

Laity

(the YOUTH edition)

Asian Catholic Youth and the Eucharist - A Regional Survey

By the Youth Desk of OLF- FABC

2008. To complement the findings, a focused group discussion was held in Manila with Asian youth from different countries.

The survey findings provide us a more factual look at our young Catholics who are not just the future of the Church but the hope of the present. It is a check into reality for the Church especially in the aspect of evangelization and catechesis. How far are we able to bring our young and the rest of the Church into the real understanding and transforming presence of the Eucharist in our lives?

HOW DO OUR YOUNG ASIANS UNDERSTAND, LIVE AND PARTICIPATE IN THE EUCHARIST? WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EUCHARIST IN THEIR YOUNG LIVES? DOES IT HAVE AN EFFECT IN THEIR DAILY REALITIES AND STRIVINGS?

THE FABC-YOUTH DESK, in cooperation with the Episcopal youth commissions and offices across Asia, conducted a regional survey on Asian Catholic Youth and the Eucharist. One thousand two hundred (1,200) youth respondents from twelve Asian countries participated in the survey conducted between January – June

The survey aimed:

- a) To develop greater understanding and love for the Eucharist among the Asian Catholic youth.
- b) To find out how Asian Catholic Youth
 - Understand the Eucharist
 - Participate in Eucharistic Worship
 - Live the Eucharist in daily life
- c) To initiate theological and pastoral reflections on the Eucharist and the young people of Asia

SURVEY FINDINGS

THOUGH young Catholics generally rated themselves as adequate in terms of their understanding (2.2 mean rating) and average in their participation (7.06 mean rating) in the Eucharist, they also revealed that it has had very little influence on their daily activities (1.97 mean rating).

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FABC Office of the Laity and Family

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**On a general level,
Young Asian Catholics,
rated themselves
adequate in
understanding and
participation in the
Eucharist. But they also
reveal that it has had
very little influence on
their daily activities.**

While the majority of them (65%) believe that they are receiving the body of Christ in Holy Communion, many believe that it gives them protection from harm (30%) and it is a means to obtain luck (17%).

Only 0.6% of Asian Catholic Youth acknowledge the parish as their source of information and understanding on the Eucharist.

**Less than
1% of Asian
Catholic Youth
acknowledge
the parish as
the source of
formation on the
Eucharist.**

More than 50% claim that they derive their understanding of the sacrament through personal readings, which in reality, may not be sufficient considering that the Eucharist is best understood within the celebration and through the Christian community that celebrates and lives it.

When asked about their reasons for attending the Mass, majority expressed their desire to worship, give thanks and pray. This has more weight compared to the community dimension and the formative component that the Mass offers. This may have strong implications on how they view their Catholic faith.

ON A POSITIVE NOTE, 61% of the respondents maintain that silence before the Eucharist helps them to prepare for the celebration. There may be a need however, to support

THIS IMPLIES that the Eucharist being celebrated in the parish has had very little influence on the young respondents' knowledge and growth in

their understanding of the sacrament. More than 50% claim that they derive their understanding of the sacrament through personal readings, which in reality, may not be sufficient considering that the Eucharist is best understood within the celebration and through the Christian community that celebrates and lives it.

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on a Eucharistic fast (37%) and going to confession (33%).

THE ASIAN Catholic Youth respondents do not consider to a high degree (very much) the connection of the Eucharist with their life and participation in the Christian community, notwithstanding that the Eucharist is intrinsically communitarian in nature, structure and celebration. Only a third of the youth respondents claim to know about and belong to Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs where this community dimension can be highlighted.

Half of the respondents have acknowledged that the Eucharist helped them grow in their relationship with God. However when asked about how it has helped them grow in prayer and in reading the Word of God, the response was not very positive. Similarly, the Eucharist has much less impact on their involvement in social issues.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

THE SURVEY book was launched on the occasion of the IX FABC Plenary Assembly and will be a major resource paper to be used in the upcoming Asian Youth Day and Asian Youth

them in preparing through reflection of the Sunday readings (33%) going

Ministers' Meeting to be held in the Philippines from November 20-30, 2009.

It is hoped that this study may be considered in evaluating catechesis for the young as well as pastoral programs that aim to instill a Eucharistic spirituality among them.

A national workshop on the survey is being planned in the Philippines for religious educators, catechists and youth ministers. A resource manual containing reflections from theologians and experts in related disciplines is being planned to supplement and/or challenge the survey findings.

CONCLUSION

The Asian bishops in many of its assemblies have articulated that Asia, is a church of the young. With the results of the survey, it hopes to shed light on the greater need to enforce this vision giving more emphasis to the evangelization and pastoral care of its young populace that they may be active players in the task of evangelization - being 'blessed, broken and shared' for the rest of Asia.

The complete results of the survey are compiled in the book entitled "Asian Youth And the Eucharist: A Regional Survey 2008" available for purchase through the FABC-OLF-Youth Desk (asianyouthdesk@gmail.com)

**The Eucharist
helps Asian
Catholic Youth
grow in their
relationship
with God.**

The Asian Youth Day Cross: Blessing the Whole Philippines

Mr. John Carlo Perez – Diocese of Pasig, Philippines

WITH THE PHILIPPINES as host to the Fifth Asian Youth Day (AYD5) on 20-27 November 2009, preparations are being made both in the Diocese of Imus as the host-diocese and in many other parts of the country. Part of the nationwide preparations is the pilgrimage of the AYD Cross.

At the preparations for the Asian Youth Day 1999 in Thailand, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) and local organizers decided that there should be a CROSS, symbol of our faith, which will journey throughout the different places of the host-country to unite Thai youth for the encounter. Since then, the Cross has traveled around AYD host-countries prior to an AYD.

MEANING OF THE CROSS

THE CROSS is made of bamboo, a plant found in many parts of Asia. The bamboo is rich in symbolism to the different cultures and religious traditions of the region. To the Chinese, it is a symbol of longevity. To the Indians, it is a symbol of friendship. Many myths and legends use the bamboo as a symbol for life. A Philippine creation myth tells that the first man and woman emerged from a split bamboo stem. Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines usually have bamboo groves around as they believe that these guard them against evil.

The Cross was designed and shipped from the Philippines. Now, it goes back to its country of origin to go around and bless the nation in preparation for the AYD5.

TRAVELLING ACROSS PHILIPPINES

STARTING with the launch of the AYD5 in the Diocese of Imus last 14 March 2009, the Cross went around

the host-diocese, visiting the parishes and raising awareness among the faithful of the Imus diocese about the grand YAsian event they will host. It continues its journey through the different regions, dioceses, and parishes around the archipelago.

A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

VERY STRIKING in this visit of the AYD Cross was how engaged the youth ministry offices have been in the preparation and the celebration, despite short notice. The first parish even had street dancing from the boundary of the town going to the parish church. Also edifying was how entire communities—clergy and lay, young and old—have been involved in welcoming the AYD Cross.

The generosity and warmth of the people were truly remarkable. In many dioceses, tie-ups with government offices and other organizations have helped make the pilgrimage embrace as many people as possible: students from various schools, lay adults, young professionals, and others.

UNITY IN CHRIST

COME 23 November, the AYD Cross returns to Imus diocese for the AYD5 proper. It is hoped that this spiritual visit of the AYD Cross will enjoin all Filipino youth together with the rest of the Catholic Church in the Philippines towards following the steps of Christ.

May it truly bring us all to **Come Together, Share the Word and Live the Eucharist. YASia Fiesta!** 🙏



Regional youth coordinators in yellow savor the prayer

The Cross that Made our Hearts Burn

By Romel P. Enar (Diocese of Kabankalan, Negros Occidental)

Left: Despite the bad weather, smiles cover the faces of our youth who generously escorted the AYD Pilgrim Cross.

Below left: Members of various parish groups pay homage to the AYD Pilgrim Cross.

Below: Despite a heavy downpour, students remain one in the AYD Pilgrim Cross celebration.



THE VISIT of the AYD Pilgrim Cross was a beautiful life-giving journey with Jesus and His cross. It was an experience of being one with the community, being immersed in the Word and prayer with the community and being alive in celebrating life with the community.

The journey began when we received the holy Cross from our neighboring San Carlos Diocese. It took place in a parish near the diocesan ecclesiastical boundary. The turn-over which was done along the road, near the public market and the plaza was participated in by our diocesan youth team and almost all sectors from parish community and local government. It was so amazing how everyone present endured the heavy rain. They were there - the children and youth, market vendors, tricycle drivers, parish organizations among others - to give a warm welcome to Jesus and to the millions who have encountered the AYD Pilgrim Cross. This generous self-giving of the people became very consistent throughout the course of the Cross' visit in the different parish stops-over.

There was a short liturgy and veneration of the Cross in every stop-over. Such became opportune time for the parish community bonding. One Legion of Mary member said, *"We know that this is a youth affair, but the cross of Jesus is not only for the youth for also for us."* The whole force of the parish especially the Kristiyanong Katilingban (Basic Ecclesial Communities) played a significant role in making meaningful AYD Cross pilgrimage. Even with the meager produce from farming and fishing, the members of the Kristiyanong Katilingban were as generous as ever in offering their crops to provide food for parish community and visitors alike. After a meaningful celebration of the Eucharist or veneration rite in the church, a feast at the parish convent awaits. Indeed it was Fiesta!

ANOTHER STRIKING EXPERIENCE for me is the passionate dedication of the regional directors and coordinators in giving the best for the event. It was very clear for them that such occasion would greatly benefit many young people. They were able to make use of the event to give catechesis and formation. What is great is the exchange of human resources within our region. A team from Antique came to our diocese to give a talk, while our team went to San Carlos to do the same. The degree of collaboration was so intense to the point that all the regional directors and coordinators came to our diocese on the last eve of the Cross' stay in our diocese and in our ecclesiastical region. As always, the bonding moments were at its peak, with lots of stories and laughter to share. It was not just our diocese turning over the Pilgrim Cross but it's our whole ecclesiastical region handing over to the Diocese of Dumaguete in Central Visayas Region.

The visit of the AYD Pilgrim Cross was an experience of grace! Our parish priests, community leaders, the youth and practically everyone were filled with overflowing gratitude for the wonderful experience of community - an encounter with Jesus. Many of us here cannot go to Imus come November for AYD, but surely, all of us will be one with them in spirit and in prayer! The AYD Pilgrim Cross had gone but the burning hearts that it has left will definitely sustain us in our various endeavors in the ministry. ✨

The 5th Asian Youth Day Logo

THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENCOURAGED TO ENJOY THEIR YOUTH. THEY ARE CALLED TO EXPERIENCE HAPPINESS WHILE THEY ARE STILL YOUNG. DO WHAT THEY WANT TO DO AND FOLLOW THEIR HEART'S DESIRE.

(Ecclesiastes 11:9)

THIS YEAR, an estimate of two thousand (2,000) young people in Asia will have another opportunity to gather and enjoy their youth as active members of the Church. It is through the collaborative efforts of the Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conference – Office of the Laity and Family-Youth Desk, Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines - Episcopal Commission on Youth, and Diocese of Imus, the 5th Asian Youth Day will happen on November 20 – 27, 2009 at the Rogationist College in Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

The theme of the gathering, inspired by the gospel text from John 6:14 where Jesus Christ Fed Five Thousand, is **"YAsia Fiesta! Young Asians: Come Together, Share the Word, Live the Eucharist"**.

This life-changing event will become an avenue for Young Asians to **"renew their faith in and love for the Word of God and the Eucharist; celebrate youthfully the Word and the Eucharist in the contexts, cultures, and communities; and become agents of transformation by living out the Word and the Eucharist in the realities in Asia."**

In other words, young Asians will have an ample time to grow in the Church and with the Church.

ONE OF THE MAJOR elements of the event, that will encapsulate the identified objectives of the spearheads, is the official logo of the 5th Asian Youth Day.

It is, of course, necessary for the delegates and other people who will be involved in the event to have a common interpretation and profound understanding on its signs and symbols and meaning. Below is the logo and explanation of each part:



1. The **CROSS** symbolizes the centrality of Jesus Christ in the AYD5 event. It is made up of bamboo, to highlight the unique culture and spirituality of Asians, which is integral to Catholic faith. Moreover, the bamboo's flexibility to bend and steadfastness to stand amidst harsh weather characterize Asians' resiliency in facing the challenges of life with grace and courage.

2. The **COLORS OF THE PHILIPPINE FLAG** represent the Philippines and, at the same time, the host of the AYD5 event, the Diocese of Imus in province of Cavite, which is known as the flag capital of the country.

3. The **FIVE HEADS FORMING A CUP** represent the four participating sub-regions of Asia united by Christ, the center head. Young Asians, gather in the name of Christ, share a common faith rooted in the Word and the EUCHARIST. The hands of Christ extending like a cup remind us of His encompassing and universal salvific act.

4. The **SUN**, lying at the center where the Cross stands, symbolizes the availability of the young Philippine Church to be of service to the young people, to share its richness and dynamism.

5. The **BANDERITAS** express the fiesta atmosphere that young Asians are called to witness to Asia and to the world as a reflection of the joy that springs from deep faith and communion of hearts and minds.

The logo, as a whole, invites Young Asians to **"COME TOGETHER, SHARE THE WORD, LIVE THE EUCHARIST."** YAsia Fiesta! 🌺

By Marlon B. Vargas & Grace Leano

OFFICE OF LAITY AND FAMILY - BISHOP MEMBERS AND SECRETARIES

There have been a number of changes and we thought it would be good to introduce you to all the members of the Office of Laity and Family in this photo collage.



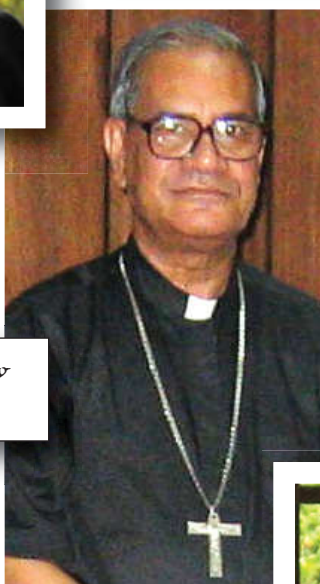
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Bishop Patrik D'Rosario
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