

IFCA Asia Continental Meeting/2

Online Wednesday 28 July 2021

Introduction

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Dear Friends of the Asian Continent, brothers and sisters of the international forum of Catholic Action (IFCA), you are all welcome, and although we are geographically distant, we embrace each other in a cordial and fraternal embrace.

We celebrate once again being able to meet together, united in faith in Jesus Christ and in love for his Church, a faith that becomes prayer, sacrifice, formation and action in our personal lives and in the life of each ecclesial, parish and diocesan community.

We are here participants from Myanmar, Hong Kong, Philippines, India, Malaysia, Italy and Argentina, bishops, priests and lay people. Missionary disciples of Jesus with different charisms and the same mission to evangelize, all of us wishing to bring the good news of the Gospel to all families, to the daily life, study and work, to the networks and media and to the social and political world, contributing to social friendship.

Unfortunately, hate, confrontation and persecution damage fraternity and demand a new sacrifice from us. This pain of so many evils, as well as the pain that the COVID'19 pandemic brought us, make us see the need to walk together, to accompany each other in the closest way to deepen the roots of community life in the parish, in the diocese, in the country, in the region and in the international dimension.

Once again we express our solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Myanmar who are suffering the blows of authoritarianism and violence.

We know that this journey together as the People of God is a fundamental value of the Church in Asia, regardless of the name of the institution, movement or expression of lay Pastoral, what matters is to live the synodal spirit. As Pope Francis said to Italian Catholic Action on 30 April last, *"synod is not so much a plan to be planned and implemented, a pastoral decision to be taken, but first and foremost a style to be incarnated. In this sense, your Association is a "gymnasium" of synodality, and your attitude has been and can continue to be an important resource for the Italian Church, which is questioning itself on how to develop this style at all levels. Dialogue, discussion, research, but with the Holy Spirit"*.

At our II International Meeting in Rome on 27.4.2017 the Holy Father told us:

" Catholic Action's mission has been and has to form lay people who assume their proper responsibility in the world. Today, in concrete terms, it is the formation of missionary disciples. Catholic Action's charism is the charism of the Church itself, deeply incarnated in the today and here of every diocesan Church which, discerning in contemplation and keeping in mind its people's lives, looking for new ways of evangelizing and of carrying out its mission, starting from the different parish realities"

Catholic Action has to offer the diocesan Church a mature laity that serves with availability to the pastoral projects of each place as a way of realising its vocation".

Thanks to the Secretariat of the FIAC for the work necessary for this meeting.

Thank you, friends, for the generous dedication of each one of you, let us ask the Lord for the fidelity, strength and joy in order to carry out this mission in a spirit of communion and participation.

We now listen with interest to Msgr. Feliz Machado.