

THE MISSION AND MINISTRY OF THE EAST ASIAN PASTORAL INSTITUTE FOR THE LOCAL CHURCHES IN ASIA AND OCEANIA

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ABSTRACT

The EAPI is a typical international, interregional pastoral institute. It trains primarily multipliers in the ecclesial-pastoral ministry for the Asia-Pacific region. In 1986/87, 20 years after the first course, the institute had 14 resident members in the teaching staff. The novelty of the Pastoral Institute has been able to consolidate itself in this region and meet the existing needs. The EAPI is today a centre for the ecclesial-pastoral renewal of the Asian-Pacific local churches and it also contributes to the exchange of pastoral experiences with other local churches.²

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1. This article was first published in Word and Worship 51:1 (2018) 60-83, republished here with the permission of the author and publisher, and with minor revisions updating information and adding names of EAPI personnel.
 2. "Das EAPI ist ein typisches internationales, überregionales Pastoralinstitut. Es bildet in erster Linie Multiplikatoren im kirchlich-pastoralen Dienst für den asiatisch-pazifischen Raum aus. 1986/87, also 20 Jahre nach dem ersten Kurs zählte das Institut 14 residierende Mitglieder im Lehrkörper. Das Novum des Pastoralinstitutes konnte sich in dieser Region

1. The stages of development of the East Asian Pastoral Institute

The Generalate of the Society of Jesus supported the idea of regional pastoral institutes. Their newly elected General Superior, Fr. Pedro Arrupe (1907 / 1965-1983 / -1991), who had worked for many years as a missionary in Japan, had signed on 15 August 1965 the decree that transferred the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI) from the China Province to the responsibility of the whole East Asian Jesuit Assistency.³

The EAPI was since its inception focused on renewal of the pastoral and missionary ministry of the church. To achieve such a renewal, it aimed at a theological, pastoral and spiritual updating of the ordained and non-ordained ministers of the church including priests, religious and laity alike. Felipe Gomez remembers that

The initial idea of the EAPI was “*aggiornamento*” which, obviously run out of gas at the end of the seventies. During this time, the EAPI conducted many courses in the various countries of the region. Then we took another direction, which would be “updating and upgrading” the Pastoral Agents of the churches. The courses were materially very similar, that is the

festigen und einer bestehenden Notwendigkeit entsprechen. Das EAPI ist heute ein Zentrum der kirchlich-pastoralen Erneuerung der asiatisch-pazifischen Ortskirchen und trägt darüber hinaus zum Austausch von pastoralen Erfahrungen mit anderen Ortskirchen”, in: Paul B. Steffen, S.V.D., *Die Bedeutung von Pastoralinstituten in jungen Ortskirchen am Beispiel des Melanesischen Instituts*, Dissertation zur Erlangung des Lizentiatates in Missiologie, Rom 1989, 16; cf. See also my article on the Indian National Pastoral Institute: “The Long Road to *Aggiornamento*. Vatican II, the Church in India & the NBCLC”, in: *Towards New Horizons*, Sr. Annette Thottakara – Fr. Sagaya John (eds.), The National Biblical, Catechetical & Liturgical Centre, Bangalore 2017, 40-64.

3. “In the Society of Jesus, Assistency is a group of Provinces and of other smaller divisions forming an administrative unit. The East Asian Assistance comprises the Jesuits working in Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, Hongkong, Macau, Philippines, Micronesia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia.”

A. Nebreda, *The Beginnings of the EAPI –Reminiscing*, in: *East Asian Pastoral Review* 24, no. 1. (1987): 4-20.

seven month pastoral course and the monographic five weeks Summer Course. The Spirit changed little by little, with a greater insistence on pastoral content and spirit. This consisted mainly in the introduction of courses on Pastoral Psychology, Sociology, Cultural Anthropology, etc. Theology became very heavily biblical. Ecclesiology gave importance to Basic Communities and some exposure. Now a new change is taking place. A new director and a new Jesuit team has been appointed to the Institute. The long course is discontinued. In its stead a series of shorter courses are offered.⁴

Fr. Johannes Hofinger had founded in 1953 in Manila an *Institute for Missionary Apologetics*, also known as an Institute for Missionary Catechetics, which changed its name in 1961 into *East Asian Pastoral Institute*. This pastoral institute founded and developed by Fr. Hofinger stood under the care of the Jesuit Province of China, since Fr. Hofinger had been a missionary in China, and his focus and his mission was still geared towards China and the Far East. That explains also the name *East Asian Pastoral Institute* instead of *Asian-Pacific Pastoral Institute* as was at least its orientation after its re-foundation in 1965. The newly founded EAPI inherited not only the name from the China province of the Jesuit order, but also its well-build up library, financials funds and the staff of six Jesuit priests; two more Jesuits expelled from Vietnam reinforced soon this team. Fr. José M. Calle had also been a member of the China province and a member of the first EAPI from its very beginnings in the 1950s. Since Fr. Calle had taken the one year course in Catechetics at the newly founded International Institute for Catechetical and Pastoral Formation Lumen Vitae in Brussels, he had advised his co-national Fr. Nebreda do to the same. The provincial of the Jesuit province in the Philippines, Fr. Horacio de la Costa, became one of the strongest supporters of the newly founded EAPI and its

4. Felipe Gomez SJ in a letter to the author from April 13, 1989.

new director since 1965. For two years EAPI could use the Loyola House of Studies, the brand-new Scholasticate of the Philippine Province for its educational activities. The present buildings of EAPI were erected very fast and the whole staff and students could move into the buildings at the end of August 1967.

Fr. Arrupe followed the request of several Jesuits and made the then 39-year old Fr. Alfonso Nebreda (1926-2004) the director of the re-founded EAPI in 1965.⁵ The sixty-year old Fr. Hofinger was made one of the two Vice-Directors, being responsible for the publications department and for international organizations, a field where Fr. Hofinger had developed an outstanding expertise. Fr. Francis X. Clark SJ, a former provincial superior of the Philippines was appointed a staff member of EAPI in 1967. On September 15th, 1966 the real activity of the newly founded EAPI started with the inauguration of its first intercultural seven-month renewal course with 37 participants, 20 men and 12 women, coming from 12 different Asian-Pacific countries. 25 different lecturers gave the inputs for the group of priests, religious and lay people. The second course in 1968/69 already had 89 participants. The fourth course in 1971/72 had 84 participants with some even coming from Africa. The eighth course in 1973/74 had a record number of 94 participants.

Pastoral ministry touches in Nebreda's view all levels of life. Rightly understood, the term pastoral, according to Nebreda, encompasses and embraces all levels of life. This approach is based on the experience of the church as a growth in community (intellectually, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually) to meet the goal. The process itself takes place in three stages: through information, formation and transformation. Similar to these three stages, the courses at the Institute are intended to serve their purpose through interpersonal, interdisciplinary and intercultural exchange. Furthermore, in the courses one must see an important contribution of the EAPI for the local

5. Cf. Paul B. Steffen, "Nebreda Alfonso M., SJ (1926-2004). Pastoraltheologe," in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* (BBKL), 38, (2017): 1007-1018.

churches of the Asia-Pacific region. The basic communities and the new lay services (ministries) should be given more consideration in their ecclesiological role. The questions of justice and the poor, the dialogue with other religions and a contemporary spirituality and liturgy should find their place in the course program. Apart from the courses, it is above all the EAPI publication *East Asian Pastoral Review* (EAPR), which from 1979 (until 2016) continued the task of two previous journals (*Good Tidings* and *Teaching All Nations*), to convey and spread relevant pastoral, catechetical and liturgical reflections. In January 1987, EAPI was able to carry out the long-standing plan to carry out research work on its own and to set up its own “research office” with a “research officer.”

Fr. Gomez tells us how the EAPI came into existence:

In 1955, Fr. Johannes B. Hofinger opened what he wanted to be an *Institute of Missionary Apologetics* that in 1958 was called the *Catechetical Center*; this was the bud of the *East Asian Pastoral Institute* (1961) . . . From those trying settings, Fr. Hofinger developed an astonishing activity. He lectured all over Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas; he organized the International catechetical-liturgical study weeks of Nijmegen, Holland (1959), Eichstätt, Germany (1960), Bangkok, Thailand (1962), Katigondo, Uganda (1964), Manila, Philippines (1967) and Medellín, Colombia (1968). With collaborators such as Fr. Paul Brunner, José M^a Calle, Martin Ramsauer, etc., besides his many books, he published the bimonthly review *Good Tidings* (1962) and *Teaching All Nations* (1964), plus other minor publications like *Amen* and the Pamphlets for Training Catechists. All these periodicals would eventually merge into the *East Asian Pastoral Review* (1980).⁶

6. EAPI – 50 Years and Forging Ahead, last accessed April 9, 2026, <https://jcapjsj.org/2011/10/eapi-50-years-and-forging-ahead/>.

The summer courses developed to become a very powerful instrument to carry out the mission of EAPI.

During summer, a monographic course used to take place during May or June, where many bishops of Asia took part. Also during the 70s and 80s, lots of aggiornamento courses were conducted by EAPI teams in most countries of the region. The EAPI was in contact with other Pastoral Centers which started popping up after Vatican II, like the Bangalore Center, whose “soul,” Fr. Amalorpavadass was also teaching at the EAPI, or the Mexican American Cultural Center of San Antonio (Texas), whose founder, Fr. Virgilio Elizondo, was an alumnus of the EAPI. The Institute has been active in ecumenical-interreligious dialogue, especially in connection with Inter-Religio of Nanzan University, Nagoya (Japan).⁷

The first collaborators of EAPI were mainly members of the Jesuit China Province; only as a team under the guidance of its energetic and visionary founder did they achieve so much.

The East Asian Pastoral Institute understood and carried out its unique and threefold mission for the churches of the Asian-Pacific Region: 1) in the field of education and formation in the form of courses, 2) in the field of academic studies and research, and 3) in the field of publications initiating an international exchange and reflection.

EAPI aims at a threefold goal, summarized in the following three guiding principles:

- 1) The spiritual renewal of the all pastoral workers and missionaries,
- 2) Their theological training and up-dating with refresher course,
- 3) To promote the pastoral efficiency of the pastoral ministry in contemporary human society.

7. Ibid.

2. The target group of the mission of EAPI: priests, religious and laity

The target group of the mission of EAPI are clearly the course participants who attended the EAPI courses. The newness of the composition of EAPI renewal courses since 1965 was that priests, religious and laity were addressed in the common courses. A new approach of teaching allowed participants to learn and live together during the period of the course. With this approach EAPI paved the way for overcoming traditional patterns of clergy-religious and clergy/religious-laity divide in the church.

In the first ten years, 759 participants had completed the EAPI basic course, and 575 people had participated in the one-month *Aggiornamento* course. 929 participants also took part in regional courses during this period, organized by the EAPI in Malaysia, Bangladesh, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. The vast majority of the students attending EAPI courses in Manila came from Asian countries.⁸

3. Sharing the EAPI vision through the *East Asian Pastoral Review* (EAPR)

The *EAPR* started with volume XVII (1980) continuing *Teaching All Nations* (TAN) vol. XVI founded in 1962. The first founder of *Teaching All Nations* (TAN) was Fr. Johannes Hofinger SJ. He was also the editor from the beginnings in 1964 up 1969. In these six years, Hofinger developed the journal according to the vision he had from Mission Catechetics and Liturgy as an indispensable dimension of an urgently needed worldwide renewal movement of the church. In the first edition he and Rev. Francis Hsu, a Chinese Diocesan priest, are named as “Editors,” and Fr. Thomas O’Shaughnessy was named “Associate Editor.” In other editions in the following years Fr. Terrence Sheridan SJ and Fr. T. O’Neill SJ. are indicated as associate editors. In 1966

8. K. Vellguth, *Kirche neu gestalten. Pastoralinstitute in Afrika, Asien und Ozeanien*, (Bonifatius Verlag, Paderborn, 2017), 147-147 and footnote 443 on page 147.

only Fr. Hofinger is named as editor and Fr. O'Shaughnessy as *Associate editor* and member of the EAPI staff, who had often written on Islamic topics. In 1967 Hofinger is editor and Terrence Sheridan associate editor.

Fr. Francis Clark SJ was the book review editor for many years, while teaching missiology at the EAPI.⁹

From the seventh volume (1970) the Austrian Jesuit Fr. Martin Ramsauer served for six volumes as editor of *Teaching All Nations*, and Frs. John O'Regan OMI and J. Hofinger are associate editors. The editorial board included José M. Calle SJ, Francis X. Clark SJ, John F. Doherty SJ, A. Nebreda SJ and John Reilly SJ. From vol. XIII Nr. 4 we find also Fr. Roger Champoux SJ named in the editorial board.

From the fourteenth volume (1977) up to number 4 of volume 26 (1989) Fr. Felipe Gomez served for twelve years as editor and Sr. Victorina de la Paz as managing editor. During this period the journal is merged with the journal *Good Tidings* founded in 1962 by Hofinger, a journal with a more pastoral orientation. The new name from volume seventeen (1980) came to indicate this pastoral orientation more clearly in the new journal title, *East Asian Pastoral Review* (EAPR). With this pastoral review journal, EAPI intended to serve Asian and Pacific countries especially, including Australia and New Zealand. EAPR, as well as its predecessor TAN, was recognised as one of the leading international journals for pastoral renewal and orientation at the time.

The fourth editor of TAN/EAPR is from number 1 volume 27 (1990) Fr. Geoffrey King, SJ. The editors communicate the following in the editorial of TAN number 3, 1979.

In 1964 the indefatigable Johannes Hofinger, SJ, trying to meet the needs of that era, began the quarterly TEACHING ALL NATIONS. It has continued now for fifteen consecutive years without ever missing an issue. As far as is known, it is the

9. Francis X. Clark SJ, *Making the Gospel at Home in Asian Cultures*. in *Teaching All Nations*, 13, (1976): 131-149.

only theological periodical in Asia published not for one explicit country or region but for the whole Asian world. A year earlier, in 1963, Father Hofinger had also inaugurated GOOD TIDINGS, a review for religion teachers, parents and catechists. It has appeared six times a year, to offer practical and inspirational stimulation for busy educators. It too has continuously published to complete sixteen volumes. Now however, it is abundantly clear that the era of 1963-1964 and the era of today are dramatically different. The former titles and viewpoints must give way to new perspectives, to meet the new needs of local churches, Christian communities, pastoral life and action. This issue is therefore the last of *Teaching All Nations*. But it will not wholly die. From its ashes a new periodical will arise: *East Asian Pastoral Review*. East Asian here must be understood as including Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. For a long time the editors attempted to incorporate all these countries into the new title, but in vain; the result was always lengthy and awkward. No the final solution is to assure all that implicitly they are included, as part of the whole irreversible movement by which Asia is being drawn closer to these areas, and vice versa.¹⁰

In the inaugural issue of the *East Asian Pastoral Review* Vol. XVI (1979), the editor, Fr. Felipe Gomez explains the reason a bit further for merging *Teaching All Nations* and *Good Tidings*. He says that economic reasons and the need to combine human resources more efficiently had caused the change. “Furthermore, positively speaking, we honestly hope to *serve better* if we unite our efforts in a single venture. EAPR has no other goal but to serve the Church, especially in Asia and the Pacific. This purpose of ours may appear

10. “Teaching All Nations is coming to an end... but it will continue as... East Asian Pastoral Review,”

Teaching All Nations, 16, no. 3, (1979): 130.

a big foolish. Asia is very big . . . very rich and diversified, more so, indeed, than any other continent. And then, the Pacific Churches are so thinly spread over the vastest of all oceans that a common something seems as elusive as a consensus in the United Nations. That is true, and yet EAPR wishes to address all of that “*catholicity*”—the only periodical, it seems, that dares such foolishness . . . We wish to serve the *catholicity* of the local Churches.”¹¹

The new editor of EAPR, Fr. Felipe Gomez writes:

EAPR has been conceived by the East Asian Pastoral Institute as the instrument for sharing its unique experience. Each year most of the Asian and Pacific Churches send some of their members to this institute. For a period of seven months they live together, think, learn, exchange, interact . . . *and form a community*. In this singular setting ideas spark which can ignite others engines too, skills surface which can be tested in other grounds, information is collected which can enrich others. Having an Asian-Pacific forum at home, we dream of extending it to the real thing itself. What we experience to be good for a few fortunate ones, why not share among the worthy many?¹²

He goes on to highlight the unique contribution that the EAPR journal as follows:

New ideas see the light continually in the world, new practices take root in the Church, new life styles are changing the traditional scene among us; EAPR wishes to keep its readers up to date about whatever is relevant for the Churches in this area. Theological articles or pastoral suggestions will have, we hope, an Asian-Pacific flavour, but always keeping in mind that nothing truly Christian can be alien to us. In the past the East Asian Institute has contributed deserving insights to the up-

11. The Editor, “East Asian Pastoral Review,” East Asian Pastoral Review 16 (1979) 193.

12. The Editor, “East Asian Pastoral Review,” East Asian Pastoral Review 16 (1979) 193.

dating of Catechetics; this is still very much our concern for the future . . . Liturgy has been a concern of the EAPI publications from the beginning, and EAPR will continue to offer information on liturgical matters . . .¹³

Fr. Martin Ramsauer SJ came from the Jesuit community at Innsbruck, Tyrol in Austria. He served faithfully as editor of TAN, and he was followed by Fr. Felipe Gomez, SJ, from Spain. The inaugural issue of *East Asian Pastoral Review*, Vol. XVI (1979) names Fr. Felipe Gomez SJ from Spain as editor and José M. Calle SJ, Francis X. Clark SJ, Bro. Desmond R. Crowe, Fr. Alfonso M. Nebreda SJ, Fr. Adolfo Nicolas SJ and Miss Teresita Nitorreda as members of the editorial board. In Vol 25 of EAPR (1988) the editorial board is composed by Edgar Adversario, Gerald Arbuckle SM, Asandas Balchand, SJ, Teresita Nitorreda and Thomas H. O’Gorman, SJ.

The new focus on pastoral issues and Christian communities is seen in various articles in EAPR treating Basic Christian communities in various countries. The number 3 of vol. XXV (1988) is dedicated to the parish. F. Gomez, the editor writes there on “The Parish: Reality – Problems – Expectations.”¹⁴ Calvin H. Poulin, SJ, wrote a paper presented to the EAPI summer course, June 9, 1988, entitled “The Parish in Transition.” Poulin also authored “Shades of the Past in the Shape of the Future,” the second article in that issue.¹⁵ John Reilly, SJ, contributed the article “The Mission of the

13. The Editor, “East Asian Pastoral Review,” *East Asian Pastoral Review* 16 (1979) 194.

14. F. Gomez, “The Parish: Reality – Problems – Expectations,” *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 25, no. 3 (1988): 203-211.

Gomez, “A Bibliography on the Parish,” *East Asian Pastoral Review* 25, no. 3 (1988): 315-328.

Gomez, “The Latin-American Church from Medellin to Puebla de los Ángeles,” *Teaching All Nations*, 16, no. 1 (1979): 3-23.

Gomez, “The Redeemer of Man: The First Encyclical of Pope John Paul II,” *Teaching All Nations*, 16, no. 1 (1979): 102-107

Gomez, “John Paul II in the Philippines,” *East Asian Pastoral Review* 18, no. 2, (1981): 104-137.

15. Calvin H. Poulin, SJ, “The parish in Transition. Shades of the Past in the Shape of the Future,” in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 25, no. 3, (1988): 212-232.

Parish.”¹⁶ Thomas H. O’Gorman, SJ, concluded this issue with a reflection on the “Spirituality for the pastoral agent.”¹⁷

Felipe Gomez, SJ wrote in his editorial for number 3 of vol. 18 (1981) of EAPR: “This third issue of 1981 is a monographic one. The EAPR wants to share with its readers the main ideas which have constituted the backbone of the summer course on Inculturation. . . . The EAPI is aware of what is at stake in and how arduous the way is to Inculturation. Tapping the resources of local and foreign experts, this course was conceived to provide a general base for the process to take off; future courses will build upon it and tackle concrete areas, where culture and faith need most to blossom together such as Sacraments, Church structures, catechesis, theology, and so on.”¹⁸ The fortieth volume of EAPR (2003) names Sr. Kathleen Coyle, SSC, as editor. EAPR ended its publication after 53 years in 2016. Three years later, the e-journal *Asia Pacific Mission Studies* continued the task of EAPR to promote the vision and mission of EAPI. “APMS aims to promote knowledge and research related to the mission of the Church, in a way that bridges theology and ministry in the Asia-Pacific context, and facilitates informed praxis and creative witnessing by the Church to the values of God’s reign.”¹⁹

4. Fr. Adolfo Nicolas SJ and his contribution to EAPI as director (1978 -1984)

Under the new leadership of Fr. Nicolas the EAPI started in 1979 with a summer course on *The Local Church*, a topic which was further developed in

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16. John Reilly, SJ, “The Mission of the Parish,” in: *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 25, no. 3, (1988): 270-301.
 17. Thomas H. O’Gorman, SJ, “Spirituality for the Pastoral Agent,” in: *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 25, no. 3, (1988): 302-314;
Thomas H. O’Gorman, SJ, “A Pastoral Seminar on Asian Forms of Prayer,” in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 220, no. 4, (1984) 338-339.
 18. F. Gomez, “In this Issue,” in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 18, no. 3, (1981): 203.
 19. Asia Pacific Mission Studies (APMS): <https://eapionline.org/journal-asia-pacific-mission-studies/> (09.03.2026)

the summer course in 1980 on *The Local Church and New Ministries*; followed by the summer course on *Inculturation, Challenge to the Local Church* in 1981 and *The Sacraments and Inculturation* in 1982.²⁰ These four summer courses show the special orientation Fr. Nebreda and his staff had given to the EAPI in order to tackle the most relevant issues of the post-conciliar Catholic Church and the declared task of the EAPI to implement and contextualise the vision of the Vatican II documents in the local churches of the Asian-Pacific region. Taking Vatican II renewal as a source of revitalisation of the mission and ministry of the local churches in the region had always been the primary task of the EAPI from its very beginning. Beside the different emphasis and specific contributions the various staff members and the directors were able to give over the years, the common vision of this renewal process has always given a strong continuity and stability to the EAPI.

The EAPI invited the best available experts for those seminars, including, Yves Congar OP from France, Sean McDonagh SSC from Ireland, Gerry Arbuckle SM from New Zealand, Bishop Francisco F. Claver SJ from

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20. Adolfo Nicolas SJ, "The City and the Old Testament: In Search of a Message," in *Teaching All Nations*, 16, (1979) 108-125
- Adolfo Nicolas SJ, "In Search of a Theology of the City," *Teaching All Nations*, 16, (1979): 174-190. Adolfo Nicolas SJ, "Growing in Christ through the Text," in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 18, no. 1, (1981): 20-34.
- Adolfo Nicolas SJ, "Gospel and Society: A Dimension that Enriches Our Reading of the Bible," in *Japan Mission Bulletin*, 31 (1977): 118-129.
- Adolfo Nicolas SJ, "Apostolic Discernment and Ideologies," in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 20, no. 1, (1983): 79-95.
- J. Calle – D. Crowe – A. Nicolas, "Dimensions of the Local Church," in *Teaching All Nations*, 16, (1979): 232-264.

the Philippines²¹; Michael Amalodoss SJ²² from India and Herman Hendrickx, CICM²³, a Belgian working in the Philippines; Jose Marins²⁴ from Brazil gave a workshop at the EAPI on BECs in 1982, among others.

But what kind of theology did the new director bring along that could serve the mission of the EAPI? In his talk on *Culture, Symbols and Theology*, the understanding of a theology at the service of life is clearly revealed:

Fr. Nicolas SJ insisted that the question of theology is a pastoral question, not in the sense of deciding what is the best theology for Asia or the Pacific, but in terms of a theology's capacity to

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21. Francesco F. Claver SJ (1926-2010) a Filipino Jesuit of tribal origin from the Cordilleras, Northern Luzon Island, Philippines was ordained in 1961; he received a master in anthropology from the Ateneo University in Manila and with a doctorate from the University of Colorado, USA. From 1969 to 1984 he was bishop of the Malaybalay diocese in Mindanao. From 1984 to 1995, Bp. Claver lived for eleven years as a re-tired bishop at the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City working as a writer/researcher in the newly established Institute on Church and Social Issues. From 1995 to 2004 Apostolic Vicar of Bontoc-Lagawe, Philippines. His main emphasis as bishop and theologian was forming and strengthening of BECs (Basic Ecclesial Communities) as discerning communities par excellence. He was always closely linked to EAPI and from 1971 onwards a regular contributor to its seminars and courses.
- See: Francesco F. Claver, "Forms of Christian Community Living in Asia," in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 20, no. 1, (1983): 65-75;
- Francesco F. Claver, "Violence and Non-Violence as Strategies for Social Change," in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 21, no. 4, (1984): 388-395;
- Francesco F. Claver, "The Church in Asia: Twenty Years After Vatican II," in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 22, no. 4, (1985): 316-323.
- Francesco F. Claver, "The Basic Christian Communities in the Wider Context," in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 23, no. 3, (1986): 362-368.
- Francesco F. Claver, "Lay Person in the World: Socio-Political Involvement," in *Landas*, 2, (1988): 246-251;
- Francesco F. Claver, *The Stones Will Cry Out: Grassroots Pastorals*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1978).
- Francesco F. Claver, *The Making of a Local Church*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2008).
22. Cf. Michael Amalodoss, SJ, "Faith meets Faith," in: *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 21, no. 4, (1984): 370-376.
23. Herman Hendrickx, "Jesus and the Sacred," in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 19, no. 2, (1982): 81-86.
24. Cf. "Basis Christian Communities: An Interview with Father Jose Marins," in, *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 19, no. 2, (1982): 59-67.

speak to life, to stimulate a community, to challenge a people's blind adherences and empty practices . . . he proposed theology as a reflection from life for life, not an entity in itself restricted to the discourse of professional theologians, but a part of life aiming to make sense and to be a positive help to the community. Theology should contribute to life as a process and therefore is not a final answer but an on-going activity which includes history and culture in the process.²⁵

The EAPI Summer Course 1981 held from May 28 to June 30 on *Inculturation: Challenge to the Local Church* had 90 participants coming from 20 twenty two different nations. A good number of participants came from Australia, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Samoa and Taiwan; the largest group came from the Philippines. Among the participants were 37 priests, 32 sisters, 8 laywomen, 6 brothers and 5 laymen.²⁶ The two previous summer courses at EAPI in 1979 and 1980 explored aspects of the local church. Based on this research the 1981 summer course continued this process of learning and investigation. The 1981 summer course "was intended as a general introduction to the task of inculturation, examining culture, religion and faith. The intention was to become aware of the all-embracing scope of the problem, to surface some of the major questions, and to acquire some skills in identifying and handling elements important for inculturation."²⁷

Being encouraged by the success of this seminar and recognizing the importance of such type of seminars the EAPI staff decided to continue with these seminars on cultural issues and, in 1982, offered a seminar on Inculturation and the sacraments.

25. "Culture, Symbols and Theology," in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 18, no. 3, (1981) 256-257.

26. Desmond Crowe FMS, "Inculturation: The Challenge to the Local Church," in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 18, no. 3, (1981): 204.

27. Ibid.

In his concluding reflections of the five weeks of lectures, discussions and activities during the 1981 summer seminar on Inculturation, Fr. Nicolas recalls the insights and the open questions the seminar had brought up. He concludes that “inculturation is a pastoral question which has to do with the life of the people. . . . [that] is taking place as a slow process which can happen only from inside, within culture, which is life touching the hearts of the person, life at its most embracing level.”²⁸

5. The EAPI commitment in organizing and teaching courses

The EAPI Summer Course on the Sacraments and Inculturation 1982

The 85 participants from 23 national backgrounds attending the 1982 summer seminar on the *Sacraments and Inculturation* transformed the seminar to an interactive multicultural learning community. Beside four bishops from Asian countries, forty-nine priests, thirty-one sisters and two lay persons coming from African and South Pacific countries, Australia, Japan, Korea and Philippines participated in the seminar. The course program was developed in three progressive stages, where the participants were gradually introduced into the theme and guided to recognize the shifts in sacramental theology and praxis.²⁹

28. Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, “Concluding Reflections,” in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 18, no. 3, (1981): 290-291.

29. Desmond Crowe, “EAPI Summer Course 1982. The Sacraments and Inculturation,” *East Asian Pacific Review*, 19, no. 3 (1982): 195.

“A Report of the Meeting of the Conference of Asian Pacific Pastoral Institutes (CAPPI) in Yogyakarta,” *East Asian Pacific Review*, 27, no. 2 (1990): 178-185.

Bruno Bottignolo, “Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Philippines,” *East Asia Pacific Review*, 27, no. 2 (1990): 165-17.

Vicente Marasigan, SJ, “Filipino Experience of Suffering,” *East Asia Pacific Review*, 21, no. 4 (1984): 406-409.

What methodology did the EAPI apply in their courses?

The summer course on *Inculturation: The Challenge to the local Church* allows us to learn about the process oriented integral methodological approach the EAPI staff had developed over the years. The first half of the course emphasized on enriching the students by giving information “with due allowance for the processing needed for clarification and learning. During the second half a great deal of the time was spent on structured exercises in the various cultural groups. For this purpose, the latter part of the program was organized in two or three day modules centred on values, theology, liturgy and structures. In these modules one morning was given to input which establishes the conceptual framework, opened up the subject to inquiry and provided some tools for the group work. The modules ended up with an expert or panel receiving reports from the groups, addressing some of their questions, and suggesting lines for future explorations.”³⁰ This learning integral approach for adult learners applied the most updated methodology from the time and proofed to be most successful as we can learn from their responses to the seminar. “The assessments of the summer course participants indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the orientations and content of the course, with the lecturers, and with the quality of the interactions which took place both in the small groups and informally. One could not fail to notice the enthusiasm of the participants, their strong motivation, their openness to one another and their appreciation of the possibilities for engagement with cultural realities in a community so diverse.”³¹

30. D. Crowe, “Inculturation: The Challenge to the Local Church,” *East Asia Pacific Review*, 18, no. 3 (1981): 205.

31. Crowe, *East Asia Pacific Review*, 18, no. 3 (1981): 293.

6. Staff members and directors of EAPI

Felipe Gomez writes in 1981: “The Staff is composed of Jesuits and non-Jesuits, religious, priests and lay people. It is international and multicultural. The courses are always enriched by visiting professors, such as Michael Amaladoss and Felix Wilfred from India, John Füllenbach from Rome, and many others. . . . At the end of Fr. Nebreda’s tenure (1978), more than 1.000 students had passed by the EAPI . . .”³²

So far, the East Asian Pastoral Institute, has had up to now the following directors, all Jesuit priests: Johannes Hofinger (1955-1965), missionary to China from Austria;³³ Alfonso Nebreda (1965-1978), missionary to Japan from Spain;³⁴ Adolfo Nicolás (1978-1984), missionary to Japan from Spain, who as later appointed Superior General of the Jesuits (2008-2016); Thomas O’Gorman (1984-1989), American missionary to the Philippines; Geoffrey King (1989-2004) from Australia; Jose Mario Francisco (2004-2008) from the Philippines; Jeyaraj Rasiah (2008-2010) from Sri Lanka; Arthur Leger (June 2010-December 2017) from the Pacific Islands, Peter Pojol (2017- 2021) from the Philippines; when Father Pojol was appointed Socius to the Philippine Provincial before completing his term, Johnny Go, from the Philippines, served as interim director (2021-2022) and

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32. F. Gomez, “In this issue,” *EAPR* 18, no. 3 (1981): 203;
 A. Nebreda, “Pastoral Reflections on the Religious Attitudes of Japanese Students,” *Teaching All Nations* 4, no. 2 (1968): 146-157.
 A. Nebreda, “Japanese Youth and Religion,” *Teaching All Nations* 3, 359-378.
 A. Nebreda, “Special Commission on International Cooperation,” *Teaching All Nations* 4, 462-465.
 A. Nebreda, “Faith as Key-Point of Catechesis,” *Teaching All Nations* , no. 1 (1969): 3-12.
 A. Nebreda, “Conversion of the Heart,” *Teaching All Nations*, 2, 107-122.
 A. Nebreda, “Mass Media and Catechetics,” *Teaching All Nations*, 4, 315-317.
33. Paul B. Steffen, HOFINGER, Johannes SJ (1905-1984), “Missionswissenschaftler,” in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* (henceforth abbreviated *BBKL*) XXXIV (2013): 584-596.
34. Paul B. Steffen, “NEBREDÁ, Alfonso M., SJ (1926-2004). Pastoraltheologe,” *BBKL* 38 (2017): 1007-1018.

currently, the director is John Chechon Chong (2022-present), from Korea. Each of these directors had a specific personal impact on the way the EAPI was conducted and how it functioned, according to their different theological orientations, characters and leadership capacities. The founding director differed quite a lot in his theological background and in his personality from his immediate successor, for instance. The same could be said of the various directors who took over the task of directing the EAPI in different times, always with new challenges. The background of the course participants, and their need of receiving theological formation and education, starting with the generation before Vatican II, continuing with the Vatican II generation, and the new generation of pastoral workers from the 21st century, differ quite a lot from each other. The continuum is their need for pastoral, theological and spiritual education and formation, but each of those groups received quite different theological educations and grew up in different changing societies.

Fr. José Calle, SJ, for instance, born in Spain and a member of the China Province studied catechetics at the International Institute for Religious Education *Lumen Vitae* in Brussels and at the *Institut Catéchétique Supérieur* of Paris; for ten years he was director of the catechetical program for public schools in Manila and Director of the Institute for Catechetics. As member of the EAPI staff he directed the *Catechetical Program* and the *Christian Community Program* and taught mainly catechetical and pastoral issues.³⁵ In 1976, the Spanish Jesuit Fr. Felipe Gomez joined the EAPI staff where he was for many years the editor of *Teaching All Nations* and its successor *East Asian Pastoral Review* up to 1989. He also served as director of EAPI. Miss Teresita Nitorreda served as staff member of the EAPI and of the Institute of

35. J. Calle, "Catechetics for the Seventies," *Teaching All Nations*, 7, no. 2 (1970): 91-113; 3, 225-240

Calle, "Reflections for the Catechists. An attempt to relate the Christian message to Fundamental Human Experiences," *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 21, no. 4 (1984) 410-421.

Calle, "Contemporary Relevance of Matteo Ricci," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 20, no. 4 (1983): 385-395.

Catechetics in Manila.³⁶ Fr. Thomas O’Shaughnessy, SJ, was a staff member of the EAPI specialised in Islamic topics. Fr. Thomas O’Neill, SJ, in the 1970s, was one of the liturgists on the staff of the EAPI. In 1986/87, i.e. 20 years after the first course, the institute had 14 resident faculty members. In 2016, Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, who had served as director from 1978 to 1984, rejoined the EAPI staff, after he had completed his term as superior general of the Society of Jesus from 2008 to 2016.

7. Developments at EAPI

During the directorship of Fr. Arthur Leger, the institute underwent many changes in order to continue the mission of EAPI in the context of the changed situations and challenges the church is facing in the 21st century.

Under the direction of Fr. Leger, EAPI has concentrated on the themes of Pastoral Leadership and Renewal. Each year it conducts six core programmes that attract a mixed group of lay, religious and priests from all over Asia Pacific and beyond, including Africa and Latin America. In addition, extension teams constantly visit local Churches, providing training and consultations. EAPI is like a “mother ship” that nourishes and supports many national and diocesan pastoral centres around Asia Pacific.³⁷

After its successful first fifty years of activity, reforms were undertaken to enable the Pastoral Institute to perform its mission in the coming fifty years in the 21st century. In 2016, the EAPI began its first

36. *Teresita E. Nitorreda* contributed with a discussion guide for the FABC Workshop on the role of women in the Church in Asia at the third plenary assembly of the FABC in 1982.

Teresita E. Nitorreda, “The Role of Women in the Church in Asia: A Discussion Guide,” *East Asian Pastoral Review* 20, no. 1 (1983): 48-64.

37. *New Director for the East Asian Pastoral Institute*, last modified July 11, 2017, <http://www.eapi.org.ph/about-us/news/new-director-for-the-east-asian-pastoral-institute>.

Master of Arts program in Pastoral Ministry, in collaboration with the Loyola School of Theology (LST) at the Ateneo de Manila University. This program in pastoral leadership and management aims to equip pastoral workers with the knowledge, skills and practical know-how in Church leadership and management in parish and other ecclesial settings. A major component of the program is the residential program at the EAPI, including participation in its community life and modular courses.”³⁸

In 2017, EAPI the Filipino moral theologian, Fr. Peter O. Pojol, SJ³⁹ became the new director. His team had the following members: Josephine C. Nolasco, Assistant to the Director; Fr. Jojo Fung, a Malaysian Jesuit theologian of Chinese origin, serving as Residential Program Coordinator and Prefect of Studies; the Singaporean Christina Kheng, who serves as Extension Team Coordinator. She is also engaged in research, teaching and consultancy in church leadership and management. Francisco Machado, a Portuguese lay theologian with missionary experience in China, joined the EAPI staff team in 2017, serving as the Residential Program Coordinator and coordinator responsible for the Sabbatical programs, working also for the Spiritual Accompaniment of the course participants. The Belgian missiologist and Scripture scholar, Fr. Luc Mees, CICM is a staff and teaching member in the Residential Programs; Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, SJ, the retired Superior General of the Society of Jesus of Spanish origin with missionary experience in Japan and former EAPI director, joined the staff to offer spiritual accompaniment; the Indonesian Jesuit, Fr. Greg

38. *50 Years of Providing Pastoral Programmes in the Spirit of Vatican II*, last modified July 11, 2017, <http://www.jcapsj.net/2016/02/50-years-providing-pastoral-programmes-spirit-vatican-ii/>.

39. “Peter, a Chinese-Filipino, obtained an undergraduate degree in Electrical Engineering before joining the Society of Jesus. In the course of his formation, he completed master’s degrees in philosophy and pastoral ministry (Ateneo de Manila University) and the STB (Loyola School of Theology). A couple of years after being ordained priest, he proceeded to Boston, Massachusetts, where he completed the Doctorate in Sacred Theology (Boston College School of Theology and Ministry). He returned to Manila and served at Loyola School of Theology as teacher and administrator. During this time, he was invited yearly to teach at EAPI. He joined EAPI full-time in 2017. His areas of interest are Fundamental Moral Theology, Sexual Ethics, Bioethics, and Pastoral Moral Theology,” last modified March 3, 2018, <http://www.eapi.org.ph/about-us/staff>.

Soetomo, served as Residential Program Coordinator, and Sr. Amelia Vasquez, RSCJ, also served as Residential Program Coordinator, also offering spiritual accompaniment.⁴⁰

Under Fr. John Chechon Chong, the EAPI welcomed new personnel to take on the various administrative, educational and spiritual aspects of its mission. Fr. Vincent Pham Dinh Khoan, SJ, is now the Pastoral Program coordinator, while also offering spiritual accompaniment to participants. Sr. Merle “Ley” Salazar, FDNCS, now heads the team for planning the curriculum and programming of EAPI Sabbatical Renewal Programs, while also providing spiritual accompaniment. Fr. Johnny Go, SJ, continues as Extension Program Coordinator, and has been conducting trainings for Jesuit schools and universities around the world based on his 2019 book on *Ignatian Pedagogy, Learning by Refraction: A Practitioner’s Guide to 21st-Century Ignatian Pedagogy*, co-authored with Rita J. Atienza.

EAPI will continue to invite men and women with specific expertise in the field of theology, formation, consultancy, administration and spiritual accompaniment as members of its team. All members have, beside their various national backgrounds, accumulated rich experience in intercultural living and ministry. Each member of the team is pledged to guaranteeing that the sixty year old tradition of the EAPI can be successfully continued according to the needs of the times, and to meet new emerging challenges of our global society. In addition to participants from the Asia Pacific region, EAPI has also come to include participants from Africa and other countries in the two-thirds world.

8. Concluding remarks and outlook

The EAPI is an international, trans-regional pastoral institute. It primarily trains multipliers in the church-pastoral ministry for the Asia-Pacific region. It aimed at translating the new ecclesiological vision of

40. Ibid.

Vatican II seeing the church as God's people at the service of God's kingdom into concrete models and attitudes of communion and co-responsibility in a participatory church. Since its foundation the EAPI "has become the Asian hub for theological renewal and updating, experimentation and exploration in the Church."⁴¹

The Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific is responsible for the East Asian Pastoral Institute, including the appointment of staff members and directors; the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific covers the life and service of the Society of Jesus in 16 countries in Asia and the Pacific.⁴² Fr. Mark Raper, then President of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific, observed in his talk during the closing of EAPI's anniversary fiftieth celebration that "Lay leadership is seriously under-developed in the clerical culture prevalent in Asia Pacific. To correct this, lay leaders should be empowered with theological formation and pastoral skills. This is surely a challenge that EAPI wishes to address. . . . Since it is difficult for many lay leaders to leave their families for the length of time demanded by residential programmes, we see that much can be achieved through the extension programmes, where an EAPI team works with local experts to deliver quality formation, for example, for catechists."⁴³

The EAPI as a totally new model of formation was able to consolidate itself as a Pastoral Institute in this region and correspond to the existing needs and challenges of the time and region.

On December 3, 2016, the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI) concluded its nine-month celebration of 50 years of being faithful to its original purpose and mission – to form pastoral workers to go back to their local churches and "set the world on fire" with new attitudes, knowledge and skills to effect transformation. "We have accomplished this in unique ways,

41. Ibid.

42. *About the Jesuit Conference*, last accessed April 17, 2026, <https://jcapjsj.org/about-us/>.

43. *EAPI: Moving Beyond the Reefs*, December 18, 2016, last modified July 11, 2017, <http://www.jcapjsj.org/2016/12/eapi-moving-beyond-reefs/>

especially with the participatory multicultural community living,” concluded its director at the end of 2016.⁴⁴

Today, marking sixty years of continued service to the church and to the world, the EAPI is a center of ecclesial-pastoral renewal of the Asia-Pacific local churches and also contributes to the exchange of pastoral experiences with other local churches. It should be mentioned that EAPI had a specific impact on its resident participants in all the stages of its sixty years of history with its “multicultural residential environment is a unique feature of the institute. Priests and sisters, lay men and women from different nations in Asia Pacific and even Africa are formed together for mission during the months they live and study at EAPI. For many participants, this is the first time they have crossed the borders of gender, culture, race and spirituality.”⁴⁵

To this day, it is a centre of the awakenings of the Second Vatican Council and an interculturality rooted in the Asian context. The East Asian Pastoral Institute sees itself as an institute at the service of a missionary transformation of Christians, non-Christians, local churches and various societies in Asia and Oceania. Pastoral continuing education courses as well as units are offered, such as psycho-spiritual renewal, for example, during a sabbatical year.

Recently developed innovative courses show that the questions of leadership and pastoral missionary practice are of great significance at this Pastoral Institute, aiming at being always responding to the present needs of Asian-Pacific church communities and societies.⁴⁶

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. K. Vellguth, *Kirche neu gestalten. Pastoralinstitute in Afrika, Asien und Ozeanien*, (Bonifatius Verlag: Paderborn 2017), 17.

Paul B. Steffen, “The Contribution of Pastoral Institutes for an Inculturated and Contextualized Ministry,” *Asia Pacific Mission Studies* 2, no.2 (2020): 32-58.