If the Asian Churches do not discover their own identity, they will have no future." [Source: ACMC (Hong Kong): 14].

CONCLUSION In addition to the FABC material provided in this summary presentation of an Asian Dialogue Decalogue, this author desires to close by citing his favorite quote from Pope John Paul II on dialogue. Speaking in Manila to all the peoples of Asia during his 1981 Philippine visit, the pope asserted that the goal of interfaith dialogue should be altruistic (not focused only on personal enrichment); he stated: "Christians will, moreover, join hands with all men and women of good will … [and] work together in order to bring about a more just and peaceful society in which the poor will be the first to be served." Indeed, a key Asian way of mission is dialogical service of the needy. This approach can clearly reveal the face of Jesus in Asia today, strengthen bonds of relationship with Asia's burgeoning masses, and place the Church firmly on the side of the Asian multitudes.

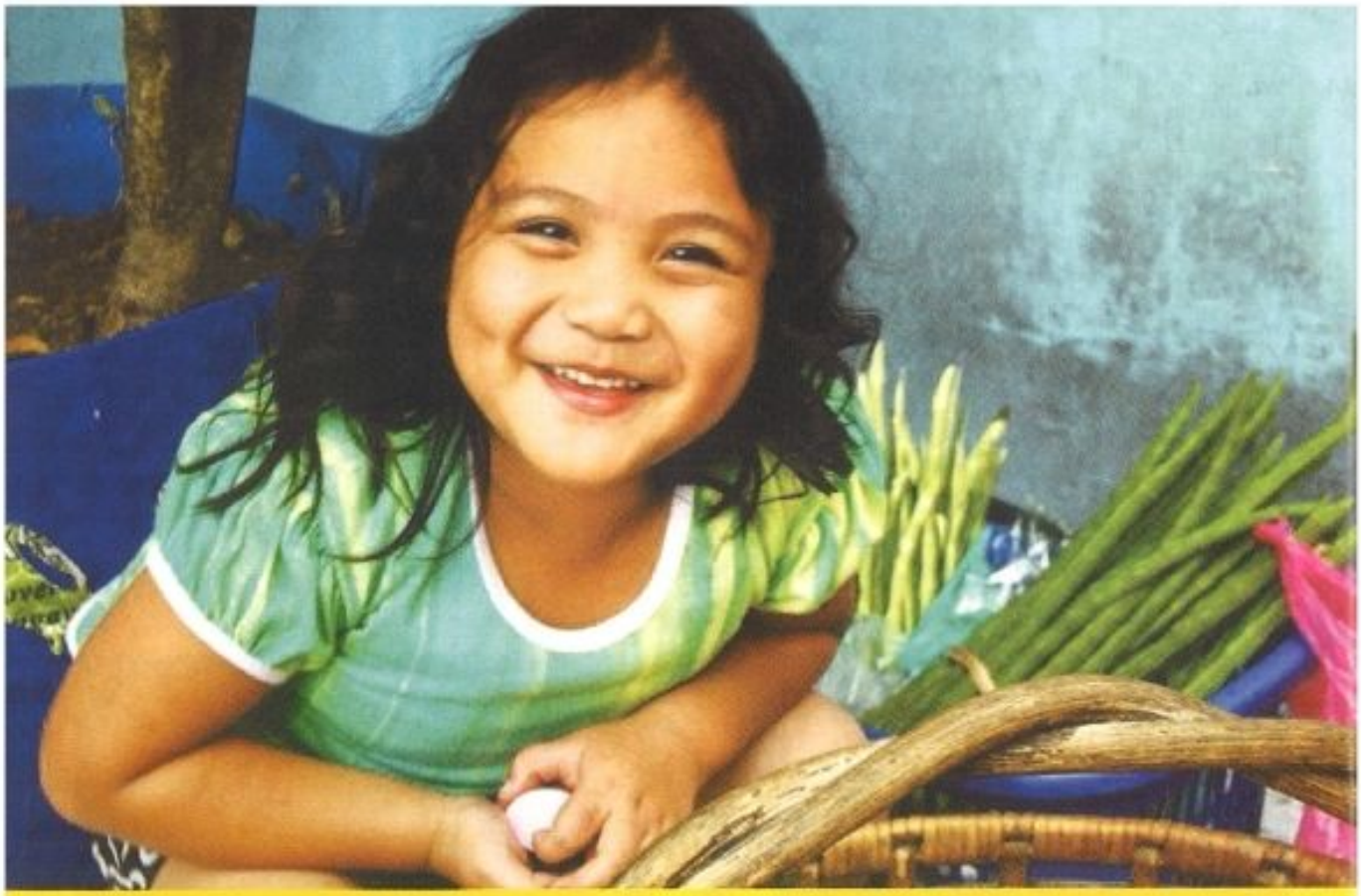
NOTE ON RESOURCES Readers may wish to consult the four-volume collection of FABC documents, *For All the Peoples of Asia* [FAPA]; this series, published by Claretian Publications in Manila, is a standard reference tool for FABC sources. The FABC central secretariat publishes the FABC Papers; they are available on the FABC website; see numbers 100 and 125 for comprehensive indexes. Another two-volume resource, which presents all the FABC doctoral studies written from 1985-2008, can serve as a useful source-book; also published by the Claretians in Manila, it bears the title *Theology from the Heart of Asia.*



Day of Reflection, Dialogue, and Prayer for Peace and Justice in the World - Assisi Italy, October 2011



JAMES H. KROEGER, MM, an Advisor to the FABC Office of Evangelization, is professor of systematic and mission theology and Islamics at the Loyola School of Theology where he has taught since 1987. He has edited two books in preparation for the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Second Vatican Council (1962-2012): *Exploring the Treasures of Vatican II* (Claretian Publications and Jesuit Communications) and *The Documents of Vatican Council II* (Paulines – Philippines).



Where is God? Where Can I Find Him?

Sr. Sweet Nemenzo, FSP

Where is God, where can I find him?
Will I ever see his face here in my little space?
Will he listen to me if I call on His name?
Will he ever care to lighten what I bear?
Tell me, tell me please,
Where can I find God whom you say to be LOVE?
Where is God? Where is God? Where is God?

This is an excerpt from an inspiring song composed by Sister Deedee Alarcon, FSP, for the stage play *Kalkal* on the occasion of the Year of Saint Paul. In one of our casual conversations, I teasingly asked her: "You have finished your MA in Pastoral Ministry at Loyola School of Theology and still you do not know where God is and where to find Him?" She was surprised and at the same time challenged by my question. I asked her again: "Seriously, what inspired you to write this song?" And, her answer was: "It was one of the songs performed by Ula, the main character in the play.

Ula comes from a very dysfunctional family in the squatter's area. Young Ula has never been to a formal school, and being the eldest child of an abusive alcoholic father and a weakling mother, she has become the sole breadwinner of the family. She scavenges in Smokey Mountain day in and day out, not only to find daily bread for her family, but also to escape the horrors of her father's abusive behavior toward family members. The song expresses the unheard voice of the many Ulas in the country and in the world. Where shall they find God in all their sufferings? The song expresses, too, the sentiments even of grown-ups and of all who restlessly search for the Truth and the meaning of life. It is a cry of desire for intimacy with God, who alone can fill the emptiness of one's heart. "Where is God?" is the song of the "little Ulas" in each one of us, in our deep longing for home, for God.

Today, many young people are seeking God, seeking truth and seeking peace. If there is a God, where can I find him? Teenagers who visit our bookstore always ask for books on Faith, on God. In fact, our bestsellers include Thomas Keating's *Intimacy with God* and Joyce Rupp's *Inviting God In*. Once, a teenager came to our bookstore and asked: "Sister, where is God in the midst of all my troubles?" Many of our bookstore patrons express feelings of emptiness, doubts, fears and frustrations of seeking intimacy with God and not finding it.

Reflecting on this, I realize that people of today seem to have an increasing longing for God. And yet, on the one hand one need not have a masteral or doctoral degree in Sacred Scripture in order to find God. He or she need not be a theologian in order to see or experience the presence of God. And, on the other hand, our study of theology does not guarantee that we will truly know God.

In the human heart, God places a longing, a desire of the possibility of achieving union with Him. God wishes to have an intimate relationship with each one of us. Even in our limitations, there is a way for us to know God. We, human beings, are *capax Dei*; we have the capacity for God. "I believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24) credibly illustrates for us our human search for God. Our faith in God is indeed capable of growing or declining. Even if we have faith, we still question and harbor moments of doubt. Even the modern saint, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, experienced spiritual darkness and the trials of faith which remained with her until her death. Mother Teresa is not the only one; others who are familiar to us are Saint John of the Cross, Saint Therese of Lisieux, and Saint Paul the Apostle. Each of these great saints has struggled in the search for God. But in the end, they did find Him.

Once, a teenager came to our bookstore and asked: "Sister, where is God in the midst of all my troubles?" Many express feelings of emptiness, doubts, fears, and frustrations of seeking intimacy with God and not finding it.

One fine Sunday morning, arriving fifteen minutes before mass, I happened to sit beside a young couple with their two kids and a *yaya* (maid). While waiting for the mass to begin, the younger son became very restless. He was running around, crawling on the pew and making some naughty remarks to his *yaya* who tried hard to keep him still. The mother tried to stop him many times and even reprimanded him, but to no avail. The father who was seated beside me and conscious of my presence, became very uncomfortable. Probably trying to impress me, he gently took the child on his lap and asked him: "*Anak, saan si* God?" The young boy immediately pointed to the Crucified Jesus in the sanctuary and said: "*Yun si* God, Papa Jesus!" Then he got down and went to his nanny and each member of the family telling them: "*Andiyan din siya o, sa heart mo!*" while pointing to the heart of each of them. Finally, he proudly blurted out: "*Siyempre, andito din siya sa* heart *ko! 'Di ba,* Daddy?" And glancing at me, he whispered to his dad: "*Pati diyan sa heart ni* Sister!"

I was very much surprised by the child's response. I had never seen such a radiant smile on a child's face before. At such an innocent age, he was convinced that God is present in each person, that God is present in me, in his mother's heart and in his *yaya*'s heart too, in all his brothers and sisters in God's family of believers in the Church. What great faith!

The little child's faith and innocence confirmed for me three important insights. First, God is near; he is present in our midst. *Hindi natutulog ang Diyos!* We need not seek God in faraway places, in order to find God in our lives. Second, God's love does not depend on our behavior. Even if the young boy misbehaved inside the church and was reprimanded repeatedly by his mother, he still recognized and acknowledged the presence of God in his mother. Our weaknesses, sins and failures do not diminish God's love for us. Because of this fact, we are challenged to relate to God, not with fear but with much gratitude. Third, God invites us to be in communion with him and with our brothers and sisters. The boy taught me that I should find God in everyone's heart—even in my enemies.

The young boy possessed a healthy image of God. We too are challenged to examine our image of God. In our religious communities, do we speak about God with conviction? Or, do we choose to speak about the gods we adore in us—our achievements, our popularity, our position, our properties, influences, and connections?

Kurtz and Ketcham in their book entitled *The Spirituality of Imperfection* discovered that the problem is not "finding" God. As C. S. Lewis observed, "to speak of man's search for God is like speaking of the mouse's search for the cat." The problem is not "finding" God, but how we let ourselves be found by a Hidden God. Allow me to conclude by sharing with you a story from Polsky and Wozner's *Everyday Miracles*:

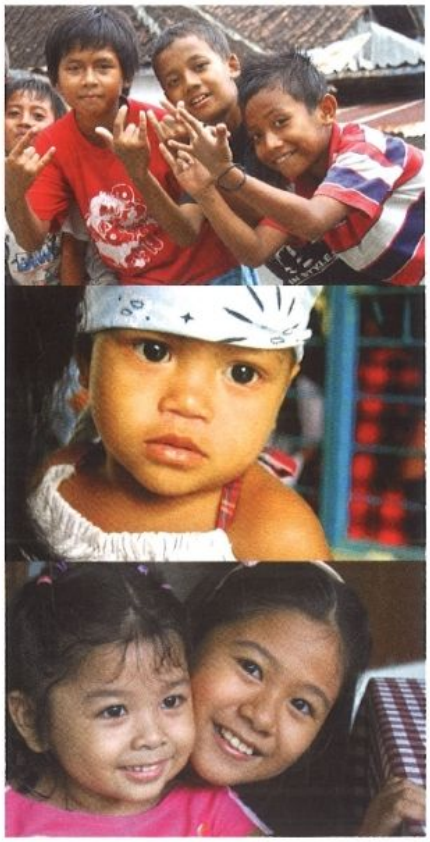
"Once upon a time, a carefree young girl who lived at the edge of the forest and who loved to wander in the forest became lost. As it grew dark and the little girl did not return home, her parents became very worried. They began calling for the little girl and searching in the forest, and it grew darker. The parents returned home and called neighbors and people from the town to help them search for their little girl.

"Meanwhile, the little girl wandered about in the forest and became very worried and anxious as it grew dark, because she could not find her way home. She tried one path and another and became more and more tired. Coming to a clearing in the forest, she lay down by a big rock and fell asleep.

"Her frantic parents and neighbors scoured the forest. They called and called the little girl's name but to no avail. Many of the searchers became exhausted and left, but the little girl's father continued searching throughout the night.

"Early in the morning, the father came to the clearing where the girl had lain to sleep. He suddenly saw his little girl and ran toward her, yelling and making a great nose on the dry branches which awoke the girl.

"The little girl saw her father, and with a great shout of joy, she exclaimed, 'Daddy, I found you'!" TL



Sr. Sweet is about to finish her MA in Pastoral Ministry. Majoring in Scriptures, she also dabbles into photography and painting in her spare time.



Jesus influencing today's youth

Pilita Venturanza

In this day and age when information and technology seem all powerful and omnipresent, it is alarming to consider what shapes the youth. From the time they wake up in the morning, they are battered with an endless stream of bad news, violence and scandals from the newspapers, radio, television and the internet. They try to escape to a world they can control and upon which they can project their angst: the world of computer and video games that often turn virulent. Some, as if to boost their self worth, arm themselves with the latest gadgets and spend hours listening to loud music and making sure they are seen and heard in social networking sites. Others attempt to give meaning to their uneventful lives by identifying with the melodramatic lives they see in soap operas and telenovelas. It is no exaggeration to say that in the age of computer and even as the world has become smaller, more convenient and noisier, young people have never felt more alone. They want to be heard, but in the noise, nobody seems to be listening. How does one introduce the person of Jesus to the youth of this age?

The Eucharist Youth Movement (EYM) seeks to teach youth to live in Jesus' way by guiding them into a heart-to-heart relationship with Him. It seeks to foster among the youth a deep and personal friendship with Jesus, constantly nourished by prayer (which teaches them to find God in all things), the Word of God, and the Eucharist. In other words, the EYM seeks to make Jesus not just a part but the center of history in the lives of youth.

EYM teaches the youth to be in union with the Heart of Jesus by seeking to encounter Him in the three key moments of the day, a practice anchored in Ignatian spirituality. The First Moment is the greeting and offering of the day to the Lord in the morning, preferably upon waking up. The member offers to Jesus all the prayers, works, joys, sufferings, and everything one has to do on that day, telling Jesus of the desire to do it with Him and in His way. The Second Moment is the meeting of Jesus in friendship at some other moment in the day, perhaps a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament, attending the Eucharist and receiving communion, remembering to say prayers before or after meals, or just pausing to remember the Lord Jesus at anytime during the day. The Third Moment is the Examen or review of the day, at bedtime, to recognize God's movement is one's life throughout the day. It is an examination of consciousness, recognizing at the day's end how God has





been present and how one has been present to God. While written prayers may be helpful as a starting point, it is encouraged that EYM members use their own words in these three moments of prayer and to record their encounters with Jesus in a journal. Indeed, journal writing is a most efficacious tool in the formation of the EYM.

There is a coincidence and continuity between these prayers and the Eucharist because prayers help the youth live the Eucharist within the day.

In the Eucharist Christ offers Himself to the Father and gives Himself to them, drawing them in His own movement of offering to offer their life. Everything was one and the same thing, since they understood that both prayers and the Eucharist placed them in an attitude of giving themselves, with Christ, during the whole day. Between these prayers and the Eucharist there was a coincidence and continuity, since the prayers helped them to live the Eucharist during the rest of the day. The offering made them more available and more docile to the Spirit, since they were guided by the desire to model or form their lives according to the will of the Father. In this way they became apostles and collaborators in the mission of Christ on earth (made concrete for them even in the most simple things of every day). SOURCE: *Spirituality and Teachings of the Eucharistic Youth Movement* [provisional handbook]: Rome.

With the blessings of Apostleship of Prayer and EYM National Director, Father Manny Flores, SJ, the EYM was started in the Holy Infant Jesus Parish in Parañaque on February 13, 2011, initially as a mode of formation for the youth who serve in the different ministries under the Commission on Worship and Liturgy. Subsequently, our parish priest mandated that the EYM be the mode of formation for the entire Parish Youth Ministry. Twelve young persons were chosen to become EYM animators; the team started forming and training them every week for at least three hours, teaching them the spirituality of the EYM (as guided by the handbook) and immersing oneself in the Word of God. By the end of April, there was a two-day EYM Camp where the animators underwent deepening and planning sessions with three Jesuit Scholastics, Ro Atillano, Philip Yohan and Martin Licup. On the second day of the Camp, the EYM was launched for all the youth in the parish.

Since that time, the EYM meets every other week and undergoes the same spiritual formation that the animators have undergone, this time facilitated by the animators themselves. Attendance is normally good, averaging around 70 participants per meeting. On alternate weeks, the animators meet with the coordinators for deepening of formation and planning for the "big group."

Faithful to its Ignatian roots, the EYM uses *Schooled by the Spirit, A Prayer Companion to Ignatian Spirituality* written by Ramon Lanuza Bautista, SJ as its current module. The Word of God complements a "prayer theme" and becomes the basis for the reflection that they write in their journal. The members then share in small groups the reflections and experiences they have written.

The growth of the EYM in the parish is simply phenomenal. "Growth" does not only refer to the increasing number of youth in the parish who regularly attend EYM sessions and whose enthusiasm keeps spreading like wildfire in the villages and *sitios* that comprise the parish. It also means the interior growth that one witnesses among the youth. This growth is seen in the quality of sharing that they give during



sessions, in their concern and love for one another, in the way they pray for one another, even in the manner by which they have learned to resolve conflicts among themselves. The growth is evident as young people have now learned to transcend social barriers and become friends in the Lord, notwithstanding the vast difference in economic status.

In addition, growth is present in the fact that more young people now visit the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, their journals in tow. Growth is manifested in the steady increase in the number of young people who join the ministries that serve in the Eucharist. The number of participants in the Holy Hour every First Friday of the month has increased by more than threefold, most of them from EYM, some of them bringing their parents along. Attendance is not checked, but the youth come of their own accord because they have learned to love and value the Eucharist. The EYM has fostered in them a deep and personal friendship with Jesus; they have become devotees of the Eucharist in the true sense of the word.

With God's grace and in less than a year since the inception of EYM, the youth are now starting to allow Jesus to shape their history and the history of the parish. They have found their voice and a Friend who truly loves them.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Youth movements and organizations are vital to an effective ministry among the youth. However, they require much effort to organize and to animate, especially nowadays. Often, the temptation is to prioritize fun at the expense of substance or to insist on substance without being able to attract and keep the interest of the youth. In the foregoing article, Pilita Venturanza, a very active parishioner and a mother of three teenagers, shared the success story of a thriving youth movement that does not compromise substance but continues to attract the youth, which they pioneered in the their parish.



A lawyer by profession, Pilt juggles her career, family life, and parish involvement with impressive finesse and grace.