

**Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences –  
Office of Social Communication (FABC-OSC)**

**28<sup>th</sup> annual FABC-OSC Bishops' Meet  
Don Bosco Home, Bangkok, Thailand  
20-24 November 2023**

## **FINAL STATEMENT**

We, the 30 participants composed of bishops, priests and lay persons, gathered at Don Bosco Home, Bangkok, November 20-24 2023, for the 28<sup>th</sup> annual FABC-OSC Bishops' Meet.

We represent Episcopal Commissions for Social Communication of the member-conferences and associate members of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), namely: Brunei-Malaysia-Singapore, Cambodia-Laos, India, Indonesia, Korea, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam and Hong Kong.

Our deliberations were enriched by the presence of Dr. Paolo Ruffini, Prefect of the Dicastery for Communication, and Dr. Natasa Govekar, head of the Theological-Pastoral Department of the Dicastery.

We acknowledge the participation and visits of the President of the FABC Cardinal Charles Bo, and the Assistant Secretary General, as well as that of Cardinal Francis Xavier Kriengsak of

Bangkok Archdiocese. We consider it a great expression of our communion with the Holy Father and the universal Church the presence of the Holy See, the FABC, and the Shepherd of the local church in our meeting.

The theme of the Bishops' Meet 2023, "Communication in the Church in Asia Today" enabled us to reflect on the challenges in the ministry.

We now submit to FABC-member conferences and associate members this "Final Statement," which is the outcome of our four-day prayerful reflection for guidance, direction, and action.

1. Every Christian is a communicator because God communicates first and He is "Communicator Par Excellence, indeed, the Perfect Communicator." (Communio et Progressio, 11)
2. The modern means of social communication are gifts from God meant to be at the service of humanity, specifically unity and advancement. (Inter Mirifica, 1; Communio et Progressio, 1)
3. We acknowledge the need to understand and critically adopt emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) as they can contribute to and provide opportunities for the communication ministry of the Church and her evangelizing mission.

4. While communication technologies will continue to evolve and develop, we acknowledge the important role of the human person in the promotion of communication in its truest sense, as well as effective use of media. (BISCOM II, Orientations 5)
5. The capacity of the human person for love, empathy, compassion, justice, and kindness can never be replaced by communication technologies. Conversely, the human person will continue to yearn for these values in order to grow in his/her vocation.
6. Faced with the challenges and opportunities presented by emerging technologies, Christian communicators should remain Christ's witnesses rather than mere sharers or conveyors of information. People listen more to witnesses than to teachers, and if they listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 41)
7. In witnessing, Christian communicators are called to remain in solidarity with the poor and disadvantaged, giving "voice to the voiceless" and "life to the lifeless." Such authentic witness lived by missionary disciples of Christ everywhere, is a stimulus for us all. We are inspired by examples like that of the Missionary Sisters of Charity of Mother Teresa, who rejected the option to leave the Israeli- Gaza war zone and chose to risk their lives and remain on to serve the poor children and elderly entrusted to them.

8. We are convinced that sustained and personal communication can lead to authentic communion that is marked by the “giving of self in love” (Communio et Progressio 11). Christian communicators are called to be in communion with God, among themselves and with all God’s people.
9. Christian communication rooted in God and manifest at different levels, reflects the communion of the Holy Trinity (BM 1996). Such communion, we believe, is the antithesis of a communication rooted in individualism, falsehood, and misguided motives of profit and exploitation of people.
10. The Asian Church is called to effectively respond to the call to synodality through building authentic human relationships that foster a culture of respect, dialogue, and friendship (WCD Message 2009). Living in the midst of people of other faiths, Catholic communicators are called to tell the story of Jesus in ways that acknowledge and respect the rich and varied cultural traditions of Asia (cf. FABC 50).
11. Evangelization is communicating life. It is sharing the beauty of an encounter with the Risen Lord who is present in our midst. Christian communication can, therefore, only be related to life by being “fully present” with people in the digital world. (Dicastery for Communication, “Towards Full Presence” 2023)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Empower all involved in the communication ministry at different levels to become “missionary disciples” embracing the “synodal way,” which beckons us to journey together in friendship, communion, and participation in mission.
2. Celebrate World Communication Day as an opportunity to provide spaces for fostering spirituality, formation in communication, sharing of resources, and networking with and supporting the work of those who work in media.
3. Exhort bishops and those who hold responsibility for communication in the FABC member conferences to participate in the annual Bishops’ Meet as an important means of promoting episcopal collegiality, and to encourage bishops to be animated by programs and events offered by the FABC-OSC such as BISCOP for the benefit of the episcopal ministry entrusted to them.
4. Develop a greater understanding of AI and other emerging technologies and their implications on the communication ministry of the Church in Asia. This can be done with the help of experts and through effective pastoral reflection and discernment so as to make our ministry a fruitful service to the local churches we represent and serve.

5. Promote and utilize existing formation programs like the one's initiated by the Dicastery for Communication ("Fully Present" initiative), and FABC-OSC's VAISCOM courses.
6. Provide spaces for real-life encounters through liturgies, forums, and other celebrations, acknowledging that true Christian communication is rooted in the Gospel values of seeing, listening, and speaking with the heart, and person-to-person encounter (cf. WCD Messages of 2021-2023).
7. Harness the richness of traditional languages and cultures in all our evangelizing efforts by acknowledging the role of communication that is rooted in the rich and varied cultural traditions of Asia such as use of storytelling, faith formation through one's mother tongue, visual symbols, and images.
8. Make available in vernacular languages faith stories, like the story of Jesus, and ensure that the important Church documents and messages are translated and published in the languages of the local churches so as to enable our communication ministry to benefit all the people of God. (cf. FABC 50)