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In Joyful Celebration, Looking to the Future

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In joyful celebration of the East Asian Pastoral Institute's 60th Anniversary, we give thanks to the Lord for the bountiful blessings we have received through the years. We are also truly grateful to all of you—staff, alumni, friends, benefactors—who have shared in this wonderful journey. Many thanks to all those who shared their personal experiences, reflections, and insights for this special edition of the Asia Pacific Mission Studies (APMS). These are truly invaluable contributions helping us to acknowledge the Lord's presence through the 60 years of EAPI's existence.

As we look to the future, our hearts are full of hope anchored on the promise of the Risen Lord who assured us, “And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28: 20). Amid a deeply divided and wounded world, we dare to ask, “Where is the Spirit leading us? Where is it leading EAPI as an institution so that it can contribute to bringing healing and hope?” We recall with deep gratitude the special moment when Fr. Pedro Arrupe, the former Jesuit General, formally announced in 1965 the reorganization of EAPI as an international and

formation training center in Asia to promote the pastoral vision of Vatican II which would conclude in that year. In the webpage of EAPI, we note that “Over the decades, EAPI has consistently responded to the Asian and Oceanian bishops and Catholic religious leaders by providing resources for special formation and *aggiornamento* in the spirit of Vatican II. It was, and still is, the Asia Pacific hub for theological and pastoral renewal, updating, experimentation and exploration.”¹

In consideration of EAPI’s original inspiration and purpose to promote the pastoral vision of Vatican II, we are invited today to engage in a common discernment as to this vision’s relevance to the Church and the world. As recent as February 14, 2025, Pope Francis spoke of the relevance of the Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World. The Holy Father tied *Gaudium et Spes* to the Church’s ongoing commitment to synodality. He says that it “coincides with the synodal spirit of the Church, where all are united in Christ, forming a universal brotherhood, as members of His Body.” The Pope goes on to say that this unity is formed by the Holy Spirit and manifested in solidarity especially “with those who suffer the most.”

As we celebrate our 60th anniversary, we rejoice that EAPI continues to espouse that vision of Vatican II by being the Asia Pacific hub for theological and pastoral renewal, updating, experimentation and exploration which is in sync with the Church’s current strategic direction to promote synodality at the service of God’s pilgrim people. It is worth noting that EAPI provides a multi-cultural residential environment, an important and unique enabling feature that fosters synodality in the Church. The concrete reality of laity, religious, and clergy who live together and participate in its programs, who welcome and accept each other, and who are provided with mutual healing and growth in their lives is a powerful indication of the Spirit’s presence in the Church today.

1. “Our Story: Training Missionaries From All Over The World Since 1961,” accessed April 9, 2026, <https://eapionline.org/about-eapi/>.

Looking to the future as a Jesuit-run institution, EAPI is constantly challenged to remain faithful to its charism of *seeking to find God in all things* in this deeply divided and wounded world. Thus, its programs continue to provide participants with an invaluable experience of St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises so that they are able to develop their capacity not only for personal discernment but for discernment in common for their respective missions. St. Ignatius' gift of discernment to the entire Church helps guide them in reading the signs of the times, in responding to the Lord's call not only individually, but communally. Discernment in common can bring people together to listen to each other, to walk together, and to face not only the challenges of geographical frontiers but also those frontiers brought about with the change of epochs in the world today. EAPI in its own humble and unassuming way can contribute to realizing the vision of Vatican II: a pilgrim people on a bold journey towards the Kingdom of God.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

REV. FR. PRIMITIVO "JUN" VIRAY, SJ, is the current President of the Jesuit Conference for Asia Pacific Region, who served as the 12th Provincial Superior of the Society of Jesus in the Philippines. He holds an MA in rural development studies and a doctorate in development studies from the University of East Anglia. Fr. Viray has a wealth of apostolic experience in education, advocacy for the poor, and formation work, which he brings with him in his new role as JCAP President. During his term as Provincial, Fr. Viray responded to an invitation from Bishop Pablo Virgilio David and sent Jesuits to the Sacred Heart Mission Station of the Diocese of Calookan. This enabled Jesuits to have greater engagement with the marginalized, including those affected by the war on drugs.