

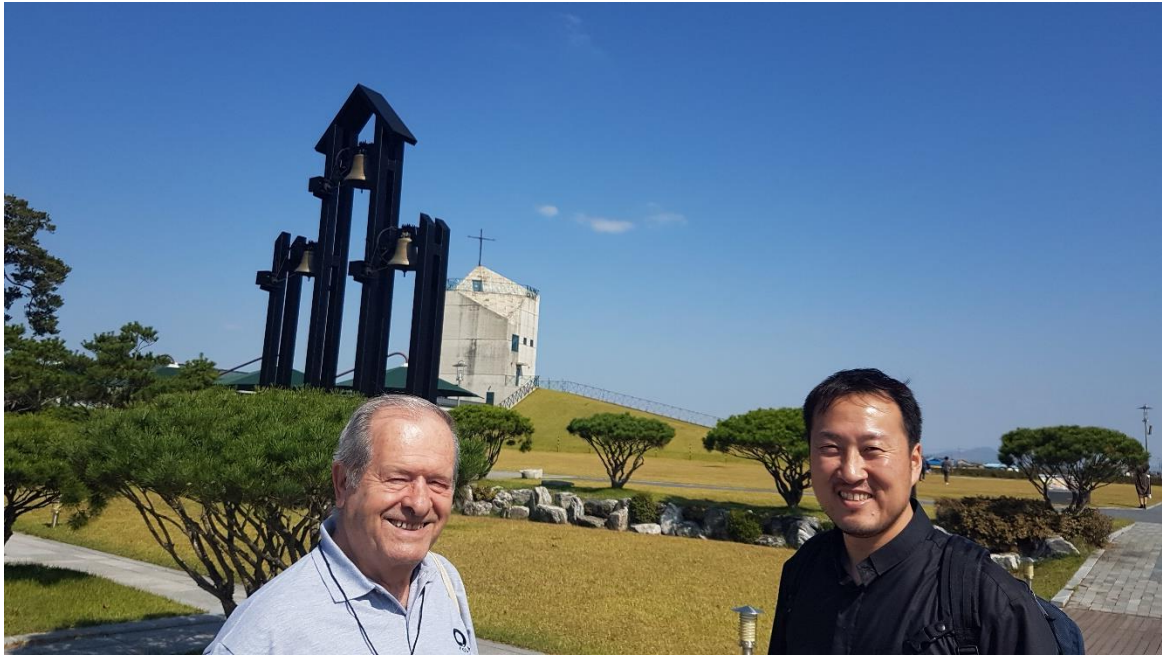
“make it or break it”

LETTER FROM GONG-JU

Jesus Caritas Asian Assembly October 11-18, 2019 in South Korea

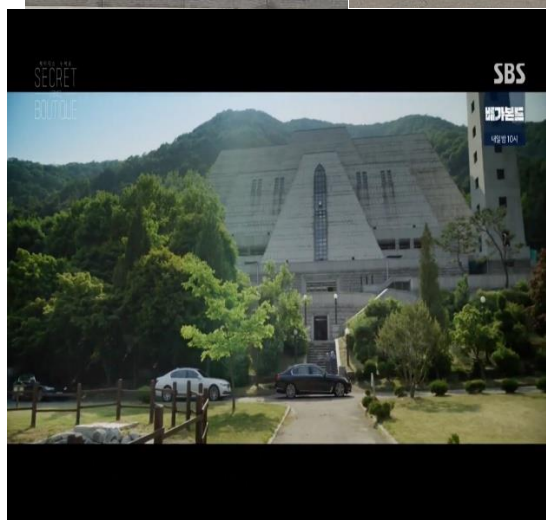
1. Arrival of participants

Eighteen priests from eight countries travelled to Seoul to participate in the **6th Fraternity Jesus Caritas Asian Assembly** from October 11th -18th, 2019. Leaving Incheon International Airport, the arriving brothers were heartfully welcomed by Korean hosts. Immediately they were taken to four parishes in Daejeon Diocese to experience a usual parish weekend in *Mokcheon Parish* with **Fr. Philip Yoon Young Jung**, in *Seosan Dong Mun Dong Parish* with **Fr. Paul Lee Peombai**, in *Ungcheon Parish* with **Fr. Cornelius Jeong Youn Sick** and in *Hansan Parish* with **Fr. Peter Hwang in Ki**. From the very beginning the priests from abroad were impressed by the warm hospitality of their host priests and parishioners as well as by the deeply committed faith of the Catholic community.



2. Welcome in *Mirinae Retreat House* at the Sacred Site of Korea

After the parish exposure-weekend we all gathered in the venue of the 6th Asian Assembly (AA): *the Mirinae Retreat House*. We were astonished by the super modern, huge retreat center building situated in a lovely valley near of one of the many martyr shrines. What honor for us to be guest in one of the most known retreat houses in Korea - thanks to our everything so well preparing and implementing organizing Korean brother priests and Korean sisters. Near the retreat house is the martyr church of **Andreas Kim Dae-Geon** (1822-1846) who is the first Korean Saint who was buried here with his mother Ursula and Bishop Ferreol. One brother remarked with awe: *"What a grace for us coming from other countries to be at one of the most sacred places in Korea. Nature gives me the impression of being in a Buddhist Temple and the sacred ground makes me feel like in heaven."*



Mother Superior Sr. Kim Hye Youn Beatrice, Superior of the *Congregatio Sororum Sacri Cordis Mariae de Mirinae Sisters*, a Korean congregation with many young Sisters, cordially welcomed us and introduced us to their retreat house and her congregation where we would stay for seven days. Unexpectedly, after the welcome ceremony ***Auxiliary Bishop Augustine Kim Jong Soo*** was humbly incognito standing amongst us, invited by Mother Superior to share dinner with us. We had lively talks with the friendly Bishop while he was showing us happily his wooden cross made by a famous national artist. Klaus asked the Bishop many questions which helped us to get a first insight into the dynamic Korean Catholic Church. Korean Catholics being geographically far away from Rome are in general not

interested in the Western Church-critical discussions and theological or structural ecclesial debates.



Bishop Augustine with Frs. Daniel, John, Klaus, Arthur, Eric, Philip, Victor.

After dinner each of the 18 participants introduced one another himself by giving information about his own whereabouts and the context of his ministry. It was a session of a first opening-up to each other evoking curiosity to know each other much more during the coming days.

3. Frustration and hope

Of course, all of us expressed disappointment and frustration that out of 35 expected brother participants only 18 brother priests from 8 countries could come for the Assembly. We were informed that a few could not come due ill-health. Brothers from the Philippines and Pakistan had been facing delay in visa process. Moreover, since we did not get any financial support from the International Team nor from the German Fraternity – *"as we were receiving it in the previous*

years” – a significant number of brothers could not join us due to financial constraints. We realized that we ought to go a long way in contributing ourselves financially to Asian or International Jesus Caritas events so that financially disadvantaged brothers do not have to stay behind due to lack of financial support. Fr. Arthur Charles, Asian Responsible, made it clear: “All brothers who came to Seoul spent substantial amount of money from their own pocket for their participation – ticket fare, local travel, visa fee and other seen and unseen expenses. Even some Bishops did not give permission to their diocesan priests to join the AA since their priests should have to pay for the air ticket on their own It would be encouraging if the International Jesus Caritas Fraternity would understand and act accordingly in a sharing spirit so as to support financially some Asian brothers who deserve solidarity, at least partially so that they can join future Asian events – such as Asian Assembly or Asian Month of Nazareth which are unique opportunities of fraternal get-together, life sharing among brother priests and renewed motivation regarding own vocation and daily pastoral ministry.”.



4. Daily Program

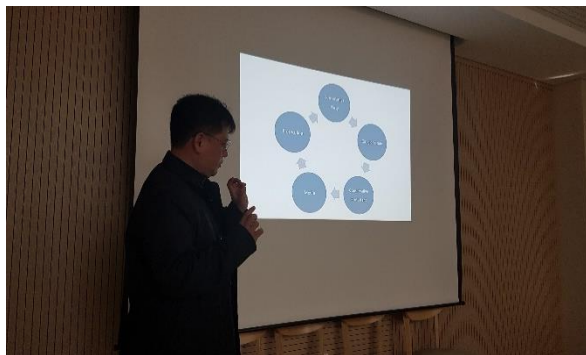
Monday 14th October

Korea – History of the people and the Catholic Church
presented by ***Fr. Rector Justin Kim Yoo Jeong***

We were introduced by the Rector of the Major Seminary in Daejeon to the Korean history, the culture of the people and to the history of the Korean Catholic Church from the beginning of the Christians in Korea up to the present situation and challenges.

We listened with awe and attention to the Rector's brilliant presentation. We understood that the Catholic Church in Korea was founded when the Korean ***Yi Seung-hun*** went to China in order to be baptized what happened in 1784 in Beijing. Thus, it was a lay person who founded the Catholic Church in Korea! Women are playing from the beginning an active role in the Church. Until nowadays the Korean Church is a youthful church.

Since the Confucian elite felt threatened by the upcoming Catholic community, persecution and martyrdom marked Korean Catholicism from its beginning. The history of the Korean population is all in all a history of suffering with two wars, cruel foreign aggressions and a series of dictatorial regimes of their own people in the aftermath of colonialism.



We became also aware although not discussed in length that the Korean Peninsula is divided roughly in half by a **demilitarized zone (DMZ)**. The DMZ which is *250 kilometres* long and about *4 kilometres* wide. DMZ was created by agreement between North Korea, China and the United Nations at the end of the Korean War in 1953. Fr. Arthur, Asian Responsible, encouraged the brothers not to be afraid to also discuss political themes. In private talks we could feel and understand the still existing threat of South Korea by North Korea, China and Russia supporting the North.

The presentation of the history of Korea and of the Catholic Church was followed by the presentation of the Korean Fraternity by **Fr. John Oh Chang Ho**.

Thereafter we had a sharing about the meaning of Fraternity in spiritual and pastoral terms under:

The fire of fraternity

Enthusiasm and Frustration, Vocation and Perseverance

Fr. Klaus gave the introduction emphasizing on the basics of Jesus Caritas Fraternity:

- sharing life with Jesus and with brethren near and far, reviewing our daily lives in our local fraternities (***local fraternity-revision de vie-life sharing***)
- looking at Jesus as Jesus looks at His Father and as Jesus looks at each one of us, walking with Jesus in our daily lives with all our limitations (***adoration-contemplative life***)
- living a simple life with Jesus of Nazareth while from time to time leaving the world behind us (***desert day-month of nazareth***).





We welcomed our guest brothers from the **Jesus Caritas International Team** led by **Fr. Eric Lozada** from the Philippines. With him were his councillors Frs. *Fernando Tapia, Honoré Savadogo and Matthias Keil*. (Tony Llanes, also councillor, was absent). The Brothers from the International Team had their first international meeting after International Assembly in Cebu side by side with the Asian Assembly.

Tuesday 15th October

Deepening the Spirituality of the Fraternity

Fr. Joselito Escote, read by Fr. Mike Cabrera

Philippine Fraternity presented by Fr. Eric Lozada, read by Fr. Erby Davy Lajara

At the evening session we were deeply impressed by the experiences of Fr. Andrew, a diocesan priest (on his way towards Jesus Caritas):

As volunteer in refugee camps in Greece

Fr. Andrew Yang Myung Sick

Andrew explained to us his living with refugees in Greece, the open mind and heart of the refugees, their capacity to share life and hardship with others, he appreciated the openness of the Muslim refugees who welcomed him as a Catholic priest living among refugees.

Wednesday 16th October

Desert day

Introduction given by Fr. Eric Lozada



Fr. Eric Lozada, in Cebu 2019 elected JC International Responsible

Thursday, 17th October

Desert Day on Holy Ground

What does adoration mean to me?

"I can say it is breathing for survival of body and soul. In this adoration time I just surrender and try to trust God does what He wants to do in me. Without this time of adoration, I am sure that I will do my work and something great according to my wish and will. But I know it is poorest thing that I do. Therefore, adoration is my life which God lead me."



Fr. Matthew Mookapaw

Friday, 18th October

Presentation by Asian Responsible **Fr. Arthur Charles** about Charles de Foucauld



Charles de Foucauld - *from within to outside*

“As always, when we come together as Asian Brothers, it’s a great time to get to know and love Little Brother Charles better.

In the context of Korea, we recall that Bro. Charles went on a journey of discovering what it meant to see Jesus in others and live a life of Nazareth among people who never even heard the Gospel.

His spiritual journey led him to identify himself with Tuareg people of North Africa (Algeria) and to live as one of them among them.

At one point in his life, Charles de Foucauld was not even a believer in God after living many years a life following the worldly desire for happiness, money and career. And all that started to change because he came in to contact with Muslims. He wrote in his experience in Morocco:

‘...the sight in this faith and these souls living in continual presence of God helped me to recognize something greater and truer than worldly preoccupation’.

Thus, the experience of God’s continual presence in the midst of non-Christians inspired him to look deeper into his own life and eventually give up everything that belongs to the world for Jesus sake becoming finally in an unusual way in Tamarasset among the Tuareg a martyr of faith and love to Jesus.

We know that Blessed Charles stood up against injustices and took clear positions on social justice issues regarding his colonial French compatriots. Life meant for him a mere being with and togetherness with those who are “most far away from Jesus.” His life became a spirituality of pure presence with Jesus and the others.

The challenge for us is just to find out how much of Jesus are we seeing in our neighbors and how much are we learning from them?”

Eucharistic Celebration leads us to the discovery and encounter of the sacramental oneness of God with the human, of people with culture, of individual with societal experiences.



Report on Jesus Caritas Asia 2013 - 2019 by JC Asian Responsible Fr. Arthur Charles

Comment: "We all are impressed by the accurate report of events and developments of Jesus Caritas Asia. We appreciate the dynamic and creative leadership of Arthur who humbly and faithfully led Jesus Caritas Asia within six years. He inspired and motivated many brothers in Asia and fostered relationship among fraternities in Asia. We are grateful for 6 years of fraternal service of Fr. Arthur. Praise the Lord!"

Election of nes Asian Responsible

The climax of the Asian Assembly 2019 was the Eucharistic Celebration in four languages followed by festive dinner prepared by ever smiling youthful Sisters of the *Congregatio Sororum Sacri Cordis Mariae de Mirinae Sisters*. It was then when the newly elected Asian Responsible was presented:

Fr. Miguel “Mike” Cabrera from the Philippines, Diocese of Tagum, Davao



Fr. Philip, newly elected Fr. Mike, Fr. Arthur

In his homily at **Eucharistic Celebration** Fr. Klaus, Mentor of Jesus Caritas Asia, reflected on the essence of Jesus Caritas Priests Fraternity: *"... to follow Jesus means to lead a contemplative life seeing God in all things and in all beings. It means to look at God the Father as Jesus looked at Him, his heavenly Father. Bro. Charles inspires us in our daily lives to look at Jesus of Nazareth in silent adoration with the eyes of a poor pilgrim following Jesus with his unconditional love."*

The concluding Festive Celebration turning out into a real fiesta with delicious food and drinks, with songs and dances. Great moments of joy and thanksgiving to our Lord, to our Korean Brothers, to the Sisters!



Saturday 19th October

Fraternity Plan for Jesus Caritas Asia 2020-2023

1. **2020 ASIAN WEEK OF STUDIES** in PHILIPPINES; Mindanao - FEBRUARY 2nd week
2. **2021 ASIAN MONTH OF NAZARETH** in BANGLADESH – OCTOBER 2021
2021 Celebration of 500 years of Christianity in the PHILIPPINES – whole year, any time. Invitation by Filipino Brothers
3. **2022 ASIAN ASSEMBLY** in ??? - OCTOBER 2022
4. **2023 GOLDEN JUBILEE** of JESUS CARITAS - ASIAN ASSEMBLY IN ROME or in SAHARA/ALGERIA

PRIESTS VISITING PRIESTS:

- Fr. Klaus Beurle visiting priests in
- ... BANGALORE October 2019
- ... MYANMAR/VIETNAM 12/2019 to 1/2020

... BOSNIA/HERZEGOWINA 6/2020

Fr. Emmanuel Asi visiting priests in BANGLADESH 2020

Fr- Mike visiting priests in MALAYSIA, SRI LANKA 2020

New platform/applications to improve communication among ourselves: **WhatsApp, Facebook**. Please send your mobile number and join Group Chat in WhatsApp "Jesus Caritas Asia". You will see miracles of communication will happen...

Newsletter/Magazine: **OPEN HANDS** yearly (Editor: Fr. Arthur Charles)

New publication type "**Open Mind**"- Jesus Caritas Asia Studies, occasionally (Editors: Fr. Klaus Beurle, Fr. Arthur Charles)

CONCLUSION

The Asian Assembly 2019 in Korea was finally, after overcoming various obstacles, a wonderful experience for all who could join – a heavenly gift to the participants from 6 countries expressing deep joy and gratitude ready to share their experiences, hope and vision to many brother priests in Asia and elsewhere.

Gong-ju, 18th October 2019

Ervy Davy Lajara, Mike Cabrera, Victor Nyan Myint, Klaus Beurle
on behalf of the participants of the Asian Assembly

After the Asian Assembly some brothers stayed for some days more in Seoul. Fr. Klaus got the chance to stay with the **Little Sisters in Eunpyeung gu, Shinsa Dong**. They were sharing lives, celebrating Eucharist, joining monthly demonstration for justice and peace in Seoul. At the Sisters Fraternity Klaus met also Bro. John M.C. from Bangladesh,

brother of Mother Teresa's *Missionaries of Charity* and various groups of youths and young professionals. In our sharing and encounters we were had understood and learned that South Korea is a vital Church and the population is marked by young dynamic youths and the population with a great discipline and kindness towards foreign goods and values.

