



The Jesuits

IN ASIA PACIFIC

A FAITH THAT DOES JUSTICE

2023

Contents



- 03** A REBIRTH OF OUR LIFE-MISSION
IN THE SPIRIT
- 04** 2022 AT A GLANCE
- 06** ACCOMPANYING PAKISTAN
- 08** CREATORS OF HOPE
EMPOWERING A HOPE-FILLED FUTURE
- 10** LIVING OUT A FAITH THAT DOES JUSTICE
- 14** BEING WITH GOD IN NATURE
- 16** WHAT MATTEO RICCI CAN TEACH US
ABOUT FINDING COMMON GROUND
FOR THE SEED OF FAITH

IMAGE CREDITS

Institute of Social Order
Australian Province
Filippo Carlomagno SJ
Fr Kuntoro Adi SJ
Fr Murti Hadi Wijayanto SJ

Published by the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific
3/F Sonolux Building, Ateneo de Manila Campus,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City, 1108 Philippines
Tel/Fax: +63 2 8426 5974
E-mail: jcapsj@jcapsj.org

Editors:
Ria S Limjap, comms@jcapsj.org
Vanessa Gorra, comms.asst@jcapsj.org

© Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific
April 2023



A Rebirth of Our Life-Mission in the Spirit

The year 2022 was a breath of fresh air for the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP) and possibly also for the whole world. Our onsite gatherings and events started to resume in the middle of the year after travel restrictions were eased. It was a period of rebirth from persistent lockdowns that challenged our creativity, solidarity, and ways of being. We had several initiatives that could be life-giving for people. We were and are still tapping young people who could be creators of hope in caring for our common home. We started a discernment process that could bring hope to the mission in Pakistan. The Pakistan mission needs to be strengthened and mainstreamed further in the life-mission of the Society. The Institute of Social Order, a Jesuit ministry and possibly the oldest development NGO in the Philippines, celebrated 75 years of work for and with the marginalised and excluded. All this is a rebirth of our life-mission.

Last year, the Flagship Initiative, which is a key desired output of the Conference Plan (2021 – 2025), was reviewed and refined. This hopes to consolidate further the efforts of JCAP to care for creation and communities with Spirit-led young people playing a crucial role.

Upon the invitation of Fr General Arturo Sosa, the whole Society reviewed and prayed over our vow of

poverty in view of the release of the Statutes on Poverty and Instruction on Administration and Finance. He gave the major superiors two recollections, perhaps this was the first time a Superior General had done this to major superiors. In between the two recollections, we facilitated a recollection for our communities and provinces/regions. It was another rebirth of our commitment to follow Jesus poor and humble.

We have so much to be grateful for despite the many challenges that we are facing. We still continue to live in times of uncertainties, but the God of surprises will navigate our way towards a rebirth of our life-mission in the Spirit.

Tony Moreno SJ
President

2022 at a Glance

We look back on the year 2022 with much gratitude, hope, and love. During the past year, we launched the JCAP Flagship project, Caring for Communities and Creation, elevated Malaysia-Singapore to an independent region, ad experimentum, published books on Christian-Muslim dialogue and the vocation of brothers, explored the possibility of transferring the Pakistan Mission from Sri Lanka to the Indonesian Province and our Jesuit Conference, and happily returned to in-person gatherings (mostly). We saw the continuing crisis of democracy, the human suffering, and the criminal acts of war, but also the support and prayers of people who accompany us in our mission of justice and reconciliation.

20-22 January



JCAP major superiors and safeguarding delegates undertake a three-day online workshop on safeguarding.

10 March



JCAP launches its flagship project, Caring for Communities and Creation, in response to the urgent call of poverty and reconciliation with creation in Asia Pacific.

14 March



Fr General Arturo Sosa SJ establishes, ad experimentum, the independent region of Malaysia-Singapore for three years, from 2022 to 2025. Until this point, it had been a dependent region of the Indonesian Province.

19 March



Young Jesuits and lay partners in the Chinese Province develop a prayer app in Chinese to promote Ignatian Spirituality to Chinese speakers around the world.

26 March

CAMBODIA



Scholastic Henry Ky Rike SJ professed his perpetual First Vows to the Society of Jesus. He is the first Jesuit to profess First Vows in Cambodia.

1 April



The Reconciliation with Creation network launches, Creators of Hope, a search for young people engaged in ecological service projects across Asia Pacific. Five young "creators of hope" have been selected. [See related story on page 8]

25-30 April

AUSTRALIA



The Australian Jesuits hold the first International Ignatian Ecospiritual Conference gathering over a hundred people from across the world.

27 June-2 July

MYANMAR



Jesuits and mission partners in Myanmar hold a six-day workshop to strengthen the Myanmar Network of Community Colleges, which responds to a great current need of Myanmar for education.

17-22 July

CAMBODIA



The JCAP Major Superiors resume their face-to-face assembly after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic.

6 August

USA



Xavier Learning Community in Thailand is awarded the St Peter Canisius Medal at the International Association of Jesuit Universities conference in Boston. The medal is given to an individual, an institution, or a group of individuals who have shown exceptional commitment to Jesuit higher education.

23 August

VIETNAM



The Vietnamese Jesuits release an ebook that highlights the presence and apostolates of the Jesuit brothers to mark 65 years since the return of the Society of Jesus in Vietnam, and the 15th anniversary of the Vietnamese Jesuit Province.

1 September

PHILIPPINES



The Jesuits Among Muslims In Asia launch "Journeying with Muslims the Ignatian Way", a book that seeks to contribute to the theological discourse on Christian-Muslim dialogue through the Spiritual Exercises.

30 Oct-6 Nov

PAKISTAN



JCAP President Fr Tony Moreno SJ, Indonesian Provincial Fr Benny Juliawan SJ, and Indonesian Province Consultor Fr Kuntoro Adi SJ visit Pakistan as part of the discernment process to transfer the Pakistan Mission from the Sri Lankan Province to the Indonesian Province and the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific. [See related story on page 6]

15 November

VIETNAM



Fr Joseph Pham Tuan Nghia SJ succeeds Vincent Pham Van Mam SJ as Provincial Superior of the Vietnamese Jesuit Province.

17 December

ROME



Pope Francis signs a decree recognising the "heroic virtues" of Jesuit Matteo Ricci, the first stage in a process of beatification. [See related story on page 16]

Accompanying Pakistan

A mission of interreligious dialogue, education, and formation



On 1 April 2023, the Jesuit mission in Pakistan was officially entrusted to the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP). Fr General Arturo Sosa announced the new status of the Pakistan Mission in a letter coinciding with the eve of the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord. JCAP President Fr Tony Moreno, who also serves as the Mission's Superior, described the timing as "a perfect moment of missioning". With the inclusion of Pakistan, JCAP now covers two of the world's most populous Muslim countries, the other being Indonesia.

The decision to transfer the Pakistan Mission from the Sri Lankan Province to JCAP was a result of a discernment process initiated by the request of Sri Lankan Provincial Fr Angelo Sujeewa Pathirana. The Sri Lankan Jesuit Province had been accompanying and assisting the Pakistan Mission since the 1970s. In recent years, however, challenges have arisen that made it difficult for Sri Lanka to support the mission in Pakistan. Travel from Sri Lanka to Pakistan has been severely restricted, and finding Jesuits to serve in the mission has become difficult due to the acute shortage of Jesuits in Sri Lanka.

As part of the resolution in the July 2022 Major Superiors Assembly, JCAP

along with the Indonesian Province commenced the process of discernment. In late October to early November, a small delegation from JCAP consisting of Fr Moreno, Indonesian Provincial Fr Benny Juliawan, and his Province Consultor Fr Kuntoro Adi travelled to Pakistan to assess the situation. They visited Loyola Hall in Lahore, the home of the Jesuits and where they run religious and lay formation programmes. They also had meetings with Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw OFM of Lahore Archdiocese, Archbishop Benny Travas of the Archdiocese of Karachi, and Bishop Samson Shukardin OFM of the Diocese of Hyderabad during their travels to those regions. In their January-February 2023 assembly, the major superiors expressed a strong desire to accompany and assist the Pakistan Mission.

The Jesuits in Pakistan, although a small mission, have a long history of involvement in interreligious dialogue, education, and formation. The first Jesuits, Fr Monserrat and Fr Rudolph Acquaviva, arrived in the 16th century at the invitation of Emperor Akbar of the Mughal Dynasty. During the reign of Shah Jahan (1627 - 1658), the church built in Lahore was closed and then destroyed, and the Jesuit mission was shut down. The sec-

ond period came in 1888 when Jesuits worked in Karachi and Hyderabad, in the Sindh province in the southern part of the country, and the province of Baluchistan in the northern border with Afghanistan.

In 1961, four Jesuits—Fr H Schulz, Fr Robert Bütler, Fr Schockert, and Fr Joseph Pays—established a mission in Lahore, which marks the third and current Jesuit presence in Pakistan. They started their work by living in a rented house, and later bought a house on 28 Waris Road. Despite being initially allowed only one house and running a hostel for college and university students, the Jesuits were soon involved in various activities, including intellectual discussions and contributions to education and interreligious dialogue.

The intellectual discussions held at Loyola Hall led to the formation of the Metaphysical Society moderated by Fr Bütler, who was also a member of the Catholic-Anglican Ecumenical committee. Fr Schulz contributed significantly to the diocesan education board, while Fr Bütler was a member of the Iqbal Academy of Lahore, where he shared his knowledge through talks and articles. Fr Bütler also taught Arabic and Italian at the University of Punjab. In 1977, Fr Vernon Buyser

arrived in Lahore from Sri Lanka to join the mission, followed by Fr Jacob Fernando, who joined the community in 1981.

The Australian Province planned to send four men to the Pakistan Mission, and two Jesuits, Fr Phil Kurts and Scholastic Renato Zecchin, arrived in 1984. Fr Dan Madigan joined the community later that year. However, due to a lack of personnel, the Australian Province closed down the mission after only six years. The Sri Lankan Province took over the mission in 1988 after the efforts of Fr Buyser and the visit of Fr Madigan to the curia convinced Fr General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach to retain the mission. Fr Kurts and Scholastic Zecchin left Lahore in 1988 and Fr Madigan in 1989. Fr Rohanta Nissanka, an energetic young man, joined the Lahore mission in 1989, and in November 1993, newly ordained Fr Zecchin re-joined the community.

In 1995, the community made the decision to promote local vocations, resulting in several young men joining the Jesuits. Although many discontinued at different levels, one remained faithful to his call. Fr Imran John became the first Pakistani Jesuit to be ordained on 28 March 2009 in the cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Lahore.

Today, the Jesuit presence in Lahore consists of Fr Juan Carlos Pallardel, a Peruvian who is the local superior of the community, Fr Noel Ajanthan, the director of the candidates' house, which currently has 4 candidates, and Scholastic Petras George, who is in Regency. Additionally, four scholastics are studying in Indonesia, two juniors in Sri Lanka, one novice priest in the UK, and Fr Imran John in Rome. This growing number of vocations is significant in a country where Catholics make up less than one percent of the population.

Loyola Hall offers various religious and lay formation programmes, which attract many Muslim scholars who come to research in its library and conduct seminars. Loyola Hall is known as a neutral space where everyone can feel safe and encouraged to speak their minds.

Fr Juliawan recounts their visit: "We heard testimonies one early evening over a copious amount of chai or milk tea from leaders of several religious congregations, male and female, who found a home for growth in the centre. They also expressed their hopes for more Jesuits to give retreats, courses on spirituality and formation, and spiritual direction. Similar hopes were echoed by Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw OFM of Lahore Archdiocese when we paid him a visit. Diocesan seminarians need quality formation, both intellectually and spiritually, and he believed the Jesuits could offer much in that regard."

The Jesuits also run two secondary schools (one is for boys but also admits girls, and the other is for girls but also admits boys) and a kindergarten that cater to students from poor backgrounds. Prior to the pandemic, the kindergarten had more than 200 students, which was the largest number of students we had seen in our ministries. Fr Juliawan recalls their encounter with the teachers and students: "Muslim and Christian students come together, encouraged by the quality and affordable education. The country's Christian population is economically marginalised, with many being illiterate and having very little access to the state education system, which applies a quota system for minorities. There are only a few Catholic pre-university colleges in the country and no university, preventing social mobility and increasing the need for quality formal education."

The Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific is blessed to have Pakistan as its newest frontier mission. Their long history in the country has led the Society to engage in multiple ways: theological reflection, schools, dialogue, study of Islam, and formation of the young and vibrant Pakistani church. Despite facing challenges, including the lack of personnel, they have continued to promote local vocations and provide a neutral space for dialogue and intellectual and spiritual growth.

Fr Moreno notes that this joint undertaking represents a crucial moment in the life-mission of both JCAP and the Pakistan Mission. He says: "We have our own fair share of challenges as a conference, but with the grace of God, I am confident that this invitation will enable us as one body to walk shoulder to shoulder with the Jesuits and companions of the Pakistan Mission."

This new collaborative mission is a testament to the recent General Congregations' emphasis on interprovincial collaboration in the service of the universal good. As Fr General Sosa states: "In a context where our human resources are becoming scarcer, it is necessary to strengthen partnerships between the provinces and regions of the Society in order to respond most effectively to the imperative of the mission."



Creators of Hope

Empowering a Hope-Filled Future



Garut, West Java

In April 2022, the Reconciliation with Creation network initiated a search for young people, who with their team or group, are making a significant contribution to their community through projects that respond to the urgent ecological crises of our time. The network intended to provide modest grants to support these projects and promote their continuation. With their passion and commitment, these young people serve as a source of hope for others. Fr Gabby Lamug-Nañawa SJ, network coordinator, dubbed them “Creators of Hope”. The project was born out of “the belief in the importance of hope in the world today, especially hope generated by the youth and for the youth,” as Fr Nañawa put it. This theme is especially poignant given the global pandemic of the past two years.

By mid-year, five projects were selected from across Asia Pacific. These ranged from a small farm in Chiang Mai, Thailand to an ecological boarding school in West Java, Indonesia, a small village in Myanmar, and the islands of the Philippines. It was important to find young people with different backgrounds, different faiths, and different

affiliations but all dedicated to helping the environment, their communities, and each other. Gender, race, religion, cultural identity, sexual orientation, or disability were not determining factors for selection. The only requirement was that the applicants were engaged in an ecological service project that addresses current environmental issues and benefits the lives of a community, especially the poor, while also demonstrating aspects of Pope Francis’ teachings in *Laudato sí*. Each project was chosen for its positive impact or contribution to the community and values, such as compassion, generosity, creativity, love for creation, and service for the poor, that are apparent in the project and among those involved.

Amongst the peaceful fields in Garut, West Java is the Pesantren Ekologi Ath-thariq, a boarding school founded in 2008 by Nissa Wargadipura. Her son, Akhfaa Nazhat Al Wafaa, is one of the grantees of the project. Growing up on the farm, Akhfaa learned to recognise various types of dragonflies, butterflies, birds, and medicinal plants, and to distinguish between female and male animals within the area. He also became adept

at creating seed art. Along with other student boarders and his family, Akhfaa lives in the Pesantren, where they teach principles from the Qur’an together with the farming practices of agroecology. The 19-year-old electrical engineering student at the University of Garut says, “Practicing agroecology ensures the fertility of the soil and results in a good harvest.” In between times of prayer, study, and studying at the university, all the boarders participate in the work done on the different zones of the one-hectare farm. There they learn to live closely attuned to nature, respecting the cycles of the plants, the interdependence with the animals, the healing properties of specific leaves and flowers, the flow of energy from the sun, wind, and rain. Akhfaa has taken these lived-principles as his own and sees their potential in responding to the climate and ecological crises.

Meantime, in Panay, Philippines, a young man is using creativity in storytelling to help with local conservation. Jann Vinze Barcinal, 21, is the founder and chairperson of Dulungan Youth, an organisation of young people involved in conservation. Their project, *Stories of Hope* in

Community Conservation, is implementing a multi-part writing and storytelling workshop for the youth of Culasi, Antique on the eastern side of Panay island. The stories will focus on the indigenous communities of the Central Panay Mountain Range, a key biodiversity area, and their actions to protect and conserve those lands, which are crucial since only 8 per cent of the original forest area remains. The stories will be told through written features and photographs to be published on a website and displayed in a public exhibition in collaboration with the local government. Jann Vinze and his team are passionate about telling conservation stories in a dynamic way. By capacitating the youth, they believe in the power of stories for creating awareness, inspiring action, and building a sense of urgency around protecting other species on the planet.

Just across the island of Panay and the Guimaras Strait is Bacolod City on the northwestern side of the island of Negros. There, 22-year-old Desirie Tiberio is part of a group of scholarship students supported by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. Driven by their own initiative, the group started rehabilitating an abandoned park in the City Heights Subdivision during the pandemic. The project began with the mothers of the community working together to clean up the plastic waste in the park. Once pandemic health restrictions were relaxed, the youth joined the effort and the project expanded to include composting. Eventually, Desirie applied for the Creators of Hope grant to build a Spiritual Activity Center in the park, as well as a nursery and a vegetable garden. With the mothers, students, and Good



Air in Emmaus Farm

Samaritan sisters pitching in, the project is a true reflection of the Filipino spirit of *bayanihan* where members of a community work together for the common good.

In the northern Thailand province of Chiang Mai, Weera “Air” Maneerattanawongsiri, 26, works at the Emmaus Centre, a farm and community centre started by Vilaiwan “Kep” Phoktavi. Air, who is originally from a northern tribe, was a student at Xavier Learning Community, a Jesuit-run educational institution in Chiang Rai. During the pandemic, Air made a major change from studying tourism to returning to his agricultural roots. At Emmaus, Air tends a vegetable patch among other things, but his focus is gathering indigenous heirloom seeds from the different tribal areas of the north. He is concerned that the rich diversity of indigenous vegetables will eventually be lost and forgotten. “Nowadays, we are losing many plant species,” he said. “This means we are losing our food. If we don’t do something about it, we will lose

it forever.” He travels around the area, talking to local communities and learning about these seeds. With a growing collection carefully stored in a small refrigerator on the farm, Air wants to plant, propagate, and share these seeds with other farmers—before they are overtaken by the few varieties of cash crops that big corporations push.

Finally, coming from Kyun Daw village, Kachin State, Myanmar is Yaw Yin Thang. He is a catechist of their local Catholic parish. Thang, 33, is also a home-based farmer with a small lychee and lemon garden, and a few chickens. The tension brought by the war had driven many people from his community to flee to the now-closed Nan Hlaing camp. The returning villagers were unsure of what to do next, and Thang saw this as an opportunity to raise more chickens so more young people could work with him. With so many young people in Myanmar leaving to find work, Thang hopes his chicken-raising project will encourage some to stay in Myanmar. Aside from food security, he hopes the simple project will also bring a sense of stability and well-being to their village.

Each of these projects, regardless of its size and scope, represents acts of hope. “Hope cannot appear out of nothing. It is essentially a grace, a gift from God,” said Fr Nañawa. “But one thing we can do is to put into action an idea or an inspiration, however imperfect it may be. And through action, by the grace of God, hope can be created, within ourselves and also within others.”



Living Out a Faith That Does Justice

75 Years of the Institute of Social Order

For 75 years, the Institute of Social Order (ISO), known to be one of the oldest non-governmental organisations in the Philippines, has played a vital role in the formation of civil society organisations, championing laws and policies aimed at improving the lives of the poor and marginalised sectors of society, while being guided by the social teachings of the Catholic Church in promoting a faith that does justice.

ISO's engagement in social justice began long before its founding in 1947. In the early 1900s, the Philippine Catholic church was grappling with its role in the country's social transformation. In response to Pope Pius XI's encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, in 1931, which called for the reconstruction of social order, the Jesuits founded La Ignaciana Retreat House in June 1932 to promote labour-management collaboration as a countermeasure against the spread of communism in the Philippines. It organised workingmen for social action and conducted recollections for various professions, while Catholic action volunteers assisted in educating workers on their rights and duties. These efforts were broadcast on the "Catholic Hour" radio programme under the direction of Fr Russell Sullivan SJ. La Ignaciana also worked to persuade landowners to redistribute their lands to rural peasants and establish independent peasant proprietorships. However, World War II disrupted these efforts.

In 1946, Fr Walter B Hogan SJ was instructed by his superior, Fr Leo Cullum SJ, to put the papal encyclical into practice. He and his former student, Juan Tan, immersed themselves in the labour movement to understand the problems and sentiments of labourers and discuss the social teachings of the church within their context. They gave talks and lectures on labourer's rights and labour unions to persuade businessmen to voluntarily improve their workers' welfare. Fr Hogan came up with the idea of establishing the Institute of Social Order (ISO) to build on the initial efforts of La Ignaciana Retreat House and bring the church's teachings on social problems to people who were in the position to restructure society. In 1947, ISO was formally established, making it the first of the "pioneer" NGOs in the Philippines.

Despite its imposing name, ISO was initially composed of only two men—Fr Hogan and Mr Tan. They conducted seminars and night classes on unions, social encyclicals, and public speaking for workers in their small office in Padre Faura, Manila. As other Jesuits came and with student volunteers from the Ateneo de Manila University, the Institute offered formal labour education programmes, conducted social research, engaged in labour dispute arbitration, and provided advisory assistance to social organisations and institutes.

Finding no labour organisation to work with in guiding workers' movements along Christian doctrines, Fr Hogan and Mr Tan established the Federation of Free Workers (FFW), with Mr Tan as its first president. FFW focused on trade-union freedom, lobbying for labour laws, and collective bargaining. ISO publicised FFW's work and spread its Christian principles. In 1956, an FFW-affiliated labour union called USTELA staged a strike, which resulted in Fr Hogan's exile to Hong Kong. However, Fr Gaston Duchesneau SJ and Fr Arthur Weiss SJ continued the ISO's programmes and extended assistance to other labour organisations.

In 1961, Pope John XXIII released the encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, which emphasised the church's role in addressing rural conditions by providing services to rural communities, promoting economic development, and recognising the need for citizens of less developed countries to take responsibility for their own development. Inspired by this document, Fr Hogan suggested the creation of a credit union to help poor residents. With technical advice from Fr Duchesneau, a group of young middle-class professionals from San Dionisio, Paranaque organised the San Dionisio Credit Cooperative Union (SDCCU) in 1962 with an initial capital of Php 328 (about US\$6). Since then, the SDCCU has grown to become one of the most successful cooperatives in the country. Simultaneously, ISO initiated the introduction of cooperativism in the far-flung communities of Jala-jala and Talim Islands.

The years that followed saw significant changes in the socio-political scene in the Philippines, with students becoming more politically active and Ferdinand Marcos being elected president in 1965. Changes were also happening in the Catholic hierarchy. The influence of Latin American liberation theology was slowly seeping through the teachings of the Catholic church. Vatican II signalled the church's more lenient stance on socialism and urged Catholics to work for social justice. These changes had a significant impact on the Philippine church and the Society of Jesus. In 1965, the Committee for Development of Socio-Economic Life in Asia (SELA) was established, leading to the establishment of Catholic social action centres in many parishes and the National Secretariat for Social Action. During this period, ISO continued its training and education programmes for the labour and peasant sectors and expanded its curriculum to include a national situationer, liberation theology, and community organising, with many emerging leaders of the NGO movement being exposed to social activism through ISO.

ISO began working with the urban poor through community organising, but this was disrupted by the declaration of Martial Law in 1972, leading to the capture, torture,

and killing of many individuals—including some Jesuits—involved in social activism. During this time, General Congregation 32 issued Decree 4, which mandated all Jesuit provinces worldwide to undertake the “service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement”.

In response, ISO shifted its focus from training and education to community organising and establishing sectoral units. It reconstituted itself into La Ignaciana Apostolic Centre (LIAC) and was heavily involved in the protest movement after the assassination of opposition leader Ninoy Aquino Jr in 1983. LIAC mobilised participation among labour sectors, urban poor, and peasant groups, and emphasised active non-violence to ensure peaceful protests. ISO continued to contribute to the organised response to Cardinal Sin’s call for support during the 1986 EDSA Revolution.

ISO then concentrated its efforts on social development, collaborating with other NGOs and engaging in grassroots education and training interventions. However, in the 1990s, ISO questioned the relevance of its vision and mission, leading to a transformation towards becoming a professional social development institution now based at the Ateneo campus in Quezon City. It adopted a multi-year programme planning cycle and added the women’s sector as its target clientele. The organisation also introduced four auxiliary programmes to address critical areas of work for NGOs during the post-EDSA period: Advocacy and Electoral Programmes, Social Entrepreneurship Programme, Development Communication Programme, and Data Base and Library Services Programme.

ISO’s grassroots-level activities achieved success in advocating for national policies to address the basic needs of its partner sectors. For instance, ISO’s Urban Poor Programme facilitated the development of a federation of urban poor groups in Pasay, Metro Manila, which played a crucial role in passing the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 and continues to lobby for laws that meet the needs of the sector. ISO’s approach gave grassroots leaders a chance to enter electoral politics, but it did not produce the expected results, though it provided valuable experience for future actions, and showed that many politically-motivated programmes were no longer effective.

In 1992, ISO underwent a transformation towards social development and intermediary functions, clarifying its contributions to the Society of Jesus Social Apostolate’s faith and justice mission. It focused on empowering

basic sectors, promoting sustainable, participatory and equitable development, and transforming unjust traditional structures of power.

ISO developed three strategies to address social problems faced by disadvantaged Filipinos: disaster preparedness and rehabilitation, development management, and empowerment. Organisational systems and procedures were established to enhance ISO’s capabilities. However, internal tensions arose due to community organisers who refused to give up the political aspect of their work.

In 1994, Fr Renato Ocampo SJ led ISO in diversifying its funding sources by consulting with private corporate foundations. ISO also established a research unit to attract new personnel with specialised skills. After Fr Ocampo’s death, a lay director was appointed, and the focus on internal organisational changes and professionalisation continued. An evaluation of ISO’s programmes showed that the organisations and federations established by ISO still existed but no longer had mass bases.

ISO changed its strategy to focus on solid community organising and adopted an integrated area development approach targeting the “poorest of the poor” who received limited assistance from the government, church, and non-governmental organisations. Partnering with social action centres and local government units, they started working with municipal fishers, who were the poorest sector in the 1990s and lobbied for the Philippine Fisheries Code of the Philippines in 1998, and subsequently Republic Act 10654 in 2015, which imposed higher penalties on illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

The Institute of Social Order has a long history of promoting social development and social apostolate through community-based approaches to coastal resource management, sustainable development, and empowering fishers to participate in local governance. It has emphasised the importance of participatory research, community organising, capacity building, networking and advocacy, environmental protection, livelihood development, climate adaptation, and youth development. Despite facing challenges, ISO remains committed to its mission and has made a significant impact on the Philippines’ social development. ISO’s faith-based approach has guided its work, allowing it to uphold its mission and promote a faith that does justice.

Dr Liza Lim
Executive Director
Institute of Social Order





Being With God in Nature

An Ignatian Eco-Spirituality Ministry

In 2002, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference established Catholic Earthcare Australia with a mandate to assist in the ecological conversion of the Australian church. Fr Denis Edwards†, a respected eco-theologian, gave his support, and some green shoots were seen across the church. The Australian Jesuits' Being with God in Nature (BwGiN) ministry germinated within this ecological conversion journey occurring in the wider Australian church. Catholic Earthcare Australia offered immersion retreats in nature, and Dr Peter Saunders, spiritual director at the Jesuit Champion Spirituality Centre in Melbourne, participated in one in 2014. While in the Flinders Rangers in South Australia, Dr Saunders had an "aha!" moment, which became the seed of the BwGiN ministry.

The offerings from the blossoming BwGiN ministry started in 2015 with Dr

Saunders, Fr Iain Radvan SJ, and Helen Lucas running nature retreats and walking pilgrimages across Melbourne. I was fortunate to undertake the 2016 Wilson's Promontory five-day retreat in nature. It was a truly transformative experience that connected me to the BwGiN ministry and, eventually, led me to take over as the BwGiN ministry coordinator when Dr Saunders stepped down as coordinator.

Today, Being with God in Nature is a key ministry of Jesuit Ignatian Spirituality Australia (JISA). Br Ian Cribb SJ, JISA Director, fully supports the work with the help of Robyn Wunder and Frances Tilley. The ministry provides various opportunities to experience Ignatian Spirituality in nature, spending time in a group, sometimes in silence, listening to God's presence in nature. The team takes people out into the Australian wilderness while also allowing them to experience nature

in urban settings. There are opportunities to spend contemplative time in nature and enter into that contemplative place in their hearts to encounter the Presence that is God in Nature, leading to "ecological conversation" and reconciliation with Creation.

Since its inception, the BwGiN ministry continues to grow and influence the ecological conversion journey of other Jesuit ministries in Australia. In 2021, it auspiced a series of lectures from Kathleen Duffy, President of the US Teilhard Association, with the WA Ignatian Spirituality Centre. A year later, influenced by the BwGiN ministry, the Australian Mercy ministry, Earthkin, engaged Kathleen to speak on eco-spirituality.

The year 2022 saw our BwGiN ministry thrive. Thanks to Dr Saunders and Fr Iain with Helen who were the key convenors



of the International Ignatian Ecological Conference (IIEC) in May. IIEC celebrated the 500th anniversary of St Ignatius' ecological conversion and was one of the Ignatius 500 events. It focused on providing an ecological conversion experience for all participants with Spiritual Exercises in nature and contemplative walks undertaken each day no matter where the participants were based.

The BwGiN ministry also blossomed with a collaboration with Catholic Earthcare to hold online movie events, one of which was "My Octopus Teacher" and Fr Gabby Lamug-Nañawa SJ giving a reflection on ecological conversion.

Another fruit of the ministry is the Australian Ignatian Trails (AIT), a pilgrimage in the footsteps of the first Jesuits in Australia leading to Sevenhill. Sevenhill is a 25-bed retreat and function centre nestled in the idyllic scenery of the historic Sevenhill Cellars and vineyard, the oldest winery in South Australia's Clare Valley, and the birthplace of the Jesuits in Australia.

So far there have been two AIT pilgrimages: one for the Jesuit Schools Ignatian Coordinators, the other for a more diverse group, which included some Christian church leaders. Both had a strong impact on the walkers, as much in the gentle periods of rest as in the hours of walking. Plans are underway to train up leaders to enable more pilgrims to experience the beautiful countryside.

Recently, BwGiN started programmes in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and newly forming in South Australia and Western Australia.

In Queensland, the highlight has been the Laudato si walks on Mt Coot-tha and the staff eco-spirituality professional development opportunities with various schools in Brisbane. In New South Wales, we have begun a contemplative walks programme with Mark and Mary Diggins to the beautiful Ku-ring-gai National Park. While in Victoria, the ministry collaborates with Jesuit Social Services using The Hut on the Yarra River for monthly contemplation in nature quiet retreats.

As I write this from the lands of the Darug Indigenous Peoples influenced by our river Deerubbin, it is interesting to reflect that our Jesuit BwGiN ministry has been influenced and tendered by the ecological conversion journey occurring in other congregations in Australia.

The Brigidine congregation auspiced Earthsong in Melbourne for many years, the Christian Brothers auspiced Glenbourne ecological retreat centre, the Sisters of Mercy auspiced Earthkin, the Columbans auspiced the Faith and Ecology Network, which produced the Grace of Place series, and many other congregational ecological initiatives that are still flourishing today. In 2023 a small legacy from the IIEC will fund a Jesuit place in the Integral Ecology Fellowship.

The journey to shift hearts in the wider community has also had many green shoots in Melbourne, where the environmental conversion journey has been occurring for many years. Thirty years ago, there was a push to have Landcare as a way to care for country and practise deep ecology. Today Landcare is a thriving community organisation throughout Australia helping people connect with like-minded individuals, enabling the green shoots of ecological conversion to take place.

The BwGiN ministry has ensured a deeper understanding of the Society's Universal Apostolic Preference on "Care for our Common Home" both within Australia and more widely across the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific. In 2023, there will be a continuation of this blossoming with pilgrimages, walks, and events in collaboration with the Australian Jesuit Care for our Common Home committee and many others in the eco-spirituality community. The invitation to be a part of this unfolding deep connection with the Creator Spirit is always open. Our dream is to have a BwGiN ministry across Asia Pacific. The planned Flagship Youth Retreat offers such an opportunity to explore future possibilities.

Sue Martin
Assistant Coordinator
Reconciliation with Creation



What Matteo Ricci Can Teach Us About Finding Common Ground for the Seed of Faith



On 17 December 2022, Pope Francis signed a decree recognising the “heroic virtues” of Matteo Ricci, marking the first stage of his beatification process. The Chinese Province of the Society of Jesus began assisting the Holy See with the cause for sainthood of Fr Ricci in 2010, when his native diocese of Macerata re-launched the process. It had lost some impetus following the initial phase concluded in 1985. Bishop Stephen Chow SJ of the Diocese of Hong Kong has urged Catholics to pray for Fr Ricci’s beatification. Rob Rizzo SJ, a scholastic from Malta studying in the Philippines, reflects on the enduring relevance of Matteo Ricci in today’s multicultural world.

The first-ever biography of a Jesuit which I read was that of Matteo Ricci by Michela Fontana, *Matteo Ricci: A Jesuit in the Ming Court*. This is still my favorite biography of Ricci, and my favourite book about Ricci apart from his own writings. His stories captivated me with a curiosity and love for Chinese language and culture. Unfortunately, I do not have all the time I wish I had to learn the language. It is a hobby I enjoy nonetheless, especially learning the characters and the grammatical concepts which show different worldviews. His story inspired me in my faith, vocation, and perspective of culture and worldviews.

Ricci’s mission in China was marked by his commitment to respectful dialogue and engagement with the Chinese people and scholars. Ricci sought to engage the Chinese in a conversation about the Christian faith and to present the church’s teachings in a way that was accessible and meaningful to them. He understood that the Chinese people had a rich and complex culture and that their beliefs and practices were rooted in a long and rich tradition. He could not uproot their beliefs and transplant the Christian faith. Instead, he had to plant the seed of faith into Chinese soil and allow it to take root according to their great culture.

Ricci’s approach to mission work was not without its challenges and difficulties. Some of his fellow Jesuits were critical of his methods and saw him as too conciliatory and compromising in his approach with the Chinese. He also faced opposition from some members of the Chinese imperial court, who saw his presence as a threat to the stability of the country. Despite these challenges, Ricci remained steadfast in his mission and worked tirelessly to promote understanding and respect between cultures and beliefs. He could do this because his faith was based on a relationship with a loving God – already present in China’s history and culture – rather than on a rigid list of rules.

To engage the Chinese people and scholars, Ricci sought to learn as much as he could about Chinese language, culture, and beliefs. He studied the Chinese classics and Confucianism and sought to engage in discussions with Chinese scholars about their beliefs. He was particularly interested in the ways in which Confucianism and Catholicism could complement one another, and he saw the potential for a dialogue between the two traditions that could lead to a greater understanding and respect between cultures.

In Jonathan Spence’s *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, I read a beautiful anecdote about Ricci’s use of mnemonic techniques to learn the Chinese language. One image he used that impressed me was the one for remembering the character 好 – hǎo, which means good. He broke it down into its radicle and components, 女 nǚ, meaning woman, and 子 zǐ, meaning child. Thus Ricci used the image of Mary with the child Jesus to remember 好 hǎo, good.

Matteo Ricci was also a skilled cartographer. He noticed that Chinese maps always had China disproportionately large compared to all the other countries and sometimes left out some countries completely. He knew that if he were to draw China in proper proportions and to the far side of a map, the Chinese would feel disregarded and overlooked. Imperial China described itself as the Middle Kingdom, 中国, after all. Instead, he drew a world map with countries and lands in proportion, but he placed China at the centre. This pleased the Chinese prefects and literati, and seeing their kingdom smaller than usual awoke their curiosity.

By drawing the world in proportion, Matteo Ricci bridged the East to the West and the West to the East. It indicated a move away from the Eurocentric view that had dominated European thought for centuries, and a recognition of the value and richness of other cultures. He introduced the Chinese to new ways of understanding geography and the world beyond their borders. This attention to detail and cultural sensitivity helped to establish a relationship of trust and respect between Ricci and the Chinese scholars, which allowed him to make significant contributions to the fields of geography, mathematics, and astronomy.

The waves Matteo Ricci made in late 16th century China reach all the way to our time today. His willingness to embrace Chinese culture and worldview to find common ground with the Chinese people changed my own worldview. He is an example of how faith does not grow separated from culture but how God’s grace is at work in all peoples, in every culture. The treasure of His love and grace is veiled in every corner of this world, in every culture, waiting to be revealed.

Rob Rizzo SJ

Euro-Mediterranean Province

Dear Friends,

The past year has been a grace-filled one for the conference. With the Covid-19 pandemic slowly abating, activities of the different JCAP networks and ministries have also begun to slowly bounce back to life. The often arduous online meetings, especially to the technologically-challenged, have gradually given way to face-to-face meetings. Virtual tea or coffee breaks have finally yielded to real breaking of bread, storytelling, and planning, either over common meals or formal sessions. The past year saw lively meetings in Phnom Penh, Manila, Yogyakarta, Cebu, and Chiang Rai. The conference is now ready for action on the field once again.

As we enter another year of mission, JCAP faces a number of daunting tasks. Its Apostolic Plan highlights, among others, the need to address the continuing poverty among communities and concerns about the worsening ecological system. The ongoing crisis in Myanmar continues to cry for humanitarian assistance. The Flagship Project, with special emphasis on poverty alleviation, building communities, and protection of the environment, is slowly taking off despite organisational challenges. The Arrupe International Residence, home to Jesuits in theological training mainly from the Asia Pacific Region but also scholastics from at least three other Jesuit conferences, needs to be sustained to keep its operations running. Additionally, a new and very recent frontier mission, the Pakistan Mission, has been placed under JCAP stewardship by Fr General Arturo Sosa SJ.

Once again, we invite you to be part of the Jesuit mission. Be part of the Companions of Jesuits in Asia Pacific and the network of collaborators, friends, and benefactors of the Society of Jesus. Support our work by your prayers and monetary assistance.

Every Wednesday in our Community Masses in Arrupe House, we pray for your intentions. Some of our friends and benefactors even join us for our weekly Open House to share a simple dinner and fellowship with us!

Contact us and let us explore how we can work together.

Fr Vidal J Gornez Jr SJ
Treasurer and Development Officer
Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific
jcap.dev.officer@gmail.com





Companions of Jesuits
Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific



SUPPORT OUR WORK

Bank of the Philippine Islands- DOLLAR ACCOUNT

Account Name: Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific
Account Number: 3084-0781-14
Bank Name: Bank of the Philippine Islands
Bank Address: Katipunan Road corner Escaler Sts.
Loyola Heights Quezon City, Philippines
Swift Code: BOIIPHMM

Bank of the Philippine Islands- PESO ACCOUNT

Account Name: Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific
Account Number: 3081-0854-97



JESUIT
CONFERENCE
of ASIA PACIFIC