

JPW BULLETIN

Newsletter of the Justice and Peace Workers (JPW) Network of Asia-Pacific

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"The Justice and Peace Workers Asia-Pacific Forum is a proactive network of solidarity among women and men working with Catholic Justice and Peace organizations and affiliated groups and organizations in the region..."

A Silent Moment

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A Silent Moment

Prayer for Easter

It is the Lord (John 21:1-7)

Bringing life from death,
Bringing abundance from nothing,
Bringing confidence from doubt,

It is the Lord.

Loving the poor, the weak, the failed,
Loving the foreigner, the stranger, the unwanted,
Loving the people, both friends and opponents,

It is the Lord.

Calling us to take the risk to help change the world,
Calling us to step out in deep waters,
Calling us to faith,

It is the Lord.

Changing the ordinary to the extraordinary,
Changing an obstacle into an opportunity,
Changing our weakness into great strength,

It is the Lord.

Risen Lord,
You love us,
You call us,
You change us,
Let us recognize your coming.
However gently or dramatically you approach us,
Let us recognize your coming.
Whoever you use to make yourself known to us,
Let us recognize your coming.
Whatever time or situation you use to approach us,
Let us recognize your compassionate emergence.
Into the dark places of our lives,
Your generous summons which you constantly utter,
Your transforming touch upon the bleak places of
our world.
Lord of life, of hope, of resurrection,
We make our prayers in your name, Jesus,
Amen

*Adapted from a prayer by the Brentwood Diocesan
Commission for Justice and Peace, England
Let Justice Roll Down, CAFOD
(courtesy of Education for Justice)*

What's going on in Asia

Hong Kong

Lent for Marginalized Labourers and other Publications by HKJP

At the time of Lent, the Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese (HKJP) has produced a timely resource for Catholics to enhance their understanding on the poor while pursuing spiritual well-being. The booklet, evolving around "Way of the Cross", incorporated reflection based on the suffering faced by various sectors of the society, such as the elderly, migrant workers and marginalized labourers.

The Commission has developed another booklet entitled "Hoping for Family Union". Compiled with letters by parents whose children were not allowed to live in Hong Kong, the book details the long struggle, thoughts and experience of the suffering parents in their fight for their children's right of abode in Hong Kong.

The above materials are only available in Chinese.

Source: Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese

Japan

Article 9 Campaign

Despite the vow to maintain international peace as stated in Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, the new government of Prime Minister Mr. Shinzo Abe seeks to revise this specific article in order to permit Japan to maintain de jure military forces.

The existing article states: "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat

or use of force as means of settling international disputes.... In order to accomplish the aim, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”

The new government has introduced a referendum bill to the National Diet, the country’s legislature. Peace groups commented that the act attempts to remove Article 9 which hinders Japan’s process of remilitarization.

Source: Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace

Government Response to Comfort Women in WWII

The Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, spurred renewed debate by suggesting there was no proof the Imperial government or military coerced women into the brothels during the Second World War (WWII). On 26 March 2007, Abe tried to quell the backlash with his apology to the victims.

Meanwhile, Asian Women's Fund, a fund set up in 1995 to aid people who had been euphemistically called "comfort women", expired on 30 March 2007. However, the private fund wraps up a mission seen falling short of expectations: many victims rejected the aid offer because it neither came directly from the government nor was accompanied by an official government apology. The head of the fund, Haruki Wada, acknowledged the results of the effort "were rather ambiguous..... as far as Japan's reconciliation with Asian neighbors is concerned, our achievement was insufficient."

Source: International Herald Tribune

Pakistan

Catholic Women Organization to Raise Voice for Women’s Rights

As an initiative to facilitate organization of women and to raise voice for their rights, the National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP) Pakistan launched a project “Catholic Women Organization” (CWO) in February 2007. The project aims at facilitating the formation of Catholic Women Associations in seven Catholic dioceses of Pakistan, enabling them to speak out for their rights. It will focus on activities for awareness of Catholic women, particularly on issues of women’s rights. A coordinator for each diocese is appointed to carry out the activities in the respective dioceses.

A training workshop was organized for the diocesan coordinators, on 9-13 February 2007, where activities and implementation strategy of CWO was discussed and planned. The training course included topics on concept of human rights, civil society organizations working for women, legal system and legal rights of citizens, Constitution of Pakistan, and women’s rights phenomenon, movement and Catholic women’s struggle in Pakistan.

Resource persons include: Mr. Salman Abid, Mr. Peter Jacob, Ms Hina Jilani, Fr. Bonnie Mendes, Fr. Raphael OP, Ms Naseem George, Ms Sidra, Ms Gloria, Ms Firdous Chaudary and Ms Anila Jacqueline Gill, while Ms Sunita Fredrick, the National Coordinator of CWO, was the organizer.

Source: The Mirror Update

Philippines

Human Security Act of 2007

On 18 February 2007, the Philippine Congress has enacted the controversial “Act to Secure the State and Protect our People

from Terrorism”, otherwise known as “Human Security Act of 2007”. On 6 March 2007, the bill was signed into law by the President of the Philippines. This law is scheduled to take effect in July 2007, two months after the May elections.

Terrorism was not defined as a crime in the Philippines. Under the new law, anyone who harms or threatens to harm a person, group, the general public or damage public infrastructure can be considered a terrorist. Helping those who commit a terrorist act directly or indirectly is also a crime. The new law also allows the government to identify groups as terrorist and says that anyone who is a member of such a group can be considered a terrorist. The terrorists are barred from plea bargaining and probation.

Although the opposition senators successfully introduced few amendments in the final version, such as the length of pre-charge detention, local groups still fear that the law will increase the powers of the state and widen the human rights violations in the country.

Karapatan, a local human rights group, said that “the constitutionally guaranteed rights of protest and redress of grievances will be curtailed and may even be considered as terrorist acts” under the new law. In the current wave of extra-judicial killings in the Philippines, Forum-Asia expresses its concern that “the Act can be used as an additional license for intensifying extra-judicial executions.”

Before the passing of the bill, Catholic priests, such as Bishop Antonio Tobias of Novaliches, Bishop Deogracias Iniguez of Kalookan and retired Bishop Julio Labayen of Infanta signed a statement by Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya (KME, Movement for a Nationalist Economy). On 20 February, Bishop Antonio Tobias presented the statement which described the bill as "despotic and tyrannical." Movement members including economists, university professors, business people and members of the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines had been circulating the statement nationwide for signatures.

On 12 March 2007, Mr. Martin Scheinin, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, issued a statement calling for changes to the Philippines’ Human Security Act.

Mr. Scheinin criticizes that “many provisions of the Human Security Act are not in accordance with international human rights standards.” The “overly broad definition” of terrorism and “strict application of a penalty of forty years’ imprisonment undermines judicial discretion in individual cases” may lead to “disproportionate punishment”. Furthermore, “competence of various bodies authorized to review detention of an individual since some of these are members of the executive rather than an independent judicial body.”

He hopes that further debate would lead to introduction of amendment or repeal of the entire Act by the new Congress elected in the coming May.

For the full statement of Mr. Martin Scheinin, please go to: <http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/33A881E349623E3CC125729C0075E6FB?opendocument>

Sources: Forum-Asia, India Catholic, International Herald Tribune, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN Statement and Melo Report on EJK

Despite the local efforts and appeals to the President, the wave of extra-judicial killings is escalating in the Philippines. The lives of the leftists, religious leaders, human rights activists, journalists and students are still under threat.

From 12 to 21 February 2007, Mr. Philip Alston, the UN Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions, made a 10-day fact-finding trip to the Philippines in response to the large amount of reports received on extra-judicial killings in the past six years.

In his preliminary note, Mr. Alston criticizes the Philippine military and government for not doing enough to solve the wave of political killings, many of which he said could be linked to government security forces – which is denied by Arroyo's government. In the press conference, he described the military as in "a state of almost total denial of its need to respond effectively and authentically to the significant number of killings which have been convincingly attributed to them."

He said that "the Government's counter-insurgency strategy encourage or facilitate the extrajudicial killings of activists and other 'enemies' in certain circumstances."

He also urged the Congress, Supreme Court, Ombudsman's office and the executive branch of the government to take up a more active and serious role to treat the crisis.

His final report will be available in June 2007. For the preliminary note, please go to:
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G07/120/95/PDF/G0712095.pdf?OpenElement>

One day after harsh critique made by the UN Special Rapporteur, the Melo report, which is produced by government-sponsored commission, was released. Jose Melo, a retired Supreme Court Judge and chairman of the Melo Commission, said that its findings are consistent with the statement of Mr. Alston.

The report said evidence showed the possibility that some member of the armed forces were "responsible for an undetermined number of killings by allowing, tolerating and even encouraging the killings."

The Melo Commission was set up by Philippine President Arroyo in August 2006 under the pressure from European Union leaders for an investigation into the alarming situation. The government had initially refused to make the findings of the commission public.

For the full Melo report, please go to:
<http://www.inquirer.net/verbatim/Meloreport.pdf>

Sources: International Herald Tribune, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

South Korea

Daechuri Villagers Forced to Evade, Fight Against US Base Continues

After 12 rounds of negotiations, the villagers of Daechuri were forced to leave by end of March 2007: the government gave villagers an ultimatum during negotiations that villagers could either leave soon and accept the offer, or wait until April and leave with nothing. The government made it clear that either way, the village would be destroyed in April 2007.

Villagers will settle temporarily in rented apartments of Songwhari while a housing complex is being built in Nowari, which is in the same area as Daechuri in Pyongtaek. Nowari will be renamed as new Daechuri. Moreover, elderly persons in low-income bracket will be provided 10 million won (USD10,000) in financial support for resettlement and a monthly allowance of 200,000 won (USD200) until 2014. Although the authorities suggested having the Prime Minister to visit the village for an apology, the idea was rejected by the residents who think the proposal was a mere public relations trick.

Despite the setback, the source indicates that Koreans will continue to fight against the root cause of the problem: US base expansion. On 24 March 2007, hundreds of supporters gathered at the Daechuri village for the last vigil to honor the residents' struggle and continue the fight against the base expansion. Villagers and supporters cried at the end of the vigil. Activists and supporters from around South Korea held another meeting in Daechuri on 7 April 2007. The Pan-S Korea Commission against US base expansion in Pyongtaek will also continue to oppose US base expansion.

Source: Local source

Taiwan

Taiwan Bishops' Conference Pastoral Letter 2007: "Social Concern and Evangelization"

Based on the reflection on Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love), the Taiwan Bishop's Conference issued a letter on 25 December 2006 to the faithful. Father John Chen Kun-chen, secretary general of the Bishops' Conference said that the letter presents guidelines for local Catholic communities to plan their activities for the coming year.

"The heart of our faith", first part of letter, quotes the first letter of John "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 Jn 4:16) to express that the heart of Christian faith is to show concern for all men and women.

In offering practical suggestions for charitable work, the conference highlighted family as the "cornerstone" of education and service to others. According to the conference, the level of stability in families affects the development of society, humanity and quality of life. Therefore, they suggest dioceses and parishes set up family-ministry groups to visit families and help them to strengthen their faith and relationship with one another.

The bishops also urge Catholics, especially those working in Church organizations and the public sector, to bring Gospel value to their workplaces. "For Christians social concern and evangelization are channels to help people to realize God's love for every person. Practicing with faith, Christians lead others to discover God who is Love".

Source: One Spirit, Catholic Online

Issues of Concern/Events

World Social Forum 2007

Some 100,000 delegates from social movements, non-government organizations, networks and coalitions from 140 countries gathered in Kenya from 20 to 25 January 2007. Nairobi hosted the seventh annual World Social Forum

(WSF), where hundreds of discussions, mobilization events, demonstrations and festivals have been organized under the slogan "Another World is Possible."

While the forum offered an invaluable opportunity for exchange of ideas, meeting of such size has its challenge, especially the challenge of unmitigated inclusion: for many people from the slums of Nairobi, registration fees and transportation costs were prohibitive. At the same time, the dominance of big international non-governmental organizations, the very visible presence of private corporations like Celtel, an African telecommunications conglomerate, and of expensive food concession was disconcerting.

Catholic organizations, such as the Jesuits and Maryknoll, participated and shared their leanings through various publications. Ando Isamu of Jesuit Social Center of Tokyo, for example, shared his reflection on the importance of information, which combined with strict analysis tools and research can unhidden the truth for social transformation. The Maryknoll Office encourages its network to act by suggesting actions at different point of time in this year. To learn more about these actions, please visit:

<http://www.maryknollogc.org/ecojustice/030707.htm>

Sources: Oxfam International, Social and Pastoral Bulletin, Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns NewsNotes

Support Campaign on Special Procedures

The UN Human Rights Council is currently discussing changes to the Special Procedures through a review, which is expected to be completed by June 2007. The Global Petition, launched by Franciscans International (FI), together with Amnesty International, The World Organization Against Torture, Forum Asia and several other organizations raises concern that, "despite the clear need for the Human Rights Council to strengthen the Special Procedures, several states are instead proposing changes that would cripple the ability of Special Procedures to promote and protect human rights effectively."

The "Special Procedures" refer to the UN Human Rights Council's (formerly the UN Human Rights Commission) system of independent experts which monitors and reports on the situation of human rights in different parts of the world. The Special Procedures have helped thousands of individuals whose rights were violated or threatened. The country visit by Philip Alston, UN special rapporteur on extra-judicial killings to the Philippines in February to investigate the appalling situation of extrajudicial killings is a recent example.

The petition is available at www.actforspecialprocedures.org.

Source: International Service for Human Rights

Justice and Peace Resources

Action Guide for Communities Affected by Dams

"Dams, Rivers and Rights!" is the latest publication of International Rivers Network (IRN). The guide contains general information about dams and their impacts, concrete ideas on how to challenge dams, as well as interesting case studies and helpful illustrations. It aims to empower communities threatened by existing and new dams and to share lessons and ideas from the growing international anti-dam movement.

The guide will be available in English, French and a number of other languages. The copy is free of charge. If you are interested in obtaining its copies, please contact riam@irn.org. If you are interested to help in translation, please contact aviva@irn.org.

Source: World Rivers Review, IRN

Social Justice Diary 2007

"Social Justice Diary 2007" published by Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC) is now available.

This year, the theme chosen by the Australian Catholic Bishops for Social Justice Sunday is "Australia's role as a global citizen." The diary this year, entitled "Seasons of Social Justice" focuses on many aspects of what it means to be one human family and invites us to consider our contribution to global peace. Each month includes prayer, reflections and web sites related to the global issues.

The Diary also includes the dates of significant events, anniversaries and special days which celebrate particular aspects of social justice and highlight the theme.

For more information or copies, please contact ACSJC www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au, or download the order form at <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/PDF/ORDER-FORM-2007-CALENDAR.pdf>. The cost for one copy is \$6.60 (inc. GST), plus postage.

Source: Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

Vatican Website

Archbishop Claudio Celli, the secretary of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, responsible for the Vatican web site, has revealed plans to translate important material, including papal statements and homilies, into Chinese.

The web site currently provides services for readers in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.

Source: Sunday Examiner

Pope's Message for World Day of Peace

1 January is the World Day of Peace.

At the beginning of this year, Pope Benedict XVI invited everyone to reflect on the theme "The Human Person, the Heart of Peace". He said that "respect for the person promotes peace and that, in building peace, the foundations are laid for an authentic integral humanism."

He reflected that many unjust inequalities have been the origins of the threat of Peace, such as the inequality in access to essential good and inequalities between men and women in the exercise of basic human right.

The Pope was also concerned about the inconsistent implementation of international humanitarian law in certain recent situation of war and anti-terrorism actions. He described that as "a failure for the international community and a grave loss for humanity." He called every Christians to "be committed to tireless peace-making and strenuous defence of the dignity of the human person and his inalienable rights."

An abridged version of the message is prepared by the Center of Concern. Please contact hotline@acpp.org for a copy.

For the full version, please go to:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20061208_xl-world-day-peace_en.html

A brief discussion guide on Pope's World Day of Peace message is also issued by the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council. This guide consists of a brief overview of the message, some points for reflection and discussion and a prayer. This useful tool is already available on the following website:

http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/pdf/2007_2_16world_day_of_peace_message_2007.pdf

Sources: Center of Concern, Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

Populorum Progressio 40th Anniversary

Forty years ago, on 26 March 1967, the Church spoke about people-centric development, about solidarity. The Church predicted the global nature of social issues and it urged that free trade be subject to the demands of social justice. These issues and many others were all taken up in Pope Paul VI's encyclical, *Populorum Progressio*.

Populorum Progressio inspired many of the faithful around the world to work for justice and peace. In Hong Kong, in 1979, a group of people established the Center for the Progress of Peoples, known today as the Asian Center for the Progress of Peoples (ACPP), to serve justice and peace efforts, in answer to Pope Paul VI's call.

Over the last forty years, Justice and Peace commissions were established all over the world to carry out this work.

On the 40th anniversary of the publication of *Populorum Progressio*, we believe that this encyclical remains as relevant today as when it was first published. Particularly, it advocates for the full development of all peoples (not just some people), for solidarity with the weak, justice in trade, universal charity and authentic development for peace. All peoples of goodwill are called to urgently act together in the world of poverty, hunger, consumerism, injustice in social and economic progress and all forms of violence.

In March, ACPP issued an FYI recommending several useful documents and articles on *Populorum Progressio*, such as Fr. Peter Henriot S.J.'s speech made to the CIDSE Forum, "Populorum Progressio: Challenge and Guidance for the Church Today", the original text of *Populorum Progressio* and how the Church has collated and updated all its social teachings in the "Compendium of the Social Doctrine of Church."

For more information and links to the documents, please visit ACPP's website: www.acpp.org.

Source: ACPP sources

JPW Exchange Corner

The following articles are excerpts from various sources and information channelled to ACPP-Hotline Asia, on topics of concern identified by the network at the recent JPW meetings.

International Network for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases

The issue of US Military presence in Asia has been discussed as a major concern of the JPW network since 2003. The following is an important initiative that supports the current peace-building efforts.

The International Conference for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases was held at Ecuador on 5-9 March 2007. Four hundred delegates from 40 countries, including women, indigenous peoples, environmental justice and human rights activists affiliated with social movements, peace movements, faith-based organizations, trade unions and indigenous communities, applauded the consolidation of the "International Network for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases" (the Network) during the Conference. Agreements were made to establish coordination mechanisms and more articulated global actions.

This Conference is aimed at strengthening Ecuador's commitment to terminate the agreement that permits the US military to use the bases in Manta beyond 2009, with the help of international network. Delegates also hope to consolidate and broaden the existing movements and networks involved in the issue.

The declaration placed the Network in the framework of movements that struggle for peace, justice, self-determination of peoples and ecological sustainability. It affirms that foreign military bases and all other infrastructure used for wars of aggression violate human rights, oppress people, and destroy communities and the environment.

Among their demands were:

- total abolition of all foreign military bases and all other infrastructure used for wars of aggression, eg. construction at Henoko, Okinawa; new military agreements between governments of US and the Philippines; and base expansion at Pyongtaek, South Korea;
- an end to both the construction of new bases and the reinforcement of existing bases;
- an end to and cleanup of environmental contamination;
- an end to legal immunity and other privileges of foreign military personnel; and
- full and just compensation for social and environmental damages caused by these bases.

Copy of the declaration can be found at the Australian Anti-Base Campaign Coalition (AABCC) web site:

http://www.anti-bases.org/~campaigns/NMD_StarWars_PineGap/EquadorConfMarch2007.htm

Apart from fulfilling its objectives in analysing impact of foreign military bases on the population and environment, the conference also reached consensus on global objectives, strategies and coordination mechanisms to strengthen local struggles and global actions. There were commitments to develop strategic alliances with global movements, expand the Network, generate global actions and influence global public opinion. The International Coordinating Committee will develop communication and information, lobbying, research, support local struggles and promote global campaigns.

There is also a need to highlight the impact of the Conference through dissemination in the mass media, web sites and news agencies, constant interviews visits for foreign and domestic

press, as well as for the Network to develop, grow and have a global impact.

As a concrete achievement, the conference got the response of the President of Ecuador, who met the delegation, to ratify his pledge that the government will not renew the Agreement with the US for the use of Manta Base, due in 2009. This firm position was widely disseminated in domestic and foreign media.

At the conference, the delegates from the Asia-Pacific region played a strong role in organizing a press conference to educate the public "civil society" about the threats of rapid militarization on the region. As a Pacific demilitarization strategy, they identified major threats faced by Guam, Okinawa (Henoko) and South Korea (Pyongtaek) agreed to discuss coordinated solidarity strategy. Participants from the Asia-Pacific region is putting up a blog to connect the links of all organizations' web sites.

The vision is that each country which currently hosts US Bases will break their military ties with the US, as well as ending excessive spending on military hardware and instead divert these resources to their own people and country.

Sources: Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition, No Bases - International Network for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases

Training opportunity: Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies Program – Strengthening Today's Leaders to Build Peace

The Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies Program is now accepting applications for its January 2008 session to be held at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. Targeting mid-to-upper level professionals in governments, non-governmental organizations and private corporations, it is aimed to provide them opportunity to be trained in conflict resolution and mediation strategies and be become better equipped to help prevent and resolve conflict, as well as foster policies and create settings that ensure peace.

The intensive 3-month program has a customized curriculum crafted by specialists in the field of peace and conflict resolution, to capitalize the experience of participants while balancing theoretical and practical learning. **Deadline of application is 1 July 2007.**

For more information, please contact Jenn Weidman, Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies Program Specialist at Jenn.Weidman@rotary.org or refer to the web site at <http://www.rotary.org/foundation/educational/rpcsp/index.html> for the program materials.

Source: The Rotary Foundation

Conference on the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

The Asian Conference on the presentation of the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church was held at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center, Samphran, Thailand on 25-27 January 2007, to reflect on the pastoral consequences of the Compendium released by the Holy See in October 2004. It was jointly organized by the Vatican-based Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the FABC Office for Human Development, and supported and hosted by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, and the Catholic Bishop's Conferences of Thailand. There were altogether 155 participants with 147 from 17 Asian countries, 7 from the

Pontifical Council and the president of the international organization of Christian business executives (UNIAPAC) from Mexico.

In his opening speech, Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace said the Compendium places "social doctrine at the heart of the Church's mission." Part of the preaching of the Gospel is "taking interest in human promotion," proclaiming the "rules for a new coexistence in peace and justice," and helping create "relations and institutions that are more human," the prelate said. "Directing our Christian witness in the social realities of Asia" there is a need to (1) "defend human rights," (2) "promote the right to development," (3) "forge a good relationship with nature," and (4) "promote the right to peace." (See Cardinal Martino's July 2005 speech on the Compendium [http://www.catholic.net/global_catholic_news/print.phtml?news_id=76309])

The three-day discussions included the themes "Commitment to Building a Civilization of Love," and "Telling the Story of the God of Love in Asia," with discourse Asian socio-political and cultural realities, engagement by the laity, as well as implications on pastoral ministry.

This presentation of the Compendium by the Pontifical Council can be seen as an important first step towards better implementation of the Catholic Social Teachings in the long term. However, it should not stop after translating, studying, discussing and debating the contents. The direction, guidance and continuous support (spiritual, moral, structural and financial) by the Church leaders and institutions are important in the effective work of the religious and lay people who are responding to realities on the ground, either in direct service or through changing unjust structures. There is a continuous need to link together these workers for a chance to share their work, exchange resources and offer solidarity and support to each other's work on sensitive issues like human rights.

Among the recent JPW friends present were Lina (Hong Kong), Fr. Francis (Japan), Fr. Nithiya (India), Achara (Thailand), Bro. Amnuay (religious JPIC) and Linda (ACPP, HK). Opportunity was taken to introduce the JPW Asia Pacific Forum to the Pontifical Council President, Cardinal Martino, as an Asian regional initiative by religious and lay groups and individuals to implement the Catholic Social Teachings through their justice and peace work within their respective countries and in solidarity with others at the regional level. It was an interesting meeting with new contacts (including lay persons, religious and bishops) from Malaysia, Mongolia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, among others.

Sources: ACPP sources, FABC web site

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