

# the jesuits in asia pacific 2016



a faith that does justice



Pope Francis with the 40 Jesuits he met with in Manila

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Photos on the cover:

- Left, top: Pope Francis visits with families of Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda victims in Palo, Leyte. (Photo by Benhur Arcayan / Malacañang Photo Bureau)
- Right: Dhammayietra (Peace Walk) 2015

The 2015 community of Arrupe International Residence

# Hope amidst challenges

**T**he Jesuit Conference exists to promote cooperation for the Jesuit mission to serve a faith that does justice. This is a daunting undertaking in our region given the depth and diversity of cultures, languages and customs, given the disparities of wealth and power and given the distractions and spread of consumerist lifestyles.

In his message for the World Day of Peace, Pope Francis chose to speak on the theme “Overcome indifference and win peace”. He writes, “Yet some events of the year now ending inspire me, in looking ahead to the new year, to encourage everyone not to lose hope in our human ability to conquer evil and to combat resignation and indifference. They demonstrate our capacity to show solidarity and to rise above self-interest, apathy and indifference in the face of critical situations.”

One most inspiring event in 2015, especially for us in Asia Pacific, was the visit of Pope Francis to the Philippines in January. His visit brought consolation especially to the people in Tacloban who had suffered so much 14 months earlier when the super typhoon Haiyan (known locally as Yolanda) hit Leyte and Samar islands, leaving more than 6,200 people dead, 1,785 missing and the homes of 5 million people damaged or destroyed. Despite the new storm brewing in Tacloban, he refused to cancel his visit. His desire to accompany and console had him going out into the rain to be with the people, dressed in the

same yellow raincoat. He had spoken eloquently in Manila; his message as always of mercy and joy. But in going to Tacloban, he brought God’s mercy and joy to those who have suffered so very much.

The Holy Father inspired us again with his encyclical, *Laudato si’*. For some years now, the Conference has attempted to raise consciousness in Jesuit communities and institutions about our common challenge to care for our common home, for reconciliation with creation. The encyclical inspired our major superiors to issue our Jesuit Conference’s first joint statement, in which we asked “each of our Jesuit communities to embark soon on a process of discernment toward making concrete changes in our lifestyle”, keeping “in mind three particular priorities: a secure water supply for all; planting in order to cool down the earth’s atmosphere; and the recycling of resources and rubbish to counter the effects of a ‘throwaway culture’”.

Then in November, the world took heart at the stunning outcome of the Myanmar elections when the opposition party of Aung San Suu Kyi won 80 percent of the vote. It is not easy for a nation to turn aside from decades of violence, military control and poverty inducing policies, but a brave and informed civil society is surely emerging. The fledgling Jesuit mission in Myanmar is steadily putting down roots after the Society was invited by several bishops to return some 15 or 20 years ago. It is a privilege for the

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with His anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

*From the Prayer of Pope Francis for the Jubilee of Mercy*

Jesuits to sustain our commitment to accompany the Church and civil leaders in re-building education and social services in Myanmar and in accompanying the many displaced local people within the country or rendered stateless abroad.

In Asia Pacific, the Jesuit Conference has developed a five-year plan that covers three broad areas – our governance, formation and how we can collaborate in our ministries. Through planning together, our major superiors wish to achieve greater intersectoral collaboration, greater sharing of knowledge and of wisdom, and of the insights that Jesuits and our collaborators gain from their life with the people.

A stronger and more networked effectiveness across Asia Pacific is in evidence in several of our ministries. One of these is in education where the Jesuit universities across our Conference cooperate more and more in activities that will better form their students into young men and women for others. Also, some universities have partnered with institutions in our mission territories to help them grow. Ateneo de Davao and Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro, Philippines for example have partnership agreements with our emerging educational institutions in Myanmar.

Something Fr Adolfo Nicolás, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, said to a group of refugees recently rings very true for our Asia Pacific conference. Reflecting on his many years living in Asia, he said "... in Asia we tend to seek the way, [the] 'how'. [How] to learn yoga, how to concentrate, how to meditate. Yoga, Zen, religions, judo – which is seen as the path of the weak because one draws on the strength of others – these are all seen as paths."

In a part of the world where Christians are a small minority surrounded by countries where Buddhism and Islam are major religions, our Asian way enables

our mission. Our Jesuit numbers do not significantly increase here in the Asia Pacific conference. Yet we can face new and demanding challenges because we are not alone and we can draw on the strength of others. The age when Jesuits can claim or aim to work alone are long gone. We need to learn to collaborate, to be humble and to lead through service, even through vulnerability. The many people who work with us do so in response to the call of the Eternal King. We are indeed privileged to find partners who share the same mission to serve the needs of the poor, to engage in education of the young and to live the joy of the Gospel. We give thanks for this as we go forth to bring God's mercy and joy to all, especially those who need it most.

In explaining the Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis said: "The world needs to discover that God is father, that there is mercy, that cruelty is not the way, that condemnation is not the way, because it is the Church herself who at times takes a hard line, and falls into the temptation to follow a hard line and to underline moral rules only, many people are excluded." As he said in 2013 in his first Angelus address, the real problem is that people – not God – give up on forgiveness. But, mercy changes everything. "A little mercy makes the world a little less cold and more just."

As we continue to labour together in the Lord's vineyard, may this Jubilee of Mercy be for each of us a year of grace from the Lord and may we strive to be merciful like our Father in Heaven to everyone we encounter and make the world a little less cold and more just.

**FR MARK RAPER SJ**

President, Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific

# 2015 at a glance

**15 - 19 JAN**



Pope Francis visits the Philippines

(Photo by Rey S. Baniquet / NIB)

**2015**

**JAN**



**18 JAN**

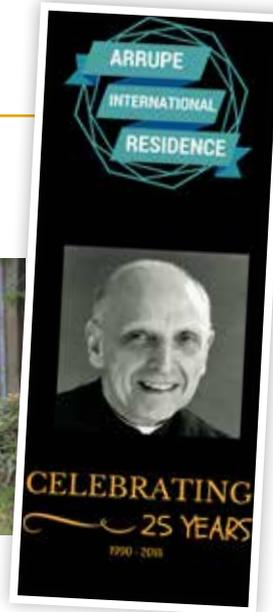


Yearlong celebration of 400th anniversary of the Jesuits in Vietnam ends with mass with Fr General Adolfo Nicolás SJ



## 13 JULY - 6 FEB 2016

Arrupe International Residence celebrates Silver Jubilee



## 31 JULY - 25 DEC

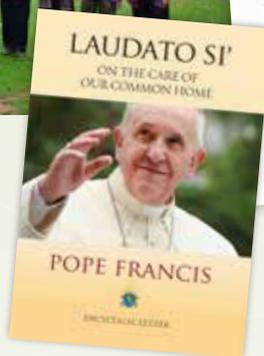
Jesuits in Korea celebrate 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary



JULY

## 17 JULY

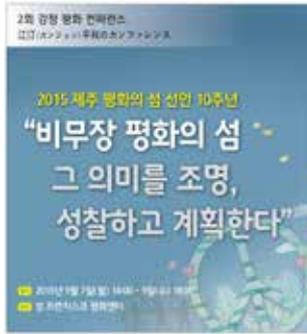
JCAP Major Superiors release statement on *Laudato si'*



9 OCT

Jesuits in Cambodia issue response to *Laudato si'*

# 10 SEPT



First bi-province meeting of Jesuits and collaborators in social apostolates in Japan and Korea, in conjunction with 2015 Gangjeong Peace Conference on Jeju Island, Korea



# SEPT

# OCT

## 19 - 22 OCT

GC36 JCAP Electors meeting in Quezon City, Philippines



## 12 SEPT

Loyola School of Theology and Loyola House of Studies begin yearlong Golden Jubilee celebration



2015 at a glance

# 2015 at a glance

6 - 12 DEC



Module 1 of first JCAP Leadership Development Programme



DEC

2016

26 DEC - 3 JAN 2016

**MAGIS**  
ASIA PACIFIC

First Magis JCAP held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia



# Soft Power



Pope Francis waves to the crowd after his final mass attended by an estimated 6 million people.  
(Photo by Ryan Lim / Malacañang Photo Bureau)

In January 2015, Pope Francis visited the Philippines. Though he spent most of the five days in the capital, Manila, his real destination was Tacloban, the city at the heart of the devastation wrought by Super Typhoon Haiyan (known locally as Yolanda). His desire was to be with the survivors, to be in solidarity with them as they grieved and struggled to rebuild their lives.

On the third day of his visit, Typhoon Mekkhala (known locally as Amang) made landfall and threatened to disrupt the pope's itinerary to Tacloban. He was not dissuaded by the bad weather, and his schedule was simply moved up to avoid the darkest clouds. When he landed at the airport, a waiting crowd of about 150,000 people from the city and the surrounding areas chanted "Viva il Papa, Papa Francesco!" He was to say mass in a nearby open field, but because of the pouring rain and strong winds, the organisers suggested that the mass be held in an indoor area and projected to the outdoor screens. But Pope Francis was undeterred and chose to be with the people. Thus, the outdoor altar was hurriedly given better shelter and the world witnessed the first papal mass in a typhoon, punctuated by a windswept pope in a yellow raincoat.

## PAPAL VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES

With this gesture, the pope made clear once more that the poor and those on the periphery are his priority. And when he met with 40 Jesuits in the Apostolic Nunciature, he reiterated this desire with his message to all the Jesuits in the Philippines: “Go to the peripheries, especially to the poor.”

Soon after, the Philippine Jesuit Provincial, Fr Antonio Moreno SJ, began the process of formulating a concerted response to the pope’s call. After months of consultation, Mindanao, the southern group of islands in the Philippines, was identified as a critical periphery because the poverty and marginalisation of its people is complicated by a longstanding conflict between government forces, Muslim separatists, communist guerrillas, indigenous peoples, and large natural resource companies.

A Province Road Map towards Mindanao was outlined in January 2016 to the superiors and directors of work in the province. Inspired by Pope Francis’ call to go to the peripheries as well as his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* and encyclical *Laudato si’*, the road map seeks to work with and for the poor, engage in new and creative evangelisation, and protect

the environment. All Jesuit institutions and works in the country were challenged, given their different strengths and capacities, to reflect on ways to be more closely aligned with this direction. With three large Jesuit universities – Cagayan de Oro, Davao, and Zamboanga – already strategically positioned there, emphasis has been placed on partnering and collaborating to strengthen and expand existing institutions and works in Mindanao. Fr Moreno hopes concrete initiatives and projects can be proposed and started this year.

### Bearing Fruit

During his visit, Filipinos across the country felt the care and affection the pope had for them in word and deed - his unscheduled trip to an orphanage, his willingness to brave bad weather to be with those who had lost so much, his personal words to console the



Above: Pope Francis celebrates mass amidst heavy rain and strong wind near Tacloban Airport. (Photo by Benhur Arcayan / Malacañang Photo Bureau)

Left: Pope Francis hugging a child upon his arrival at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City from Tacloban. (Photo by Rey S. Banquet / NIB)



Above: Pope Francis blesses a child upon his arrival from Tacloban and Palo, Leyte in Villamor Air Base in Pasay City. (Photo by Rey S Baniquet / NIB)



father of Kristel Mae Padasas, a volunteer for the papal mass who was killed when scaffolding fell on her. Particularly touching was his emotional embrace of Glycel Palomar, a Tulay ng Kabataan (Bridge for the Youth) Foundation scholar, who tearfully asked him why God allowed children to be abandoned by their parents and fall into drugs and prostitution.

Unexpectedly, Filipinos were able to reciprocate this love explicitly at a mass when the pope was reading the Gospel narrating the resurrection story by the Sea of Galilee. When Pope Francis uttered the words of Jesus to Peter, “Do you love me?” many in the congregation shouted, “Yes!” before he could continue. He could not hold back his smile and quickly expressed his gratitude to much applause and laughter.

The pope’s affection and example have been a touchstone for the leaders and clergy of the Philippine Church. Papal quotations and anecdotes

of his visit still pepper official statements, articles, and homilies a year after his departure. With his visit, Pope Francis made it easier for Filipino Catholics to connect with and understand their faith in modern times. And his impact is not limited to Catholics. A Social Weather Stations survey conducted in the Philippines two months after his visit showed the pope’s trust rating had rocketed among Catholics, other Christians, and Muslims.

Pope Francis is a role model for ordinary Catholics, for clergy, and for the country’s leaders. Indeed, it is hoped that his values and style of leadership will have a positive influence as Filipinos go to the polls in May for national and local elections. It may be then that his visit truly bears fruit.

**JOSEPH PATRICK ECHEVARRIA SJ**  
A scholastic in the Philippine Jesuit Province



# The Spiritual Exercises

## and the Church in China

**K**wai-ling came to my course on Spiritual Conversation in 2005. She was then the novice mistress of her congregation, and my venture into Ignatian formation in China was fairly new. I was conducting the one-week course three times a year, each time with 25 students. How time flies! Now she is the director of a retreat centre capable of accommodating more than 70 retreatants, assisted by a team of more than 10 spiritual directors. And we have become collaborators in the ministry. Ten years have seen about 1,000 religious, priests and lay people formed through this course. And by great common effort, more and more Catholics have experienced the Ignatian 8-day retreats, and not a small number have gone through the 30-day retreat too.

Since 1979, the Church in China has been enjoying greater freedom and contact with the universal Church, and religious and priests are able to receive formation overseas. However, although there

is great benefit in learning new things, it is important to be able to discern what is best for our own faith journey. We know that Ignatian formation, especially the Spiritual Exercises, is an effective process for guiding a person through a personal appropriation of his or her faith and inner journey. Now many of our participants know this too. They have found it helpful, even necessary to living their religious and priestly vocations faithfully in the midst of the demands and challenges of religious life today. Indeed, maturity and genuine religious experience are crucial and fundamental to doing so.

When Ignatius and his companions founded the Society of Jesus in 1540, they had no plan to enter the arena of formal education. Similarly when my team and others started to give Ignatian retreats and formation in mainland China, we were simply happy that the religious and priests received them with spiritual fruits and joy. We had no vision of them one day giving the Spiritual Exercises themselves.

Training spiritual directors was not our intent. We did not see the potential there nor did we dare to dream about it. Fortunately God had a different thought.

Five years ago my superior invited me to begin a kind of spiritual directors' training programme. I was somewhat reluctant and felt inadequate to begin even after a year of mutual bargaining and consideration. Thank God we finally followed this prompting from the Holy Spirit and began the programme in 2012. It was a three-year programme of three months of learning together each year. We offered it to 28 of the students in the Spiritual Conversation course. Kwai-ling was one of them. We tried to provide them with some basic understanding of people, mental health, philosophy of life, prayer, etc before making the long retreat together and learning its dynamics afterwards.

As the programme progressed, we saw something amazing begin to emerge. Through the frequent and intensive encounters in those three years – in retreats, praying together, small group sharing, writing journals and papers, reading, practice of spiritual direction and mutual evaluation – many of them became more mature and integrated.

Giving the Spiritual Exercises is labour intensive. Each day we usually see six persons at most, but in China we are often asked to guide eight people instead. The harvest is plenty but labourers are few. We realised we had to train local spiritual directors and retreat givers.

After three years, we chose 12 from among the 28 to begin giving retreats under supervision in the



retreat houses or through Skype conversation. Last year saw this smaller group giving the long retreat under supervision twice. The other graduates are giving shorter retreats under our supervision by Skype from time to time.

*Cura personalis* is fundamental in this formation and ministry. However, we cannot ignore the importance of environment in making a good silent retreat. Besides the preparation and organisation, good food, comfortable bedrooms and natural beauty are necessary for Ignatian contemplation. But many religious houses in China do not provide this. In this area too we have witnessed the providence of the Lord. The last few years have seen the establishment of a few lovely retreat centres in China. We cannot but admire the dedication and conviction of the religious who spent so much energy setting up these centres, some of them even at the expense of their health.

In Kwai-ling's retreat centre, the programmes encourage religious members from both the official church and underground church to participate together so that they can meet and share in the learning process. This is a concrete way to establish communication and gradual communion on both sides, although there is still tension between them from time to time, especially in liturgy and celebrating the Eucharist together. But Kwai-ling and her team never lose heart. They strongly believe the Ignatian formation they went through can help everyone have a personal experience with the Lord and that this will gradually bring us through the desert into the promised land of communion.

**FR STEPHEN TONG SJ**

Director of the St Francis Xavier Spirituality Centre  
in Hong Kong and Chairman of the Chinese Province  
Ignatian Spirituality Commission



# Buddhist-Christian Dialogue & Action in the Year of Mercy

In the face of the enormous challenges and crises of globalisation, people from the different religious communities are asking a question: How can a religious faith with its truth and vision be a source of hope to the contemporary world – and do this not apart from but in collaboration with people of other religions? Pope Francis might have had this question in mind when he decided to declare the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. He has relentlessly spoken out against the “globalisation of indifference” since the beginning of his pontificate. The point of his message is that we have to be aware of and sensitive to the poor who are suffering from socio-economic, political and ecological injustice. His call for “being merciful as God is merciful” is a

prophetic voice challenging Christians to become more effective signs of God’s compassionate love and justice for the poor and the marginalised. He urges Christians to do this in dialogue and collaboration with people of goodwill and beyond religious boundaries. The Pope emphasises that real peace is possible only through our commitment to justice.

Our efforts to build a Buddhist-Christian dialogue should be pursued with this same vision of merciful action for justice and peace.

It is interesting to note that the term “mercy” in many Asian languages is rooted in a Buddhist concept. The Chinese and Korean word for mercy is *jabi* or *taeja-taeji* which means “great love” (*taeja*) and “great compassion” (*taebi*). This term refers to





Both Christianity and Buddhism show that suffering remains inexplicable, most of all for the man who attempts to explain it in order to evade it, or who thinks explanation itself is an escape. Suffering is not a “problem” as if it were something we could stand outside of and control. Suffering, as both Christianity and Buddhism see, each in its own way, is part of our very ego-identity and empirical existence, and the only thing to do about it is to plunge right into the middle of contradiction and confusion in order to be transformed by what Zen calls “the great death” and Christianity calls “dying and rising with Christ”.

Thomas Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*

the selfless love of the Buddha and of the Buddhist saints, especially that of Quan Yin, the most venerated bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism. East Asian Buddhists believe that Quan Yin, often in a female figure, listens to the cry of all sentient beings with her motherly compassion. Quan Yin is a translation of the Sanskrit *Avalokiteshvara*, a compassionate bodhisattva who looks down upon the world’s lamentations and appears in various forms to those who call upon his/her name. In Buddhism, a bodhisattva is a person who is assured to become a Buddha. But Quan Yin or *Avalokiteshvara* bodhisattva resolved to postpone his/her enlightenment until all sentient beings are saved from their suffering. This is why some Asian theologians compare the self-emptying (*kenotic*) and compassionate love of Jesus to that of Quan Yin.

The original Pali word for mercy (*taeja-taebi*) is *metta-karuna*, used by Theravada Buddhists in the Southeast Asian countries. This term refers to the four sublime states of the human mind, fully realised by the Buddha and by Arahants (Buddhist saints) in their final liberation. The Buddha and Arahants are believed to be free from all kinds of selfish desires and

negative feelings. They are always ready to help others with loving kindness (*metta*), take others’ pain and suffering as their own with great compassion (*karuna*), and be glad for others’ happiness as their own with sympathetic joy (*mudita*). Their mind is always in perfect balance with equanimity (*upekkha*). Inspired by these ideals, our Buddhist friends are struggling to overcome greed (*raga*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*) – three unwholesome roots (*akusalamula*) which lead individuals and societies to enormous suffering.

Today, in the world of globalisation, we can see the structural manifestation of greed: economic injustice afflicting not only the poor but also the rich through ever-growing hatred between them. War and violence are the unavoidable outcomes of greed and hatred. The root of all violent conflicts is delusive attachment to “I” and “mine” or “we” and “ours”, separated from others. Indifference to the suffering of others is a passive form of delusion. The dualistic view of “my group” and the “other group” is used to justify killing even innocent others who are perceived as part of the evil enemy. Terrorism and the war against terrorism arise.

## INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE



Buddhism, in its various forms, realises the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain, by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination.

Nostra Aetate, 1965

Against this dualistic delusion, the Buddhist insights of non-self (*anatta*) and emptiness (*sunyata*) lead us to the mindful awareness of the interdependent reality of all things (*paticcasamuppada*). There is no separate self and the other; nothing is independent in the universe. We are all related. That is why the Buddha, Arahants and Bodhisattvas cannot remain in the eternal happiness (*nirvana*) alone, separated from the suffering living beings. Compassionate social engagement is the fruit of the Buddhist wisdom (*panna*). Inspired by this way of liberation, we Christians recall the biblical insights of God's love and justice: we are all responsible for his creation and salvation. In our *agapeic* commitment for the poor who are victims of organised greed (*mammon*) today, we are called to reconcile all distorted relations in God's mercy. As the late Cambodian monk Maha Ghosananda said, "Peace is coming step by step" starting with our great compassion for the suffering and walking together towards a more human, more just and more peaceful world."

**FR IN-GUN KANG SJ**

Coordinator for Dialogue with  
Buddhism, Jesuit Conference of  
Asia Pacific



# Arrupe House

## - 1990 and a bit more

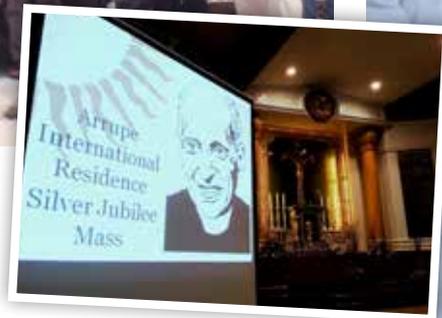
Everything has a pre-history and Arrupe International Residence (AIR) is no exception. Few will know who first spoke about the idea of a common house of studies for Jesuits in East Asia. It was Fr Robert Deiters SJ, then Provincial of Japan, who first talked about an Asian Juniorate. He experienced in his own province a need for facility in English. He also saw that there probably could not be adequate cooperation among the Jesuit provinces in this area until a sizeable number of Jesuits got to know one another. But that was some time before AIR was conceived.

Fr Deiters, however, was not the founder of AIR. The founder was Fr Daven Day SJ of Australia, the President of what was then the Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania. He had the same concerns as Fr Deiters, but he discovered further needs and acted on this discovery. One of the concrete needs was the intellectual formation of young Jesuits of the smaller units in the Jesuit Conference. These were Thailand, Malaysia-Singapore, Micronesia and later Timor-Leste and Myanmar. Fr Day engaged in lots of planning and persuasion of the major superiors of the Conference. It is clear to me that AIR would not have existed were it not for Fr Day's vision and persistence. Even after AIR became a reality, Fr Day, as the house's first major superior, was much involved with its first few years.

Recently, I found the group picture of the first year at AIR (1990 to 1991); and happily, old age did not prevent me from remembering the names of everyone in that picture. There were two staff members, Fr Peter Kim Se Mang SJ of Malaysia, who was Prefect of Studies, and Fr James Meehan SJ, who was Prefect of spiritual matters. And there was the rector. Ten young men were from Malaysia-Singapore Region, three from the Philippine Province, two from the Indonesian Province. There was one each from the Chinese Province, as well as from Upper Germany, North Germany, Thailand and



## INTERNATIONAL WORKS



Micronesia. Later Australia, Korea, India and places in Europe and North America were added.

What are these men doing today? Twelve men remain in the Society. One is now Philippine Provincial, another the Regional Superior of the Malaysia-Singapore Region, one is Vicar General in the Archdiocese of Singapore, one is in the Bishops' Conference of Indonesia, one is a province treasurer; one is in charge of the Apostleship of Prayer in the Philippines, one is a parish priest, one is in Vatican Radio, three run retreat houses, one teaches in a university. The rest have left the Society and are husbands, fathers, bachelors or a combination.

In those early years there were a number of things that made things easier than what might have been the case. All of the men had adequate to excellent English and the effort to create programmes for spiritual growth was made easy because the young men desired them. Most took responsibility for their own formation as they were urged to do as mature young religious. While there were some of the problems that come with any new house, there was considerable openness to sharing in the house chores. All had a common vocabulary from the Spiritual Exercises of St

Ignatius of Loyola, and most were deeply affected by the spirit and values of the Exercises.

We have to be grateful for the many things that pre-existed our occupation of AIR on the Ateneo de Manila campus. These were a support for what we were sent to achieve. The Ateneo University with its liberal arts curriculum and the set-up of the Loyola School of Theology were readymade for these Jesuit students, and both institutions were open to considering suggestions from our particular needs. Even in that first year, there was an academics committee with faculty members from both schools so that we could quickly learn what was expected of us and how we should direct the scholastics and brothers. Fortunately we had three Filipinos in formation, two Philippine Province priests among the four official consultors of the rector in addition to two successive rectors of the Loyola House of Studies, Frs Salonga and Balchand, to advise us.

Of course, there were difficulties. There was an unavoidable lack of familiarity with what was new. The university was largely unknown to us. Very few knew any Tagalog, and few knew much about



Philippine culture. Although each was nourished by the Ignatian Exercises and other Jesuitica, there were occasional miscommunications because of differences in previous formation. There were inevitable distractions too because of the need to complete the building's construction, hire the help, and distribute the house jobs – all this when we were anxious to get busy with the growth of the young men.

Cultural differences were occasionally a concern, but the biggest problem overall was the Jesuit age spread. We had young men just out of the novitiate right up to ordination and beyond. Before long, however, we found some ways to ameliorate the problem. For instance we created groups that met several times a month: pre-regency and theology groups, and later, even special studies groups.

Now, 25 years later, there are some obvious differences from how things were in the early 1990s. AIR is now primarily a theologate, providing a residential and community experience that complements the Asian Theology Programme offered by Loyola School of Theology. Residents now come not only from Asia Pacific but also from provinces in Europe and Africa. There are also more people in AIR now than in the early years. The number of residents never went beyond 42 in the '90s but in

recent years, the population reached about 60. At the end of 2015, it had close to 50 residents.

From the beginning, the Society of Jesus has always been international. If ever the Society ceases to be international in spirit and reality, it will also cease to be the Jesuit body conceived by Ignatius. I believe that AIR was and is the fruit of that concern beyond borders; and at the same time, it is one of the seeds from which internationality will grow.

The friendships formed at AIR have to lead to openness to cooperation in Asia Pacific and beyond. Its existence is a reminder and a stimulus to our internationality. I am convinced that it has contributed to the expanded vision of the Major Superiors of what is now the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific. AIR has also been a spur to the generosity of the Philippine Province. We have only to look at the 12 Arrupe men from that first year alone who are working in the Asia Pacific vineyard and beyond. And now we have alumni from 24 other years.

**FR WILLIAM MCGARRY SJ**

First rector of Arrupe International Residence



Published by the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific  
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April 2016

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