

Asia Pacific Mission Studies

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Editorial Note

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**Celebratory Issue
on the
Sixtieth Anniversary
of East Asian
Pastoral Institute**

Editorial Notes

Dear Readers,

The APMS is glad to present to our readers this and the following issue (Volumes 8.1, 8.2) in celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the EAPI, our mother institution.

We open with three celebratory greetings and essays, by Filipe Cardinal Neri Ferrão, President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference, by Fr. Primitivo “Jun” Viray, SJ, President of the Jesuit Conference for Asia Pacific (JCAP), and Fr. Antonio Moreno, SJ, former President of JCAP.

Our two keynote articles are by Fr. John Chechon Chong, SJ, current director of EAPI, and by Charles Bertille, who has devoted more than three decades to full time ministry in the Asia Pacific region and who delivered one of the two keynote addresses at the Strategic Futures Seminar held from August 16 to 17, 2025, marking EAPI's sixtieth anniversary. Fr. Chong lays out a vision of EAPI's future as a place to nurture those in the service of God's work in the Asia Pacific region as well as in the rest of the world, meeting the challenges of our contemporary times. Dr. Bertille highlights the renewed understanding of the synodal character of church, and lays out some implications for concretization in the localized contexts that participants of EAPI are engaged in, with a view to their global implications. (Another keynote address delivered at the same workshop by Sr. Nathalie Becquart, XIJM, will be included in the next issue.)

Five articles are presented under the theme of “Looking back, Looking Ahead,” opening with highlights of the first ten years by the late Fr. José Maria Calle, SJ, one of the founding figures of EAPI. This was given as an address on the occasion of the 42nd anniversary of EAPI on October 15, 2008, with his recollections of that initial decade, republished here from a JCAP newsletter. Reading these reminiscences brings forth sentiments of gratitude to the pioneering figures who made EAPI what it is today. Following this nostalgic look

back at our foundational decade, we include a summary statement of the vision and mission of EAPI based on decades of experience up to that point, set forth by Fr. Jeyaraj Rasiah, SJ, Sri Lankan Jesuit who served as Director from 2006 to 2010. This is followed by a more detailed reflective account of how EAPI sees its role in responding to challenges in a changing world, laid out by Fr. Arthur Leger, SJ, who succeeded Fr. Rasiah as Director in 2010 as the latter took on the appointment as Provincial Superior of Sri Lanka in that year. In this vein, we also invite the reader to check out the article of Fr. Peter Pojol, SJ (Director from 2016 to 2021), who has situated the mission of EAPI in its Asian context, in his essay, “Incarnating the Missionary-Pastoral Character of Churches in Asia,” published in APMS Vol. 3-2 (2021), 23-33, accessible through this link: <https://archium.ateneo.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=apms>

To provide readers with information and appreciation of the various changes and developments that happened within EAPI through the decades of its existence in serving Church, we also include an article by Fr. Paul Steffen, SVD, entitled “The Mission and Ministry of East Asian Pastoral Institute for the Local Churches in Asia and Oceania,” previously published in Word and Worship, (51:1, 2018, 60-83), with the blessing and permission of the author and the publisher, revised and updated up to the present. In this connection, we refer readers to another article of Fr. Steffen which is also relevant to the understanding and appreciation of EAPI's role, entitled “The Contribution of Pastoral Institutes to an Inculturated and Contextualized Ministry,” published in a previous volume of APMS (2020, Volume 2.2) accessible through the following link: <https://archium.ateneo.edu/apms/vol2/iss2/4/>

We have a delightful essay by Sr. Merle “Ley” Salazar, FDNSC, who writes about her EAPI experience first as a participant, and then for three years now as Coordinator of the Sabbatical Renewal Experience program of EAPI. Sister Ley, as she is endearingly called, gets up close and personal, and invitingly brings the reader into the EAPI community life with her wise musings, and the gentle and reassuring touch her presence brings to the community.

This issue offers a section including brief accounts by selected EAPI students and graduates on their experiences at EAPI and what these have meant to them in their lives of service to the church and to the world. We will include more in the next issue.

We include brief but spectacular tributes to four giants who were the pillars that formed EAPI into what it is now—Fr. Johannes Hofinger, SJ, Fr.

Alfonso Nebreda, SJ, Fr. José Ma. Calle, SJ, and Ms. Teresita Nitorreda. For the latter, we are grateful to Sr. Vicky Palanca, ICM, for providing further details not available elsewhere.

On a different tone, as a special feature of this volume, we present Fr. Roderick O'Brien's account of the courageous life and faith of Jan Ruff-O'Herne, born in Java of a Dutch colonial family, who was kidnapped by the invading Japanese army and was subjected to sexual enslavement and abuse, along with many other women. Shipped back to Holland after the surrender of the Japanese in 1945, and after years of silence, she found her voice and spoke out publicly about her experience, noting how her faith had sustained her through those years of ordeal, encouraging others to be resilient in their own faith and trust in God amidst all forms of adversity.

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