



The Asian Forum, organised by the Provincials of Asia, was conceived two years ago with these aims.

The Sisters of Asia from the four Provinces of Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand coming together at the Asian Forum:

- to get to know each other better and build bonds as IJ Sisters in Asia.
- to listen to God's call to inculturate our Charism in Asia, keeping in focus our prophetic role in Asia today in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and beyond.
- to look at new ways to respond to the calls and challenges of today and to see together the way forward in our collaboration in mission and the sharing of resources, to cross boundaries or even coming together as one in our response since we share the same vision and heritage.
- to collaborate together on joint projects e.g. formation and mission.
- to look at new forms of membership and
- to look at our interconnectedness and collaboration with our lay partners in mission.



This Asian Forum became a reality on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2016 when 46 Sisters from the four Provinces came to Thailand to spend the next three days together to see, reflect and share on how they see the future of Religious Life (IJS) in Asia. We are grateful to Sr Hirota Shizue (Filo), a Mercedarian sister for being our resource person and Sr Kathleen Geaney, a Columban sister for being our facilitator. We are also grateful to Mrs Mathews Shuquo, our lay partner from Singapore for accepting to be our secretary.



Sr Hirota Shizue (Filo)

**Our Resource Persons**



Sr Kathleen Geaney (second from the left)



Sr Jane, our host, giving her welcome speech



Mrs Mathews Shu Quo (in the background )

The Asian Forum opened on the 6<sup>th</sup> November with a welcome Thai dance by the students of Mary Immaculate Convent School in Chonburi. This culturally rich and graceful dance together with the hospitality by our Thai Sisters set the scene for our Asian Forum in the next few days. The Sisters are grateful to Sister Marie and Sister Noreen for their presence and participation at our Forum.



On the first day, we were invited to be still mindful of being in the here and now



... and to have contemplative dialogue



It's a contemplative way of being together; a way of engaging meaningful conversations that are rooted in deep listening ... We listen from an inner silence that creates a space where something **new** can emerge.

We come together in a circle of peers, of equals (where no one is an expert, no one is teaching, dominating, persuading). We come with the intention of creating a field of presence and love by grounding our awareness in our hearts, our Source, our interiority, our God.

And at the same time, we offer ourselves wholeheartedly to creating communion in this circle as we intentionally listening for something new to emerge.

We practised three skills of contemplative dialogue:

- contemplative listening,
- contemplative speaking, and third,
- intentionally creating a **WE space** among us as we listen to and build on one another's thoughts. Thus WE space will be a space of the Ruah... being fully aware

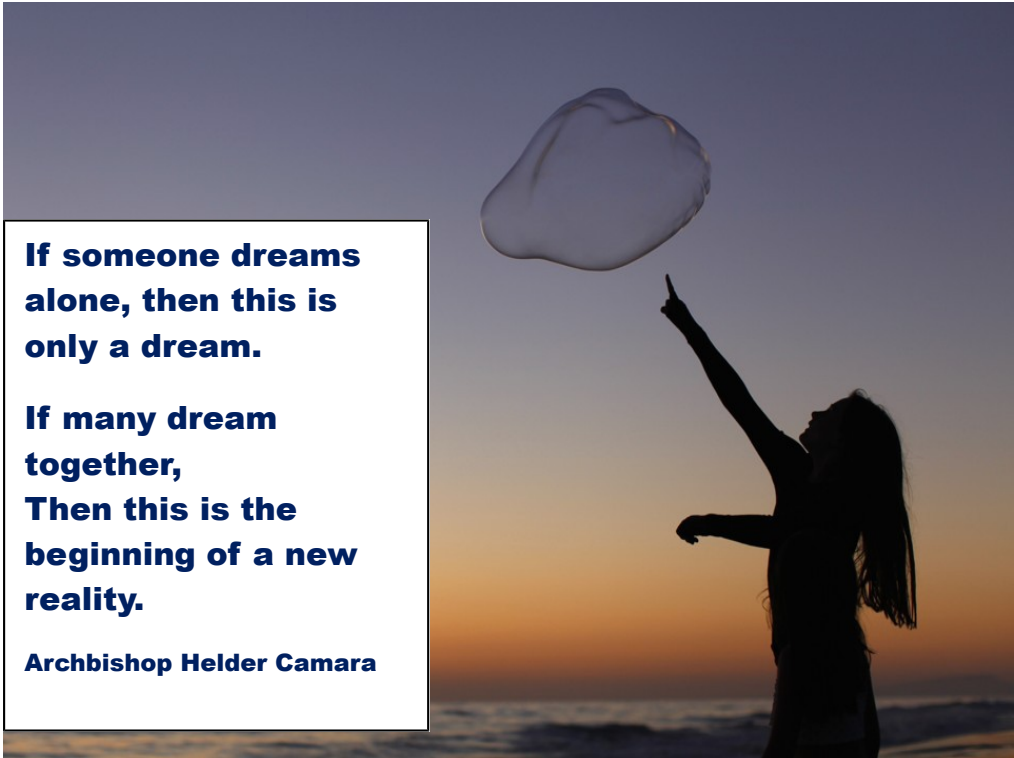
and attentive to God's gift and grace revealed in the present moment, no matter what is happening in that moment.

We were posed with challenging questions:

**Listen to what is stirring in you...**  
**Deal with the diversity...**  
**Journey towards a new way of being IJs in Asia and  
in the world...**  
**Dream... Imagine... Be creative...**  
**Trusting ... Audacious...**



How do we respond to the challenging reality in a new way?  
What is God telling me as I look at the reality of Asia in the light of our Charism?  
What is burning in my heart?



**If someone dreams  
alone, then this is  
only a dream.**

**If many dream  
together,  
Then this is the  
beginning of a new  
reality.**

**Archbishop Helder Camara**

What is our dream for a common Asian response as IJs to the reality of Asia today?



**Let us DREAM together  
a new way of being in this world...**









MOMENTS OF SHARING



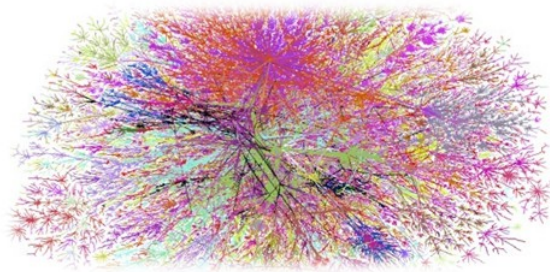






We began each morning with prayer in the prayer space and each evening with mass in the chapel.





INTER.....

- BEYOND PROVINCES
- INTERCONGREGATIONALITY
- COLLABORATION WITH LAITY
- COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS



In the light of our IJ experience of collaboration with lay partners:  
What ways forward/new ways are opening before us?

Name one or two concrete steps we can take at the Asian level in terms of collaboration with lay partners.



*Giving shape to our DREAM..*

Another dream is to have our next Asian Forum where both the Sisters and our Lay Partners will participate





How to shape our life and mission  
In light of who and what we are  
To nurture LIFE?



# WHAT IS THE CORE THAT UNITES US WITH OTHERS?



This led to the setting up of an Asian Mission Team appointed by the Provincials with members (either a sister or a lay collaborator) from each Province/District to carry out feasibility studies on new calls in other parts of Asia, discern the response with the Asian Provincial Teams and network with existing NGOs. Sisters and lay collaborators who feel called, has the IJ Spirit and passion for and experience of mission, good health and able to work as a team are invited to offer their services.

The Forum generated a lot of energy and enthusiasm and all felt that it was worthwhile, inspirational and life-giving.

With renewed faith and hope, we go forth in trust, assured that God: "I am with you always." Mt 28:20