

PROFILE OF FR. RAYMOND LESLIE O'TOOLE, SFM

Fr. Raymond Leslie O'Toole SFM was born on November 1, 1938 in Alder Point, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Eastern part of Canada.

Fr. Ray's primary and Secondary Education were in Cape Breton, then at nineteen years old in 1957 he entered the Novitiate of Scarboro Foreign Mission Society in Ontario. Scarboro Foreign Missions is a Canadian Missionary Society, founded for work in China in 1918. Fr. Ray was ordained a priest on 12 August 1963.

Fr. Ray continued his studies for preparation of mission and also studied Portuguese. After ordination, he worked as a missionary in the Amazon region of Brazil. In 1968 he entered a Master's in Theology Programme in Canada and in 1970 received a Licentiate in Theology from St. Paul's University and Masters of Theology from the University of Ottawa. In 1971 he resumed work in Brazil until 1974 when he returned to Canada. Since that time he had been doing mission work in Canada related to Latin America with special emphasis on Brazil. In 1980 a Doctorate in Ministry from St. Michael's University, the Toronto School of Theology and the University of Toronto. His doctoral work was mission-related with a thrust from a social justice perspective.

In 1983 he was a Special Lecturer at the Toronto School of Theology and from 1985-1988 he was Director at the Toronto School of Theology (Ecumenical) responsible for theological field education for theological students.

In 1988 he was assigned to China/Hong Kong. He studied Mandarin both in Hong Kong and in Taiwan. He served for three years as a researcher on Church and society at the Holy Spirit Study Centre in the Diocese of Hong Kong. From 1988 to 1997 he served in various other pastoral assignments in the English speaking community at St. Alfred Church in Shatin, St. Ann's Parish in Stanley, Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Taipo and St. Joseph's Church on Hong Kong Island.

He returned to Canada and served on the leadership of his Society as Assistant General from 1997-2002 during which time he was also director of the Scarboro Missions Inter-Faith Desk.

Then he arrived again in Hong Kong in 2002 where he served the English speaking community of St. Margaret's Parish in Happy Valley and St. Mary's Parish in Hung Hom on week-ends. In 2005 he was appointed Assistant Secretary General for the FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences) and later Secretary General in 2012.

With the FABC, there are many significant moments but just to highlight a few. Fr. Ray as Assistant Secretary General has travelled vastly not only in Asia but also overseas to forge closer ties, to attend ordinations and funerals of various Ordinaries, to make FABC known but also to meet many Bishops and the people responsible for the various Episcopal secretariats to forge closer ties with FABC; participate in the FABC Offices various programmes.

In 2007 he went to various cities in India like Bangalore, Bombay, Calcutta, Jamshedpur, Kochi in 2008 in East Timor, Japan, Thailand, Macau, Cambodia, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Vietnam. Also in 2007, attended the meeting of the Ordinaries of Central Asia, Tashkent and Uzbekistan; attended the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia. In 2010, he attended the Synod of Bishops for the Middle East and it was a great opportunity to meet Bishops from the different Oriental Rites as well as the Latin Rite and to learn more about the

fragile situation of the Church in their conflict-ridden countries of the Middle East especially in the Holy Land.

Just to nominate a few things:

- There were various amendments to the FABC Statutes as in 2006 it was noted that there were a lot of ambiguities over the roles of the Convener of the Standing Committee and Secretary General. Another amendment was the representation of the Associate Members on the Central Committee. Also the Appendices related to the Offices were updated. The position of the Assistant Secretary General was included as there was no reference in the Statutes.
- In 2009, the Central Secretariat restarted the FABC Leadership Seminar for Bishops. The last one before that was held 10 years ago.
- An FABC Documentation Centre was blessed in 2006 with office and meeting space given for the use of FABC by the Archdiocese of Bangkok.
- FABC was in financial deficit after the 2004 FABC Plenary in Korea so In 2006 there was major fund raising and in 2007 there was a surplus.
- Many FABC Papers were published.
- The scanning of the old FABC Papers and uploaded to the FABC Website and make available especially for research purposes.
- The FABC Central Secretariat moved to a new location in 2010.

FABC Plenary Assemblies - During this period there were three:

- In 2009, the IX FABC Plenary Assembly in Manila in 2009; in 2012 , the X FABC Plenary Assembly in Vietnam and in 2016, the XI FABC Plenary Assembly in Sri Lanka.

Climate Chang Desk - Previously it was under the FABC Central Secretariat.

- There were two Asia-wide Climate Change Seminars in 2011 and 2013 plus 5 Regional Asia Climate Change in 2015.

FABC Central Secretariat in Rome during the Synod of Bishops – Co-ordinated a Secretariat for Asian Bishops at the General and Extraordinary Synod for Bishops to assist the Asian Bishops in the preparation of their short interventions. The Secretariat was located in the Philippine Embassy to the Holy See (across the street from the Holy Office). This was done in 2008, 2012, 2014 and 2015.

Continental Conferences

Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM)

- In 2007, Fr. Ray represented the FABC Secretary General at the CELAM General Conference in Aparecida, Brazil and gave a short presentation on FABC in Portuguese.

The European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE):

- In 2013, the meeting of the General Secretaries of European Bishops' Conferences in Warsaw, Poland; in 2014 at the Annual Meeting of the General Secretaries of the European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE) in Strasbourg, France. Other continental Secretaries were also invited, namely SECAM and FCBCO and were invited to give presentations on how Europe is perceived at cultural, economic, political and ecclesial levels in the different continents
- In 2016, The Secretary General represented Cardinal Gracias at the CCEE Plenary Assembly, Monaco. He gave a presentation on the role of FABC in Asia under the topic of The Church in the World. He highlighted the Megatrends of the X FABC Plenary Assembly Final Document.

Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM):

- In 2014, attended the Secretaries General of National and Regional Episcopal Conferences Meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa. It was an opportunity to establish closer bonds between the continents of Asia and Africa and to explore areas of collaboration

- In 2016, The Secretary General represented Cardinal Gracias at the 17th Plenary Assembly of SECAM, Luanda, Angola. The theme was entitled, ‘The Family in Africa, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: in the Light of the Gospel’.

Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania (FCBCO):

- In 2014, represented FABC at the Plenary Assembly in Wellington, New Zealand. Members of the FCBCO are Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands and the Pacific Islands. One of the main things discussed at the Plenary was the pastoral challenges of economic refugees arriving at the shores of Australia and being diverted to islands near Papua New Guinea and surrounding islands.

In 2015, an informal meeting with the Continental Episcopal Conferences Secretaries General at the end of the PCIJ-CIDSE conference, to look at the Road to Paris COP21 and on how to collaborate, organized by PCIJ, CIDSE and FABC.

Also in 2015, FABC together with the other Continental Federations, (CELAM, SECAM, FCBCO, CCEE, COMECE, CPCO, USCCB, CCCB) and other groups like PCJP, Caritas Internationalis, CIDSE were invited by the Secretariat of State to share the different initiatives in preparation for the Paris meeting on Climate Change. The initiative of FABC and the other Continental Federations of Episcopal Conferences was a Continental Catholic Church Statement, ‘Appeal to the Negotiating Parties of COP21’ and was signed by the Continental Presidents, (Cardinals, Patriarchs and Bishops).

In 2015, was invited by PCJP and CIDSE to participate in “People and Planet First: the Imperative to Change Course” Conference in Rome; in 2016, represented FABC at the CIDSE Mid-Year Meeting With Directors & Partners in Lyon, France for a Five Year CIDSE Strategic Planning Meeting.

In 2016, represented Cardinal Gracias at a 2-day Workshop entitled: ‘Catholic Ministries and Social Impact Investing – An Introduction’, convened by Catholic Relief Services in Rome and also at the Second Vatican Conference entitled, ‘Making the Year of Mercy a Year of Impact for the Poor’, hosted by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Catholic Relief Services in Rome, celebrating the Extraordinary Year of Mercy established by Pope Francis and his 2015 encyclical, ‘*Laudato Si*’.

In 2014, was invited by several Episcopal Conferences of the FABC territory like Bangladesh, East Timor, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, to present FABC. In addition was invited to the Papal Visits in 2014 Korea, 2015 Sri Lanka &, Philippines, 2017 Myanmar, Bangladesh.