



# Laity

## Family Symposia Series



Opening welcome with Auxiliary Bishop Peter & Fr Louis Anh Tuan the hosts and organisers of the archdiocese of Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City.

Dear Bishops, families & friends in Christ,

The office of Laity and Family has three secretaries and three desks, namely: women, youth & Small Christian Communities. We have in common that all these entities are part of the family and dependent on families. All of us in the family ministry insist that the family is the fundamental building block of society and church, that the family is the first school of faith and humanity and that the family is our priority.

We are very concerned about the family – that it is facing unprecedented pressures from the way our socio-economics and politics is changing – increasing patterns of migration, displacement, separation, divorce, poverty, gender inequality and urban overcrowding & materialism, powerful influence of the media, shrinking families & redefined families.

Vietnam, Family Commission hosted a South East Asian Family Symposium this May which is a continuation of a series of meetings originating from BILA I on Family in 2007. The series has been organised among the family commissions of the South East Asia region and they made the decision to discuss the family in its 6 stages of development. The 2008 symposium in Singapore discussed the couple, inter-faith marriages and their relationship; the 2009 symposium in Indonesia discussed Infancy



### FABC Office of the Laity and Family

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### Continued ... Executive Secretary's Message

Within the Church concerns have been expressed about the need to pastor those in inter-faith marriages, those in dysfunctional situations and those who suffer various losses from death, separation, disability and the like. As Church we are asking how these expressed priorities are translated into family friendly policies, budgets for support structures and education. Many of us pour most of our resources into catechising the youngest members of our families to little effect.

The Office of Laity and Family beginning in the year 2012 will hold a series of consultations on the family to explore the various issues that touch our different regions and countries. The question we are asking is "What can we as Church leaders do to support and nourish family life in our various dioceses?" We are not only concerned about Catholic families but all families. To help us study the issues carefully we are looking for those people who have done some research in these areas and are willing to share their insights - research that has been done in the various languages that pertain to family life - inter-faith marriages, marriage preparation, youth and family life, changing role of women in families, impact of poverty on families, migration and the family - internal migration and emigration, war, displacement and family life, domestic violence, the girl-child in the family, SCCs and family. Any family related topic that is relevant in your region and can be explored & shared is of interest to us in our consultations.

Please write to [fabc.laityfamily@gmail.com](mailto:fabc.laityfamily@gmail.com) to give us your views, send us your papers or references on these subjects.

**Thank – you.**

### Continued ... Family Symposia Series



and early childhood; the 2010 symposium in Kuala Lumpur discussed adolescence and Christian parenting and the 2011 symposium in Vietnam from May 19-22 explored the situation of Young Adults in families. The symposia from 2008 to 2010 did not involve the FABC OLF but grew from a common agreement, concern and commitment of the family commissions in the region to tackle the problems of families. Countries participating in Vietnam were: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar & Vietnam. The symposium in the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam had the theme "Journeying with Young Adults in Christian Faith". The auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Saigon spoke of the fact that the symposium began on Good Shepherd Sunday as 'no coincidence' and the gathering was in the Spirit of the Good Shepherd and in a spirit of Communion. The Director of the Pastoral Institute, Fr Joseph, spoke of pastoral considerations relating to Young Adults and their needs and the vice-chairman of the Migrants Commission of the Bishops' Conference of Vietnam, Fr Ty, spoke about the phenomenon of migration from the North to the South of Vietnam and from the countryside to the cities. Many young adults find themselves isolated from their roots and from their traditional values and face serious problems with insecurity, unemployment, homelessness,

human trafficking and exploitation. The poor families they have left behind look forward to their assistance which puts a great stress on them to provide for themselves and for their families. This issue, it seems to me is one that calls for a multi-pronged approach in our pastoral care with the Migrants commission, the Justice & Peace commission, the Family, Youth & Laity Commissions all working with a common strategy.

The emphasis of these symposia has been on the psychological and physical features of the stages of development in the human person and on the spirituality that accompanies these features. Talks given by Fr Charles Sim SJ, Dr Francis Heng and Fr Louis Anh Tuan focused on these aspects. The participants have formed strong friendships over these years and the exchange of best practices for family commissions and expertise has helped fledgling commissions to learn from others. For the 2012 symposium the FABC OLF will work with the hosting family commission. It is also hoped that other countries not currently attending will be interested to attend to lend their expertise to the questions to be raised.



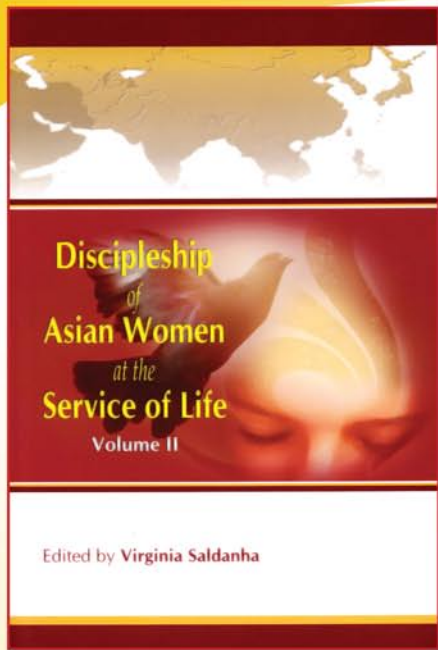
### In defence of the Family

- family, children & culture
- Conference June 16 - 21 Bangkok organised by SERFAC, Chennai, India.

As this newsletter goes to print I travel to Bangkok to attend an international conference on the Family organised by the Chennai (India) based Centre for Family called SERFAC (Service and Research for Family Centre) which will focus on the family within a changing globalized context and all the challenges faced by families in different socio-economic situations. The conference will run from June 16 - 21 and is facilitated by Dr (Sr) Catherine Bernard who is the founder & director of the centre.



# Women's Desk



## Newly Published: Discipleship of Asian Women at the Service of Life - Volume II

Edited by Virginia Saldanha (Executive Secretary, FABC Office of Laity and Family - Women's Desk until 2010)  
Pub. Claretian Publications, 2011

"This second volume, is a compilation of papers and reports presented at the Bishops' Institute IV on Women which was a meeting of bishops and women held in May 2008. It also contains a selection of papers from the various Asian regional meetings on women over the past decade.

Both Volume I and II provide an excellent resource for both scholars and writers. Bishop John Lee – Office of Laity and Family – Women's Desk

"It is hoped that the reflections offered at these meetings and now to our readers, will help make the required shifts to shape women's reality in all of Asia towards enhancing their dignity and giving them opportunities to use their God given potential for bringing about God's reign of justice and peace in Asia".  
Virginia Saldanha.

For copies at US\$10 each (inclusive of postage)

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## Networking & Exchange

Invitation to network with all Women's Commissions, Desks and Coordinators in our four Asian regions. Please send your email and mailing address as we are planning to have a gathering of all those working for Women's Issues and Ministry in the near future. See address below for contact.

## Laity News

### New website for the Pontifical Council for the Laity



The official website of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, [www.laici.va](http://www.laici.va), will be online from 30 April 2011. In four languages – English, French, Italian and Spanish – and with a visual presentation rich in images, it will provide news and analysis of the activities of the Holy See dicastery that serves the lay faithful all over the world.

As Pope Benedict said in the message he wrote for World Communications Day 2011 June 5, "the web is contributing to the development of new and more complex intellectual and spiritual horizons, new forms of shared awareness. In this field too we are called to proclaim our faith that Christ is God, the Saviour of humanity and of history". The aim of this new website is to make the Pontifical Council for the Laity available on the web in more languages and to have a more attractive graphic presentation. We want to present activities that proclaim, through the areas of competence of the dicastery, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour, the One who accompanies humanity in every area of life.

The website will be an "open window" on the activities of the dicastery. In addition

to providing a detailed illustration of its structure (senior staff, section heads, secretariat, members and consultants), it will devote a substantial number of pages to the work of the sections dedicated to lay associations, ecclesial movements and new communities; to youth ministry, and especially to World Youth Day which is under the responsibility of this dicastery; to the vocation and mission of women in the Church and in the world; to the relationship of the Church to the world of sport, a vast area of contemporary culture that is a beneficial instrument for integral personal growth in the service of peace and fellowship among nations...

## Report from Cambodia by Agenzia Fides

Too many women die during childbirth Kraing Kaok The women of the village of Kraing Kaok, Cambodia, fear of dying during childbirth. The Asian country records the highest maternal mortality rates in the region. According to UN estimates, five of them die every day. Public health experts attribute the phenomenon to the lack of midwives, the precariousness of health centers, the high cost of services offered and the inexperience of staff in rural areas, where the rate is three times higher than in urban areas. Since 1997, every 100,000 live births there are 461 maternal deaths. The small number of midwives and skilled health personnel in hospitals and health centers contributes to worsening the situation in rural areas, where about 85% of the population live. According to the World Health Organization, approximately 40% of births in Cambodia are not assisted by competent staff that, in cases of emergency, could save many lives. - <http://www.fides.org>



## YOUTH MINISTRY IN EAST ASIA

Growing in awareness and made firm in conviction

Last March 1-3, 2011, the FABC-Youth Desk in coordination with regional East Asia YM representatives, conducted a regional meeting of Youth Ministry commissions and offices in Macau. Countries represented were Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Macau, Hong Kong and Mongolia.

Highlights of the meeting were the country reports on youth ministry, casino exposure and the workshop on Emerging Youth Trends and Challenges in Asia.

The youth ministry reports was an opportunity to learn from each other and dialogue on best practices in youth ministry employed by youth offices. Hong Kong Diocese has advanced in program development and is establishing more collaboration with other commissions in ministering to the young. Taiwan youth office created a national body composed of youth ministers from universities, youth movements and dioceses to develop a more systematic program of formation for their young people. Mongolia, a very young church, has been zealous



in sending youth leaders for further formation in other countries as they at present comprise the majority of its 600 baptized Catholics in the country. Japan highlighted the emergence of youth leaders and ministers from different diocese who have bonded themselves to network for the welfare of their young people. This body has been instrumental in keeping the spirit alive for young people within the Catholic Church.

Macau on the other hand, despite many pastoral challenges, continues to attract Catholic and non-Catholic youth through its pastoral center which offers various services like tutorials, career orientation, counseling and formation sessions to assist young people in their personal concerns.

An exposure to the casinos helped shed light on the very particular situation of Macau. With 500,000 people and more than 80 casinos attracting 25 million tourists yearly, it is rapidly affecting young people's values and lifestyle and has modified family living. A dialogue with youth working in these establishments engaged participants in looking at ways and means to do pastoral care for those affected by the setting.

A workshop on Youth Trends and Challenges was conducted by Ms. Susan Estanislao, a psychologist from the Philippines. The session raised awareness on the developing values and worldviews vis-à-vis psychological tasks of young people in the different stages of growth.



# Youth Desk

Continued ... Youth Ministry In East Asia



While the majority are able to cope with the tremendous gaps in their development, a growing number have opted to create their own ways of coping which have adverse effects on the individual. The participants shared that many young people in East Asia are exhibiting anti-social behavior (using masks to express that they don't want to communicate, staying in their rooms in front of their computers for 24 hours, leaving school, etc.) and engage themselves in cyber relationships and convenience dating, among many other new forms. The sessions also equipped participants with some skills in crisis intervention especially suicide which is also a growing phenomenon among young people in East Asia.

With the many common challenges on youth their countries are facing, the commissions committed to be more in collaboration with one another. Chinese speaking countries agreed to look into translation into Chinese of some tried and tested programs. There is a scheduled exposure trip of Hong Kong people to Mongolia. A regional program on Youth Ministry Training Program is set on the last quarter of 2012.

## SOUTHEAST ASIAN YOUTH MINISTERS MEET

*Journeying with the youth towards wholeness*

Teenage pregnancy, drug addiction and alcoholism are the most common problems affecting young people in Southeast Asia. In a Catholic youth survey conducted by youth commissions in Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, Catholic youth within the age of 15-25 years are beset by these problems while facing issues such as poverty and political instability in their countries. The survey also indicates how the spirit of volunteerism is still high in these countries though nationalism

seemed to be decreasing among the young. Though the Church is generally seen by young people as a community where they feel they belong, many among them also lament that it lacks manpower and material resources to accompany them in their growth as young Catholics.

The survey was conducted to assist youth commissions in visioning and planning for their youth ministry programs and to consolidate efforts in the area of formation. The survey reports were presented in a meeting held on March 15-18, 2011 by the FABC-YOUTH DESK at the Redemptorist Center in Pattaya. The survey results gave direction to a workshop on vision planning which was facilitated by Fr. Earl Cura, CICM. At the same time, it became a ground for the countries to plan for some programs on a regional level and how they can encourage collaboration among them.

Fr. Chalerm Kitmongkhol's session on Youth and Asian Spirituality allowed people to dialogue on Asian values such as unity in diversity, human dignity, family, that are still alive or are threatened by the changing world of young people in Asia. The reflections were deepened by accompanying theological and Scriptural insights.

The gathering also provided an opportunity for the commissions to learn from each other's programs and structures. Thailand presented its 10th youth pastoral plan for 2011-2015 which hopes to tackle relevant issues vis-à-vis the young. They plan to tackle these issues like prolife, compassionate communicate, technology and new media and environmental issues through different activities and formation to youth ministers/ coordinators, youth committees and leaders, seminarians and catechists. Laos shared on how the

church in their country has developed with and through the presence of youth pastoral workers who are assigned not only to the young but in other ministries of the Church. This year, the youth ministry has extended its services to children to ensure continuity of formation and developing them into leaders for their basic communities. Myanmar has successfully echoed the Asian Youth Day theme in the different dioceses. This has inspired them to initiate a reflection group composed of youth directors and animators in the 16 dioceses to come up with a more contextualized and in depth process in ministering to young people. Vietnam has ventured into training youth core groups in every vicariate and parishes, offering spiritual courses, and promoting social movements like pro-life and fiat among many others. Youth ministry in Phnom Penh vicariate in Cambodia, prepared a 3 year pastoral plan of formation for the young on the year of St. Paul, year of the priest and year of social awareness. With the help of youth movements like Jesus Youth and Fondacio, they provide discipleship training programs and other spiritual formation activities to youth leaders who are prepared to also work for the other dioceses.

The body, composed of 15 priests and lay animators also discussed collaboration with youth movements and organizations, as well as concrete programs like the Asian Youth Gathering in the WYD.

The next gathering is scheduled in November 2012. The body has decided to organize a gathering of national youth ministers and youth leaders on the theme of BEC and YOUTH after seeing the urgency of building communities of young people rooted in the local church so that they can be accompanied in their spiritual and personal growth.



# AsIPA Desk

Annual Seminar for Thai Priests at Baan Phu Waan, Sampran, Thailand. This workshop will follow the content of the BILA I on SCCs at the request of the Thai Bishops who attended the programme last October and will be facilitated by the AsIPA Resource Team and the local Pastoral team. The workshop will take place in July.

## UP COMING EVENTS

### 1. AsIPA Two International Workshop

– REGISTRATIONS ARE OPEN

- not to be missed.

• **Dates:**

October 13<sup>th</sup> (Thur.) to 21<sup>th</sup> (Fri.) 2011

• **Duration:**

9 days including 2 days exposure and arrival and departure days

• **Venue:**

Batam Island of Pangkalpinang Diocese, Indonesia (Pacific Palace Hotel)

• **Content:**

Exposure programme, Additional Gospel Sharing method/s, Making our own Awareness Programmes, Strengthening pastoral tools and skills.

• **Criteria of Participants:**

Priority is on Participants of AsIPA One and Those who complete equivalent workshops (as a team)

• **Application forms are available from AsIPA Desk.**

### 2. Theology Course on SCCs

• **Dates:**

November 1<sup>th</sup> (Tue.) to 30<sup>th</sup> (Wed.) 2011

• **Duration:**

30 days

• **Venue:**

Ruamrudee International School, Minburi, Bangkok, Thailand (a residential programme and full-time attendance is mandatory)

• **Theme:**

**RENEWING CHURCH IN THE NEW WAY THROUGH SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES (SCCs)**

A Theological, Pastoral, Spiritual Study of SCCs and Its Integrative Power to Transform Parishes into Active Communities

• **Content:**

Basic Understanding of what the Asian bishops meant when they called for Renewing the Church in Asia in 'New Way'; Theological Insight into what SCCs are.; Church Teachings on SCCs; Method for formation of SCCs; New Way of Being Church and Theological Issues; Insight into process of Integration; Exposure to and involvement in SCCs; Critical Reflection and Integration on the learning which happens during the course.

• **Total Number of Participants:**

30 (Thailand and South East Asia)

• **Criteria of Participants:**

It is a certificate course, requiring a short integrative paper to be written. Fluency in English is required.

• **Course fees:**

US\$ 2,000 / B60,000. Scholarship is not available from the organizer.

• **Host:**

Programme coordinated by Pallottine Animation Centre, Nagpur, India: The course will be animated by Fr. Thomas Vijay and his team from India.  
-CBCThailand

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