



reports.

EAST ASIAN CONFERENCE SECRETARY FOR FORMATION & STUDIES

LIGHTS, CHALLENGES & PROPOSALS

**FRANCISCAN CONFERENCES OF ASIA, AUSTRALIA,
& OCEANIA (FCAO)**

Ministers Meeting with the Minister General, the General
Definitory & Major Secretariats & Offices of the General Curia

TRYP Hotel Manila, Philippines
April 07-13, 2024

FCAO 2024

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INTRODUCTION

The East Asian Conference [EAC] is composed of twelve (12) entities, that is, 6 Provinces, 1 independent Custody, 2 Foundations, two other entities in the mainland China and a missionary presence. EAC comprises therefore 7 independent and 5 dependent entities. The Conference from the point of view of formation offers many opportunities that can be of help in solidifying this specific programs and concerns relation to formation ministry and its collaborative needs.

I. LIGHTS

1. EAC provides a good venue for collaboration not only in formation but also in areas related to missions and JPIC. Nonetheless, the regularity of the EAC's Ministers' Assembly provide more venues for updating and discussion on the common efforts that the Order is pursuing initiated by the General Curia.
2. Formation collaboration in the EAC level covers the 10 day Young Friars Gathering hosted by the different entities. This

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encounter offered many accompaniment opportunities to the young friars to update themselves on their life and ministries, including their struggles and many other personal challenges. Guided by the organizers, this accompaniment results to a deeper encounter with the brothers in the conference and in their entity level as well.

3. The most recent Lay Brothers Gathering in Vietnam [Feb 15-March 1, 2024] had been a very good venue for our brothers to integrate and celebrate fraternal life. Thanks to the project initiated by the General Curia on the upcoming International Gathering of the Lay Brothers in Rome/Assisi next year. We have elected 5 representatives from the East Asian Conference to attend this encounter.
4. The Common Integration Programs of EAC which was aimed in preparing the brothers for Solemn Profession has been a regular feature of the conference's collaboration. Next year will be the 12th time of the CIP Brothers' encounter. This one-month program covers inter-cultural encounters, Franciscan conferences, exposure to people being the locus of our life and ministry, language encounters, prayer and life and ministry sharing, among others.
5. The brothers in the Conference level gathered also through on-line for the Centenary celebration of Greccio. This can be done also for the other remaining celebrations of the centenary - Stigmata, Canticle of Creatures and Easter of Francis. This encounter proved to us that regardless of our location, we can joyfully celebrate as lesser brothers.
6. Finally, the on-going Formation Course spearheaded by FCAO is a dream come true. While both entities had seriously considered this for the longest time, as a matter of fact there were already sorts of this kind of program before, both entities now are seriously considering this project because of its great help in the conferences' formation needs. Aimed in equipping the Formators' the skills needed in accompanying the candidates, the pedagogy employed in running the program is truly outstanding and exceptional.

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FCAO is seriously considering in providing more venues for the formative accompaniment of both formators and the formandis in both regions.

II. CHALLENGES

1. As experienced in the entire entity in EAC, there is a need to train brothers to work in formation. This growing demand is a paramount concern since accompaniment of candidates is a must in formation work. While there might be willing brothers to be trained in formation work, the demands in other ministries are also challenges faced by the entities. We cannot pull the pendulum on the other side alone, hence the integration of the JPIC and other mission and evangelization formative efforts should not be set aside. Formation as a basic tenet should be at the forefront in realizing the goals and aspirations of the Order.
2. While pursuing all these formative concerns, the financial effect of these programs can never be set aside, hence, there is a need to do collaborative efforts on the entity and Curia level to study means on how this can be pursued without jeopardizing our efforts for a more workable financial-formation programs. The reality on how formation can be dealt-with as a concern that directly affect our entity's financial stability should be considered as a serious one. We cannot pursue what we don't have. Hence, financial related concerns should be studied seriously.

III. Proposals

1. *To seriously consider the financial implications of our formation programs without jeopardizing our efforts towards a meaningful and formative structures/programs needed in formation work.*
2. *To value formation COLLABORATIONS that will help respond the different formative needs in the entity level, i.e. common formation courses, English as secondary language, common formation conferences-on line, etc.*

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3. *To pursue the Franciscan Study Center in Asia that will help respond the Order's needs in the entity level related to formation, JPIC, mission and evangelization, among others.*

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