



CONGREGATION OF THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST

47th GENERAL CHAPTER

Rome, 6-27 October 2018

Report of Passionist Asia-Pacific Configuration (PASPAC)

I. DATA

A. Four (4) Provinces and Two (2) Vice-Provinces

1. Province of Regina Pacis (REPAC), Indonesia
2. Province of Korean Martyrs (MACOR), Korea and China
3. Province of the Holy Spirit (SPIR), Australia / New Zealand / Papua New Guinea / Vietnam
4. Province of the Passion of Christ (PASS), Philippines
5. Vice Province of St. Thomas the Apostle (THOM), India
6. Vice Province of Japanese Martyrs (MAIAP), Japan

- B. Number of Members:** 400
C. Average age: 45 years old
D. Number of Houses: 43
E. Students: 39 novices; 81 professed students

II. ANALYSIS

A. Strengths of the Configuration

PASPAC is a culturally rich configuration of self-governing entities committed to working together in Solidarity in Personnel, Formation, Finances and JPIC. These four are pursued by taking into account the many common sentiments and practices of all entities vis-à-vis the uniqueness of each.

Statistically, PASPAC stands strong with 400 members. Vocations are strong in Indonesia, Vietnam, China, and PNG, slowing but surviving in the Philippines, Korea, and India. Australia and Japan make up for the dearth of local vocation by opening up to naturalized and immigrant citizens. Australia has promising members from Burundi and South Africa. Japan welcomes Filipino and Korean Passionists to do work in the Vice-Province.

In the Philippines and Australia, Catholics are a major religion. In other entities, Catholicism is a minority but has considerable influence in social and

educational institutions. In both China and Vietnam, the Church suffers from repressive government control but exhibits profound witnessing of faith.

Passionist charism is animated through various ministries – itinerant preaching, formation and education, parochial work, justice and peace advocacies, etc. Many members are also working in entities and areas outside of the Configuration – in Europe, North and South America, and Africa. This speaks of the ready adaptability of PASPAC membership.

B. Weaknesses of the Configuration

1. AUTONOMY AND INTEGRATION

Most of the entities in PASPAC are around (more or less) fifty years of establishment, hence still maturing as entities. The project of aligning autonomy and integration is still a struggle. The alarm over “globalist” direction still prevails over sound commitment to configurational mindset. At this, PASPAC can easily be assessed as stuck in conference-style collaboration rather than moving towards solidified configuration as envisaged by the congregation. There is lively exchange of personnel but the sharing could still be cautious and tentative. In terms of formation, there are real efforts to level and integrate formative strategies but these strategies still have to catch up with formation personnel equipped with configurational mentality. There is still so much to ask in terms of configurational solidarity in finance, particularly in terms of transparency and commitment beyond limited configurational programs and projects. The Commission on Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation still leave each entity on its own.

2. VOCATION COUNT IN SOME AREAS

Despite the continuing and sustaining good count of aspirants to the Passionist life in countries like Indonesia, Vietnam, China, PNG, India, and The Philippines, there is so much to ponder on how to address the waning count of aspirancies from Korea, Japan, and Australia. These three provinces could not just dismiss the future by accepting natural death; hence, they are appealing for help from other entities. These entities look for different ways to make Passionist life continuously existent in their localities. PASPAC takes the dearth of vocation in these entities as a challenge the whole configuration has to address.

3. READINESS FOR THE MILLENNIAL PASSIONISTS

Inasmuch as most of the religious (and students) in thriving entities of PASPAC belong to an age of digital and virtual connections, there is a shortage of administrative and formation resources to address the problems brought by a self-absorbed culture and too much dependence on social media. The manifold gifts

that the present age could offer to our life as Passionists are seeking infrastructures that can accommodate, process, and align eminent modern (contemporary) mindsets and practices of our young religious. PASPAC's Formation Commission is working on policies that would address contemporary challenges but it would need an aggressive (sometimes fast-paced) updating of the way we deal with and address these challenges.

III. PROPHETIC AND HOPEFUL ASPECTS

A. Successful Initiatives

Restructuring is a process not just for the Configuration as a whole. Each of our entities is involved in its own internal restructuring in response to the needs of their ministries, the situation of vocations, the age of their religious.

- China, Vietnam and PNG are in the process of transition from establishing the congregation and formation focus, to the establishment of ministries and mission.
- India and Vietnam are promising entities.
- Philippines, Korea and Indonesia are stable provinces.
- Australia and Japan are now aged and facing rapid diminishment.
- Despite the work-in-progress status of our entities, we enthusiastically look forward to establishing our congregation in new areas. On September 22, 2018, PASPAC starts sowing the seed of Passionist life in Patheingyi, Myanmar. The community is exploring how we can best facilitate the sprouting of the Passionist charism in this wounded but a beautiful country.

All our entities are asking how the signs of the times are calling us to respond. How the emerging needs of Justice and Peace shall be addressed.

PASPAC has been working in solidarity for 40 years. Mobility, social media and globalization have made knowing each other and sharing more possible than before. Visits and sharing between entities and knowledge about each other are growing. There is significant sharing of personnel mostly in bi-lateral arrangements between two entities.

There has been very significant sharing of finances through PASPAC, which fuels the interface of the different areas of solidarity in the Configuration. This sharing has taken the form of joint contributions to international formation opportunities and English and Novitiate programs. The financial costs to Provinces of educating religious and then giving them to other entities for ministry is a great gift and sacrifice. This free offering of personnel is especially generous when no recompense is asked for. Similarly, provinces have contributed solidarity donation to the entity from which these religious come. Various provinces

have also supported and/or paid tuition fees for religious coming from other entities for language or study.

B. Hopes for the Future

PASPAC hopes to strengthen its model of configuration with the following prospects:

- Finding financial self-sustainability for each entity
- Establishing financial equity across the Configuration
- Configurational strategies in addressing ageing and illness of religious in some areas
- Configurational initiatives in addressing the lack of personnel for ministries
- Configurational commitment to guide the younger religious after final profession and ordination
- Configurational strategies to address the challenges of addiction, alcohol, pornography and misuse of social media
- Configurational commitment to raise our life in China, Vietnam and soon Burma in the midst of government repression
- Configurational efforts to face the issues of Professional Standards Failures and of Child Abuse and implement the policies crafted to address these disturbing issues

IV. CHALLENGES & CONCERNS TO PRESENT TO THE GENERAL CHAPTER

A. Configurational Challenges

1. TOWARDS A CONFIGURATION-MINDSET

As in other Configurations, we are still often locked into a “**My Province**” mindset. We recognize that in the wide diversity of our countries, cultures and entities, mission is local - responding to what is happening where we are. This is necessary and healthy.

We see the need to work further to establish a “**Configuration-mindset.**” We realize that this will need healthy and regular communication, formation, exposure of religious in formation to other entities, cross-configurational meetings and formation gatherings.

We also need to hold these two dimensions in creative tension. This will need putting healthy structures in place organizationally especially at the level of Leadership and PASPAC Executive.

2. RE-VITALIZING COMMUNITY LIFE

A major challenge we recognized is that, for many, community life has become arid and parched. There is much dysfunction in our communities. They are often far from being the healthy community religious life they were meant to be.

Having healthy, whole integrated religious living in healthy communities underlies and is a precondition of everything else we do as entities or as a Configuration – and as a Congregation.

3. PRESERVING PASSIONIST LIFE IN MILLENIAL LANDSCAPE

We believe and hold that the Passion of Christ penetrates into any age, culture, and locality. The Passion of Christ will never be obsolete or culture-detached or out-of-place. The challenge, especially in a rapidly changing atmosphere and varied landscapes in PASPAC, is to keep pace with the breath of the Holy Spirit in all these changes and transitions.

B. Questions for the Chapter

1. MOVEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT VERSUS JURIDICAL FACTORS

In many instances, the decisions of the configurations, which do not use the “superprovince” model, are grappling with juridical questions like choosing delegates to the Chapter, opening a new mission outside of existing entities, and status of configuration efforts like International House of Formation.

2. LAY PEOPLE’S ROLE IN THE CONGREGATION

While many entities have appreciated the role of lay people, we still do not know (or not willing) how to considerably avail the expertise of lay people especially in our important structures like formation and ministries. The future of our congregation cannot just rely on professed membership.

3. COLLECTIVE STRATEGIES IN ADDRESSING SEXUAL SCANDALS

Our seemingly “not being alarmed” by the rising cries over scandals caused by the hierarchy in the Church and by the members of our own congregation may be caused by an entrenched “mind-your-own-business” strategy and “do-my-own-damage-control” scheme. Isn’t it time for us to collaborate in aggressively addressing the scandals and have collective compunction and admit a degree of culpability?

Fr. Gwen B. Barde, CP
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