

OFFICE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (OHD)

Climate Change Desk (CCD)

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EDITOR'S COLUMN

Fake news, or hoax news, refers to false information or propaganda published under the guise of being authentic news. Fake news websites and channels push their fake news content in an attempt to mislead consumers of the content and spread misinformation via social networks and word-of-mouth.

One of the more colourful definitions of fake news comes from PolitiFact: "Fake news is made-up stuff, masterfully manipulated to look like credible journalistic reports that are easily spread online to large audiences willing to believe the fictions and spread the word." (Forrest Stroud)

In this context the new Apostolic exhortation The joy of truth expresses the restlessness of the human heart until it encounters and dwells within God's Light, and shares that Light with all people." With that thought, Pope Francis begins his new Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium*, "On Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties." The Holy Father emphasizes that "truth is not an abstract idea, but is Jesus himself, the Word of God in whom is the Life that is the Light of man"; and this, he says, "is the joy that the Church is impelled by Jesus to bear witness to and to proclaim in her mission, unceasingly and with ever renewed vigour."

The current OHD Bulletin highlights the Pope's letter with an article by Fr Clarence Devadass and an extract from the Apostolic Constitution. We have also included the final statement of the seminar in January on the GLOBAL SOCIAL ECONOMY AND IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE FAMILY AND THE REPORT OF OHD-CCD 2017-2018

Bishop Allwyn D'Silva
Executive Secretary

OFFICE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (OHD) / Climate Change Desk (CCD)

LIST OF CONTENTS

1. Editorial	
2. POPE FRANCIS' NEW APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION 'VERITATIS GAUDIUM' ON ECCLESIASTICAL UNIVERSITIES & FACULTIES. An Excerpt From "VERITATIS GAUDIUM' Joy of Truth (from Foreword 3, second para onwards...) compiled by Deepika Singh	2
3. THE JOY OF TRUTH: REDISCOVERING JESUS IN TODAY'S WORLD by Fr. Dr. Clarence Devdass	4
4. GLOBAL SOCIAL ECONOMY AND IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE FAMILY (With Specific Reference to Amoris Laetitia in Asian context), Seminar Statement	6
5. PAST Updates/events & Announcements: a) ACTIVITIES OF THE FABC-OHD/CCD: APRIL 2017- MARCH 2018 by Bishop Allwyn D'Silva	9
b) Bishop Allwyn at CIDSE BISHOPS' FORUM 2018, Leuven, Belgium – 24-25 January 2018	10
6. Press Release	11
7. Forth Coming Announcements	12

An Excerpt

From "VERITATIS GAUDIUM" Joy of Truth

(from Foreword 3, second para onwards...)...

The primary need today is for the whole People of God to be ready to embark upon a new stage of "Spirit-filled" evangelization. This calls for "a resolute process of discernment, purification and reform". In this process, a fitting renewal of the system of ecclesiastical studies plays a strategic role.

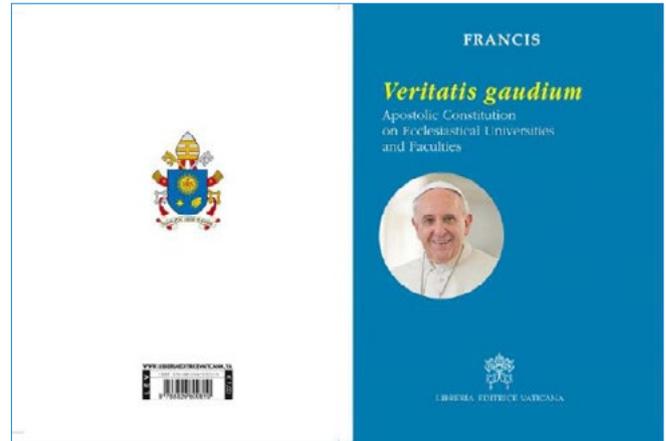
These studies, in fact, are called to offer opportunities and processes for the suitable formation of priests, consecrated men and women, and committed lay people. At the same time, they are called to be a sort of providential cultural laboratory in which the Church carries out the performative interpretation of the reality brought about by the Christ event and nourished by the gifts of wisdom and knowledge by which the Holy Spirit enriches the People of God in manifold ways – from the *sensus fidei fidelium* to the magisterium of the bishops, and from the charism of the prophets to that of the doctors and theologians. This is essential for a Church that "goes forth"! All the more so because today we are not only living in a time of changes but are experiencing a true epochal shift, marked by a wide-ranging "anthropological" and "environmental crisis".

Indeed, we daily see "signs that things are now reaching a breaking point, due to the rapid pace of change and degradation; these are evident in large-scale natural disasters as well as social and even financial crises". In a word, this calls for "changing the models of global development" and "redefining our notion of progress". Yet "the problem is that we still lack the culture necessary to confront this crisis. We lack leadership capable of striking out on new paths".

This vast and pressing task requires, on the cultural level of academic training and scientific study, a broad and generous effort at a radical paradigm shift, or rather – dare I say – at "a bold cultural revolution".

In this effort, the worldwide network of ecclesiastical universities and faculties is called to offer the decisive contribution of leaven, salt and light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the living Tradition of the Church, which is ever open to new situations and ideas.

Today it is becoming increasingly evident that "there is need of a true evangelical hermeneutic for better understanding life, the world and humanity, not of a synthesis but of a spiritual atmosphere of research and certainty based on the truths of reason and of faith. Philosophy and theology permit one to acquire



the convictions that structure and strengthen the intelligence and illuminate the will... but this is fruitful only if it is done with an open mind and on one's knees.

The theologian who is satisfied with his complete and conclusive thought is mediocre. The good theologian and philosopher has an open, that is, an incomplete, thought, always open to the *maius* of God and of the truth, always in development, according to the law that Saint Vincent of Lerins described in these words: *annis consolidetur, dilatetur tempore, sublimetur aetate* (*Commonitorium primum*, 23: PL 50, 668)".

What must be the fundamental criteria for a renewal and revival of the contribution of ecclesiastical studies to a Church of missionary outreach? Here we can identify at least four criteria that emerge from the Second Vatican Council's teaching and the Church's experience in these past decades of having received that teaching in attentive listening to the Holy Spirit and to the deepest needs and most pressing questions of the human family.

a) First, the most urgent and enduring criterion is that of contemplation and the presentation of a spiritual, intellectual and existential introduction to the heart of the *kerygma*, namely the ever fresh and attractive good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which continues to take flesh in the life of the Church and of humanity. It is true that "we may not always be able to reflect adequately the beauty of the Gospel, but there is one sign which we should never lack: the option for those who are least, those whom society discards". This option must pervade the presentation and study of Christian truth. From this comes the particular feature, in the formation of a Christian culture, of discovering in the whole of creation the Trinitarian imprint that makes the cosmos in which we live a "network of relations" in which "it is proper to every living being to tend towards other things". This in turn fosters "a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity".



b) A second guiding criterion, closely linked to and flowing from the first, is that of wide-ranging dialogue, not as a mere tactical approach, but as an intrinsic requirement for experiencing in community the joy of the Truth and appreciating more fully its meaning and practical implications. Today our proclamation of the Gospel and the Church's doctrine are called to promote a culture of encounter, in generous and open cooperation with all the positive forces that contribute to the growth of universal human consciousness. A culture, we might say, of encounter between all the authentic and vital cultures, thanks to a reciprocal exchange of the gifts of each in that luminous space opened up by God's love for all his creatures.

As Pope Benedict XVI pointed out, "truth, in fact, is logos which creates dia-logos, and hence communication and communion". In this light, *Sapientia Christiana*, echoing *Gaudium et Spes*, urges dialogue with Christians of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, and with those of other religious or humanistic convictions, maintaining "contact with scholars of other disciplines, whether these are believers or not", in an effort to "evaluate and interpret the latter's affirmations and judge them in the light of revealed truth". This provides a positive and timely chance to review, from this standpoint and in this spirit, the structure and method of the academic curricula proposed by the system of ecclesiastical studies, in their theological foundations, in their guiding principles and in their various levels of disciplinary, pedagogical and didactical organization. This can be accomplished in a demanding but highly productive effort to rethink and update the aims and integration of the different disciplines and the teaching imparted in ecclesiastical studies within this specific framework and intentionality.

Today, in fact, "what is called for is an evangelization capable of shedding light on these new ways of

relating to God, to others and to the world around us, and inspiring essential values. It must reach the places where new narratives and paradigms are being formed."

c) From this follows the third fundamental criterion that I would propose: inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches carried out with wisdom and creativity in the light of Revelation. What distinguishes the academic, formative and research approach of the system of ecclesiastical studies, on the level of both content and method, is the vital intellectual principle of the unity in difference of knowledge and respect for its multiple, correlated and convergent expressions.

This entails offering, through the various programmes proposed by ecclesiastical studies, a variety of disciplines corresponding to the multifaceted richness of reality disclosed by the event of Revelation, yet harmoniously and dynamically converging in the unity of their transcendent source and their historical and met historical intentionality, which is eschatological disclosed in Christ Jesus. In him, writes Saint Paul, "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3).

This theological, anthropological, existential and epistemic principle takes on particular significance and is called to manifest all its effectiveness within the system of ecclesiastical studies by ensuring cohesion together with flexibility, and organicity together with dynamism. It must also show its effectiveness in relation to the fragmented and often disintegrated panorama of contemporary university studies and to the pluralism – uncertain, conflicting and relativistic – of current beliefs and cultural options.

To view the Encyclical 'VERITATIS GAUDIUM' "Joy of Truth" please visit

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/01/29/180129c.html>

THE JOY OF TRUTH:

REDISCOVERING JESUS IN TODAY'S WORLD - Fr. Dr. Clarence Devdass

Rev. Fr. Clarence Devadass is the Director of the Catholic Research Centre (Malaysia) since 2008 where he coordinates all research projects on matters concerning faith, politics, and other current issues within and without the Church. He holds a Doctorate in Theology, specialising in Moral Theology. He has been a member of the FABC's Office of Theological Concerns since 2008 and in January 2013, was appointed as its Executive Secretary. In February 2014, Pope Francis named Fr Devadass as a Consultor to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID). He has just returned to Malaysia after spending a year (2017) at the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, UK as a Visiting Fellow

While in my second year in the major seminary, I recall vividly, the Professor of Scripture introducing a programme entitled 'The Joy of Discovery in Bible Study' with the objective of breaking away from the monotony of doing purely scriptural exegesis. He probably had noticed the students entering into a phase of monotonous learning and tried to introduce a more creative way of learning Scripture. This brief programme was intended to rekindle the interest and also joy in learning Scripture. Though the effort did not last long, I will say that the effort did create a renewed sense of enthusiasm and love for studying Scripture, not by way of compulsion but now, it was conviction.

Since his election, Pope Francis has introduced the theme of 'joy' in three of his writings, 'The Joy of the Gospel' (*Evangelii Gaudium*), 'The Joy of Love' (*Amoris Laetitia*), and most recently 'The Joy of Truth' (*Veritatis gaudium*). A cursory reading of all three writing of Pope Francis would point out that he is intent on helping the Church to rediscover the joy of following Jesus and not a burden to be carried. It is also clear that for the Christian, joy is much more than a fleeting or passing emotion. Instead, Galatians 5:22 lists joy as the second fruit of the Holy Spirit, meaning that joy is a gift that we receive from God through the Holy Spirit. Similar to my Professor of Scripture who wanted to help us find joy in Scripture, Pope Francis is clearly intent of leading the Church in rediscovering Jesus and that the fruit of the encounter with Jesus, is joy. Joy is not an abstract concept or some ideal that people can only long for.

In sharing his own experience, Pope Francis says, "I can say that the most beautiful and natural expressions of joy which I have seen in my life were in poor people who had little to hold on to. I also think of the real joy shown by others who, even amid pressing professional obligations, were able to preserve, in detachment and simplicity, a heart full of faith. In their own way, all these instances of joy flow from the infinite love of God, who has revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, #7). In many of his homilies, Pope Francis encourages his audience to reclaim the joy of knowing Jesus and spread it to others: "Joy is a beautiful reality... authentic joy, not self-referential or complacent, is the most credible witness of a full life"

(Pope Francis addressing the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master, 22 May 2017)

The centrality of Jesus' teaching also revolves very much on the joy of knowing God. However, it wasn't just an intellectual knowledge but more towards a personal encounter with God – an encounter that leads to transformation. The positive nature of Jesus' public ministry is epitomised in the presentation of the Beatitudes. Scripture scholars often present the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12) as the "new" Ten Commandments. If in the Old Testament the Ten Commandments is presented as prohibitive laws, the Beatitudes in the New Testament is presented as positive law – an invitation to embrace the path of the kingdom for the sake of "blessedness". The freedom that Jesus offers to all who seek God is clear when He says, 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls' (Matthew 11:28-29). The liberation and consolation that Jesus offers inevitably brings joy to His followers.

The recent Apostolic Constitution, *Veritatis Gaudium* is Pope Francis' continued plan to restore joy in not just following Jesus but also embracing the truth that Jesus came to bring to the world. This is clearly expressed in his opening words: "The joy of truth (*Veritatis Gaudium*) expresses the restlessness of the human heart until it encounters and dwells within God's Light, and shares that Light with all people. For truth is not an abstract idea, but is Jesus himself, the Word of God in whom is the Life that is the Light of man (cf. Jn 1:4), the Son of God who is also the Son of Man. He alone, "in revealing the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals humanity to itself and brings to light its very high calling" (VG #1). We are aware that objective truth is being challenged on many fronts by ideologies that stem from the wave of secularism, liberalism, and relativism. In the light of all these challenges, how do we as Church present Jesus who is the Truth?

In recognising that the world is changing rapidly, Pope Francis calls for a renewed way of presenting the truth. In fact, in the world that we live in today, the very concept of truth is being challenged and being



separated and alienated from God, who is the source of all truth. *Veritatis Gaudium* presents truth as something essential and rooted in the Divine, and any search for and knowledge of the truth must lead towards a greater knowledge of God, who is the source of human joy.

In specifically addressing ecclesiastical universities and faculties, where formation takes place, Pope Francis calls for a renewed way of approaching formation for the purpose of evangelisation since there is a “new horizon now opening before us”: “The primary need today is for the whole People of God to be ready to embark upon a new stage of “Spirit-filled” evangelisation. This calls for “a resolute process of discernment, purification and reform”. In this process, a fitting renewal of the system of ecclesiastical studies plays a strategic role. These studies, in fact, are called to offer opportunities and processes for the suitable formation of priests, consecrated men and women, and committed lay people” (VG #3).

The Holy Father puts before us a four-pronged approach aimed at achieving this renewal – a renewal that could respond positively to the call of the Second Vatican Council “to overcome this divorce between theology and pastoral care, between faith and life” (VG #2). Firstly he calls for a contemplation and presentation of a spiritual, intellectual and existential approach to the gospel of Jesus Christ; secondly, any presentation of this gospel must have a dialogical nature, in other words, fostering the “culture of encounter”; thirdly, it has to be inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary which would prevent seeing things in isolation; and fourthly, a networking among institutions worldwide so that resources may be shared and inspire one another by the different cultural and religious traditions that each brings to the table.

What is notable in this document is that the study of Catholic philosophy, theology and even canon law,

should not take a missionary approach and in doing so must take into account the “social and cultural meditation on the Gospel undertaken by the people of God in different continental areas and in dialogue with diverse cultures” (VG #3). In calling for this renewed approach, Pope Francis reminds the Church that “theology must doubtless be rooted and grounded in sacred Scripture and in the living tradition... for this very reason it must simultaneously accompany cultural and social processes and, particularly, difficult transitions” (VG #4).

This document does challenge teachers in ecclesiastical universities and faculties to find creative ways in presenting the gospel not merely in abstract concepts but in ways that are rooted within the news realities the Church finds herself in the different parts of the world. Pope Francis calls this “creative apologetics”... that which encourages “greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all” (VG #5). Those who teach, must not only be aware of the Church’s rich and diverse tradition and love the faith, it also calls for understanding the modern world and be able to engage with it. Failing this, the chasm between faith and life goes further than it already has.

Veritatis Gaudium is indeed a timely reminder not just to ecclesiastical universities and faculties but also to the Church at large as we see “signs that things are now reaching a breaking point, due to the rapid pace of change and degradation” where our secularised society struggles to hold on to even the most basic truths of human existence. In this new landscape that surrounds us, we need to rediscover not only the joy of knowing and following Jesus, who is our Way, Truth and Life, but make Jesus the source and fount of life for all who seek Him in spirit and in truth.



GLOBAL SOCIAL ECONOMY AND IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE FAMILY

(WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO AMORIS LAETITIA IN ASIAN CONTEXT)

A seminar on GLOBAL SOCIAL ECONOMY AND IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE FAMILY (with Specific Reference to Amoris Laetitia in Asian context) was organised by Office of Human Development (OHD) of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) in collaboration with the Catholic Commission for

Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand (and the Asia-Pacific Justice and Peace Workers Network (APJPWN) from 8-13 January 2018 at Baan Phu Waan Pastoral Training Center (Bangkok, Thailand). Below given is the Seminar Statement by the participants of the seminar.

— SEMINAR STATEMENT —

Bangkok, 8-13 January 2018

Seminar Organized By
FEDERATION OF ASIAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCES (FABC): OFFICE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (OHD)/ CLIMATE CHANGE DESK (CCD)

In collaboration with
Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand (CBCT) & Asia-Pacific Justice and Peace Workers Network (APJPW)

We, 46 participants from Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand representing Asian Episcopal Commissions of Bishops' Conferences, Asian Commissions for Justice, Peace & Development, Asian Commissions on Family and Life & Asia-Pacific Justice and Peace Workers Network (APJPW), gathered in the Baan Phu Waan Pastoral Training Center (Bangkok, Thailand) from 8 to 13 January 2018 to reflect on the Global Social Economy and the Impact Of Climate Change On The Family in the light of Amoris Laetitia.

This seminar was organized by the Office of Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in collaboration with the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand and the Asia-Pacific Justice and Peace Workers Network. Coming from diverse cultures and working in various capacities in justice and peace, family and life, human development, we salute the People of God in Asia and with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, we "thank God that many families, which are far from considering themselves perfect, live in love, fulfil their calling and keep moving forward, even if they fall many times along the way" (Amoris Laetitia 57).

Our families in Asia today face poverty, conflict, ideological colonialism and persecution. Many are forced to migrate or suffer dislocation. Many families and nations – especially the poor, who are often the least responsible for it – are adversely affected by climate change and "a world economic system that discards men, women and children because they are no longer considered useful or productive according to criteria drawn from the world of business or other organizations" .

We began by visiting communities in Sampran (Thailand) already living out creative solutions to injustice, inequality and lack of harmony: producers' cooperatives, organic farming and religiously motivated communities. We see them as examples of sustainable development and ecologically responsible communities that live out the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity, participatory democracy. They show us that the transformation of the liquid or market economy to a social economy is possible, as envisioned by Pope Francis and shown in the life of the early Christians inspired by the Holy Spirit and guided by the disciples.

In our times, an analysis and reflection of ecological issues are of very much importance because an excess of energy and natural resources consumption and dangers of climate change such as extreme heat and greater risk of natural disasters and drought are having a negative impact on the economic and social lives of our families and Global warming could change the fabric of society in Asia.

On 01 Sept 2016, on the occasion of the Celebration of the World Day of Prayer and the Care of Creation, Pope Francis said: "The world's poor, though least responsible for climate change are most vulnerable and already suffering its impact". He is convinced that the social market economy on a global scale would not only foster the principles of subsidiarity, but also help



us to restore human dignity and bring about a greater equality among peoples.

As the Oxfam Report informs us, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening and as of today, eight men own the same wealth as 3.6 billion people who make up the poorest of humanity. Inequality is the root of social evils, especially poverty and hunger, caused by an unjust socio-economic system. An economic system of exclusion and inequality which is only geared to profit maximization is incapable of developing the world's people and guaranteeing dignified labour.

Pope Francis has strongly advocated that, in the light of the global financial crisis and instability and the negative impact of the liquid economy, we should move from a liquid economy which focuses on a self-centred culture to a social economy which works for the common good of all.

In light of what we have seen, heard and shared and moved by the suffering and courage of our families, inspired by the Word of God, we commit ourselves to:

1. Celebrate, develop and promote the Asianness of our families.
2. Continue fostering a culture of hope, solidarity and care – especially among the young – that welcomes the advances in technology and the human sciences, and uses them to serve the Asian family, to promote harmony and to care for the Earth our common home.
3. Prioritize the goal of steady employment for everyone therefore promotes the Social Economy as a possible solution to challenges faced by families in Asia.
4. Support the establishment of cooperatives, mutual aid societies and similar incarnations of the social economy to cope with rapid rise of inequality, youth unemployment, feminization of poverty and all pathologies of the throwaway culture and liquid economy.
5. Inform and disseminate good practices and knowledge about the Social Economy in our Church, in our communities and countries calling for the greater engagement of public authorities to support and promote the Social Economy with relevant legal and public policies for the common good.

We recommend the following to the FABC – OHD: Office of Human development:

- a. In order to operationalize the recommendations of the XI FABC Plenary Assembly: Hold joint regional and national consultations and workshops that would study the obstacles and opportunities offered by current national laws and local customs as well as the historical and cultural context of evangelization in order to arrive at relevant approaches and realistic strategies.
- b. Adapt, promote and disseminate the document FABC No. 151 “The Catholic Family in Asia: Domestic Church of the Poor on a Mission of Mercy”.
- c. Build resources data base to implement the recommendations of the document in the dioceses. Examples: modules, toolkits and best practices and networking.
- d. Assist in creating effective approaches in addressing country specific problems. Eg. Migrant’s issues, trafficking, climate change.
- e. Provide with good practices and educational resources on Social Economy other important concerns like climate change, human trafficking and migration.
- f. Evolve efficient networking with Episcopal commission, JP Commissions and other actors to organise a collective responses to the various critical issues affecting families, youth and women in Asia.

From the depths of our hearts, we thank Missio Aachen, our partners and benefactors, for making this seminar possible. Their generosity inspires us to continue our task of promoting integral human development and caring for the Earth, our common home. May the good Lord bless them and reward them for all that they do.

(We were total 46 participants (1 Archbishop, 5 Bishops, 15 priests, Laity: 11 women & 11 men) representing Asian Episcopal Commissions of Bishops’ Conferences, Asian Commissions for Justice, Peace & Development, Asian Commissions on Family and Life & Asia-Pacific Justice and Peace Workers Network (APJPWN).

Special thanks to the Statement drafting committee coordinated by Fr Enrico Emmanuel A Ayo, Dr Fr Stephen Fernandez & Ms Laurence KWARAK , Bishop Allwyn D’Silva & Ms Deepika Singh for the final edit.)



— SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS —

GLOBAL SOCIAL ECONOMY AND IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE FAMILY
(WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO AMORIS LAETITIA IN ASIAN CONTEXT) BANGKOK, 8-13 JANUARY 2018



Opening prayer/Inaugural Address Bishop Yvon Ambrose & Bishop Allwyn D'Silva



Session in progress at
Baan Phu Waan Pastoral Training Center (Bangkok, Thailand)



A) ACTIVITIES OF THE FABC-OHD/CCD: APRIL 2017- MARCH 2018

I. CONFERENCES ORGANISED BY OHD/CCD

1. Conference-Workshop on Climate Change in Asia – Human Development, Climate Justice and Ecological Sustainability, at the FABC Documentation Centre in Bangkok, June 11-12, 2017

At this event, findings of the Misereor-funded 'Climate Change Research and Collaboration in Asia' initiative of the CCD were disseminated to Catholic Church leaders who have influence in making decisions that drive climate actions. The climate justice themed-research employed a case study approach across sites in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam. During the

conference-workshop, research collaborators and practitioners across the sites interacted and shared expertise and recommendations in designing evidence-based strategies for relevant interventions. The 35 participants involved leaders and representatives of FABC's member and associate member conferences from over 20 countries in the region, research collaborators, technical resource persons, representatives of present or potential climate action partners of the FABC at regional and global levels, and the conference secretariat. Proceedings are expected to facilitate the crafting of FABC's regional climate change strategy.



2. Conference on Business Sector's Response to Laudato Si', at the FABC Documentation Centre in Bangkok, November 6-7, 2017, in collaboration with FABC Central Secretariat, Hong Kong and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand and sponsored by CAFOD

3. There were 30 participants for the conference comprising business persons, heads of the various commissions, and NGOs from Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Viet Nam, Indonesia and Thailand. The technical sessions were planned with an aim to have a deeper understanding of climate change, current trends/ debates and threats for South Asia. Good business practices from Philippines and Malaysia were also shared and the conference concluded with way forward.



II. Seminar on Global Social Economy and Impact of Climate Change on the Family (with Specific Reference to AmorisLaetitia in Asian context)in Bangkok, January 8-13, 2018, in collaboration with the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand and Asia-Pacific Justice and Peace Workers Network

The 41 participants comprised 1 Archbishop, 4 Bishops, 17 priests and 18 Laity representing the Asian Episcopal Commissions of Bishops' Conferences, Asian Commissions for Justice, Peace and Development, Asian Commissions on Family and Life and the Asia-Pacific Justice and Peace Workers Network. Visits to religiously motivated communities in Sampran (Thailand) already living out solutions to injustice, inequality and lack of harmony such as producers' cooperatives and organic farming were seen as examples of sustainable development and ecologically responsible communities that live out the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity, participatory democracy; thus vindicating that the transformation from a market to a social economy is possible. In the final seminar statement released, among other resolutions and suggestions, participants

committed to promote harmony and to care for the Earth our common home. They also recommended that the OHD assist in creating effective approaches to address country-specific problems – including climate change.

III. OHD/CCD E-Bulletin:

The last newsletter of OHD was published in December 2012 and due to unforeseen circumstances thereafter, no newsletters were published since. Hence, the E-Bulletin was re-launched. The work included compiling and writing articles, designing and circulating. Two E-bulletins have been published: August to December 2017 and December 2017 to April 2018.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

- Printed Proceedings of Conference-Workshop on Climate Change in Asia – Human Development, Climate Justice, and Ecological Sustainability, which was held at the FABC Documentation Centre, Bangkok from June 11-12, 2017
- Report writing of the 'Climate Change Research and Collaboration in Asia' is in progress

V. PROGRAMMES ATTENDED:

As Executive Secretary of the FABC-OHD/CCD, Bp Allwyn D'Silva has attended various programmes and been a speaker/ resource person, as listed below:

1. Met with Representatives of Siem Reap Diocese, Cambodia to discuss the steps for a Greener Diocese in March 2017.
2. Attended the International Movement of Catholic Students –Pax Romana Asia Pacific organised by the Asia Pacific Council under the theme "Laudato Si' in Action: Addressing the Ecological Crisis in Asia Pacific - Capacity building of Asia Pacific Students to be critical and analytical educators and advocates of environmental justice" on May 20-27, 2017 at Bangalore, India. Also, Dr Noelyn Dano presented the key findings of 'Climate Change Research and Collaboration in Asia' initiative of the CCD.
3. Attended the 2017 Caritas Asia Regional Conference, themed "Integral Human Development: The Caritas Network in Asia for Justice" on June 12-14, 2017 in Bangkok.
4. Gave a welcome speech at the International training workshop and theological forum: "Asian Youth, Champion for Building a New World: Centring on Peace, Sustainable Developments, Ecological Justice", was held at the Disaster Oasis Training Centre in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from July 22 to August 1, 2017.

5. Attended the Base Church Communities Meeting at the Honeyville Canossian Retreat House in Hong Kong, September 21-22, 2017.
6. Presented a paper on "Social Economic Factors affecting Family Life in India" at the "National Symposium on Understanding AmorisLaetitia in the Indian Situation", organised jointly by Commission for Family, Office of Justice, Peace and Development – Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, Bio-Medical Ethics Centre, Diocesan Human Life Committee (Bombay) and Commission for Doctrine and Theology from October 13-15 2017, at St Pius X College in Goregaon, Mumbai.
7. Attended the International Conference on "Perspectives for a world free from nuclear weapons and for integral disarmament" from November 10-11, 2017 at the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Palazzo San Calisto, Vatican City.
8. Attended a Bishops Forum of the CIDSE Board of Directors Meeting, January 24-25, 2018 in Leuven, Belgium, during which the work done by FABC on climate change was shared at the session "Getting inspired by stories of change" session.

B) Bishop Allwyn AT- CIDSE BISHOPS' FORUM 2018, Leuven, Belgium 24-25 January 2018

Bishop Allwyn was invited to share his experience at CIDSE BISHOPS' FORUM 2018, Leuven, Belgium from 24-25 January 2018 on: "Stories of Change: Sustainable Food for the People and the Planet". This topic was part of the main theme of the day 2 second session titled "Getting inspired by stories of change", which included the Intro and excerpt from the CIDSE documentary and the "Stories of Change: Sustainable Food for the People and the Planet", Inputs and experiences by Bishops from different regions By Mgr. Allwyn D'Silva (India).

The FORUM had their day one & session one on "Where we are: How is Laudato Si' inspiring our work? How did

it change our work", for which there were experience sharing & input by 3 resources persons from the CIDSE and network partners.

The 40 participants at the FORM were comprised of 20 CIDSE DIRECTORS / PRESIDENTS, 10 CIDSE ACCOMPANYING BISHOPS, 4 special invites including Bishop Allwyn, 3 PERMANENT OBSERVERS & 7 participants were from CIDSE SECRETARIAT / Member organizations' staff



PRESS RELEASE

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India expresses its deep pain and anguish at the incidents against women in Kathua, Unnao and other places in the country.

We are not a soulless nation. If we were, then the outpouring of anger as we have seen it across the nation would not have been manifest. Our nation has a soul, a heart and a mind. A soul to respond to these unspeakable crimes committed against women, a heart that reaches out in empathy and solidarity and a mind that does not fall for hate games played by those who wish to pollute the sacred secular fibre of the nation.

It is hard to be unmoved by what has happened in Kathua, how brutally an eight year child was assaulted, molested and cruelly murdered or in Unnao, or in any part of the nation where women are raped and murdered. What has made the incidents in Kathua and Unnao even more deplorable is the justification by certain sections of society; the very people who should uphold the rule of law have either become the alleged perpetrators or the defenders of the indefensible. There is no justification for rape; none what so ever and every voice of sanity must speak out in one voice against such crimes.

In a way humanity was thrown out of the window in Kathua and Unnao and replaced by the darkest side of human behaviour. The repeated targeting of women and children as a tool or agenda for personal, religious or political gain is nothing less than a crime against humanity and it is here that we look for the voices of sanity, in the pillars of democracy to speak out boldly and immediately; for when this is not done it gives a boost to actions of the perpetrators of such crimes. If justice is then delayed is justice denied and injustice not called out in time is injustice encouraged.

The eight year girl in Kathua and the twenty year old maiden from Unnao and every woman is our daughter, our sister, our mother. Their religion or caste does not in any way make them belong less to us.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India stands firmly with the victims of these and every horrific crime committed in our nation. We condemn strongly these dastardly incidents or elements that have committed or supported such acts which have brought great shame on our nation.

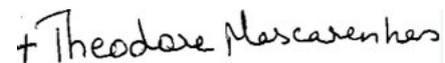
Ours is a nation that has produced great women leaders, social reformers, politicians and women who walk the corridors of power and yet our women are subjected daily to the most unspeakable crimes. This must stop now and the Catholic Church in India wishes to lend its voice and resolve in speaking up against such barbaric acts of violence against women.

Let us remember what Swami Vivekananda told us: "Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise you will remain as backward as you are now."

May the Almighty grant us wisdom and enlightenment and may we as one people stand up and oppose crime and injustice in all its forms.

God bless our women, God bless each and every Indian. God bless our Country.

Jai Hind



Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX Secretary
General Catholic Bishops' Conference of India

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Exposure programmes in Bangladesh for Bishops, Priests and Lay People, with special focus on Refugees and Energy
2. Strategic Planning Meeting of CCD-OHD in Bangkok
3. Meeting with FABC Commission for focus on Refugees, Energy and Climate Education
4. Workshop and Exposure on Climate Change and Migrants
5. Reports of the two workshops to be printed on Expanding Sustainability Commitments through Christian Business Stakeholders in South and East Asia – Supported by CAFOD
6. Laudato Si' handbook for grassroots workers - Supported by CAFOD

We thank MISEREOR, CAFOD and Missio Aachen
for supporting and being a partner of OHD/CCD

EDITOR

Bishop Allwyn D'Silva

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