



**ALL FORUM**  
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## ***PILGRIMAGE OF HOPE*** **and Solidarity with the Poor**



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# PILGRIMAGE OF HOPE & SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR

## Solidarity with the Poor: The Silent Rise of Hope

In our previous issue, we reflected on Democracy in Asia and the Role of Youth. That theme reminded us that the voices of young people are not only vital for shaping political landscapes but also for sustaining the moral and spiritual fabric of our societies. Today, as floods sweep across Asia and wars continue in different regions, we are confronted with the question: Where can the world lean for hope?

This issue dares to offer an answer. Hope is not found in distant abstractions or empty promises. It is revealed in the lives of the poor, in the resilience of youth, and in the solidarity of communities who refuse to surrender to despair.

From Sabah, Malaysia, indigenous youth remind us that ancestral wisdom and faith can guide us through disasters. In another corner, young leaders rise against corruption, defending the vulnerable with courage. Elsewhere, the cry is clear: when nature is cared for, humanity is protected. These voices are not simply reports—they are revelations of hope, showing us what lies beyond the crises of today.

Our solidarity section highlights the living witness of communities and institutions—WTI, EAEC, MAP, RTRC, and IMCS—who embody faith in action. Their activities remind us that solidarity is not a slogan but a practice: feeding, teaching, organizing, and standing with those who suffer.

The theological and spiritual section continues to deepen our reflection. Fr. Aloysius Pieris, SJ, guides us in the New Quest for Asian Christian Identity, reminding us of the pioneers who shaped our faith in dialogue with culture and history. And Dr. Paul Hwang's reflection on Pope Leo XIV's *Dilexi Te* reframes poverty not as a problem to be solved but as the very place where God reveals Himself. In this continuity of mercy, Pope Leo carries forward the vision of Pope Francis, ensuring that the Church remains close to the marginalized. This fidelity offers stability and a renewed sense of hope amid uncertain times.

We also celebrate the voices of women leaders through IMCS Pax Romana's RISE 2025, the strengthening of youth engagement with Cardinal Sebastian Francis, and the collective efforts across Asia to address children's mental health in times of crisis. The RTRC's participation in the Nyéléni Global Forum and endorsement of the Kandy Declaration further remind us that solidarity is global, weaving together communities across continents.

This newsletter is not just a collection of articles. It is an invitation. An invitation to sink deeper, to immerse yourself in the wisdom and witness shared here, to discover the secret of hope that lies hidden in the struggles of our time. As believers, we are called not only to read but to live—to embody solidarity with the poor, who are the living revelation of God.

May these edition challenge us to think critically, act courageously, and ignite the youth to raise their voices, embrace responsibility, and forge a brighter future in **Solidarity with the Poor : The Silent Rise of Hope**. In solidarity, we stand at the threshold of true hope. Let us cross it together.

Enjoy this issue, and let it inspire you to see beyond the crises, toward the mercy that saves and the hope that endures. Enjoy reading!

—Editor's Note

*Maverick Joniah*



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# WHEN NATURE IS MANAGED, HUMANITY IS PROTECTED

*Fransista Dobe - Indonesia*  
AYA/ATF Alumni 2025



*Photo illustration depicting flood conditions in an Indonesian rural community.*

## The Impact of Typhoons and Floods on Community Life

Indonesia is recognized as a nation prone to various natural disasters that directly affect its citizens' lives. Its geographical position and natural features make many areas in Indonesia vulnerable to threats like typhoons and floods. These occurrences are not just natural events but also bring about significant social, economic, and humanitarian consequences that are immediately experienced by local communities, especially the most vulnerable groups. Typhoons and floods have far-reaching effects on people's lives. One of the most apparent impacts is the destruction of homes and the surrounding environment. Many residences are damaged,

flooded, or no longer fit for habitation. As a result, some individuals are forced to evacuate and endure living in difficult circumstances. For families with limited economic means, this situation becomes even more overwhelming, as they lose both their homes and their sources of income. As a real-life example, as described above, a natural disaster recently occurred in the Mauponggo area, Nagekeo regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia on Monday, September 8, 2025. Several facilities, both public and private, were heavily damaged. One house along the river was swept away by the current, two government offices were affected, three roads were blocked due to landslides caused by the intense flow of water, and two bridges were also carried away by the current. In addition, farms and rice fields were submerged, and livestock were impacted.

When the disaster occurred, many people lost their sources of income and faced difficulties in meeting their basic needs. The economic impact was significant, especially for farmers who lost their land and crops, which were their main sources of livelihood. Other impacts were also felt in the education and healthcare sectors. Schools in the area were forced to close, as many students were affected by the disaster, and school buildings were used as shelters. As a result, the teaching and learning process had to be temporarily suspended. On the other hand, public health conditions became vulnerable due to unsanitary environments, limited access to healthcare services, and psychological stress following the disaster. This shows that typhoons and floods not only cause physical damage but also affect the overall quality of life of the community.



## Perspectives and Reflections

If examined further, typhoon and floods that frequently occur are not solely caused by natural factors but are closely related to human behavior and environmental management. Heavy rainfall and extreme weather are indeed the main factors, but their impacts would be much greater if not balanced with preparedness and concern for the environment. One example of an indirect cause of natural disasters is the habit of excessive hunting. This hunting activity can lead to disasters in an indirect manner. First, it disrupts the balance of the ecosystem. Each animal has a specific role in the food chain. If a particular species becomes extinct or drastically reduced, the ecosystem's balance is disturbed. Second, it leads to an increase in pest populations. When predators are continuously hunted, pest populations in agricultural areas become uncontrollable. This condition can damage crops and forests, thus increasing the risk of floods and soil erosion. Third, it causes deforestation and soil degradation. Hunting activities are often accompanied by the clearing of new paths and the burning of shrubs, reducing the soil's ability to absorb rainwater and increasing the likelihood of floods. Lastly, it diminishes nature's ability to act as a disaster buffer. Some animals play a role in seed dispersion and maintaining soil fertility. If these animals continue to be hunted, forests lose their natural capacity to mitigate the impacts of disasters. Another frequently mentioned factor is the decrease in water retention areas due to land conversion. Development that neglects ecological balance prevents rainwater from being absorbed effectively, resulting in flooding in residential areas. Moreover, the practice of carelessly disposing of waste worsens the situation, as it clogs drainage systems and prevents them from handling increased water flow. The lack of collective awareness and inadequate environmental

management also play a role in the occurrence of floods. In many instances, disaster prevention measures are reactive, meaning they are implemented only after a disaster has occurred, rather than proactively. This highlights that the issue of flooding is not the responsibility of a single entity but requires the participation of everyone (communities), governments, and the younger generation.



Photo: Fransiska Dobe - Indonesia | AYA/ATF Alumni 2025

## Becoming Pilgrims of Hope: Simple Actions Bringing Significant Change

In conclusion, typhoons and floods should not be seen merely as events that cause suffering, but also as opportunities to raise awareness and foster solidarity, particularly for those who are most impacted. In this regard, the younger generation plays a vital role as agents of hope, capable of driving positive change. Young people can start with small but meaningful actions, such as spreading awareness about the importance of environmental conservation, avoiding littering, and participating in social initiatives. For example, young people help to clean public spaces often littered with waste, and become advocates for those whose voices are seldom heard. Showing solidarity with the poor and vulnerable can take the form of sincere efforts, whether through direct involvement or by offering constructive ideas and critical perspectives. With a spirit of hope and solidarity that remains strong, it is hoped that Indonesia's youth will not only witness the various disasters that unfold, but also actively contribute to finding solutions.

Preventative actions can be taken through consistent, small steps before disasters strike. By standing in solidarity with those affected, hope can continue to shine, and a fairer, more humane future can be achieved.

Asian Lay Leaders (ALL) Forum



# RISING AGAINST THE FLOOD: FIGHTING CORRUPTION, DEFENDING THE VULNERABLE

*Tricia Marie R. Medel* - Phillipines

*Christian Advocates for Justice and Development in Negros Occidental (CAJDEN)*

The Philippines is one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, experiencing frequent and devastating typhoons, floods, and heat waves. Last November 2025, one of the most heartbreaking disasters hit the country when Typhoon Tino took many lives and properties, leaving many Filipinos in agony. Typhoons, tropical storms, cyclones, and low-pressure systems wouldn't miss a chance every year to visit the country, but why is it getting worse as years go by?

It is notable that many areas affected by Tino were not commonly flooded areas in the past. However, due to the country's climate vulnerability exacerbated by its geographical location, poverty, and the corruption that is deadly to the country's government open a can of worms. These direct and indirect causes stir the Philippines to a worse situation than in the past.

The Philippines' geographical location, being in the Pacific typhoon belt and having a tropical climate, contributes to its flood-purulence. It's not just about being in a typhoon-prone area; it's about how resources are managed. Lack of resources wasn't an excuse; in fact, the Philippines is abundant. Ultimately, it boils down to political governments that are long on sleaze and short on substance.



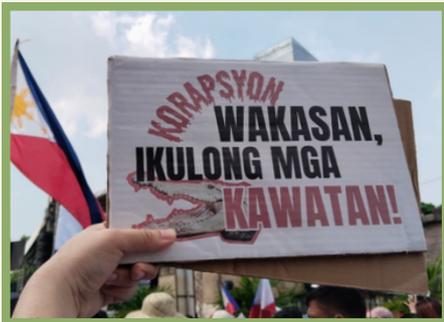
Photo: Tricia Marie R. Medel - Phillipines | AYA/ATF Alumni 2024

While the country's location makes it prone to natural disasters, effective governance and management could mitigate these risks. **Corruption diverts resources away from essential services and infrastructure, leaving communities more vulnerable.** In this sense, corruption is a major contributor to the severity of flooding in the Philippines.

Corruption in the Philippines, particularly in infrastructure projects, has aggravated flooding issues. Billions spent on Flood Control Projects, but many were incomplete or used substandard materials — Drainage Systems: Housing Projects, and bribery and Extortion on officials' demand kickbacks, delaying or halting projects. Trillions spent on failed projects in exchange for the lives of many Filipinos — a rotten system is still dominating.



**It is tormenting how normal Filipino people suffer**, while some of the corrupt government officials and agencies savor the luxury from taxpayers' money. Corruption kills, and the poor are indeed the most vulnerable to the impacts of corruption and disasters. When infrastructure projects are poorly executed, they are the first to be affected. When disasters strike, they lose their homes, livelihoods, and sometimes, even their lives.



*End the Corruption, Jail the corrupt!*

**May the truth prevail and clear the dirt of the past.**

To the youth of our nation and the world, we must never hesitate to raise our voices or to challenge injustice wherever it exists. Our silence has consequences, and our courage can shape history. We must be deliberate and courageous in choosing those we place in positions of power, because the future of our country, our communities, and the generations after us is at stake. This is the time for us to stand up for our environment, to protect what has been entrusted to us, and to take responsibility for the impact of our choices.

Even in the face of corruption, climate crisis, and social inequality, I believe in a brighter future—one driven by empowered, informed, and fearless youth who refuse to be passive and who are committed to building a just, sustainable, and accountable society.

The protest will never stop until someone is held accountable. My community and the whole nation still call for transparency and accountability. Different organizations, sectors, and most especially the poor are still shouting for a fair and just society where no one is being deprived of their rights in accessing what's theirs. May the government's investigation and prosecution be immediately done.



*Tricia Marie R. Medel donation drive "HELP REBUILD, HELP HEAL"*

*The devastating impact of Typhoon Tino is still felt, especially in St. Vincent Ferrer Community School Danao Extension located at Hda. Danao Ramoa Brgy. Haguimit, La Carlota City, Negros Occidental.*



# INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES IN SABAH: DISASTERS, ANCESTRAL WISDOM, AND FAITH

*Adrian Amatus* - Sabah, Malaysia.

*Sabah Bobohizan Organization | AYA/ATF Alumni 2025*

Across the world, the climate crisis is increasingly felt through disruptive hydrometeorological extremes, including heavier rainfall, intensified flood events, and cascading hazards such as landslides. These phenomena are no longer distant projections confined to scientific models but lived realities for many communities. Climate assessments consistently show that a warming atmosphere holds more moisture, leading to more intense precipitation and a greater likelihood of extreme weather events, particularly in tropical and monsoon-influenced regions (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2021). In Asia, where seasonal monsoon systems already shape environmental risk, climate change has compounded exposure and complexity, placing additional strain on communities, infrastructure, and governance systems (IPCC, 2022; World Meteorological Organization [WMO], 2024).

In Malaysia, these global dynamics manifest through recurring floods, flash floods, coastal erosion, and landslides that disrupt everyday life and place increasing pressure on public resources. Official statistics indicate that flood-related losses reached RM933.4 million in 2024 alone, affecting housing, infrastructure, and economic activities across multiple sectors (Department of Statistics Malaysia [DOSM], 2025).



These impacts are amplified during the Northeast Monsoon season, typically occurring from November to March, when prolonged rainfall places sustained pressure on river systems, drainage networks, and unstable slopes (Malaysian Meteorological Department, n.d.).

In Sabah, the consequences of extreme weather are experienced in particularly immediate and communal ways. Recent years have seen repeated flooding, deadly landslides, and large-scale evacuations across multiple districts following continuous heavy rainfall. Local reporting has documented how landslides in areas such as Penampang, Papar, and Inanam unfolded rapidly, often within hours, leaving communities little time to prepare and resulting in loss of life, displacement, and severe disruption to daily routines (Daily Express, 2025; Malay Mail, 2025). Subsequent flooding events in Kota Kinabalu and surrounding areas were described by residents and authorities as among the worst in decades (Daily Express, 2026).

*Photo: Cultural Night at the AYA/ATF Yogyakarta 2025 Program  
Adrian (left) and Kenedy (right) - Malaysia | AYA/ATF Alumni 2025*



These experiences highlight an important reality: the impacts of climate-related disasters are not distributed evenly. Indigenous and marginalized communities are frequently more exposed, not by choice, but because settlement patterns and livelihoods are historically tied to rivers, floodplains, coastal margins, and forested or hilly landscapes. Empirical research shows that vulnerability is shaped not only by environmental exposure but also by disparities in preparedness and recovery capacity (Sadeka et al., 2020).

**The Kadazan-Dusun thought**, well-being is understood through the concept of 'Ahasu' and 'Osogit', which reflects the dynamic relationship between imbalance and harmony. 'Ahasu' (heat) signifies a state of unhealthy or disordered energy, whereas 'Osogit' (coolness) denotes a positive and ideal condition where human life, nature, and the spiritual realm exist in harmony. This state of balance, known as 'Otoonong' or 'Atatamis', encompasses mental, physical, spiritual health and the wider natural order. From an Indigenous cultural perspective, environmental disturbances are not understood solely through physical explanations. Land is not merely an economic asset but a source of ancestral continuity, identity, and moral responsibility. Within Kadazan-Dusun tradition, the 'Bobohizan' (traditional ritual specialists and spiritual custodian) play a central role in preserving and transmitting knowledge that emphasises the interdependence of human behaviour, ecological order, and spiritual harmony. Rituals and customary practices reinforce communal responsibility and resilience (Dainal, 2024). Alongside Indigenous wisdom, Christian faith provides another framework through which many communities in Sabah interpret suffering,

respond to loss, and sustain hope. Faith shapes practical responses through compassion, mutual aid, and stewardship of creation, an approach that resonates with Catholic social teaching, particularly *Laudato Si'*, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of human dignity, environmental care, and responsibility towards future generations. When held together, Indigenous wisdom and Christian faith contribute to a holistic foundation for resilience in the face of the climate crisis. Addressing climate-related disasters therefore requires not only technical solutions, but a renewed commitment to balance, justice, and care for both people and the environment across generations.

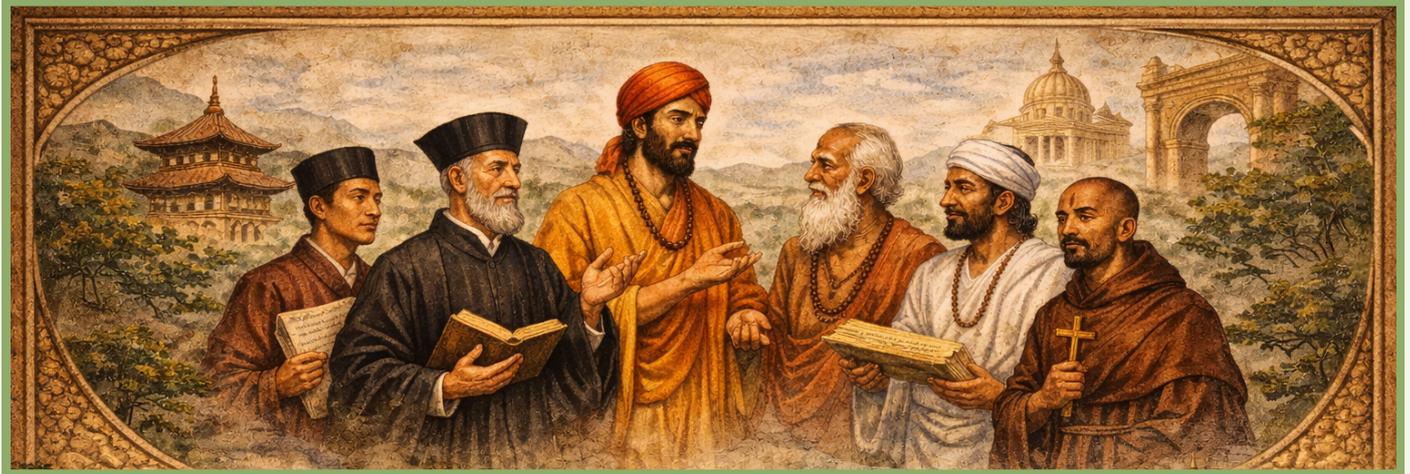
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## THE NEW QUEST FOR ASIAN CHRISTIAN IDENTITY: GUIDELINES FROM THE PIONEERS OF THE PAST (A SUMMARY) - PART 2

*Fr. Aloysius Pieris, S.J.*



Georg Evers comes to one's mind when one hears the Jesuit General's invitation to the Jesuits in Asia to become Jesuits of Asia. Though European, Evers engaged both the Asian-Jewish heritage of Christianity and Asia's contemporary realities, supporting Asian theologies and theologians. In response to the Jesuit General's challenge, this essay highlights features of Asian Christianity which have been emphasized also in Evers' life-time work. Also, in this essay, I seek to sift the stepping stones from the stumbling blocks in the path of those Christians in Asia who yearn to become Christians of Asia.

### **Lessons to Be Learned from the Nascent Church's Westward Expansion**

#### **The Jewish Christian Identity and Gentiles**

The history of Christianity in its own continent is rich with daring experiments that can guide our search for an Asian Christian identity. I will highlight a few well-known cases and draw three basic principles which, in light of what we have learned from Christianity's westward expansion, can help Asian churches truly become churches of Asia.

For practical reasons, I begin with a 16th–17th century Asian experience of the "Western Missions" before moving back to earlier times. The Italian Jesuits Roberto De Nobili and Matteo Ricci, thoroughly schooled in Europe's Renaissance humanism, genuinely became Christians of our continent by mastering Asian languages and cultures. Constantine Joseph Beschi (1680–1747) even adopted the Tamil name Viramamunivar and became a renowned poet in Tamil Language. Their example teaches us that only Christians rooted in their own culture can truly appreciate another's and acquire a new Asian Christian identity (Axiom 1).



This axiom has been proven beyond doubt in the Cultural Festival held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 29–30 October 2003. where artists from the Tamil north and Sinhala south shared their cultural achievements despite attempts at disruption by extremists. Their refinement in their own traditions enabled them to reach what is most human in all cultures. Amid ongoing racial tensions, poets, dramatists, and novelists from both sides communicated with ease, proving that true cultivation makes one transcultural without a loss of identity.

The Renaissance Jesuits displayed remarkable cultural sensitivity, unlike many 19th-century missionaries shaped by European nationalism, who often failed to understand and support indigenized Asian churches, but rather created conflict such as the tensions with the Chinese church as Arnulf Camps stated. From De Nobili and Ricci, however, we also inherit two negative lessons.

First, they assumed that Hinduism as a religion was evil, while its culture was neutral or good and could be adapted to Christianity. They tried to strip Christianity of European culture and re-clothe it in Indic forms, calling this “adaptation,” what we now call “inculturation.” Vatican II, however, clarified that religions and their cultures are inseparably bound within God’s Reign. As we search for our Asian Christian identity, other religions provide an indispensable part of it (axiom 2), implying there can be no true inculturation without some form of “inreligionization.”

The other false assumption of the De Nobili-Ricci era was the identification of Asian reality with the culture of the elite. Believing God worked from top to bottom, they targeted the Brahmins and Mandarins, neglecting the biblical vision of a God who works from the bottom up, siding with the weak to challenge the powerful. They lacked a covenant Christology.

In its seventh plenary assembly workshop (January 2000), the leadership of the Asian churches has been made aware that Jesus began His mission with the poor, the socially excluded, and that the universality of His message starts from below, breaking privilege. This is a non-negotiable element of Christian revelation in the Asian Semitic idiom, an irreversible advance that guides our search. Our identification with the Asian poor, Christian or otherwise, secures our identity as both Asian and Christian (Axiom 3).



### Corollaries to the Three Axioms

Brahmadat Upadhyay advanced beyond the De Nobili–Ricci model by living fully as a Christian within his Hindu Vedantic religiosity. He went beyond inculturation to adopt what we could retrospectively call “inreligionization.” Later, Swami Abhishiktananda (Le Saux), a French Benedictine monk, went even further by giving up everything to become a Christian Advaitin, a Vendatic Catholic. His experience was even more daring than Upadhyay’s, since it involved a radical continental shift in acquiring his Asian Christian identity. In light of this, we may add a corollary to Axioms 1 and 2: only those firmly rooted in their own tradition can venture into another’s. Like a creeper grounded in its native soil, they can rise to any height or reach any depth beyond their own habitat.

Asian Christians who take this path cannot ignore Hindu Advaitin reformers like Swami Vivekananda, who reinterpreted the sacred texts in light of caste critique, or Hindu “liberation theologians” such as Swami Agnivesh. Their vision of a reformed Hinduism resonates with the biblical truth that social emancipation and inner liberation are inseparable. This prevents inculturation and inreligionization from becoming nothing more than brahmanization, as seen in criticisms of the “Indian liturgy.”

This observation takes us to another unique form of Asian Christian identity. Tribal India has produced “Christian Asians” since Constant Lievens, distinct from the “Hindu-Christians” of the 19th century. Their cosmic religiosity, ecospirituality, and strong community-sense defies the individualism of metacosmic religions and show us where to begin our search for Asian Christian identity today—a principle confirmed at the 1995 Hua Hin Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

Hence, we add the following corollary to Axioms 2 and 3: appropriating Asian identity through “inreligionization” requires absorbing the cosmic religiosity of the poor, as already affirmed by Bishop’s Institute for Social Action (BISA) VII in the 1980s. In fact, the whole of Asia, hopefully, a new form of Christianity will soon emerge among the tribal and clan societies, different from that shaped by metacosmic religions.

The corollaries to Axioms 2 and 3, mentioned above, are becoming an obligatory policy in light of the Dalits’ struggle against caste discrimination, long justified by Hinduism and tolerated even within Christianity. By rediscovering the biblical God as covenant partner of the downtrodden, they present themselves as truly God’s people and offer a model that fuses the Semitico-biblical heritage with the Indic tradition. Their cosmic religiosity, stamped by resistance to socioreligious oppression, anchors us again in what is non-negotiable in biblical soteriology.



### **Asian Christians Working in other Asian Cultures: Two Examples**

In the 1960s, during the Vatican II era, I found a clue to Asian Christian identity in Fr. S. G. Perera's *Life of the Venerable Father Joseph Vaz, Apostle of Ceylon (1942)*. Unlike the Portuguese who came with grandeur but later on has been obsessed with wealth, and the Dutch who were initially disciplined but also fell into greed, this Goan priest came poor and weak, seeking only to share the Word of Christ. In him, our people encountered not the colonial Christianity of the Portuguese or Dutch, but the Meek Brown Man of Galilee. Abandoning the Brahmin caste privilege and rejecting the Portuguese padroado Sytem, he lived as a true Sannyasi, living the life of the poor, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and serving the weak. Though trained in the West, he gained his Asian Christian identity from the poor he lived with and served, letting God in their suffering shape him—a model for forming youth for the presbyterate and consecrated life in Asia.

Obviously St. Joseph Vaz was a man of his age, long before Vatican II opened the Church to interreligious dialogue and ecumenism. Like De Nobili and Ricci, he inherited the Western Church's theology of religions. The divisions and rivalries of that era, marked by wars and absolutism, left little room for tolerance of Asia's religions. This, unfortunately, constituted one of the identity marks of the Church of his time!

To fill this particular lacuna in this Indian saint, Christian seekers of Asian identity must turn to the non-Western churches of the East, which began missions as early as the late second century, distinct from Greek and Latin standards—an Asian Christianity that sprang forth before Europe and the Americas were Chritianized, though ignored in the Christian histories today.

In my prolonged discussion with Norman Tanner, I refused to call the Greek Councils "Asian," insisting they were at most Eastern. The earliest Asian churches, however, rejected these debates as speculative and instead used their own Antiochene and Semitic idiom. Despite extremes, they produced many saint-ascetics engaged in missionary and secular life, advocating an apostolic mysticism within Asia's religious context.

Here a dynamic relationship can be seen between prayer, fasting, scholarship, service of the poor, and missionary work, along with bold efforts to engage other religions. These churches evolved monastic life in continuity with early Christian asceticism, even influencing the West. Seeing no contradiction between marriage and priesthood, they affirmed monasticism as an essential mark of Asian Christian identity. While admitting their limitations, ecumenism must begin with an empathetic study of Asian churches—their spirituality, mission, service to the poor, and encounters with other religions.



## Concluding Observations

These great pioneers have done the spadework for us by their daring creativity in trying to reconcile their love for the Lord with their loyalty to their land. Reviewing their journey, we arrive now at a better understanding of the tension, if any, between our Christian identity and our Asian identity, a dilemma enunciated more clearly today than ever before. We owe it to their pioneering efforts that we have a hindsight which they did not have. They have made things easy for us.

Besides, we have two important gains in the contemporary Church which makes us better equipped to handle this question than they could ever do. The first is a more profound non-literalist and non-fundamentalist apprehension of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures; the second is the theological recognition of the legitimacy of religious pluralism. These two must go hand in hand. In other words, the comparative study of various religions—a theological imperative for the church today—has helped us to identify what is non-negotiable and essential in every religion, and a fortiori, what is non-negotiable in the Hebrew-Christian Bible. There is and there must be a unique element that imparts an unrepeatable identity to every religion, which we Christians should respect and learn from and even appropriate judiciously, while preserving the Christian identity that is already couched in the Asian idiom of the Semitic culture, an identity that should not be lost in the process of Asianizing Christianity. We must keep these two poles in a healthy tension when seeking what is both Asian and Christian in our faith, faced as we are with an unprecedented challenge of a globalized monoculture now invading our continent, paling the panhellenism of the first Christian centuries and the Western colonialism of the last millennium into insignificance.



# INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (IRDS) INDIA

## IRDS Target Communities Pass Resolution at Statutory Gramsabha for Fair Wages and Climate Action

Statutory Gramsabha meetings were held on **11 October** across IRDS target village panchayats, with strong participation from village communities mobilized by IRDS team members and Village Action Committees.

During the meetings, villagers passed resolutions calling for the proper implementation of the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA)** to ensure fair wages and

as tanks, lakes, water canals, and community forests as part of local efforts to address climate change.

Dalit community members and people from other castes all supported the resolution, marking an important achievement for our villages.



within their villages. The resolutions also highlighted the use of MNREGA works to protect and revive common resources such



In addition, IRDS observed **World Food Day on 16 October** by organizing a traditional seed exchange of millets, pulses, and vegetables. The activity aims to encourage families to grow their own food on small landholdings and strengthen local food security.



### **IRDS Organizes Union Worker Camps and Youth Training Across Villages**

In the early week of November 2025, IRDS organized camps for union workers in Emmapper village and at the IRDS center to help them access benefits from various Labor Welfare Boards in Tamil Nadu, including educational support for children, housing, self-employment assistance, marriage support, burial expenses, accident claims, and more. Many workers were successfully linked to the boards, and IRDS plans to continue similar initiatives at other locations in the coming weeks.

On 8 November, IRDS organized a training program for young leaders, with 47 participants from different villages. IRDS team members were also present. During the program, participants discussed the need to generate self-employment in their regions by using local resources and their educational skills.

The young leaders also emphasized the importance of strengthening Panchami land struggles in their villages, in collaboration with women. They shared that in many villages, women farmers had started farming on their own land and established home vegetable gardens using the seeds distributed on 16 October. Participants discussed the need for cooperative organic farming and the direct exchange of surplus produce with consumers. They also noted that MNREGA works in many villages had helped improve common resources in preparation for the coming monsoon.

In addition, the group discussed forming cooperative milk producer units using traditional cows, promoting sports meets and cultural activities for children, and enrolling members from their villages and nearby areas to support future cooperative initiatives. They plan to finalize the list of interested members in December.





# EAST ASIA EVANGELIZATION CENTER (EAEC) SOUTH KOREA

## EAEC ACTIVITIES

### The 7<sup>th</sup> Synodal Spirituality Retreat



The 7<sup>th</sup> Synodal Spirituality Retreat was held on November 29-30 at Suwon Diocese Spiritual Education Center with main theme of “Let us Walk Together this Path (Communion Mission Participation)” and “Take Courage, I Have Conquered the World” (John 16:33)



### ACEC The Academy Zoom Meeting

There was the Zoom meeting on November 23, where main discussion was “The Division of the Korean Peninsula and East Asian Peace” led by Prof. Anselmo Lee (pax Christi Korea).



## Sharing Missionary Experience “The Great of Hope”



Kim Dong-won Pius gave a speech on his missionary experiences in China at an Asian Missionary Congress titled “The Great Pilgrimage of Hope” in Penang, Malaysia, which was held from November 27 to 30.



### ACEC Christmas Mass

The Nativity of the Lord Mass was celebrated at ACEC on the night of December 24.



# WOORI THEOLOGY INSTITUTE (WTI) SOUTH KOREA

## WTI ACTIVITIES



### Catholic Practical Intellect I

Is a book featuring in-depth interviews with four senior figures of the Korean Catholic laity. Their testimonies and records not only illuminate the history of modern Korean Catholicism but also provide a glimpse into the cross-section of Korean society amidst its turbulent times.

The four laypersons introduced in this book are highly respected Catholic senior figures who serve as exemplary models for the laity. The book fully captures the invaluable experiences and records of these four individuals who lived through the tumultuous modern history of Korea.

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우리신학연구소 교육 강좌

**교황 레오 14세의 첫 회칙  
'너를 사랑하였다' 깊이 읽기**

| 온라인 줌(Zoom) 유료 강좌 / 총 4회 / 2만 원 (각 5천 원)

2026.1.5(월) ~ 1.26(월), 매주 월요일 저녁 7시 30분 ~ 9시



**A DEEP READING OF POPE LEO XIV'S FIRST POPAL EXHORTATION DILEXI TE ('I HAVE LOVED YOU') - WHY RETURN TO A 'CHURCH OF THE POOR'?**

**"THE LOVE OF JESUS AND THE LOVE OF THE POOR ARE ONE"**

Through his first exhortation, *Dilexi Te* ('I Have Loved You'), Pope Leo XIV appeals to us to return to the most essential roots of our faith. Promulgated on October 4, 2025, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, this document clearly illuminates where we must seek the "Face of God" that has been lost amidst the complexities of modern society.

In this reading group, we will encounter the paradoxical truth that the poor are not merely objects of our unilateral aid, but rather that "the poor evangelize us." Reflecting on the meaning of the Baby Jesus who came into this world in poverty, we invite you to experience the warm and overwhelming message of *Dilexi Te* that rises from the depths of the heart as we begin the New Year of 2026.

**Program Details**

Session 1 (Mon, Jan 5): *An Overview of Dilexi Te – Theological and Pastoral Significance* (Lecturer: Hwang Kyung-hoon)

Session 2 (Mon, Jan 12): *Biblical Poverty According to Dilexi Te* (Lecturer: Lee Mi-young)

Session 3 (Mon, Jan 19): *Dilexi Te and the Spirit of Poverty in Saints and Church Fathers* (Lecturer: Kyeong Dong-hyun)

Session 4 (Mon, Jan 26): *Reading Dilexi Te through Catholic Social Teaching* (Lecturer: Park Moon-su)

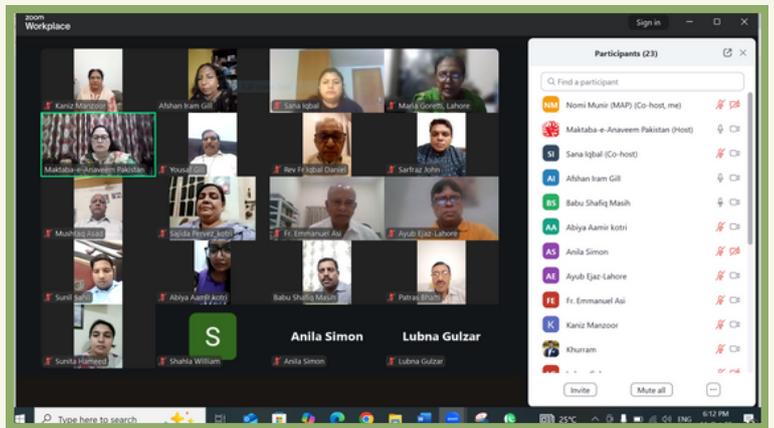


# MAKTABA-E-ANA VEEM PAKISTAN (MAP) PAKISTAN

Maktaba-e-Anaveem Pakistan (MAP) is organizing Theological Sessions for the laity on different themes. The details of the programs are below:

## 1. ONLINE SESSIONS: CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY FOR LAITY- SEPTEMBER DECEMBER 2025

Contextual Theology for Laity-Online Sessions is a three-year project (2024-2026). Two evening sessions are conducted on Saturdays twice a month. The total registered members for the Online Sessions in 2025 are 65 from different cities of Pakistan and from Overseas Australia, Dubai, California, USA, Kuwait. A total 6 online sessions is conducted from October to December 2025.



The following topics were presented by the speakers:

- Feminist Leadership and Society - Ms. Naureen Akhtar.
- Role and Ministry of Women in the Church - Mrs. Alishbah Javed Akhtar.
- Bible in 100 weeks (vol-III) - Ms. Sana Iqbal.
- 14 Stations of Joy of Blessed Virgin Mary - Ms. Sunita Hameed.
- Sin and Love - Ms. Maria Goretti
- Marriage - Sr. Rebecca James FSP
- The People of All Faiths: Inspiring teachings of Jesus Christ - Mr. Khurram Pervez



## 2. SEMINARS: CELEBRATION OF 1700 YEARS OF THE NICA EA COUNCIL

MAP celebrated 1700 years (325-2025) of this historic Nicene council, these seminars provide an opportunity to reflect on its enduring significance for the Church today. The sessions invited the people to rediscover the richness of the shared heritage, engage with the challenges of faith and unity in the modern world, and be inspired by the vision of the early Church for truth, justice, hope and communion.



Maktaba -e -A naveem Pakistan MAP conducted a series of seminars to celebrate the 1700 years of the Nicaea Council. The details are as follow:

Sr.	Date	Venue	Speakers	Beneficiaries
1	25 September	Bishop House, Quetta	Fr. Emmanuel Asi, Mrs. Alishbah Javed Akhtar	90
2	26 September	Holy Rosary Parish (Bashirabad) Quetta	Fr. Emmanuel Asi, Mrs. Alishbah Javed Akhtar	75
3	4 October	Pastoral Institute, Multan	Mr. Shahbaz Francis + Fr. Emmanuel Asi + Fr. Raphael Mehnga	120
4	25 October	St. Francis Solanus Church, Nawabshah	Ms. Saima Shoukat + Ms. Parveen Joseph	45
<b>Total</b>				<b>330</b>

### 3. SEMINARS ON PILGRIMS OF HOPE

MAP provides opportunities to the laity for learning theological topics. MAP's vision and mission is to empower laity in the church and society through education and formation. MAP took initiative to introduce the importance of The Jubilee Year 2025 to the laity. Fr. Emmanuel Asi and Mrs. Alishbah Javed Akhtar were the resource persons in these sessions.



MAP conducted these sessions as following:

Sr.	Date	Venue	Beneficiaries
1	28 September	St. Pious X Parish Quetta	75
2	29 September	St. Eugene Parish, Quetta	80
3	30 September	Christ the King Parish, Quetta	75
<b>Total</b>			<b>230</b>

### 4. BIBLE STUDY SESSION

Maktaba-e-Anaveem Pakistan (MAP) in collaboration with the Apostolic Vicariate of Quetta, conducted a Bible Study session at Don Bosco Learning Center, A-1 City Brewery Road, Quetta. The theme of the Bible Study was "The Spirituality of Leadership". The session was led by Fr. Emmanuel Asi. He shared his insights on Christian leadership and its spiritual foundations. Participants actively shared their views and engaged in a question-and answer session, making the discussion more meaningful and enriching.





## 5. ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE

Maktaba-e-Anaveem Pakistan (MAP) organized a two-day seminar in collaboration Theological Educators Forum -TEF on 10–11 November 2025 at Falettie’s Express Hotel, Shimla Hill, Lahore. The theme of the seminar was **Ecumenical Theological Dialogue**.

The two bibles’ studies were conducted each day by Mrs. Alishbah Javeed Akhtar and Dr. Robert Wetmore.



### Thematic Presentations

The seminar featured four major thematic lectures:

#### 1. History of Ecumenical Dialogue

Presenter: Fr. Emmanuel Asi

#### 2. Global Trends of Christianity

Presenter: Dr. Qasir Julius

#### 3. Exploring Common Theological Grounds

Presenter: Prof. Mushtaq Asad

#### 4. Emerging Theological Leaders in Theological Dialogue

Presenter: Dr. Keneth Pervaiz

### Workshops

#### Workshop 1: Women’s Contribution in Ecumenism

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Khushnud Azariah

#### Workshop 2: Contextual Realities and Social Dimensions of Salvation

Facilitator: Mr. Hamid Henry

#### Workshop 3: Theology for Dialogue

Facilitator: Rev. Tariq Waris

A total of 67 participants (49 male and 18 female) attended, representing 25 institutions across 15 cities of Pakistan. The dialogue strengthened ecumenical relationships and highlighted shared theological insights while respectfully addressing differences. Participants committed to continued collaboration, emphasized inclusivity through women’s active participation, and recommended integrating ecumenical approaches into theological education and community initiatives.





**6. CONTEXTUAL BIBLE READING**

Maktaba-e-Anaveem Pakistan (MAP) and Open Theological Seminary (OTS) conducted a two-day training session in collaboration on “Contextual Bible Reading” from 14–15 November 2025 at the Theological Institute for Laity (TIL). Mrs. Alishbah Javed Akhtar and Rev. Sharjeel Munawar explained the CBR methodology — See, Judge, Act —4 enabling participants to reflect deeply on Scripture and its relevance in today’s world. A number of 20 participants attended this training session.



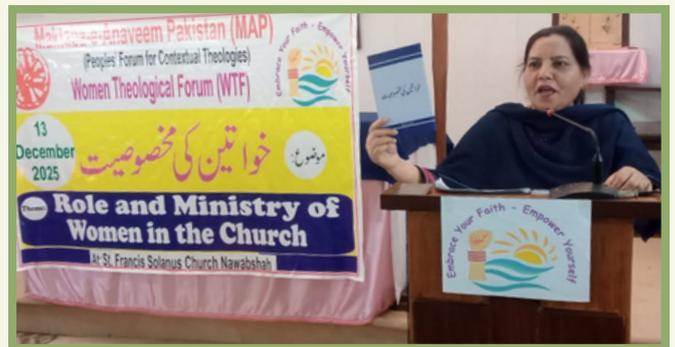
**8. NETWORKING**

Maktaba-e-Anaveem Pakistan (MAP) conducted an introductory session on 26th September at Bishop House, Quetta. Mrs. Alishbah Javed Akhtar presented the introduction of MAP, highlighting its vision and mission. Mr. Riaz David shared how to strengthen and serve the local group. Fr. Emmanuel Asi gave targets and valuable tips to participants. The participants expressed their appreciation for the services of MAP and acknowledged its valuable contributions.



**7. ROLE AND MINISTRY OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH**

MAP – Nawabshah Group conducted a seminar under the platform of the Women Theological Forum (WTF) on 13 December 2025 at St. Francis Solanus Church, Nawabshah. The topic of the seminar was “Role and Ministry of Women in the Church”. The session began with an introduction to the Women Theological Forum (WTF) by Mrs. Ishrat Khurram, followed by an introduction to Maktaba-e-Anaveem Pakistan (MAP) by Ms. Saima Shoukat. Ms. Samina Riaz and Ms. Shazia Zahid was the speaker. Participants actively learned through interactive workshops and question-and-answer discussions, which enriched their understanding of the role and ministry of women in the Church. Mr. Khurram Shahzad Paid a vote of Thanks. A total number 75 participants the seminar.



**9. THANKSGIVING GET-TO-GATHER**

On 20th December 2025, Maktaba-e-Anaveem Pakistan (MAP) joyfully celebrated its Thanksgiving for the year 2025 and Christmas celebration. The Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Fr. Faryad Ansar and co-celebrated by Fr. Emmanuel Asi.





## THE RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER FOR RELIGIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (RTRC) CHIANGMAI, THAILAND

### RTRC JOINS THE 3RD NYÉLÉNI GLOBAL FORUM AND ENDORSES THE KANDY DECLARATION KANDY, SRI LANKA | SEPTEMBER 2025

The Research and Training Center for Religio-Cultural Community (RTRC) participated in the 3rd Nyéléni Global Forum, held in Kandy, Sri Lanka, together with social movements, collectives, and civil society organizations from more than 100 countries, including Indigenous Peoples and grassroots communities.

During the forum, a declaration was released and is presented below.

We are peoples from diverse regions, territories, social movements, collectives and organizations – from more than 100 countries and diverse Indigenous Peoples – gathered in Kandy, Sri Lanka for the 3rd Nyéléni Global Forum.

Together, we have woven our struggles into a fabric of convergence and built a movement of movements for systemic transformation.

We are peasants, landless agricultural workers and farmers; family farmers; artisanal fishers, fisher peoples and shellfish harvesters from rivers, lakes, mangroves and seas; mobile pastoralists and Indigenous nomads; Indigenous Peoples from land, coastal and riverine communities; forest dwellers and peoples; hunters and gatherers; Afro-descendants; anti-caste and racial justice activists; feminist and women's rights activists; youth and inter-generational activists; gender and sexually diverse peoples; differently abled peoples; artists; interpreters and translators; urban poor peoples; food system and migrant workers; trade unions; consumers; human rights, social, economic and climate justice movements; advocates for social medicine, collective health and the right to health for all; social solidarity economy actors; researchers and scholar activists; representatives from solidarity philanthropy, and other civil society

organisations. With our diverse knowledges, convictions and actions, we feed the world, nurture and sustain life, defend our territories and Mother Earth, and ensure the health of all living beings.

Over the past three years, through collective processes in our territories, we have organized assemblies and gatherings of our communities and constituencies to deepen our analysis of the contemporary societies we are part of, and to clearly identify the structural obstacles that deny us justice and dignity. These consultations – that continued during the 3rd Nyéléni Forum in Kandy – have formed the basis of an agenda for Common Political Action. It is an agenda that draws strength from the convergence of our struggles and has the power and potential to bring about systemic transformation in our societies. This Kandy Declaration, and what follows hereafter, is rooted in the collective understandings developed through the creation of this Common Political Action Agenda.

We begin by recalling that over generations, with courage and perseverance, we have nurtured economies of care, cooperation, and solidarity, centering buen vivir and dignity. We have reclaimed lands, waters, and territories through peoples' struggles; built agroecological territories; and defended the Right to Food and nutrition, public services, universal access to public health systems based on integral primary



healthcare, and our commons. We have taken many steps forward in our battles against patriarchy, misogyny, casteism, racism, exploitation of workers, destruction of our territories, privatization, financialization, commercialization, automation, capitalist trade, and corporate power.

However, we still have many struggles ahead of us.

**1. Understanding The Crises We Face**

Capitalism and imperialism are scouring every corner of Mother Earth and nature, converting our ecosystems, biodiversity, and commons into commodities to be consumed and discarded, while devastating our communities and peoples. We are facing multiple crises related to food, health, climate, and biodiversity.

Corporate driven mining, monoculture and extractivist operations, promoted by institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), other International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and the World Trade Organization (WTO), are expanding with the backing of complicit governments. New colonial frontiers, including neoliberal green and blue economies and regimes, and the growing financialization of our territories, are fueling a new wave of extractivism and resource grabbing of lands, oceans and rare earths. This is displacing communities in both rural and urban areas, while intensifying exploitation and pollution.

The agro-industrial model systematically undermines the Right to Food and health through monocultures, industrial aquaculture, pollution, so-called “blue foods”, genetically modified and gene-edited organisms, agrotoxins, chemical fertilizers,

and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) dependent on massive use of antibiotics and antivirals. The increasing consumption of ultra-processed products is fueling a global pandemic of non-communicable diseases.

As corporate technologies advance at an unprecedented speed, new forms of oppression, occupation and control emerge in the form of

genetic modification, digitalization, commercialization and financialization, affecting every aspect of our daily lives. The push for more, faster and powerful artificial intelligence tools provide new instruments for these threats and persisting problems of colonialism.

Meanwhile, wars, genocides, and armed conflicts are escalating with impunity across many regions and continents, fueling brutality and violence marked by the use of prohibited weapons, hunger, rape, and the destruction of health systems, while contaminating the environment. Our territories are being used as testing grounds for transnational military and technology corporations.

Conservatism, fascism, far-right ideology, racism, casteism, classism, xenophobia, misogyny, LGBTQIA+ phobia, anti-worker, anti-blackness, anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, anti-indigeneity, militarism, and climate denialism are on the rise. These are supported by corporate media and some State-run media outlets that spread disinformation, building false narratives, and hijacking and appropriating progressive language to push privatization, deregulation, intolerance, and various forms of supremacy, discrimination, and violence. Hate towards minorities and xenophobia against migrants aim to divide and rule us by turning the richness of our diverse cultures, bodies, languages and beliefs into tools for rejection, deportation, discrimination, oppression, and exploitation.

As inequality and inequity deepens, many among us suffer exploitation in many sectors, from poverty wages to precarious conditions and systemic violations of their rights, while others struggle to secure employment



We affirm the rights of workers, including migrant workers and workers who are particularly vulnerable, whose labour cares for our societies, but suffer low wages, unsafe housing, deportation threats, and other systemic injustices.

The capitalist system is rooted in individualism, consumption and the accumulation of wealth. It is built on deeply discriminatory and hierarchical societal structures based on misogyny, ableism, patriarchy, sexism, heteronormativity, caste, class, colonialism and racism, and has created multiple layers of oppression and exploitation that affect peoples and nature in profoundly violent ways. A systemic crisis of this magnitude, which affects us all, makes a unified global response both urgent and imperative.

## **2. Our Shared Histories Inspire Our Collective Actions**

Over the past decades, we have renewed our spirit of struggle and solidarity, through thousands of lights of resistance and transformation across the world, and from our local territories to international spaces, we have resisted the divisive forces of the numerous systems of oppression we face.

We continue to tear down the walls of caste, class, race, religious fundamentalism, and gender and sexual norms that divide us. Our fight centers the recognition of women's labour, the reorganization of care, redistribution of wealth, intersectional justice and the abolition of gender- and sexual-based violence.

We are inspired by our legacies of resistance—Nyéléni Forums in Mali (2007 & 2015), the Aragalaya movement in Sri Lanka, the farmers' protests in India, and the many different struggles of peoples to be free from hunger, impoverishment, war, and occupation. These struggles teach us the urgent need for convergence among us to effect a

deep systemic transformation that dismantles the different structures of oppression. This 3rd Nyéléni Global Forum in Kandy is, therefore, a necessary step forward in expanding and strengthening our alliances and collective struggles for emancipation, justice, autonomy, and the Right to Self-determination. As we honor those who have been taken from us by conflict, criminalization, and the pandemic, and those still persecuted for defending Peoples' rights and territories—we affirm that their courage inspires our commitment to internationalist solidarity and people-powered change

Through music, poetry, dance, and cultural expression, we carry forward our histories. Led by popular feminist principles, we are collectively building a world rooted in dignity, equality, peoples' rights and sovereignty, justice, freedom, peace and food sovereignty.

Our paths of resistance and transformation will converge across local, national and international levels.

### **Strengthening Our Struggles**

We will build and defend democracy and peoples' rights, peace and internationalist solidarity. We will continue to advance peoples' and feminist economies that center life and food sovereignty.

From the rivers and lakes, across our lands to the wetlands and sea, based on agroecology, aquaecology, and the ancestral knowledges of our peoples, we will fight for universal access to healthy and culturally appropriate food—produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods for all.

We will defend our bodies, lands, seeds, breeds, water bodies, territories, ecosystems and all public, traditional and intercultural health systems. These are our commons, which we will protect and reclaim through struggles and transformative feminist governance models. We bring together Indigenous and feminist knowledges and ways of being in the world, working in diverse collectives that do not just change who is a leader, but change what leadership looks like.



Land, water, seeds, forests, and knowledge belong to the people who care for them—not to corporations, states, or algorithms. We will defend collective, customary, and traditional rights to land. We assert the rights of Indigenous Peoples to their lands and ancestral domains, and we call for land back for Indigenous communities and displaced traditional custodians.

External sovereign debt and household-level indebtedness among rural and urban working classes have soared across the world. The repercussions have severely undermined people's access to education, healthcare, food, housing, and a wide range of other essential goods and services that should be part of the public realm and accessible to all, especially vulnerable populations.

In every country and territory, we will resist the financial chains that trap us in debilitating debt, and build social and solidarity economies across borders to reclaim life, dignity, and freedom from debt. We will redistribute resources, power and care, and insist on reparations for those communities who have been colonized and dispossessed of their lands and resources.

We will continue our fights for freedom and for reparations, education, dignified employment, workers' rights to organise and to strike, right to adequate and healthy food (including the right to breastfeeding), rights to universal health, social and solidarity economies, and climate justice. We will implement a feminist just energy transition that secures energy justice for all peoples, makes energy a common good for all, enables peoples' ownership and control over their energy resources, and advances community-led renewables.

We recognize that the transnational corporations (TNCs) and imperial powers enabling the genocide in Palestine and the crimes against humanity in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Afghanistan, Sudan, Myanmar, and other regions are the same forces responsible for oppressing the people of Cuba for decades and placing our communities and peoples at the frontlines of social, economic, and climate crises. We will step up our agitations against these imperial forces.

Our internationalist solidarity demands uncompromising opposition to the ongoing genocide in Palestine destroying lands, lives and resources. Therefore, we express support for the Boycott Divestment Sanction (BDS) movement and holding accountable Zionism, and those who are complicit in the genocide, who fuel it and who benefit from it.



### **Reclaiming the Multilateral System**

We will defend and fight to transform the multilateral system of the United Nations (UN) so that it serves the people, not corporations. This system must reflect the voices and needs of communities, workers, peasants, Indigenous Peoples, and all those who struggle for justice – not the interests of powerful governments or transnational corporations. In this regard, we are committed to ensuring that UN instruments—shaped through decades of our struggles, activism and engagement—are properly implemented. We demand real power for social movements in global decision-making and full protection of our right to resist oppression, as well as strong measures to stop corporate capture of global institutions such as the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO). We will support the UN Committee on World Food



Security (CFS), as the UN policy space that, so far, best ensures meaningful participation of our peoples in food governance decisions and agriculture policy development and we will seek to defend it against the intrusion of corporate interests and geopolitical clashes.

We demand full implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP). The FAO must fulfill its commitment to amend the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management to include Indigenous Peoples' collective rights, especially their right to free, prior, and informed consent. We demand that the UN separate and not conflate, in all its documents and decisions, the concepts of Indigenous Peoples with local communities.

We support movements opposing and stopping the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) and protecting peasants' and Indigenous Peoples' seed sovereignty, and traditional knowledge systems. We will fight to stop digital biopiracy at national and global levels and will continue to agitate against this within the International Treaty on Plant and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD).

We support making the UN Guidelines on Small-Scale Fisheries legally binding and officially recognizing November 5 as the Global Day of Fisherwomen. We urge the WHO to recognize food sovereignty and agroecology, ensure independence from corporate and philanthropic influence, and create space for grassroots participation.

We recognize the rights of pastoralists as guardians and defenders of commons and wild flora and fauna. We will support the Global Pastoralists Gathering during the UN International Year of

Rangelands and Pastoralists (2026), affirming these rights.

For over a decade, we have been resolutely negotiating—and will continue to do so—for a legally binding treaty to hold transnational corporations accountable for human rights violations and to close the loopholes in existing justice systems that have created an architecture of impunity. We will resist the corporate lobbies attempting to block this demand to subject TNCs to human rights law and to provide affected communities with access to justice. We firmly support the demands for a strong Global Plastics Treaty to end plastic pollution and digital biopiracy. We call for the full implementation of the Durban Declaration and an end to all forms of racial discrimination and intolerance. Furthermore, we demand concrete action on gender- and sexual-based violence, using Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the CFS Gender Guidelines on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls.

### **3. Our Collective Commitments Towards Systemic Transformation**

We have agreed on the following collective commitments to strengthen our solidarity, deepen our struggles and advance systemic transformation across our lands, territories and movements through feminist and popular communication.

We will hold mobilizations and solidarity actions, including: a World Day of Mobilisation against imperialism, wars, conflicts, genocides and to resist the use of famine and destruction of health systems as weapons of war.

We will develop collective actions against fascism, conservatism, and all forms of oppression and discrimination, including those on the basis of caste.



We will organize an annual Nyéléni day that will bring together movements to expand, deepen and strengthen the Nyéléni process.

At global events such as the Belém Peoples' Summit towards COP 30, the International Conference on Agrarian Reform (ICARRD+20), and the World Social Forum of Social Movements, among others, we will organize assemblies of social movements, Indigenous Peoples, and Afro-descendants, ensuring that the Nyéléni agenda is integrated into these and other policy processes.

We commit to organizing a general strike to highlight care work and its centrality in our societies. Our strike will be a united call to defend the rights of caregivers— especially the informal and unpaid ones - and to challenge the patriarchal and capitalist system that has systematically made invisible caregivers within the realm of labor rights.

We will strengthen our movements by establishing political formation process with platforms and schools. Drawing from our Common Political Action Agenda (CPAA), these schools of formation will cover themes such as popular feminism; anti-racism (including anti- Black, anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and others); anti- casteism; gender and sexual diversity; care; feminist and solidarity economies; knowledges and rights of Indigenous Peoples; food sovereignty; and agroecology for systemic transformation. These educational efforts will prioritize and empower young people, incorporating their concerns and ideas into decision-making spaces, ensuring inter-generational knowledge transfer, and promoting the inclusion of all genders and diversities.

Central to this is building our own narratives through the strengthening of popular feminist communication and people's communication networks—both digital and non-digital—for internationalist solidarity and support for peoples and social movements in their territories.

We will continue and deepen dialogues between the entire diversity of Nyéléni and trade union movements based on the connections between food sovereignty, people's health, solidarity and feminist economy, just transition, environmental justice, and popular sovereignty.

We commit to building collective struggles for the radical transformation of the multilateral system and the United Nations, moving them away from corporate control over global governance.

We will continue the dialogues between social movements and Indigenous Peoples with researchers, solidarity philanthropy and other social movements.

#### **4. Processes, Actions and Campaigns That We Commit to Support**

We commit to collectively supporting campaigns and actions that secure food, health, and economic sovereignty. Central to our efforts is resisting corporate monopolies over vital resources—land, water, seeds, animals, genetic materials, and territories—and opposing the commodification of life in all its forms. Our actions will focus on reclaiming territories, advancing popular, inclusive, and comprehensive agrarian reform, and defending the commons from industrial exploitation. This includes halting industrial aquaculture and fishing, the blue economy, privatization of oceans, as well as industrial and factory farming. We will strengthen pastoralist rights and movements worldwide, united in confronting the impunity and power of transnational corporations and other exploitative actors.

Globally, we will join actions to end and prevent famine and to stop the destruction of food and health infrastructure used as weapons of war.



We will rally against the exclusion and harassment of migrants and refugees, fighting to defend their rights and amplify their voices.

We will build alternatives from below, in tune with our lived realities by creating peoples' solidarity economies and peoples' health systems. We will continue to counteract the privatization and commercialization of health systems and defend social protection, including ancestral medicines. We will build grassroots pressure and participate in international negotiations to establish an international framework for trade based on food sovereignty and to promote mutually beneficial and transformative trade relations locally and globally.

The campaigns on food, health, and economic sovereignty are not possible without control over financial resources and debt cancellation. It is therefore imperative that we support efforts to transform the global debt architecture, while recognizing the need to converge with anti-debt movements to raise grassroots concerns.

We are committed to bringing Nyéléni agenda, our values, principles, strategies and campaigns into policy and political processes at all levels, from local to international, to galvanize our solidarity. Our commitment extends to combating all forms of discrimination—based on caste, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual diversity, religion, and faith. Across all our actions, youth inclusion is essential. We will ensure youth voices are represented in decision-making spaces, promote grassroots entrepreneurship, facilitate the intergenerational transfer of ancestral knowledge and practices, and build youth leadership through popular education rooted in feminist, anti-racist, anti-caste, and decolonial values.

## 5. To The Peoples of the World

This Kandy Declaration summarizes our collective wisdom and reflections. In Sri Lanka we resolved to struggle in unity—communicating in eighteen different languages, a remarkable achievement made possible by our dedicated interpreters and translators, to whom we offer our heartfelt gratitude. This Declaration is our lantern—lighting the path ahead as we confront capitalism, imperialism and multiple interlinked and cascading crises. These paragraphs capture the commitments we have made to continue the journey toward systemic transformation. It is our collective call to action: to dismantle the systems of death that have been imposed on our peoples. We are converging to build a system rooted in peace, dignity, and life—for all of humanity, for all beings, for our future generations and for our Mother Earth.

It is a call for unity among Peoples, social movements, and civil society organizations. Across all the diversities we represent—to strengthen our struggles - we are raising our voices together, declaring:

**Systemic Transformation—Now and Forever! We are in this together.**





# INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF CATHOLIC STUDENTS (IMCS) ASIA PACIFIC

## **1. Women Leaders Unite to Advance Inclusion and Justice Through IMCS Pax Romana's RISE 2025**

On October 15, 2025, IMCS Asia Pacific marked the International Day of Rural Women with the virtual gathering "RISE: Resilient, Inclusive, Strong, Empowered Women Leaders." The event brought together women leaders from different regions to affirm women's leadership in promoting justice, inclusion, and community development.

Aligned with IMCS Pax Romana's 2025–2027 Strategic Plan, the gathering featured reflections, inspiring testimonies, and an interactive panel on breaking barriers and building support systems. Participants reaffirmed that when women support one another, meaningful transformation and hope are strengthened.

## **2. IMCS Pax Romana Leaders Strengthen Engagement with Cardinal Sebastian Francis**

Mr. William Nokrek, International President of IMCS Pax Romana, together with Ms. Ann Beatrice, Regional Lay Female Chaplain, met with Cardinal Sebastian Francis in Penang to strengthen collaboration on youth leadership and faith formation. The meeting highlighted Cardinal Francis's enduring connection with IMCS Pax Romana and his continued commitment to accompanying young people.

Discussions focused on advancing shared initiatives, particularly the International Youth Training Centre (IYTC) as a space for inclusive formation, leadership development, and community outreach. The encounter reaffirmed the shared mission of IMCS Pax Romana and the Church in empowering youth to work for justice, peace, and integral human development.

## **3. Experts Across Asia Address Children's Mental Health in Times of Crisis**

On 28 October 2025, the International Youth Training Center (IYTC), together with IMCS Asia Pacific, Christian Advocates for Justice and Development in Negros (CADJEN), Salvatorian Pastoral Care for Children (SPCC), and Opportunity Village Nepal (OVN), hosted the Expert's Forum on Children's Mental Health and Well-Being in Times of Crisis, themed "Access to Services: Mental Health in Catastrophes and Emergencies."

The forum brought together psychologists, educators, public health professionals, and humanitarian practitioners to reflect on the impact of pandemics, conflicts, and natural disasters on children's mental health. Ms. Coleen Dolina-Anugon, RSW, MSW, highlighted that anxiety, fear, confusion, and withdrawal are normal responses to abnormal situations, while emphasizing the importance of resilience through stable relationships, supportive communities, and consistent caregiving.

Participants emphasized the need to create protective environments in homes, schools, and communities, and concluded with a shared commitment to continue safeguarding children's mental health and well-being through collective care and action.



#### **4. Young Catholic Leaders Reflect on Building a Church for the Poor, Rooted in Justice**

On October 30, young Catholic leaders gathered virtually for the fall online roundtable “Dreaming of a Church for the Poor: Dorothy Day and Dilexi Te.” The discussion brought together Dr. Kelly Johnson, Fr. Michael Thomas, Dawn McCarty, and special guest Marcellino Monareh of the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS) Pax Romana.

Marcellino, a student activist from Indonesia, shared reflections shaped by his involvement in Catholic student and youth movements. He emphasized intellectual formation, social justice, and solidarity with marginalized communities as essential to building a Church that truly journeys with the poor.

The roundtable provided a reflective space to engage with Dilexi Te, Pope Leo XIV’s first papal document. In his reflection, Marcellino reminded participants that poverty is not merely a condition but a place of encounter where faith is tested and transformed. He stressed that love must be expressed through justice rooted in mercy, and that commitment to the poor is not optional but central to Christian discipleship.

The gathering concluded with a renewed sense of faith, courage, and shared commitment to building a Church that listens, accompanies, and stands in solidarity with the poor.

#### **5. Championing Civic Resilience & Global Solidarity: IMCS Pax Romana Youth Leaders at the CIVICUS Youth Assembly**

Representing IMCS Pax Romana, Suman Ghale and Titi Maya Ghale of the International Youth Training Center (IYTC) actively participated in the CIVICUS Youth Assembly, a global platform for young leaders and youth-led civil society organizations to exchange ideas, build partnerships, and address pressing global challenges. Held alongside the CIVICUS International Civil Society Week (ICSW), the Assembly emphasized inclusive, sustainable,

and rights-based approaches to civic engagement. At the Assembly, Suman and Titi focused on cross-cultural collaboration, digital literacy, and youth-led initiatives as key tools to strengthen civic participation and social accountability. Sessions highlighted the importance of safe and participatory spaces for youth to share perspectives, co-design solutions, and translate advocacy into tangible community impact. Discussions underscored digital empowerment, human rights-based development, and collective leadership as essential to meaningful civic action.

The Youth Assembly concluded with the adoption of the Youth Manifesto, a unifying declaration committing young leaders to address civic risks, adopt strategic responses, and promote social action through sustainable systems and inclusive collaboration. Suman and Titi reaffirmed that the future of civic engagement depends on strong youth networks that connect, innovate, and sustain, embodying a generation committed to justice, solidarity, and democratic renewal.

#### **6. Youth Leaders and Faith Communities Gather at the Catholic Social Forum**

On 5 November 2025, the Catholic Social Forum (CSF) was held virtually as a side event to the UN Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2), bringing together youth leaders, faith-based organizations, and civil-society advocates worldwide. Organized by Pax Romana with Catholic, ecumenical, and interfaith partners, the forum provided a platform to share strategies and collaborative efforts on justice, peace, and sustainable development.

Speakers highlighted the role of youth-led and faith-based organizations in promoting justice, peace, ecological care, and support for marginalized communities. They also addressed global challenges including debt justice, climate finance, migration, labor rights, and ethical leadership, emphasizing how coordinated action can advance human dignity and sustainable development.

The forum concluded with a call for continued collaboration, dialogue, and action, reaffirming the commitment of youth and faith communities to promote justice, solidarity, and sustainable solutions beyond the event.



### **7. IMCS Asia Pacific Supports Dinajpur Youth Conference**

On 30 November 2025, IMCS Asia Pacific visited the Diocese of Dinajpur during the diocesan youth conference, where forty young participants from five units shared experiences and discussed a strategic action plan under the theme: “Strengthening the movement through self-development and social commitment of the youth society. Empowering the future.”

Suman Ghale from IMCS Asia Pacific highlighted the participants’ dedication to self-development and their commitment to strengthening the youth movement. The visit also included meetings with leaders from the Bangladesh Catholic Students’ Movement (BCSM), Jesuit priests from St. Xavier’s International School and Retreat House, the Dom Antonio Pastoral Center, and the Episcopal Commission on Youth to explore further collaboration.

### **8. Global Youth Voices Unite to End Violence Against Women and Build Safer Spaces for All**

This year, the “Voice for Her Freedom” 16-day campaign was launched to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and to promote safe digital spaces where dignity and freedom are protected. Organized with IYTC, the campaign gathers reflections from women and youth leaders worldwide, amplifying their voices and experiences.

Reflections emphasized the importance of respect and empathy in digital spaces, supporting survivors of violence, celebrating women’s leadership and contributions, encouraging men to create safer spaces, and upholding dignity in all interactions.

The campaign also promotes four core practices for safe digital spaces: think before posting, use polite language, respect privacy, and offer support to victims. By fostering respectful and supportive spaces, the initiative aims to protect freedom, empower women and girls, and ensure safety for all.

### **9. IMCS Asia Pacific Opens 2025–2026 Commission Term with Training and Orientation**

On 29–30 November 2025, the IMCS Asia Pacific Commission officially began its 2025–2026 term with a two-day virtual Training and Orientation, bringing together representatives from several national movements. The sessions introduced new commission members to IMCS Pax Romana’s mission, its role as a global Catholic student movement, and the structure of the Asia Pacific region.

Members were oriented on their roles, responsibilities, and coordination processes, including communication protocols, documentation, and portfolio assignments. They also participated in reflective discussions connecting leadership, social engagement, and international advocacy with Catholic social teaching and Pope Leo’s *Dilexit Te*.

The training concluded with a unified understanding of the commission’s direction for the term. Members are now equipped to carry out their portfolios, strengthen regional coordination, and support the growth of national movements across Asia and the Pacific.

### **10. IMCS Asia Pacific Holds National Transformative Leadership Program in Dhaka**

From 3–7 December 2025, the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS) Pax Romana Asia Pacific organized the National Transformative Leadership Program in Dhaka. The program engaged students in input sessions, group discussions, and Spark Tank social projects, aiming to train leaders committed to peace, justice, and transformative social action.

Participants were guided and inspired by Ms. Anne Beatrice and Mr. William Nokrek, along with the Bangladesh Catholic Students Movement team, reflecting on self-development and strategies for social transformation.



### **11. IMCS Pax Romana Asia Pacific and IYTC Conclude 16-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women**

The “Voice for Her Freedom” 16-day campaign concluded with a renewed commitment to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and to create safer spaces, including digital environments, where dignity and freedom are protected.

Reflections from youth and women leaders emphasized that violence against women can take many visible and invisible forms, but its impact is always deeply human. They highlighted that freedom begins with dignity, including the right to walk, speak, study, believe, and dream without fear, and that respect, consent, and safety must shape every space—at home, in communities, institutions, and online.

The campaign reaffirmed the importance of listening to survivors, challenging harmful attitudes, and taking meaningful action. IMCS Pax Romana Asia Pacific and the International Youth Training Center close the campaign committed to standing with women and girls and building a future where courage replaces fear and compassion overcomes cruelty.

### **12. IMCS Pax Romana Asia Pacific Marks International Human Rights Day 2025**

On 10 December 2025, the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS) Pax Romana Asia Pacific celebrated International Human Rights Day, inviting everyone to stand in solidarity for the safety and rights of Human Rights Defenders.

In a world challenged by war, conflict, corruption, and violence, IMCS reaffirmed its commitment to harmony, communal love, peace, and reconciliation, empowering young people to become agents of social change.

The theme for this year, “Our Daily Essentials,” highlights that human rights are not abstract ideals, but fundamental necessities that safeguard dignity, safety, and well-being.

### **13. IMCS Pax Romana Asia Pacific Holds Asia Pacific Council 2025**

On 12–13 December 2025, the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS) Pax Romana Asia Pacific successfully convened the Asia Pacific Council (APC) 2025 online, with active participation from student leaders, chaplains, and partners across the region.

National Movements, Contact Groups, and collaborators shared reports, reflections, and visions, enriching collective discernment and strengthening regional solidarity.

The Council marked an important step in shaping 2026 regional priorities and preparing for PAPA 2026, grounded in faith, justice, peace, and care for our common home.

### **14. IMCS Pax Romana Conducts Global Advocacy Training 2025**

On 20 December 2025, the Global Advocacy Training (GAT) 2025 took place under the theme “Building Global Student Advocates through the Spirituality of Action.” The training provided young leaders a space for reflection, growth, and discernment, connecting local realities to global advocacy efforts.

Participants explored advocacy at local, national, and international levels, including the roles of faith-based movements, youth networks, and global institutions such as the UN, while learning practical tools such as research, storytelling, digital mobilization, coalition-building, and engagement with decision-makers.

The program culminated in participants presenting individual advocacy action plans, translating learning into purposeful action within their communities. GAT 2025 strengthened a community of young advocates committed to justice, peace, and human dignity, reflecting IMCS Pax Romana’s focus on forming thoughtful, inclusive, and action-oriented youth leaders.

IMCS Pax Romana acknowledged the support of the Coordination Team, UN Advocacy Team, and facilitators Mr. Christopher Dekki, Kevin Ahern, PhD, Dr. Sameh Kamel, and Mr. Hirotaka Koike, whose guidance enriched the learning experience.



### **15. IMCS Asia Pacific Celebrates Christmas 2025 with Hope and Solidarity**

On 21 December 2025, the IMCS Asia Pacific family gathered online for a Christmas celebration, bringing together national movements, contact groups, chaplains, and friends from across the region. The event featured prayer, song, and shared greetings, creating a space of warmth, faith, and companionship.

Movement leaders, including William Nokrek, Fr. Jojo, and Fr. Pangkoj, shared messages reflecting on Christ's birth and the call to live out faith through peace, justice, compassion, and solidarity, particularly with marginalized communities.

The celebration included musical performances and greetings from friends, concluding with a shared photo moment that captured the unity and gratitude of the IMCS Asia Pacific community. The gathering reaffirmed the movement's commitment to faith, service, and solidarity as it moves into the new year.



## SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR: THE THRESHOLD OF TRUE HOPE

*Dr. Paul Hwang*  
Director of ALL Forum

### A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON POPE LEO XIV'S DILEXI TE FOR ASIAN YOUTH

When Pope Leo XIV published his Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te* ("I Loved You") early last October, I felt a profound sense of relief accompanied by a prayer of gratitude. In an era of uncertainty, his declaration to faithfully follow the spirit, theology, and pastoral focus of his predecessor, Pope Francis, served as a lighthouse providing great stability to our Church. It was a confirmation that the Church would unwaveringly continue to walk the path of mercy, staying close to the marginalized.

To align with this significant moment, the Woori Theology Institute(WTI) organized a four-week course to study this document in depth. I was in charge of the first session, sharing an overview of *Dilexi Te* along with its theological and pastoral significance. As I engaged with the forty or so Korean believers present, I felt a strong desire to share these deep insights with a wider circle, especially with the youth of Asia. Today, I would like to share the theological essence of this document with you through this newsletter. Through this study, I was able to reaffirm just how strongly both Pope Francis and his successor, Pope Leo, emphasize solidarity with the poor. I believe this solidarity is the fundamental virtue that our Church must never forget in its pastoral activities. Only when we stand firmly on this foundation can we truly speak of "Hope."

#### **The Poor as "Revelation" Itself**

The most striking theological shift presented in *Dilexi Te* is not merely moving the poor from being an "ethical object" to a "theological place," but explicitly declaring them to be "Revelation" itself. It suggests that when we help the poor, it is not just that God is pleased with our good deeds, but that God reveals Himself within them. Paragraph 5 declares, "This is not a matter of simple human kindness but of revelation. Contact with the lowly and powerless is the fundamental way to meet the Lord of history." Here, the word "revelation" is decisive. Encountering the poor is not an optional act of charity but an epistemological prerequisite for knowing God. Jesus revealed Himself not only as a poor Messiah but as the Messiah of and for the poor (no. 19-20). Since poverty characterized every aspect of Jesus's life, any Christology that excludes poverty is merely fiction.



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We must clearly understand the fact that the Lord "took on flesh" (no. 110) in the hungry, the thirsty, and the imprisoned. This is not a metaphor but the "continuation of the Incarnation in history," where the flesh of Jesus two thousand years ago is ontologically connected to the wounded flesh of the poor today. If the Bible is "written revelation," the lives of the poor are "lived revelation." This tradition of "Solidarity with the Poor" opened its floodgates at the Second

Vatican Council, flowed through the "Option for the Poor" at the Medellín Conference (1968), and was concretized as the "Preferential Option for the Poor" at the Puebla Conference (1979). Today, we confirm that this enduring tradition remains vividly alive, passing from Pope Francis to Pope Leo.

### **Liturgy and Justice: A Holy 'Sal-lim'**

This solidarity awakens us to the truth that liturgy and justice are one. The act of feeding the hungry and advocating for their rights is, in itself, a Mass offered on the altar of the world. The act of breaking bread connects the inside of the church with the outside world into one holy "Sal-lim" (a Korean concept meaning "saving life" or "enlivening"). The two pillars of our faith—"Revelation" (Where is God?) and "Liturgy" (What do we do?)—must both be built upon the concrete lives of the poor.

Of course, there are lingering regrets. The document seems somewhat lacking in a precise analysis of the neoliberal capitalist system or a deep reflection on the scars left by imperialism and colonialism. However, we have not yet seen Pope Leo's full social encyclical. Bearing this unfinished task and patiently practicing the message of Pope Leo while waiting for his next teaching is also, I believe, a Christian attitude toward hope. Perhaps this attitude bears a strong resemblance to the deep and quiet character of our Asia. In this time of **Doing Dabar**, or God's Words, let us not cease our solidarity with the poor, who are the living revelation.



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