

**“Dialogue of faith and culture must continue to form credible witnesses of God’s truth”**

The Church needs to continue fusing Christ’s teachings with cultural values to form credible witnesses of God’s truth.

Filipino culture has certain values, which when directed to God, will cure the age-old split or dissonance between belief and practice.

Fr. Francis Lucas highlighted this at the Forum on Truth and Discipleship aired July 2 on Facebook Live and YouTube.

The president and CEO of Catholic Media Network or CMN echoed Pope Paul VI’s call in *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) to “dialogue” with culture and the modern world.

Such dialogue would help forge the split between faith and culture, which the Pope himself said in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) was the drama of our times.

When values are directed to God Himself, Filipinos will be able to better respond to the call to discipleship, which Fr. Lucas said is characterized by conviction, consistency, and community.

In his talk on “Truth and the Filipinos’ Faith Journey,” the priest stressed that Filipinos are steeped in religiosity.

The people’s faith conviction combined with firm commitment and strong sense of community would effectively counter widespread lies while bolstering relationship bonds, he said.

As an example, the priest cited the million devotees joining the Black Nazarene procession in Manila every year. Such public display of the people’s *panata* or vow come as a result of personal revelation or experience of the Divine.

The Church must help redirect this and values like *utang na loob* or showing depth of gratitude towards God in ways of living His truth daily and consistently, Fr. Lucas said.

The Philippines’ patronage system needs to be directed to God who is already proven to be the people’s greatest and most enduring patron.

Personal experiences of God's intervention in people's lives must strengthen their conviction that God truly loves and cares no matter what. Such conviction helps Filipinos to remain ever hopeful and prayerful, the priest added.

To facilitate the said dialogue, members of the clergy including parents need to take on the role of influencers in today's milieu, Fr. Lucas said.

They need to "live God's truth," and "immerse themselves in the grassroots" through another Filipino value, *pakikisama* or getting along with others, "using today's most understandable language."

What we hope for is the evangelization of culture by way of Christ's Gospel, the priest said.

For more than four decades, Fr. Lucas remains the head of CMN, the country's largest network of over 50 Church-run radio and TV stations.

Psalm 25:5 that states "Guide me in your truth and teach me" was the forum's adopted theme.

Initiating the event was Veritas Asia Institute for Social Communication (VAISCOM), the training and formation arm of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences - Office of Social Communication (FABC-OSC).

The Philippines' Catholic Media Network or CMN and Mary the Queen Parish (MTQP) of Novaliches Diocese were event co-organizers.

The forum was aired simultaneously on the Facebook pages of VAISCOM and MTQP, and on the YouTube channel of FABC-owned Radio Veritas Asia.

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