



The Jesuits

IN ASIA PACIFIC **2021**

A faith that does justice



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PHOTO CREDITS

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DREAMING OF A NEW WORLD



The year 2020 was easily overshadowed by the pandemic crisis. As the coronavirus was making its way, the major superiors were still blessed to have made the Spiritual Exercises at the Mirador Jesuit Villa Retreat House, Baguio City, Philippines conducted by José Garcia de Castro SJ from Comillas Pontifical University. This first eight-day retreat of the major superiors, made at the start of February, was a significant shift from being simply an executive body to becoming a discerning community of the conference. After the retreat we continued to discern further the invitations of the Lord in the proposed JCAP Plan (2021–2025). We are now in the final stretch of our discernment process before we submit the plan to Fr General for his blessing.

In this time of the pandemic, our world changed, and uncertainty became a new normal. Many lives have been claimed by Covid-19. Millions have lost their jobs and livelihoods. Physical distancing and virtual interaction have become part of our culture. The pandemic deepened further the pre-existing issue of marginalisation, inequality, and exclusion in our world. Pope Francis raises rightly these issues in his encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*. In a real sense, the pandemic is the new stage upon which the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) can be appropriated and pursued. We don't have to wait for the pandemic to end before we can carry out the UAPs. Apart from the pandemic, we also had to endure the ravages brought about by a string of strong typhoons that pummeled Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

To be fair, however, the year was not all doom and gloom. There were heroic moments of solidarity, accompaniment of the poor, the homeless, and the hungry. There were deep expressions of faith, and unwavering hope. The Jesuit provinces and regions across Asia Pacific along with their mission partners were involved in the distribution of food packs, hygiene kits, and protective equipment. They also enabled access to their facilities for the frontliners and those who needed to be quarantined. Several Jesuits accompanied and ministered to Covid-19 patients. Others offered online liturgical celebrations and reflections to make sense of the pandemic in the light of faith. In moments of crisis, there is always a ray of hope.

We take comfort in the words of Pope Francis: "Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all" (*Fratelli Tutti*, #8). Let this dream be our task as well. This is a fitting disposition as we prepare for the celebration of the Ignatian Year (20 May 2021 – 31 July 2022).

Tony Moreno SJ
President
Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific

2020 AT A GLANCE

FEBRUARY

1-8, BAGUIO

JCAP Major Superiors take an eight-day retreat prior to their Major Superiors Assembly in Baguio City, Philippines



JANUARY

13-20, SEOUL

Novice Directors of JCAP. They are joined by Fr Riyo Mursanto SJ, JCAP Delegate for Formation, & Fr Mark Ravizza SJ, Fr General's Delegate for Formation from Rome.



Left: Fr Adolfo Nicolás SJ.
Right: Fr Kim Yong-su Paschal SJ

MAY

1, SEOUL

Fr Kim Yong-su Paschal SJ is inaugurated as new Provincial of the Korean Province

20, TOKYO

Fr Adolfo Nicolás SJ, 30th Superior General of the Society of Jesus, dies at the age of 84

JUNE

8 JCAP President Fr Tony Moreno SJ appoints Filipino Jesuit Fr James Gascon SJ as Coordinator of the new Safety in Ministry Network to advance a culture of safeguarding and integrity in the conference

JULY



Left: Fr Greg Soetomo SJ
Right: Fr Vidal Gornez Jr SJ

1 JCAP welcomes Fr Greg Soetomo SJ as the new Socius, and Fr Vidal Gornez Jr SJ as the new Treasurer.

Fr Gabriel Dennis Lamug-Nañawa is appointed Coordinator for JCAP Reconciliation with Creation with Sylvia Miclat and Sue Martin as Assistant Coordinators.



Fr Benedictus Hari Juliawan SJ

13-17

JCAP Major Superiors hold their first online assembly

20, INDONESIA

Fr Benedictus Hari Juliawan SJ begins his mission as Provincial of the Indonesian Jesuit Province

25 Fr Jeffrey Chang SJ is appointed Coordinator of the Network of Deans of Theological and Philosophical Centers, which replaces the Theological Cooperation Working Group

AUGUST

24-28 Jesuits and collaborators in social ministry gather over Zoom for conversations on the Universal Apostolic Preferences in a time of pandemic and beyond

SEPTEMBER



Fr Dominic Quyen Vu SJ

1 Fr Tong Chak-long Stephen is appointed as Coordinator, and Sally Law as Assistant Coordinator of the JCAP Ignatian Spirituality Network

4 Fr General Arturo Sosa SJ appoints Fr Dominic Quyen Vu SJ as the next Provincial of the Australian Province beginning 1 January 2021



OCTOBER

8 Indian Jesuit and indigenous rights defender Fr Stan Swamy SJ is arrested under false charges in Ranchi and subsequently jailed in Taloja near Mumbai. JCAP shows support for Fr Swamy and the Jesuit Conference of South Asia.



22 Pope Francis appoints Fr In-gun Kang SJ, Coordinator for Buddhist Studies and Dialogue, as one of the consultors of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.



OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

Late October - Early November

A series of powerful typhoons hits Southeast Asia, causing widespread damage in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines. Jesuits mobilise emergency response.



DECEMBER

10 Fr General Arturo Sosa appoints Spanish Jesuit Fr Miguel Garaizabal Fontenla SJ as the new Superior of the Thai Jesuit Region.

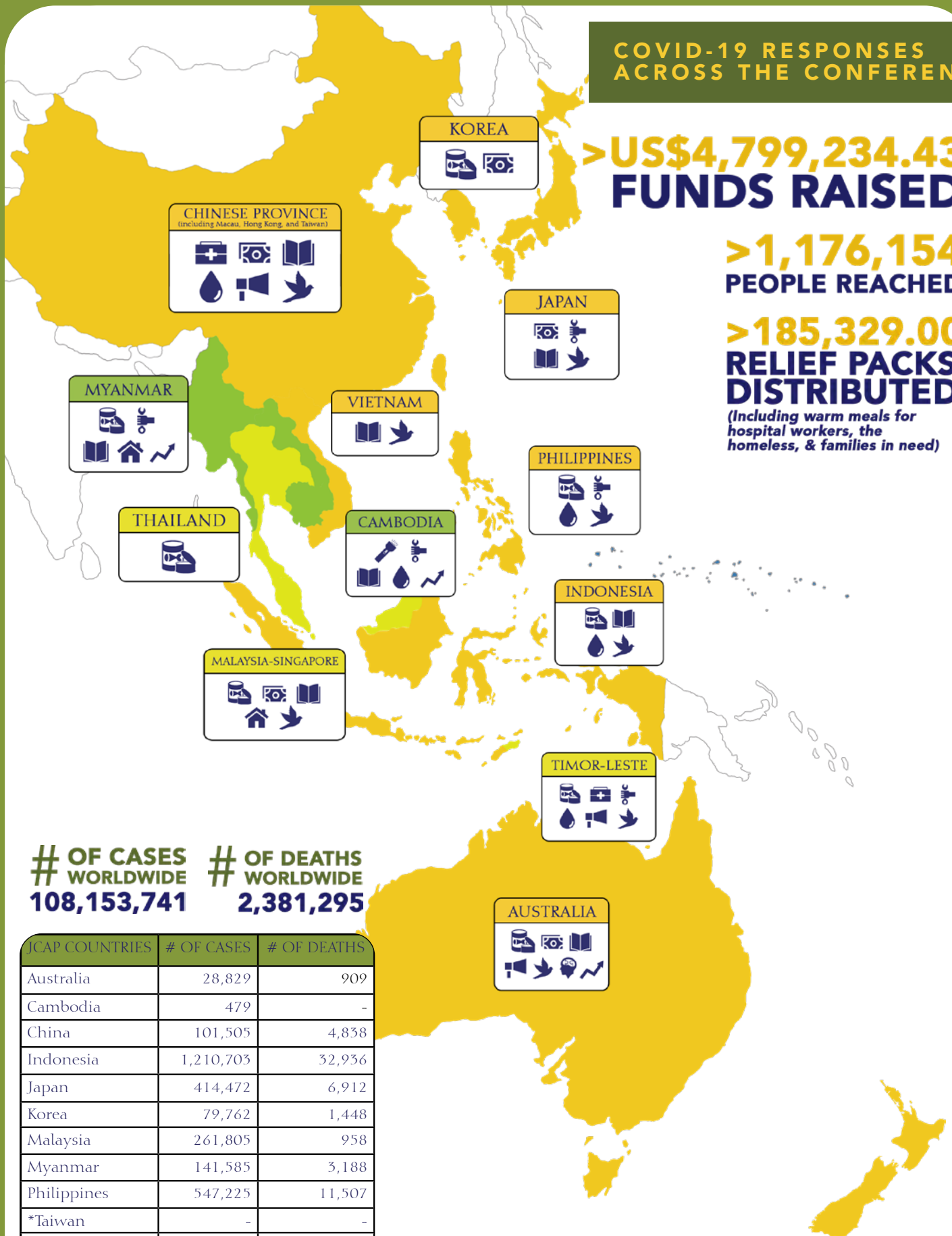
COVID-19 RESPONSES ACROSS THE CONFERENCE

> **US\$4,799,234.43**
FUNDS RAISED

> **1,176,154**
PEOPLE REACHED

> **185,329.00**
RELIEF PACKS DISTRIBUTED

(Including warm meals for hospital workers, the homeless, & families in need)



OF CASES **# OF DEATHS**
WORLDWIDE **# WORLDWIDE**
108,153,741 **2,381,295**

JCAP COUNTRIES	# OF CASES	# OF DEATHS
Australia	28,829	909
Cambodia	479	-
China	101,505	4,838
Indonesia	1,210,703	32,936
Japan	414,472	6,912
Korea	79,762	1,448
Malaysia	261,805	958
Myanmar	141,585	3,188
Philippines	547,225	11,507
*Taiwan	-	-
Thailand	24,571	80
Timor-Leste	101	-
Vietnam	2,195	35
Singapore	59,786	29
TOTAL	2,873,081	62,840

LEGEND

- Province
- Region
- Mission
- Medical Assistance
- Livelihood
- Spiritual
- Shelter
- Financial Assistance
- Education
- Capacity Building
- WASH
- Psycho-social
- Awareness Raising

World Health Organization | 14 February 2021
* No data

The infographic seeks to give a general picture of the Covid-19 responses across the Jesuit Conference. Data are based on responses to a web-based online survey held from 1 January to 14 February 2021 with participation from all provinces/regions/missions.

CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES TO A ONCE-IN-A-CENTURY PANDEMIC



In May 2020, the Social Ministries of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific collected information on Jesuit responses to the Covid-19 pandemic to identify areas of collaboration on the conference and global levels. The survey asked five questions: the initiatives carried out by the provinces/regions, the most vulnerable groups affected by the pandemic, the immediate and mid- and long-term needs of the groups, the challenges encountered, and common concerns that need to be addressed. Answers were gathered through an online survey and a virtual meeting of the social delegates of the provinces/regions, and representatives of Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Asia Pacific.

The survey found that the pandemic affected all dimensions of human life, encompassing both the physical and psychosocial-spiritual, such as health, education, socio-economic, political, and mental-spiritual aspects. Many new vulnerable groups and new needs emerged as an offshoot of the pandemic. The coverage of virus transmission and its impact on the population varied from country to country within the conference, but we all faced the common challenge of social distancing and travel restrictions, which hampered us from accompanying and reaching the people in need of our services.

All provinces and regions were unprepared to respond to this unprecedented human disaster, but we were able to quickly conduct initiatives to respond to the emergency. Some provinces formed a taskforce to coordinate and support the province's and region's responses to the pandemic. There were those who implemented interventions on an individual capacity but in close collaboration with Jesuit ministries. In general, the characteristic of our initiatives focused on addressing the immediate needs of the communities.

Since we all faced the same negative impacts of the pandemic, our provinces/regions opted to prioritise their resources on the needs of their own provinces/regions. However, those who needed support were able to ask for assistance from other provinces or the conference.

NEW VULNERABLE GROUPS

Predictably, the most vulnerable groups that were identified are those who are already poor and “forgotten” even before the pandemic, such as refugees, undocumented migrant workers, people in prison, the homeless, scavengers, street vendors, casual workers in non-essential services, people with mental health issues, the elderly, and people with chronic illness and disability. The pandemic has made them poorer and more vulnerable. However, we also identified new vulnerable groups, namely those who have lost their jobs, students who don’t have access to online learning, international students who have lost casual employment and are not eligible for government support, rural communities that have experienced sudden inflows of people from urban areas to their hometowns, and couples who have to take care of their children, but need to go to work at the same time. Medical workers and volunteers who are caring for Covid-19 patients were identified as the most vulnerable group.

JESUIT INITIATIVES

All Jesuit provinces and regions designed and implemented initiatives to address the needs of the identified vulnerable groups according to their local context and available resources. Since the pandemic impacted all Jesuit work, those in the social ministries carried out their services in close collaboration with other Jesuit ministries and networks outside the Society.

The services that were rendered varied according to the needs, except for the distribution of basic necessities, which included food and non-food items, such as hand sanitisers, soap, disinfectants, and masks. This was carried out in all provinces and regions. Jesuits and partners also urged their respective governments and relief providers to give the most vulnerable people access to basic needs and services.

To support health personnel and volunteers in the frontlines, some provinces provided personal protective equipment, such as medical masks, goggles, gloves, safety helmets, face shields, safety boots, among others. The Indonesian Province offered some of their buildings to be used by hospitals in need of additional space to treat Covid-19 patients. Besides logistic support, the provinces also provided spiritual services online and, whenever possible, offline. Pastoral visits to internally displaced persons in camps and the sick in hospitals were also conducted following strict health protocols.

The pandemic has changed people’s behaviour towards their health and safety. Jesuit ministries participated in various campaigns in disseminating health protocols. Information, Education, and Communication materials were made, published, and circulated.

PLANNING THE WAY FORWARD

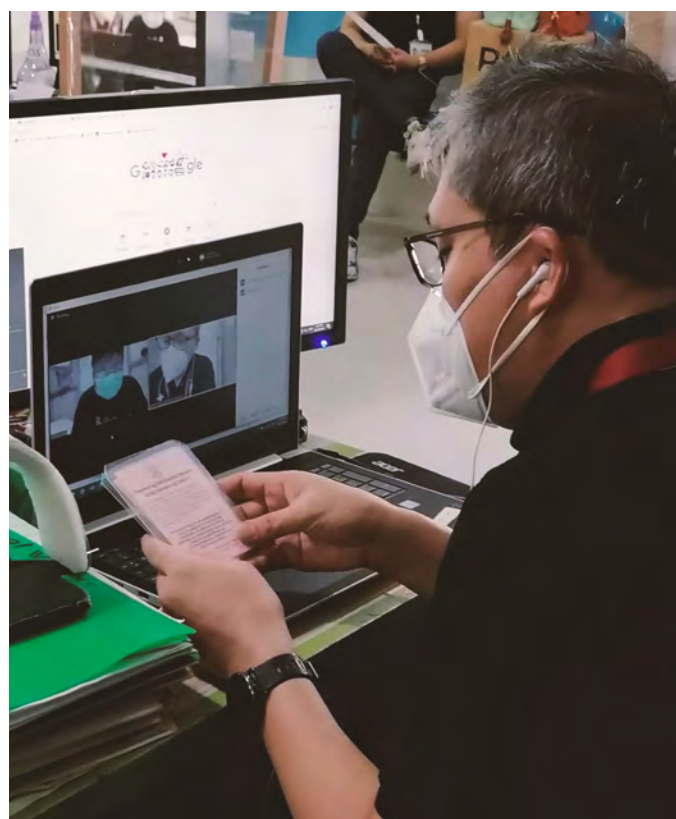
The health and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic have worsened the lives of the poor and marginalised.

There is urgent need for equal access to health services and livelihoods for the poor and marginalised. A post-Covid-19 economic recovery plan that integrates ecology in an inclusive economic development model should be promoted.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic remains far from predictable, it is difficult for social institutions to design medium- and long-term plans. However, there are some things that should already be considered. At the conference level, we need to continue the conversation on what will happen after this crisis is over, with pertinent questions such as: What is the new normal? What good/positive gains have we learnt from this experience and can we continue to practice them? What mistakes and possible sins of omission have we committed arising from the pandemic? Can we learn to avoid them? And is Covid-19 a new reality we must live with rather than live without? We also need to continue monitoring the situation in each province/region and be ready to offer assistance where possible--cooperation and resources-sharing have never been more needed than now.

At the global level, there was a suggestion to advocate for governments to put a moratorium on financial commitments and repayments at various levels of society. Regarding the issue of migrants, it was also proposed to advocate for temporary amnesty for undocumented migrants in receiving countries. These are complex issues and Jesuit social institutions cannot do it alone. We need to collaborate with other institutions and stakeholders, inside as well as outside the Society.

Adrianus Suyadi SJ
Secretary for JCAP Social Ministries



Telechaplancy. Online prayer with families of patients in the ICU of the Philippine General Hospital.

WHAT MAKES JESUIT EDUCATION JESUIT IN THE DIGITAL AGE?

In the last year, educators everywhere found themselves involved in an unforeseen global teaching experiment. As a result of the pandemic, teachers had to quickly learn how to pivot to online teaching.

Few of our teachers had been prepared for this shift, with little time to find ways to equip themselves with the skills to deliver their courses online.

Understandably, many Ignatian educators were initially reluctant. Online learning was dismissed as inappropriate for Jesuit education, if not downright ineffective.

The fear at the time was that all the defining markers of Jesuit education would be compromised, if not totally sacrificed, in the online environment. *Magis*, for example, is an important element of our brand of education--that commitment of both students and teacher to excellence. But given this far-from-ideal situation of online learning, how can teachers possibly challenge their students to strive for excellence? We would be lucky if they even perform the tasks we assign to them.

Another hallmark of Jesuit education is *cura personalis*--or the personal care for every individual student. How can teachers provide this kind of care in an online lecture, where instead of the actual presence of students, we find ourselves facing a computer screen with the videos of most students--all too often--switched off?

And let's not even talk about Ignatian Pedagogy, with its emphasis on Experience, Reflection, and Action. It's tough enough to implement this pedagogy in our traditional face-to-face classes, how much more challenging would that be now that we've gone virtual?

THE FIRST JESUIT EDUCATORS

The good news is that Jesuit education belongs to a larger tradition and a longer history, which can offer us some instructions on how to proceed in a time like this one.

Former Jesuit education secretary Fr Gabriel Codina had this to say about the early Jesuit schoolmasters: "Thus the first Jesuits went as it were to the supermarket of education."

By "the supermarket of education," he meant the programmes, practices, and strategies that were already available then and that they could "beg, steal, or borrow" from experts and leading educators of the day. Those early Jesuits understood that a truly good education "requires continuous renewal, innovation, reinterpretation, and re-invention, and that if they wanted to actually provide quality education, they have to be attentive to the always-changing context and open to new developments".

Now that's a very timely reminder for us because Ignatian educators today are being challenged to resist remaining complacent about the way we have been going about our business of education.

AteneoBlueCloud

In the Ateneo de Manila University, when it was clear that all classes would be held online, we decided not to rush into things. We didn't immediately jump into the bandwagon of scouting for the best learning management system or video conferencing platform. We restrained ourselves from attending every single webinar on online learning and teaching because a more fundamental question needed to be answered: How should *online* Jesuit education look and sound like so it would truly be "Jesuit"?

We needed to define the elements of an Ateneo-- and Jesuit--education that we should make sure to preserve and even strengthen when we go online. How do we brand our online education so that the online education we offer our students would truly be "Jesuit"?

The AteneoBlueCloud was the strategy we came up with to offer not only engaging and effective learning experiences for our students, but also to strengthen the defining ingredients of a Jesuit education.

We consulted our stakeholders, especially our faculty and even some of our students: "What do we consider most essential for us in our face-to-face education that we want to preserve and strengthen in the AteneoBlueCloud as we go online?"

Two principles stood out from the conversations.

The first principle may seem obvious, but it is so fundamental that we felt it needed to be spelled out explicitly: Technology is but a means to learning and formation. It's not about being as technically sophisticated as possible--not at all about having at our disposal all the latest software and hardware. Rather, it is unequivocally about our goal of learning and formation for our students.

The second thing we agreed on is that it's not so much about the mode of delivery. For example: Are we going to be more synchronous or more asynchronous? Rather *it's about the design*. And here is where Ignatian Pedagogy comes in.

In designing virtual experiences, we asked ourselves the following questions:

What is the array of possible online learning experiences we can offer our students so they will be engaged and learn?

What are students' experiences like during a typical Zoom class? Will the teachers simply flash their slides and deliver the usual lectures as if the class was physically present? Or will they chunk their lectures into bite-sizes and use the Chat Box occasionally to solicit feedback from their learners or check their understanding? Will they take advantage of the polling function so that the class becomes more interactive? Will they assign students to breakout rooms so that learning doesn't remain an isolated experience and students actually get to interact with their classmates?

How do we encourage our students to engage in Reflection even if our discussions are virtual, whether during live Zoom sessions, asynchronous Discussion Boards, or blogs?

Online learning offers a valuable opportunity for our students to become more independent and critical thinkers. In the online environment, they have the opportunity not to be too dependent on their teachers and to learn to think and process things on their own. The Ignatian term for that is Reflection.

If we examine the culture in social media and the internet, there prevails an anti-reflection online culture. The culture that results from the internet does not encourage reflection at all. As a result, Reflection has become an endangered practice.

Nicholas Carr, in his book *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brain*, talks about the reverse evolution that's happening to our mind.

The evolution of human civilisation shows a shift from human beings being hunters and gatherers of food to becoming cultivators of food. With the advent of agriculture, humans began to settle down, cultivate their own food, and form more permanent societies.

Carr's observation is that there is a reverse evolution that's happening today--not in food production, but in knowledge production, not in agriculture, but in information. Because of easy access to online information and the resulting copy-and-paste culture today, all of us who are users of technology tend to stop being cultivators of personal knowledge.



Isn't that what Reflection is about? When we mull over information and process it, we are reflecting on it and we are cultivating, nourishing, and growing our own personal knowledge. This cultivation takes time, takes patience, but unfortunately, that's no longer in fashion today.

What's happening today is that more and more young people--as well as adults--are becoming mere hunters and gatherers of information in the digital forest. We just want to pick all this information that's out there and not spend enough time and attention to cultivating our own personal knowledge, which is the result of reflection.

So by default, reflection is not encouraged today, but this shift to online learning can make us more deliberate and more mindful of the need for Reflection.

Finally, how can we promote Action online so we can make sure our students will actually use and apply what they have learned "in the real world"?

Jesuit education is about forming persons for others so that when our students graduate, they will aim to serve the world, keeping the common good before their eyes and making a difference.

We had to study designing effective formation programmes for an online environment. To our pleasant surprise, the internet stretched the horizon of possibilities for our students. We experimented with *distance Service Learning* and *vicarious immersion* programmes, which-- while admittedly not ideal--turned out occasionally to be powerful and transformative experiences for our students.

For reasons we had not foreseen, the online sharing turned out to be more *inclusive* and more *personal*: Because they had more time to prepare what to say, even the introverts got to share, and perhaps because of the genre of online writing, the quality of sharing seemed deeper and more personal.

Ignatian educators all around the world are still experimenting and learning from their teaching experiments. But two things already seem evident. First, contrary to our initial apprehensions, *with proper design*, the defining elements of Jesuit education can, in fact, be promoted and even strengthened.

Second--again to our surprise--the online mode of learning actually stretches the horizon of possibilities for designing the students' Experience, Reflection, and Action.

Johnny Go SJ
Secretary for Jesuit Secondary and
Pre-secondary Schools in Asia Pacific
Director, Ateneo de Manila
Institute for the Science and Art
of Learning and Teaching

YOUTH



jesuitinsight

finding **GOD**
in **ONLINE**
THINGS (?)

Magdalena Maristia

Hefty Sirait

From 2019 to 2020, more than half of Indonesia's population accessed the internet.¹ The average time an Indonesian spends on the internet is 7 hours and 59 minutes with 3 hours and 26 minutes especially on social media.² Unsurprisingly, majority of them are within the ages of 18 and 34 years old.

The reality of how people communicate and access information these days is an invitation for us in the Society to step back and ask what God wants us to do as His companions. The internet is an ever-changing landscape and we need to learn its language in order to reach out to those around us and beyond with the message of the Gospel.

The Vocation Promotions team of the Indonesian Province started using social media in 2017 to share information and stories on the life and vocation of the Jesuits. In 2018 we opened another account, Jesuit Insight, where scholastics can share more reflective insights on today's world from the Jesuit worldview. Both accounts are managed by young scholastics amidst their demanding studies. The province manages the official account, @jesuitindonesia, to share official information about the province and its apostolic works.

The engagement in social media and other digital ecosystems brings about challenges on how to behave, especially in communicating with people from various faiths and cultural backgrounds. Too often we see the destructive and divisive nature of conversations online. However, we also learn to uncover the facts, be more open when our point of view is challenged, and become enriched with the comments and questions users post online. Sometimes we are even led to collaborative efforts.

A podcast series called Every Friday Podcast (SJ Podcast) is an example of collaboration and commitment to accompany the youth. Using applications like Anchor, fm, Spotify, and Apple Podcast, scholastics from Hermanum College with Magis youth contribute their life reflections through the lens of the Spiritual Exercises. So far it has broadcast 12 episodes, which have been played more than 5,000 times. Its usual audience are young Indonesian Catholics who desire to reflect on their daily life. The SJ Podcast is currently in the process of evaluating how it can maximise its presence and find more growth opportunities.

Some Jesuits have creatively used digital platforms to offer the Spiritual Exercises during the pandemic. Fr Sumarwan adapted Michael Hansen's The First Spiritual Exercises (FSE) into Indonesian and organised three cohorts of FSE retreatants in 2020. There were about 300 participants from all over Indonesia and abroad who joined the FSE. They faithfully did their prayers daily, and the spiritual conversations on weekends using a digital platform.

Alongside the opportunities it offers in disseminating information and bringing us together, the internet also poses some problems. Certain vested interest groups use the digital world to spread misinformation, propaganda, ideologies, and for financial gains. The backbone of digital ecosystems is known as an algorithm, a process that defines and organises quantitative rules in complex sequences to filter information in the process of decision-making. Algorithms recognise, collect, and create a recognisable pattern in our interactions in digital ecosystems, and then predict our steps by offering certain things. Reflective and critical thinking is fundamental in order to maintain our freedom in making decisions. Something that contemporary people, especially the youth, find more as a luxury rather than a necessity.

Being reflective plays an important role in discerning the spirit of God. The pandemic helps us to be reflective and continue our engagement in the digital world. It may be a luxury to discern what Christ wants from us in today's world, and yet it is vital. While we happily engage as users, we are also invited to analyse and to reflect deeply on the influence of this algorithm on our relationship with others and with the Lord.

Jesuit engagement in digital ecosystems is a necessity; it is not merely joining the trend. It is an invitation to humbly learn a new language to be able to speak about God's presence in our contemporary world. We can help to build critical dialogue, challenge the establishment, and bridge divisions. The digital world offers us a way of bringing people into actual, real, and sincere encounters that can move their hearts to find God.

Septian Marhenanto SJ
Indonesian Province Communications Office

¹ APJII (Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association) and ICS (Indonesia Survey Center) reported in June 2020 that there were 196.71 million internet users out of a total of 266.91 million population in Indonesia in 2019-2020.

² DataReportal with Hootsuite and We are Social, January 2020

SAFEGUARDING AS A MINISTRY IN ASIA PACIFIC

In contemporary society, the safeguarding of minors at the secular level involves community-based awareness raising, education, prevention, and intervention systems. For the Catholic Church, such interventions, particularly the education effort, must not only be at par with or better than secular systems, but also show how the safeguarding of minors is an integral part of the life of the Church and a necessary part of the formation of persons, of their ability to draw close to Christ. Thus, it is imperative to provide a safeguarding education that is both theologically integrated and temporally robust. This is the spirit that inspired the conception and mission of the Catholic Safeguarding Institute (CSI).

A PRACTICAL NEED

There is an observed practical need for more than one education/formation programme to meet the demand for high-quality Catholic education in culturally effective safeguarding. The Centre for Child Protection (CCP-Rome), an academic centre of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, aims to address this by providing higher educational degrees in safeguarding. Launched in January 2012 by the Institute of Psychology of the Pontifical Gregorian University, CCP-Rome's mission is geared towards safeguarding the vulnerable, educating to protect them from all kinds of abuses and any attempt to violate their integrity, both within the Catholic Church and in society.

With Fr Hans Zollner SJ – a German Jesuit, theologian, psychologist, and one of the leading pioneers in the field of safeguarding and prevention of sexual abuse – at its helm, CCP-Rome animates the mission of the Universal Apostolic Preferences as it provides a rich platform and expertise in educating all stakeholders of the need for recognition, protection, and healing of the many who are vulnerable and violated by abuse. It goes beyond offering educational programmes as it collaborates with an international academic network and doctoral students in various fields (psychology, theology, spirituality, canon law, social sciences, etc.), slowly building a culture of safety in the Church and in society that is based on Gospel values.

After successfully completing its first offering of a one-semester diploma course on safeguarding in June 2016, CCP-Rome observed that the demand for positions in the programme from all over the world is greater than what the programme can accommodate on a yearly basis. Currently, the CCP-Rome diploma course is the only safeguarding education programme that formally incorporates Catholic teaching. This is a good problem as it indicates a sense of initiative and urgency on the part of the local Churches to

learn how to design and implement a culturally effective safeguarding programme that has Catholic theology among its core elements.

Among the Catholic institutions in Asia (diocesan, religious, and lay), there is a lack of knowledge and skills for creating and implementing effective Catholic safeguarding programmes. Additionally, the Church in the Philippines, through the St John Vianney Renewal Center for Priests and Religious that is sponsored by the Philippine Episcopal Commission for the Clergy, has received many requests from various jurisdictions in Asia for safeguarding training but has been unable to provide it because it lacks personnel who are trained to provide such an education.

This is where CSI comes in. Led by Prof Gabriel S Dy-Liacco LPC who is a member of the Pontifical Council, it aims to offer a culturally effective programme similar to that of CCP-Rome's but designed specifically for the Church in the Asian context, as well as to collaborate with CCP-Rome on institutional research in the areas of vocation assessment and ongoing formation in relation to safeguarding. Inspired and animated by the healing ministry of Christ, CSI is the pioneer in promoting the development of and providing safeguarding education and formation against sexual and other forms of abuse in the Asia-Pacific region, contextualised training of safeguarding leadership personnel and teams, and raising awareness and knowledge of the importance of building and maintaining a safeguarding culture and environment while affirming existing safe values and practices in Asian and Pacific cultures.

SAFEGUARDING THE PHILIPPINE CHURCH

CSI concretises its ministry through the various formats of its formation programme based on the Tripod of Relational Safety model. These formats are the Basic Orientation Workshop on Safeguarding in the Church (BOWS), the Guidelines Write-shop for BOWS Alumni, the Safeguarding Leadership Formation Program, the Diploma in Safeguarding (in collaboration with Pontifical Loyola School of Theology and the Centre for Child Protection-PUG; face-to-face programme is developed but has not yet been launched due to Covid-19; online version will be developed), the Webinar for Alumni: Safeguarding in the Time of Covid-19, and talks or seminars for various audiences with experts sharing their expertise in the field. CSI commits its ministry to the current or intended protection officers, vicars for clergy, formation directors, Catholic educators, and others who have or will assume leadership roles in safeguarding in their jurisdiction. Since its conception in 2019, the institute has reached a total



of three archdioceses, nine dioceses, and various formation institutes for clergy and laypersons across the Philippines. This array of safeguarding formation formats has trained a grand total of 589 persons. With the rest of 2021 already fully booked for workshops and more requests from other dioceses and lay institutions coming in, the mission of CSI in safeguarding the Asia-Pacific Church has only just begun.

In keeping with its duty to the Catholic church, CSI works to ensure that those who participate in its formation programmes return to their respective cities, provinces, and countries of origin and collaborate with the leaders of their local Churches in the creation and maintenance of safeguarding structures, policies, and systems towards the protection of the minors and vulnerable adults in their population. It is CSI's hope that a collaborative network of safeguarding efforts can be established in the Philippines and Asia towards a global alliance focused on the protection and care of minors and vulnerable adults. It is also expected that the documentation of the experiences of these local agencies will contribute to an expanding body of knowledge that can serve future target beneficiaries of CSI's formation programmes as well as their own local populations.

ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING MISSION

Pope Francis articulated well in his March 2014 Chirograph establishing the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors the reason for needing a unified Church response and concretising it in initiatives arising from the particular Churches as given by our Lord himself in His Gospel. The "unified response" envisioned by the Catholic Safeguarding Institute, in collaboration with CCP-Rome, refers to a unity in principles and necessary standards of education, prevention, and intervention that demonstrates the single-minded commitment of the Church to this endeavor.

Beyond just educating and training individuals and leaders of dioceses on the fundamentals of safeguarding, CSI's mission is geared towards the development of a unified and intentional Asia-Pacific culture of safeguarding and communities of care. It recognises that safeguarding is a perspective and way of life that needs to become an intentional part of the daily life of every Catholic.

Johanne Arceo
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60 YEARS AND BEYOND: CARRYING THE TORCH OF FAITH IN SINGAPORE

On 12 February, the parish of St Ignatius, Singapore marked its 60th Jubilee. It was the fruit of the Irish Jesuits who were first diverted to Singapore to start the mission by default when their intention to go to China was no longer possible with the Communist takeover in 1949.

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

When Singapore's Catholic Bishop, Msgr Michael Olcomendy, wanted the Jesuits to set up a school in the British colony, the Jesuit superiors in Rome felt they could not comply. But how could they refuse a Bishop? By avoiding a meeting, they thought. Hence when Fr Paul O'Brien SJ, the Hong Kong-based Vice-Visitor with authority over Jesuits in Southeast Asia, had to travel to Rome, he was instructed to avoid Singapore. Before his journey back, he decided to go to France. When changing trains, he entered a car which had just one other passenger — the Bishop from Singapore!

Eventually, Fr O'Brien's visit in February 1951 led to the setting up of a Jesuit-run hostel for students from Malaya at the Teachers' Training College. Fr Patrick Joy SJ arrived from Hong Kong in November as the local Superior to oversee the building and management of the hostel. A 4-acre plot was bought in Kingsmead Estate with funds from various sources, including the Free Asia Society in the US. The hostel, which could house up to 85 students and eight Jesuits, was blessed by then Archbishop Olcomendy on 16 August 1954. Mass was said in one of the rooms for priests and hostelites, and before long, Catholics from the neighbourhood joined in. It was a small group and there was no offertory collection. Then one Sunday, at the end of Mass, a lady took off her beret, passed it round for a collection, and emptied it on the table where Fr Joy was investing. That was taken to be the official start of the parish. As the numbers grew, Mass moved to the porch outside for the 100 or so people.

Fr Joy was anxious to build a church near Kingsmead Hall where there was no nearby church. Fr Thomas Doody SJ came from Hong Kong to help and proved to be a brilliant fundraiser, thanks to his good-naturedness and fluent Cantonese which endeared him to many parishioners. A 35,665 sq ft plot next to a cluster of wooden houses was purchased at \$1/per sq ft, where

for years later, the residents were served by the St Vincent de Paul Society.

On 12 February 1961, Archbishop Olcomendy presided at the blessing and opening of the Church of St Ignatius. The church, which could accommodate 550, had wide doors on three sides. Most remarkable was the absence of pillars which offered a view of the altar regardless of where one sat. A church bulletin was launched in 1962. With Vatican II, on 29 November 1964, the priest said Mass in English for the first time, facing the congregation.

By then, the parish had grown to 1,200 and various activities were organised by the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Legion of Mary, and a Ladies Choir. A simple breakfast of sandwiches with tea or coffee was offered at a cluster of table and chairs in the foyer, organised by a group of ladies. Yet another group of parishioners launched catechism classes for children from the nearby kampong and for those who attended non-Catholic schools.

A major highlight in the church calendar since is the Feast of St Ignatius of Loyola, marked by Triduum Masses, and parish socials, which began as simple barbecues in the early years but grew into sit-down affairs with performances by parishioners and, occasionally, priests. A major shift took place in 1978 when a group of young Redemptorist fathers were invited to conduct a parish mission. It had a great impact on the faithful. "The decibel of the weekend Masses was greatly increased," said Fr Kevin O'Dwyer SJ, then the parish priest. Neighbourhood groups were formed and awareness grew as to what it meant to be a Catholic community and a Catholic family. A second parish mission, led by Fr Tom O'Neill SJ was held in late 1985 to prepare for the Silver Jubilee.

A series of 18 Parish Renewal Experience (PRE) programmes from 1984 to 1988 also helped to foster a sense of community among parishioners and encouraged greater involvement in church activities. The result was a blossoming of new activities. More volunteers became catechists and lectors, and a new ministry, the Lilies of the Valley, was set up to offer prayer services for families of parishioners who had passed on. By then, more space was needed in the church so the parish hall was expanded. The Sacred Heart Hall was built in 1988 and

1989, adding classrooms, a multi-purpose hall, a meeting room, and a prayer room. In December 1990, Kingsmead Hall was turned into a Centre for Ignatian Spirituality and Counselling, with one wing reserved for the Jesuit Novitiate and another for the Jesuit community residence.

THE NEW MILLENIUM

With the ever-growing congregation, then parish priest Fr Leslie Raj SJ, embarked on a new church building project at the close of the second millennium. Priests and congregation alike envisioned a new building that would allow deep appreciation of the Roman Catholic liturgy, as well as enable full and active participation of the parishioners in all the church's activities. The task was demanding of the Building Advisory Committee comprising parishioner volunteers who were experts in the various disciplines for finance, architecture, engineering, and communications. A columbarium committee and a carpark committee were also set up. The fund-raising committee had the monumental task of raising the estimated \$14 million needed for the project. While members sourced for big donations, activities were organised for all parishioners to contribute and take ownership of the new church. By the end of 2001, \$3 million had been raised from the sponsorship of items, such as religious artifacts, sacred space, and outright donations. A 40th anniversary dinner raised \$593,000 and in August 2001, a charity golf tournament added another \$190,000. There were numerous smaller projects including sales of festive cookies, St Ignatius teddy bears, and the sale of a Christmas CD by a parishioner country singer. Donations came in from all walks of life. With some cost savings from the project, the full \$12.3 million was raised before construction was completed. Archbishop Nicholas Chia officiated at the dedication of the new church on 12 February, 2004.

Renovations were added towards the end of the decade to make space for more classrooms, with covered walkways and wheelchair friendly access. There was also a new adoration room, a new canteen, and a commercial grade kitchen, which enabled parishioners to run a soup kitchen and serve breakfast on Sundays. A Social Mission Core Team was set up by then parish priest Fr Philip Heng SJ to spearhead the social dimension of the parish. It started with a bang with an up-market bazaar that raised over \$350,000 to fund the ambitious projects for the poor and needy.

2011 saw the 50th anniversary of the parish and a beautiful commemorative book documented life in the parish up until then. Over the years, church activities continued to flourish with RCIA/RCIY and Bible Study, instruction, and Sacraments for foreign domestic workers; Bible Study (Road to Emmaus); expanded Catechism (CGS) and dedicated Youth programmes/activities; Sick and Elderly (PaCES) activities with D'Fellowship Dementia Support; Social Mission Fund; and seasonal activities (Lenten Fish Fry, Advent wreath Making, Feast Day Food and Fund fairs).

JUBILEE YEAR CELEBRATIONS (26 JULY 2020 - 31 JULY 2021)

The Jubilee year opened on 26 July in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, hence we could only hold a small but significant Mass attended by 50 people, and celebrated by Archbishop Marek Zalewski, Apostolic Nuncio to Singapore. It was live-streamed on YouTube. There was also a week-long online retreat via Zoom, Following Ignatius' Footsteps in Daily Life, by Fr Hung Pham SJ, attended by more than 400 regional participants. In October, the beautiful Jubilee Door of Grace was completed and the receipt of the papal indulgence for the Jubilee year was announced. The Door recalls God's infinite mercy and grace, and for

all to always turn back to God and seek him. The motto for the Jubilee: ABOVE ALL, SEEK GOD is a reminder to find God above all our trials in life. In December 2020, nearly 300 parishioners participated in an Advent Prayerthon, a 60-hour prayer marathon marking the 60 years of the parish's existence.

In line with the Jesuits' Universal Apostolic Preference of Walking with the Poor and the Excluded, the Jubilee committee hopes to raise \$60,000 from the sale of commemorative souvenirs, comprising T-shirts and umbrellas for their adopted charity, Morning Star Community Services.

A Memorial Wall honouring the Jesuit priests' contributions to the development of the parish church was unveiled on 12 February, after the Jubilee Mass. Coincidentally, the church's 60th birthday fell on the first day of Chinese New Year making it a double celebration!

In the works are an archival video featuring the milestones of the Church of St Ignatius, and a musical based on the life of St Ignatius, which will premiere in the church on 31 July 2021, with the Jubilee Finale Mass to be celebrated by the Most Rev Archbishop William Goh of Singapore. This will mark the close of our Jubilee year and celebrations.

OUR PRAYER FOR THE FUTURE

The parish of the Church of St Ignatius will carry the torch of faith so courageously and generously brought to them by the early missionaries and our own Irish Jesuits. We will share it with the community in Singapore and the wider region in carrying out the mandate to bring the Good News to everyone who have yet to encounter Jesus Our Lord.

Fr Colin Tan SJ
Parish Priest
Church of St Ignatius, Singapore



BRIDGING FAITH IN CAMBODIA



In Cambodia, there is a steel suspension bridge called The Bridge of Happiness. Spanning 83 metres, it connects several villages from the provinces of Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchey about 10 kilometres from the highway. Cross it and it will lead you practically to the doorstep of Ta Om Catholic Church on the Banteay Meanchey side.

Established in the middle of rice fields over 100 years ago by the Missions Étrangères de Paris, the small church has seen a renaissance in recent years with its careful restoration and growing community. It survived the Khmer Rouge regime with the scars to prove it: marks on the walls from machine guns. It was used as a barn and a rice mill, and by the 1990s it was abandoned and fell into disrepair. After the war, the church was turned over to the tiny population of Catholics in the area who managed to salvage it.

Near the church, the river flows into the great Tonle Sap Lake, the largest body of freshwater in Southeast Asia. Its rich resources from the beginning attracted human settlement and gave birth to early Khmer civilisation. In its ancient temples, stone carvings depict river life along with its flora and fauna. To this day, the lives of villagers from both sides are inextricably linked to the river--they use it for travel, commerce, and communication. This is where they bathe and wash their clothes, the children come after school to wash their muddy feet.

The parish priest of St John the Apostle Catholic Church in Siem Reap, in the Apostolic Prefecture of Battambang, is

Filipino Jesuit Fr Jose Hildy Banaynal. Fr Totet, as he is known throughout the parish, saw the need to connect the communities on each side of the river in Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchey. "It has been my dream since 2015--when I became the parish priest in charge--I saw the need to extend our services to the other side of the river, which belongs in another province," says Fr Banaynal. "Before the war, people would come to church in their boats but now we don't see it that much anymore, so the communities were separated."

Around 7,000 people live in seven villages near the church, but the river made it difficult to access. The village leaders identified the need for a bridge to connect their communities and that village life would benefit significantly from it. A bridge would make it possible for the church to reach out to more people and extend social and education services such as house repair assistance, visit and medication for the sick, hygiene and sanitation training for mothers, guidance for mothers, care of the elderly, and care and formation of the children. A bridge would also enable the people to easily visit the temples--Wat Bat Trong, Wat Tonlop, and Wat Sambor--during feast days.

The villagers were enthusiastic. "The bridge was a cooperation with the people," shares Fr Banaynal. "When they heard that we were planning on a bridge, the people collected their own money to be able to buy the piece of land on the other side of the bridge," he says. This ensured they had acquired right of way. "The village leaders on both sides of the bridge helped to clear the permissions for us. They were excited about it. It's a good sign of friendship."

Fr Banaynal then set about raising the funds needed to build. Through Jesuit Mission Australia, a donor decided to fund a large portion of the bridge's construction. "Later on, I realised that we had to raise more for the foundation wall and, to enhance community life, the steps. That is why we also asked our friend in Singapore who, with her friends, promptly donated the rest," Fr Banaynal says. "The Lord has been very good. I really feel that the Lord wanted us to have the bridge. It was so easy for us--for it to happen." Even for the church renovation, the same friend in Singapore covered the cost. "That's the fruit of the mission. I always trust that the work of the mission belongs to God. The Lord will provide. The donors are fellow missionaries," he says.



Resources came not only from private donors in other countries but the villagers themselves, and even the contractor who donated his professional services to the project. Mr Rithy, who wants to become a Catholic, told Fr Banaynal that he considers it his apostolate to help the church. "He has been working with us since 1995," says Fr Banaynal. "He dedicated the bridge, made it really beautiful, working with us on the design. He said, 'Father, I propose that we call this the Bridge of Happiness because this bridge is bringing joy and happiness to people on both sides.'"

The bridge was built despite the pandemic. Started in March 2020, it was near completion by September. It opened quietly to the public on 4 October, the feast of St Francis of Assisi--a date that coincided with the release of the papal encyclical Fratelli Tutti. "A bridge is a beautiful symbol of collaboration, of helping each other, of collaboration between religions. Especially now, with the letter of Pope Francis on brotherhood, on friendship," says Fr Banaynal.

With decades as a missionary working in Cambodia and its predominantly Buddhist population, he says they are "very open people. Their attitude in life is welcoming. It's a very welcoming religion and a very welcoming culture." Fr Banaynal knows to build something beautiful was important. "Cambodians are very good with architecture; they make beautiful things. It enhances their dignity to have this place," he says. "As a missionary, you have to think of creating a beautiful atmosphere for people. Not necessarily to make them Christians... the most important thing is to create communities, to give them a sense that the church is facilitating joy in their lives." He calls the bridge "a beautiful place... that makes the community".

An old man from the Siem Reap side reached the church by asking his grandson to drive him on a motorbike to see the bridge. "He was so excited that the two places are now connected," says Fr Banaynal. He continues: "On the other side of the bridge is a poor woman's house. She said, 'Before, I used to go to the church every Sunday. We joined the Mass.' I was so surprised to hear this. She said, 'I know the church. I knew the sisters there before, when we were children.' People are remembering the old times when they would hear the bell ringing, even on the other side. They know that the church is here. They are Buddhists, but they have good memories of the church."

Fr Banaynal adds: "This is the beauty of being a missionary. In that moment when you are feeling your way and wondering what you are doing here at all. I don't look at my work in terms of how many baptisms we have; rather, it's about inculturation and interreligious dialogue. It's about teaching the Gospel in a way that makes people understand it in their lives and culture."

He says planting the seeds of friendship and joy is what they are doing. "We don't know what the future of the mission will be, but I know that people who come to us, they will be cared for with loving kindness. They will live with values of mercy, justice, and care for each other and the natural world. Together – as Buddhists and Christians - we will hopefully make a better world – a world that brings religions together, a world that reconciles communities and families to each other, a world that bridges people unto themselves – and with God, the Father of us all, whose happiness is our strength."

TRIBUTE

MEMORIES OF A TRUE JESUIT: TRIBUTES FROM FRIENDS OF FR ADOLFO NICOLÁS SJ (29 APRIL 1936 - 20 MAY 2020)



Fr Adolfo Nicolás SJ and Fr William Currie SJ in Tokyo, 1967, the year of their ordination

On 25 February 1961, I was among the Jesuit scholastics in the Japanese language school in Yokosuka, Japan, preparing to welcome a new group of applicants from overseas to the Japanese province. Suddenly one of the Spanish scholastics announced in a solemn tone, "One of the group arriving tomorrow, Adolfo Nicolás, will be our Provincial someday." Thirty-two years later that prediction came true, but little did we guess in 1961 that Nico would not only become Provincial but later Superior General of the whole Society.

Nico was also a leader in organising discussion groups among the scholastics to deepen our understanding of the Council documents, and as the ecumenical movement began to take shape, promoting dialogue between Jesuit scholastics and representatives of the Anglican, Lutheran, and United Church of Christ communities. Another pioneering effort he made with considerable success was encouraging communication between Jesuits and our counterparts in the diocesan seminary next door. Nico's ecumenical efforts reached a kind of symbolic culmination on 17 March 1967, the evening of our ordination to the priesthood in Tokyo, when a number of Protestant clergymen and their wives joined Nico, me, and my family for a joyful celebration. Nico went on to many greater accomplishments later in his life, but these are the memories I treasure most with joy and gratitude. – **William Currie SJ**



Fr Ando Isamu SJ (leftmost) and Fr Nicolás (centre) with Jesuit scholastics in Japan

The 34th General Congregation inspired me to take the initiative to live in a low income workers' area in maybe the poorest region of Tokyo where I was already doing pastoral social apostolate, while teaching at Sophia University. That wasn't the "standard" life of Jesuits in Tokyo and provoked misunderstanding.

Fr Nicolás was our Jesuit provincial and one day phoned me asking whether there was any empty room in my apartment. Due to the construction of the new Church of St Ignatius, the

provincial house was dismantled and although he had various options, he decided to come to live in the region where I was. We were there together for about four years. From the beginning he was greatly concerned about the situation of a large population of Filipino workers living and working in the region. A few months later, Fr Nicolás ended his term as provincial and dedicated himself to working in the Catholic Tokyo International Center (CTIC). At the same time, we did pastoral work together at a diocesan parish, taking care of a small Filipino community.

The parish, composed of about 90 local Japanese faithful, was soon overwhelmed with foreign workers and often reached, on Sundays, 600 Filipino workers that belonged to the El Shaddai Christian group. That created problems because every Sunday they used all empty facilities of the parish. Finally, the parish decided not to allow them to come to the church anymore.

I still remember that Sunday evening conversation with Fr Nicolás about the matter. In fact, he had become the chaplain of the El Shaddai group, convinced of the need to assist their members in their true and simple faith, and the daily difficulties facing them in Japan. We felt sad at remarks that the parish was losing the generous financial contributions provided by the El Shaddai community, which had been thrown to a religious exile. – **Ando Isamu SJ**



Fr Nicolás with Jesuits and friends in the home of Eric and Marites Ingles

Fr Nico was a peaceful person who generously shared his smile and warm hellos. He was not one for chattiness, yet, he kept abreast with the conversations with his gentle nodding, his "hmmmm", and occasional one-sentence replies. For instance, when we were discussing the highly emotional subject of extra judicial killings and silence of some church leaders, a few Jesuits included, Fr Nico, in almost a monotone reply, said, "They will act when it comes close to them", then said nothing more. He never rebuffed us or suggested we keep a distance when, out of concern with his frequent falling as his illness progressed, we would remind him to slow down in walking or we would hold him as he wobbled. He obediently nodded with a "yes" and a smile. – **Eric and Marites Ingles (Philippines)**

When Fr Nico was our Provincial in Japan and I was in Nagasaki, I remembered consulting him about some activity I wanted to do. Feeling my Local Superior didn't understand my point, and hoping Fr Nico would, I just told him frankly that that was the reason why I was asking his opinion. I remember clearly what Fr Nico, with his usual smile, told me: "If your Local Superior doesn't agree, don't expect me to do so." I



Fr Renzo de Luca SJ with Fr Nicolás at the launch of the Adolfo Nicolás EAPI Endowment Fund in Manila in 2018

was disappointed at that time, but I saw the point. Now that I am Provincial, I am not afraid to repeat those words to my people, knowing that, even if some may get frustrated, they will help them to grow in our way. – **Fr Renzo de Luca SJ**

“We collect stories from the provinces and regions, secretaries, peer groups, then we distribute the interesting ones as news.” That was my answer when Fr Nicolás, who was then new to his position as JCAP President, asked me about what I usually do to share news about the conference. “What are the criteria you use to decide which stories are interesting?” he asked again. I was surprised to hear this question. Honestly, I got only enough stories to fill the quota for a monthly news bulletin that I did not have the luxury of choosing the “interesting” ones. “Don’t we notice that the stories we share are usually about something we have successfully accomplished?” Fr Nico pursued. “Certainly, from those stories we can learn something, but is it not possible that we also write news about our failure?”



Fr Riyo Mursanto SJ and Fr Nicolás at the Ateneo de Manila University

I have to admit that even after I left the office of the Socius of the conference, I had never put out a single story about failure. I learned, however, that what Fr Nico said about celebrating failure has deep roots in his personal experience of Ignatian spiritual life. A phrase he often repeated was “depth of spiritual life”. Only a person who has a deep understanding of life as a gift can celebrate failure. Fr Nico knew that his life mission was not his own but a mission from above, the Missio Dei. That conversation we had was a moment of a great revelation. We know very well that pride is a synonym for Jesuit, and that is why it is all the more important that we beg to be humble by asking for the courage to celebrate our own failures. – **Riyo Mursanto SJ**



Fr Nicolás and Victoria Faicol in EAPI, 1978

On regular East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI) Wednesday Community Nights, Fr Nico would be transformed into a flamenco dancer, a bandurria player, and best of all, Charlie Chaplin. Oh, those Charlie Chaplin evenings!

It was during Fr Nico’s time as EAPI director when Fr General Pedro Arrupe met privately with the staff community. Before his arrival, I had told Fr Nico that Fr Arrupe was the

first Jesuit I read about and that he was my favorite Jesuit. There was no photo of our meeting at that time. But the next day, on top of my table was a small piece of paper with Fr Arrupe’s signature!

When Fr Nico ended his EAPI tenure, we had Mass for him and I cried a river that it made one Jesuit quip that I should charge him for all the tissue paper used.

In one of my last visits, I asked him what was a memorable experience during his time as Father General. It took him a few seconds of quiet and then, he finally replied: “When I met a Jesuit who was true.” On 20 May 2020, the angels led someone to Paradise, he who had a great sense of humor and who was a true Jesuit. – **Victoria Faicol**



In those years at the EAPI, we had cultural shows when each country would present, in songs, dances, costumes, and rituals, their culture. One such event was reserved for the staff, and the main surprise-number was always Nico’s, who would appear as Charlie Chaplin. And believe me, he was better than Charlie Chaplin himself! It was truly hilarious and always got rave reviews since, despite all our efforts to compete, Nico always had the best part of the whole show. I’m not sure he ever appeared, when General, as Charlie Chaplin. Too bad, it would have been worth more than a speech or a homily. – **Roger Champoux SJ**



Top: Fr Nicolás with Rachel Prieto’s son. Bottom: Rachel and Fr Nicolás

Fr Nico, no words can express how lucky I am for being part of your life. I am thankful that God has given me those opportunities to take care of you. I will cherish those memories we spent together. Thank you for protecting me and trusting in me. Thank you because I found a father figure in you. You are like a father to me. You taught me how to boost my self-confidence and my skills. You treated my son as you own grandson and I am so grateful for that. Thank you for being a kind and great priest. We miss you and love you. You are always remembered by our hearts. – **Rachel Prieto, Fr Nicolás’ caregiver at the Jesuit Health and Wellness Center in Manila**



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