

FINAL STATEMENT OF 5TH ASIIPA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Held at Regional Major Seminary, Davao, Philippines

From October 20th - 28th 2009.

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

1. Preamble

1.1 The 5th ASIIPA General Assembly gathered 225 participants from 17 countries at the Regional Major Seminary, Davao city, Philippines from October 20th to 28th 2009. As we are gathered here we remember that this is the land where some 40 years ago the seeds of BECs/SCCs¹ were first sown. We also respectfully remember the BEC leaders who were martyred during the Martial Law for their prophetic commitment.

1.2 Linking with the previous assembly in Trivandrum which discussed the sacraments in SCCs and continuing the reflections of the 9th FABC Plenary Assembly on, “Living the Eucharist in Asia” and the Synod on the ‘Word of God’ in Rome, this assembly took the theme “Do this in Memory of me (Lk.22:19): Bread Broken and Word Shared in SCCs”. We shared how the Word and the Eucharist were lived in the SCCs and we were challenged as to how SCCs can become catalysts of integral evangelization.

2. Asian Realities in SCCs.

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

¹ SCCs & BECs are used interchangeably. For this document we will keep to SCCs for brevity.

- 2.6 In some countries especially in the cities, due to the heavy schedule of work and travel, many SCCs have a low attendance for the Eucharist and for Gospel Sharing.
- 2.7 The experience of Gospel Sharing ‘sharing the word’ has shown that the Word of God is as important as the ‘breaking of bread’ in leading SCCs to a Christ experience. The participants also acknowledged the various other methods and approaches used in different Asian countries to break the Word of God in SCCs.
- 2.8 The experience of the various Gospel Sharing methods and the Eucharistic celebrations during this Assembly made us aware of the social and political realities in the region and how the SCCs are a sign of hope.

3. Theological Insights.

3.1 “Do this in memory of me”

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

3.2 “Word Shared”

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

3.3 “Bread broken”

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

3.4 “Mission”

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

4. Challenges and Recommendations.

- 4.1 The presence of a large number of passive and un-churched members in our parishes is a great challenge to the SCCs.
- 4.2 In several Asian countries the socio-economic problems caused by migration, poverty and cultural upheavals are adversely affecting family life. The SCCs are called to respond to these realities in the light of the gospel.
- 4.3 Impelled by the Word of God, the SCCs are called to get involved in the social transformation of oppressive structures, based on the values of the Kingdom.
- 4.4 The Church is challenged to face the reality of finding ways and means of making the Eucharist an integral part of the life of the community.
- 4.5 The coordination of the efforts to form, strengthen and sustain SCCs in Asia is a demanding task.
- 4.6 The spirit of the 'new way of being Church' challenges SCC leaders and other Church leaders to exercise a non-dominating and facilitative style of leadership.
- 4.7 The SCCs are called to integrate faith and daily life from the Eucharistic celebration so that their lives become sources of healing, unity and reconciliation.
- 4.8 The SCCs nourished by the Eucharist should become 'Open Doors' for faith seekers.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Assembly gained a deeper understanding of the significant role SCCs can play both in celebrating Eucharist meaningfully and living it out in their daily lives.

5.2 In the light of discussions and sharing during the assembly the participants strongly felt that SCCs be exhorted to work harder to animate its members to take the Word and the Eucharist more seriously into their lives.

5.2 We are deeply grateful to Archbishop Fernando Capalla and his local team of organizers at the Seminary & other residence. For the exposure programme and for the SCCs / GKKs for their generous hospitality and hard work. We also acknowledge with gratitude the generous support given to us by MISSIO Germany and others who contributed towards the fund. FABC Office of Laity and Family, ASIIPA desk for overall coordination work.

5.3 Finally we raise our hearts in gratitude and prayer to our Almighty Father through Jesus his Son and the Spirit that we may be continually led to grow as communities Sharing the Word and Breaking the Bread. We intercede to our Blessed Mother who guided the first community to live out the Word and the Eucharist, to be our source of inspiration and transformation. May we be given the grace to die as a grain of wheat to give new life in and through SCCs. **'THY KINGDOM COME HERE IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD'**