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To equip seminary bishops and priests involved in Priestly formation with insights and guidelines regarding the relevance, perspectives & challenges of New Evangelization.

### Formation of Priest in the Era of New Evangelization and Evangelii Gaudium

Thank you very much for that tiring introduction. You deserve to rest.

Good morning.

It is always a joy to be part of conferences, meetings sponsored by FABC. This room contains a lot of memories of FABC assemblies [and] meetings. I remember in 1993, I was part of a theological discussion here. I remember how we, also at that time, had to arrange ourselves. And the Theologians are more organized ... when it comes to photo. I want to thank also Bishop Vianney and his committee for organizing this convention and for inviting me to share on formation of priests for the task of New Evangelization and Evangelii Gaudium insights. So the context of New Evangelization and insights from Evangelii Gaudium.

According to the schedule. I have two sessions.... Pray that my throat could bear the two hours. We can always open the floor to questions and sharing. What I intend to do, since there are two sessions, for this first hour I'd like to share with you some insights for the formation of priest, including seminarians for the priesthood, in the light of the Synod of Bishops on New Evangelization. Let us tackle that (the theme of New Evangelization) from the perspective of the Synod of Bishops held in 2012. After the break, I will focus on Evangelii Gaudium. Instead of bringing the two together. Although, as you will see, there will be a lot of convergences, a lot of mutual support, and even mutual critique on the part of the two.

So for the first part:

Some insights coming from the synod of bishops on the NE held in 2012. And I will relate this to the demand on formation. Preparing for the sharing I realize that we probably need to talk about the word formation. What does that really mean? And what does that entail? Those of us who are in seminary formation, and those of us who are in continuing, on-going formation of the clergy and of the religious ... when you are assigned to do formation work, what does tht mean? What does it mean to form someone, or to help someone be formed towards being something or someone?

This is a whole topic that probably the workshops, the small groups, could dwell on. In the extraordinary synod of bishops concluded a month ago, there was one bishop who said: "We have 9-10 years to form priests ... to prepare seminarians to become priests. And after that long process we're not even sure if they'll become good priest." Then, he asked "What formation do we give to persons who are preparing for marriage?" And he was insinuating that if there is no formation are we surprised why some marriages fail. So, he challenges the church. We want the marriage to succeed. But what formation are we giving? Still again, the problem of formation. But what does it mean to form?

Pope Benedict in one of his last meetings with some bishops, asked us: "In your countries, who or what are the main shapers of culture? They are the ones who form our young people. Identify who or what are the main movers or shapers of culture. Maybe we can learn from them. They are the ones who are forming, we sometimes say, deforming, young people. They have the secret formula as to how to influence mind the hearts. Especially young people, they are being influenced without them even realizing that their mentalities are already being changed; that their value systems are already

being transformed. For example, see how powerful media, social communications are in informing minds and hearts.

When Lady Gaga goes around for concerts, people are willing to pay thousands of dollars to see her, to listen to her. But when a bishop calls the faithful to a meeting, we pay them! We scam. And after receiving our payment, they do not come. Why?

I was able to talk with a professor of social-psychology in the state university in the Philippines (the University of the Philippines). She shared with me how a food company, a food chain paid their department millions of Pesos for them to give advice to this company: what is the psyche of the Filipino. How do we touch the minds and hearts, especially of the young Filipinos, so that they will buy our hamburger. Before selling their products, this company tries to enter the value, the cultural mode, they will attack it. And you, looking at the advertising, you don't even realize, that you are already being formed, being motivate to buy this sandwich. "Buy!" This is an important topic, but those questions are not part of my topic. So bear that in mind. This whole area of formation: we have assess it; we have to review it. We even need to ask painful questions: "Are our seminary structures really "formative"? And we have to ask, the present seminary structures: "What type of formation, how do they change the minds and hearts of our seminarians?" And our diocesan, congregational atmosphere, the milieu, what type of priests/religious do they form?

Now going more directly to the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization (NE). I would like to dwell on the message issued by the Synod of the bishops at the end of the two weeks of meeting. The message of the Synod of Bishops on New Evangelization used the biblical narrative of the encounter between the Jesus and the woman of Samaria, in Jacob's well, in Sychar. The message of the synod of bishops, this narrative, a very simple narrative, could provide for us a framework for understanding what we call New Evangelization. Of course, the narrative cannot exhaust all the subtleties of NE. But it provides a fairly good orientation, which I think, is pertinent to our concern: the formation of priest and future priests.

We know the story in John 4. Jesus gets to the well. He was journeying with his disciples. He stops by the well. The woman gets there. Jesus asks for a drink, and the woman reacts. Then that starts a whole conversation about water, then it became living water. Then it shifted to "Call your husband". There was no husband to talk about. Then, the question: "Who are you? Are you a prophet?" Then from prophet, Jesus is revealed as the Messiah. The woman forgets her water jar, the main reason for her coming to the well. She runs to the people of her town. She's an evangelizer now. Look at how Jesus formed her ... at the well. Not at the school of theology. At the well, formation happens there. This zealous woman runs around the town telling people "I have met the messiah". And the people begged Jesus to stay. And he obliged, he stayed for two more days. And at the end, the people told the woman: "At first we believe that he was the messiah on the strength of your word. But now we believe because we have heard him, we have seen, him, we have encountered him". And most probably those people would have spread the good news. A very simple story, we all know the story.

But the Synod of Bishops says, why don't we dwell on this story and let it provide the matrix for some key ideas regarding new evangelization. I have here five points which I will relate to formation.

1. The first point is: Jesus described as a traveller.

He was on a journey with his disciples. He is described as weary, tired, and thirsty. Jesus, the one sent by God, the Son of God, the Word made flesh is depicted as an ordinary traveller, just like any ordinary

traveller at that time. He experiences the tiredness, the weariness of many other brothers and sisters journeying through life. The one sent by the Father was not alien, was not a foreigner to the human condition of tiredness, of being weary, of being thirsty. And how significant! Jesus gets to the well before the woman gets there. As though he is really waiting for the woman to come. As though he sits her to welcome the woman. So he will meet the woman as an ordinary traveller, at an ordinary well, at an ordinary time of the day, the sixth hour. Now, this image of Jesus as a traveller, as someone who experiences the burden, the difficulties of travelling deserves, presents a powerful image of someone or of a community with a mission. He depicts to us God's chosen evangelizer, coming not in a triumphant mode, coming not as a conqueror, but coming as an ordinary, unrecognizable traveller. This is a far cry from the image of an evangelizer who is a triumphant conqueror.

The synod invites us to learn from Jesus in this renewed evangelization, the new expression, the new method. Why not travel as a companion with people. This is not new. This is Gaudium and Spes: "The hopes and joys, the sorrows and the same anxiety of the men and women of our time, specially of the poor, and in anyway afflicted, these are same hopes and joys, sorrows and anxieties of the followers of Christ". Vatican II says this is the way of all the follower of Christ. And maybe we can add: "most especially, the ordained whose preeminent ministry is to evangelize; to evangelize by travelling with people.

Here I want ask if our seminary formation and if our ongoing, permanent formation of the ordained is .. how do we take it seriously. Formation as walking with people. Formation in a synodal state, for that is what a synod is all about. The word synod is about walking with, walking together, the bishops and the Holy Father, the priests, the religious, lay people, and the auditors walking together. SYNODOS. I'm sure this is part of a topic of our spiritual conference, but we have to be more deliberate in the light of NE. In many cultures, becoming being a seminarian is a step up from the rest of humanity. Becoming a deacon is two steps above the rest of humanity. Becoming a priest? Wow! ... you belong more to heaven than to earth. You are perceived as a journeyer with the angels and not as a traveller with human beings. You become a bishop, wow! Imagine what happen to us when we become cardinals. Cardinal Toppo will have more years of experience there. But I tell you when I was a deacon, going to villages to conduct Bible services with Communion ... no sacristan, altar boy accompanied me. I was just a deacon. When I got ordained as a priest, so many of these young children would volunteer to accompany me because they will get a free breakfast or a free lunch. If you're attached to a priest, you expect to experience, to taste the fringe benefits of being close to a priest. Now that I am a cardinal so many people claim to be my relatives. Last August I went to Australia and there was an old woman there who said: "Your Eminence, we are related. Our grandmother is a Tagle." "Ah, really? So, what is the name of your grandmother?" So she gave me the name. I sent a text message to my father "Someone here is telling me that we are related to one another." And my father said "Yes, that grandmother is my cousin." Oh, a real relative! Everyone wants to be associated with you. And if we are not careful this whole cultural mores (and it's accepted, accepted culturally) if you put yourself up, if we're not careful, that cultural mores will form us to be journeyers not with the people, but our own.

Once on my way to Rome, leaving through Hong Kong (and so now you know what airline I take), going to my next gate. there was a Caucasian who stopped me. "Cardinal Tagle, right?" "Yes." "I see you on YouTube". "Oh, thank you." "Where are you going?" "I'm going to Rome." "Oh, you have a meeting in Rome?" "Yes". " You're traveling alone? Why?" "Why not?" Then came the remark of this man: "But you are a cardinal. Where is your entourage?" Can I not travel just like any ordinary

traveller. Why do I need an entourage? He was expecting it. My being an ordinary traveller scandalized him. Maybe having a whole entourage would have pacified him. But that tells us: "What has gone wrong?" Why do they associate the episcopacy, cardinalate, with having all these trimmings. If you do not do that, they make you feel like you are violating something. If you are too ordinary, it seems you are violating a rule. Being with. How do we instill this in an early time in our seminarians? We need to look closely at the culture of the seminarians. Are we giving wrong signals? Are we making the seminarians believe that they are a caste above the rest? After the ordination they become untouchable. The career mentality that the recent Popes have been decrying. Let us look at our language. Maybe the language of constantly telling our seminarians: "You are the chosen ones! You are the chosen ones! You are the chosen ones!" And so the rest are not chosen. And they feel special. "We are chosen." And when they see a lay person, they say: "Poor, poor woman. Not chosen by God." "And I am one of the few chosen. Lord, thank you, I am not like the rest". Then we produce Pharisees, we produce hypocrites. The parable happens again.

Formation in solidarity, feeling with people, understanding their tiredness, understanding their confusion because we also get confused. Understanding their suffering because we also suffer. Developing compassion rather than a judgmental attitude. This is the life in community, this is the life in the apostolate that we need to instill. Let us review the whole culture, in the seminary, the dioceses, the ecclesiastical culture. Are our cultures formative of travellers, companions on the journey of the weary and poor?

I can stop there. That's already a lot. Really, that it itself is a whole project. But let me continue before I go to the second point. There's an element here. Jesus goes there before the woman. Part of our being co-journeymen with people is ... Do we know the wells that people frequent when they are tired and weary. Do we know our people that well? ... for us to be able to identify the fountains? I was in a seminar, I used this image, and I asked the young people. I told them: "Be honest with us. When you're tired, weary, and thirsty for meaning and joy, what fountains or wells do you go to?" You know, these are young people from Manila. They mentioned places, I tell you, I felt humiliated ... I did not know those places. And they were all related to Internet sites and cafes. I thought I was already travelling with them, but no. I don't know their wells. The elderly people, the adults in the seminar, most of them were parents of the young people, most of them got alarmed, because I asked them: "You parents, do you know, do you recognize those wells?" They said: "No". Then I asked the wives: "Wives, do you know the wells where your husbands go to when they are tired, when they are weary?" "Like Jesus, go to the well before your husbands get there." "Meet your husbands there. If the well is a casino, or a beer garden, imagine the surprise of your husband." He enters and his wife is already there. "Hi! Welcome! Let's have a drink." Very biblical! Then I ask myself: "Do we, bishops, know the wells frequented by our priests? Do the priests know the wells the bishops go to? So the Synod invites us to identify the wells that our people go to, especially the youth, the migrants, the refugees, the tired, the weary. And do we sit by those wells, the way Jesus did? How can we present ourselves to them as companions on the way, as though anticipating their tiredness and meeting them where they will go.

2

Shall I move on? In the story, let us focus on the town of Sychar where the story unfolds. St. John the Evangelist identifies the town of Sychar in Samaritan territory. So this was an enemy territory. For we know that the Jews and the Samaritans had very little in common. Yet we know from the story,

Jesus does not only pass by, Jesus even stays for a day, for two more days upon the request of the people. But here, from the description of Jesus as a traveller, note the place where he travels is important. He does not run away from hostile, an enemy territory. The synod of NE reminds us what that while many aspect so the world, the contemporary world, many parts of the world are really quite problematic specially in relation with the Christian faith. We can even say some events, some phenomena are hostile to the Christian faith, specifically to the Christian faith. Without denying the sinfulness, the contradictions, the problems in the contemporary world, the Synod reminds us that this world still is God's creation. God is still present in that world. God has not left that world. So, how do we engage this world, not only looking at the problems, at the weakness of this world, but also at the signs of hope, the signs of God's presence in that world. For in its weakness, it remains God's world. It is the world where the Son of God became incarnate. It is a world where the Son of God ministered, where He died. It is also in this world that the Son of God rose from the dead. It is in this world, and not in another world, where the Church was born, and where the Spirit blew, and continues to blow. The NE does not make us blind to the problems. But how come, sometimes, we see the problems clearly but we are blind to signs of God's presence; and we are blind to the opportunities, which this broken world offers to us for evangelization. The world itself offers opportunities for evangelization. The Synod of bishops, in the message, identified some. For example, in some parts of the world we lament growing secularization. "Oh, it is hostile to religion." But during the synod, in some countries where one religion wants to take over, one religion is imposed on all, what they say is: "What we need is a secular state; not a theocratic state." Secularity also has its contribution. Many Christians are persecuted because they do not live in secular states. I remember in the Synod, in the small group where I belonged, there was a whole discussion on that. One bishop said: "Let us change the word. Let us not use the word secularity, secularization. But the reality is what one part of the world laments, the other one craves for. Migration. We see the wounds caused by migration. In the Philippines, for example, migration is a testament to the failure on the part of the government, the failure of business to provide jobs, employment, to its citizens. So, they go. And the family is really hurt. We have children growing up with grandparents, with aunts and uncles, we have de facto single parenthood. Even if they are not divorced, even if they are not separated. We have one parent living alone with the children, the other works in Europe, in Hong Kong, in Saudi Arabia. Of course, they sent in money. But the wounds of the family cannot even be calculated. Migration is really one ambivalent thing.

Last February, I was invited by Cardinal Scola to address the clergy, the lay people. And then to celebrate mass for the Filipino community. You know how many attended? 20,000 Filipinos in one mass! And at the end of the mass, the master of ceremonies told me: "Your Eminence, behold the future of the Church of Milan". "Mi dispiace, I'm sorry, but they are not only the future, they are already the present." They are already the present. Migration may inflict wounds, but migration in the hands of God also create opportunities. Last week I was in Orlando, Florida to address the convention of Filipino priests working in the United States. Not everyone was able to attend. But you know how many were able to attend? Three hundred; three hundred Filipino priests! And the bishops, the American bishops who were there said: "This is the trend here. And you should count the priests from India, from Vietnam ... what Archbishop Savio was talking about. The shift in missionary presence. So migration is a problem, but there is also an opportunity for evangelization. Bishop Paul Hilder of Abu Dhabi has been inviting me. "No, I'm so busy." "But you have to encourage the Filipinos there." I said: "You are there, encourage them." "No, you should encourage them. Without the Filipinos, I would not have a diocese. Almost 99% of the faithful in Abu Dhabi are Filipinos. So, you loose jobs but you gain a diocese. What is the mystery?

In formation, I don't know. Jesus enters enemy territory, stays there, and takes the opportunity, seizes the opportunity to produce evangelizers in enemy territory. How do we form a non-prejudicial attitude. Sometimes prejudices, biases sadly are inculcated in formation. For me, the classic example of prejudices learned in seminary formation is how we pit one seminary against other seminary. "We are graduates of Dominicans. You are lowly graduates of the Jesuits." But now the Pope is a Jesuit. "We are graduates of the Jesuits. And you are graduates of diocesan seminaries." Where do this come from? The seminary formators! The whole culture in the seminary is an atmosphere. We don't have seminars on that; and we don't need seminars for that. Because the whole atmosphere feeds into that. Prejudices.

Now learning from Jesus. How can be go beyond labeling. The labeling that makes us puritanical. Pope Francis was already saying that he does not want a Church that is pure because it has avoided any wounds or scars. How do we develop in seminaries the discerning capacity to see the presence of God's spirit, the opportunities? In Asia this is very much akin to the dialogical approach where we see the seeds, the presence of he Spirit, of values, of truth in people, religion and cultures that differ from us, and take opportunities.

Before I leave this point, we are concluding in the Philippines the year of the Laity. In one session, I reminded them of Vatican II, how the lay people should evangelize the secular realm. Politics, economics, the arts, etc. And one very pious person said: "But your eminence, if I enter politics, you know how dirty it is. I don't want to enter. It's a dirty world." I said: "Yes, no one denies it's dirty. But can you look at this possibility: if you enter it, maybe it might become a little cleaner." "It might contaminate me!" "Yes, that is very honest of you. But don't you have faith? Jesus touched people with leprosy (the gospel for today). But instead of him being contaminated by the disease, they were contaminated by His sacred, holy power. They the ones who got healed, He was not the one that got leprosy. We possess the spirit of Jesus. Why not go there and contaminate them with the Gospel. Instead of you being contaminated by the corruption.

Now the culture of the priests. Sometimes the seminarians learn their bad ways also from the priests. Instead of the priest being viral in the good sense, they are the ones contaminating our seminarians. I reacted very strongly against one seminarian who spent the whole summer with a priest. After the summer break, he said: "The priest in that parish said "Don't study. Look at me, I got ordained without studying. So don't waste your time studying"". This seminarian was one of the most studious seminarian. I challenged him. I will vaccinate you for you to resist. Don't be afraid. I cannot shield you all the time from getting in touch with that priest. But I want to form you internally. You possess the Sprit, you possess what is good. Do not be afraid to face even territory.

3

Jesus begs the Samaritan woman for water. He begs. A Jew asks a Samaritan woman at that disturbs her. This opens a conversation, a dialogue where Jesus speaks about living water, and presents himself as the giver of living water. Now the roles are reversed, the woman begs Jesus for that water. At the beginning it was Jesus who was begging and the woman was the giver. Towards the end of the story, it was the woman who was begging and it was Jesus who was giving water. Now this is important in the new evangelization. Jesus and the woman are both beggars and givers. The NE demands this mutuality. The synod of bishops, reflecting on this story, challenges us to be a listening, to be a welcoming community, specially to the lost, the abandoned, the neglected, learning from them,

even begging them to give us water, to give us wisdom. Part of formation is to engage in self-examination. We have a lot to give. Are we the givers that pretend that we have all the answers, and that we cannot anymore learn from others? Are we operating from that standpoint where the rest of the world will receive from us, but we have nothing to gain from others.

Mutuality. But it comes with humility. At that early state in seminary formation, I hope that those in charge of pastoral, apostolic work of the seminarians would not check only if they report to the ministry, but check also whether they are learning there this humble art of listening and learning. When I was still teaching, I made my students read stories at the beginning of the semester. Difficult stories like hunger, murder, rape, etc. all of those. And then the question is how do you talk to people about grace? How do you talk about the love of God. How? What I try to impress on them is "Please, control your tongues. We are too quick to explain, explain, explain. Without first listening ... to the cries. Sometimes the best response is silence, be compassionate silence. They experience Jesus more through that than through our ... My point was verified by a student. He said: "I went to the wake of a young girl, a girl who died." This seminarian encountered the mother of the girl. A triumphant seminarian, knowing all the answers! He told the mother of the girl: "What did the girl die of?" "She has been sick for a number of months." And the seminarian said: "Well, God is good. He has given your daughter rest. Your daughter is now at peace." And the mother said: "God gave my daughter rest. But does God see the pain of a mother that has lost her daughter? Does God see that?" So, I asked the seminarian: "What did you do?" He said: "I left the wake." That's a learning thing. "Shut up." The Church thinks that it is evangelizing by a multiplication of words. There is a compulsion to say something about anything! The sun does not shine, we issue a statement: "The sun is not shining". God speaks, but God also listens. How come we learn only one side: God speaks. We forget that God listens. We even say that: "God listens to cries of the poor". Mutuality.

In the spiritual life, in prayer, God listens. I am encouraging all of you to, please, read the recent document from the International Theological Commission of the *Sensus Fidei*. Two days ago I gave a talk to seminarians and professors in Manila on the document *Sensus Fidei*. And one practical application of that is: "We need to listen to the lay people, especially of the poor. They have a spiritual instinct about the Gospel that the learned probably do not possess. The document used the cry of Jesus: "I praise you, Father, for hiding these from the learned and the wise, and revealing them to the little ones." The instinct of faith, the spiritual instinct of faith, even from those who do not have formal scientific training in theology and in the sciences.

4

Jesus tells the woman to call her husband, and she claims that she does not have. And Jesus tells her the truth about her and her relationships. She has had five husbands. This leads her to suspect that this Jewish man was a prophet, even the messiah who will announce all things to us. Look, her thinking about the messiah is: "You have told about everything that I have done." Their view of the messiah is someone who will tell us, who will announce all things. And Jesus talks about worship in truth and in spirit, and admits to her: "Yes, I am he." This is an important element of the NE: speaking the truth with respect and love. Jesus here is an evangelizer, the bearer of truth, he tells the truth about this woman. In a way, if you use some current terminology, this Jesus names the woman, names her for who she truly was. Probably this woman has been hiding her true identity. But one bible scholar in Rome during the Synod said: "Why do we presume that this woman is sinful, just because she has five husbands? She might be a widow, a widow being given to brothers. Why do we always depict her as a sinner?" Yes, look at our mentality. "Sinner! because you have five husbands!" Why not: "A widow"? Who formed us to think of her as a sinner? Exegetes! Thanks be to God, we have this exegete who opens to us a new possibility.

Naming persons, explaining the truth. Evangelization is naming God. Naming persons, leading persons to their true selves, leading people to experience the truth about themselves. And in embracing the truth about themselves, they detect the presence of God. "Are you the prophet? Are you the messiah?" So the NE does not mean abandoning the truth, but knowing the people to whom the truth is to be proclaimed, and doing it in charity, and with respect. Probably this woman, if she was a sinner, was mesmerized by the respect that she gets from this Jewish man.

So let us review our intellectual formation both in seminary and in the on-going formation of the priests. The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has been attacking the creeping Phariseism in the church. In fact, Pope Benedict already did that during his pontificate. Pope Benedict, in some of his discourses, said: "You don't call that person an evangelizer. You call that person a hypocrite. You don't call that person a bearer of good news; you call that person a Pharisee." Truth with love. Let us review our formation. Do people become too notional ... do they acquire a certain level of expertise that makes them judgmental to others, and incapable of proclaiming the truth in love and respect?

5

Finally, the woman, after this encounter with Jesus went into the city, as we said earlier, and became an evangelizer. The other people of the city were brought to Jesus. She leaves behind her water jar. Probably her deepest thirst was already quenched. She was there not simply for water but for truth. She was there truth; she was there to see God; she was there to see herself. She was there for truth and love. And that was her deepest thirst. It was quenched by Jesus. There was no more need for the jar. And she goes

The first letter of John is repeated. "What we have seen with our eyes, what we have heard regarding the word of life we in turn proclaim to you." This is the experience of the Samaritan woman. She has heard, she has touched, she has seen, and there is no containing this. She goes around! "Never mind the water jar. I go. I have to tell people. I have met the messiah." The content of evangelization is the Messiah. But not just any kind of Jesus; the Jesus she has talked to, the Jesus who has loved her, the Jesus who has made her face the truth about herself and the truth about God.

The NE, of course, will include new methods, techniques, strategies, etc. But let us not know forget that evangelization, whether old new whatever, and forming evangelizers must come from a religious experience. And with this, I end here, forming evangelizers, whether seminarians or priests. Let us learn from Jesus and the woman. What made the woman an evangelizer? An experience of Jesus! A religious experience, a gripping, a life-changing experience. In the seminaries, in our day-to-day pastoral work, is there a space, or do we pay attention to that space for encountering Jesus. That space that will change us, and will fire us up again to become bearers of good news. Sometimes our formation in the seminaries and in our on-going formation may be too academic, and lately we focus on strategies, on skills. They are all important. But as the story tells us, what really forms dramatically an evangelizer is a gripping experience of Jesus. A religious experience that would make us committed to the good news. So we have to repeat that. And even our spiritual directors, our Spiritual Program: are they focused only on techniques, on content? How about helping people exploit, identify, experiences of Jesus in their lives? Experiences that will transform them into committed evangelizers. So those are the five points.

I have to make a confession. Yesterday, flying into Bangkok, I was entertaining a lot of thoughts like: "What's happening to my life? I'm flying from one place to another. This evening I'm flying back to Manila, we'll have a press conference to announce the details of the Pope's visit. After the press conference, the following day I fly to Rome. With all those congregations, Pontifical councils, I'll be there for another ten days. But when you're out of your diocese your mind flies: "What's happening in the diocese?" When you're in the diocese you get all these emails from Rome, etc. And then the FABC enters. In fact, before coming here, Fr. Ray O'Toole sent me a text from Hong Kong "Can the FABC send you to Peru to represent the Asian bishops in December, in the United Nations conference on Climate Change?" So I have not responded ... anyone wants to go to Peru? So, even in the airport in Manila I ask: "What's happening to my life?" And look at God's surprises. On the way I was seated by a Caucasian woman. We did not talk. But when it was announced that it was 30 minutes to landing she started a conversation. This is the reverse. She started a conversation and said: "I wish you luck in whatever you will be doing there in Bangkok." I said: "Thank you, Maam." And then she said: "What will you do there?" "I was invited to a conference." "You came from Manila?" "Yes, I am an American but I live in Thailand. But I went to Manila because my father died. My father has been in the Philippines for 14 years, and he married a Filipina, and he died. So I went there." "Oh, I'm sorry." "Don't be sorry. That is destiny." "Where does your father live?" "In Tagaytay." "Oh, that used to be part of my diocese." "I don't like flying but when I saw you wearing this cross, and you sat beside me, I knew this will be safe. Whoever he is, I know that this flight will be safe." Then she said: "I am not a Catholic but I admire the Popes. John Paul II, Benedict, and now Francis. Are you a Catholic?" "Yes." "What is your position?" "I am the archbishop of Manila." "O my God!" "You know, I am not a Catholic but I work with Caritas. I help in Myanmar." I said "I am the chair of Caritas in Manila." "Wow, look this is a most meaningful trip." "I'll go back to the Philippines" she said. And when I was walking I said, "There. This is the answer! I was like weary and tired, without knowing it, getting confused. Who am I? Am I a traveller? Am I what? And then seated there near the well, Jesus sends this woman who starts a conversation. And somehow I saw some meaning. Yes. But you have to be attentive, otherwise the experience will get lost. It comes from a woman who's not even a Catholic.