



# IACM BULLETIN

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC MISSIOLOGISTS



## THE PRESIDENT'S VISION

Gianni Criveller

Dear Friends and members of IACM!

Here we are with the second issue of our newsletter. My sincere gratitude to those who contributed to this issue of our newsletter.

As three out of four members of the Board are in Italy, we think that we might especially try to promote the life of the Association in Rome, where several members and friends of IACM are located.

On May 6, 2023, the Board and some members in Rome gathered for some discussions and a simple fellowship at the Focolare Center in Rome. Several proposals came about which are worth pursuing for the growth of the Association.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to invite everyone who is in Rome for a Study Day on the theme of Mission and Synodality on October 27, 2023. This event is in collaboration with Prof. Samuel Amaglo, SDB who is organizing a Formation Course on Mission at the Pontifical Salesian University. Details about this Conference will soon be communicated to all members.

Finally, we thank those who took the time to renew their membership with the Association. We encourage everyone to spread the word among members that we continue to grow in number and in our collaborative effort for the mission.



# Communication: The Mission of the Church

*John Paul Herman, SVD*

We know the world is drastically and rapidly changing due to the Information and Communication technology boom. They are no longer just a means of communication because they have become human life's dominant and defining factors. They are shaping the lives of people, of society, and of the whole globe. In 2005, Ogunsola said, "Information Communication Technology is basically an electronic-based system of information transmission, reception, processing and retrieval, which has drastically changed the way we think, the way we live and the environment in which we live." [1] In such a context, the Church lags far behind when every person is educated with thorough knowledge and skills. The people, especially the young feel out of place. That is one of the reasons they no longer go to the church.



By nature, a person is hungry for information and experience. Although technology provides a person with information, he/she is still looking for more concrete experience. The Church mostly gives them information that is either irrelevant or passé. The Church needs to focus on giving them an experience beyond information. Thus, the Church is challenged to make sufficient use of this technology to provide men and women with the right information and lead them to a real experience. Since the Church does not provide what they want, they depend on technology and thus their lives are shaped by what they receive.

If the Church is to be revived, it must employ this communication technology positively and influence the lives of people in a better way than the negative forces. The impact on the lives of people is so strong that the Church cannot ignore it. It is high time to use them to provide life-giving information and lead them to real experience. The Church must rethink its communication methods and change its negative attitude toward modern communication. Technology dominates and will continue to dominate the lives of people and change is inevitable.

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[1] L. A. Ogunsola, Information and Communication Technologies and the Effects of Globalization: Twenty-First Century "Digital Slavery" for Developing Countries--Myth or Reality? *Electronic Journal of Academic and Special Librarianship*, v.6 no.1-2, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria, 2005.



The Church has made effective use of the press in the past and it became a powerful means of communicating the Gospel to all nations. So, why not use the same means here and now?

We know, the Church is going through difficult times. Large numbers of people are going out of the church and the youth stay away. Has the Church become so ineffective and irrelevant? To find an appropriate answer, she needs to investigate the present context thoroughly and analyse its way of functioning. The Church must reinvent and reincarnate to be effective in the world, just as “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14).



Christianity has always been a religion of communication, placing central emphasis on divine revelation, on the incarnation. A Church, the formal ecclesial community continually becoming incarnate in different cultures, fulfilling the mandate to proclaim the Word of God, must make Christ incarnate in the present context too. It has always proclaimed that the Word made flesh. Now is the time to proclaim that the Word has also become the image through technology and through our lives.

It is a new challenge for the Church: to bring its members back to the union of faith and use the new religious symbols provided by the new technology that expresses the cultural and religious spirit of our time. These symbols are the new communicative language both for the internal communication of the church and for projecting a dramatic witness of the Gospel to the larger society.[2]

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[2] Cfr. ROBERT A. White, *The New Communications Emerging in the Church*, 4.



John Paul Herman, SVD has a Doctorate in Social Communications from the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Italy. He is currently the Director of SEDOS (Service of Documentation and Study on Global Mission) in Rome, Italy.





# University of Santo Tomas Our Partners in Global Compact on Education

*Roberto Catalano*

For the past three days I have been in the Philippines, the real destination of this Asia trip. At the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) in Manila, as planned, I met with Declan O'Byrne, the acting rector of Sophia University Institute, with whom we spent three days in the pleasant climate of Tagaytay, a hillside town that now, with the new arteries recently opened even taking advantage of the Covid lockdown, can be reached in less than an hour and thirty minutes.



Today, we finally immersed ourselves in the world of Santo Tomas University (UST), which in the coming days will host the annual conference "The Saint Thomas Aquinas Forum 2023", an international event that this year has, as its specific title, "On Catholic Education, Cultures, and Religions; a Post-Pandemic Conversation". This is the culmination of two years of collaboration between our small and very young Sophia University and the historic - established in 1611 - Saint Tomas University. It is a cooperation which was born in the context of the Global Compact of Education (GCE).

Within this project launched by Pope Francis himself, our two universities are partners in the area of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. We have already collaborated on several occasions, but this event starting tomorrow, April 28, intends to launch the GCE in the Philippines and the program was prepared jointly by UST, Sophia and LUMSA University of Rome.

We began our institutional engagements by meeting the Rector of what is a private university of great renown, as well as the oldest university in the Philippines and in the whole of Asia. Father Richard G. Ang is the 97th Rector of this Athenaeum, a Filipino of Chinese ethnicity as the name betrays.



The meeting was held inside the oldest and most representative building of this Philippine University (UST), originally founded in the Intramuros area and later rebuilt in its present location, at the center of a large campus with 21 faculties. The building is imposing, as indeed majestic is the entrance, hallways, administration rooms, and classrooms. Just inside the Senate Hall, Father Ang welcomed our delegation, consisting precisely of Prof. O'Byrne and Dr. Carina Rossa from LUMSA in Rome and myself. Also present were some 20 staff, including five vice-rectors, as well as the Director and some of the Center for Theology, Religious Studies, and Ethics professors, which is this conference's main organizing body. The formality typical of such settings, throughout Asia, soon melted away both in the cool and warm Filipino hospitality and in the fraternal sharing of the short but fruitful journey conducted in common over these two years.

Both from the Rector Magnificent and from our Acting Rector and Dr. Rossa, collaborations were envisaged that may allow us to look to the future within the GCE but also to broaden the perspective to other academic environments both in the Philippines and abroad (in Asia).



Peace, dialogue, and human rights were some common points of interest that immediately emerged in addition to the commitment to involve other institutes, especially but not only, from the Catholic area within the greater Asian continent. It is understood that the GCE is a project that is all to be outlined and invented but deserves to be a place to engage energies and creativity.

We, then, moved on to a brief tour of the campus, which oozes history. For instance, during World War II, UST had been occupied by Japanese forces and turned into a place of detention for Western prisoners.

We were taken on a tour of the very rich library and especially the area with very old manuscripts dating back as far as the end of the 15th century precisely in the years of the arrival of Westerners in these parts of Asia.



In the richness of a truly interesting day, full of encounters but also of mutual enrichment, I was struck by a sentence of Fr. Richard Ang, who, commenting on my confession that I had been baffled when the Holy See matched Sophia with UST (two poles opposite in age, experience and number of infrastructures and students), emphasized how precisely this diversity can be the reason for fruitful collaboration.



Finally, an excellent dinner inside a large hotel in the Philippine metropolis with colleagues from the Center for Theology, Religious Studies and Ethics. It was an evening in a serene, family atmosphere, with challenging talks, looking ahead to the future of our collaboration, but also with personal and even joking moments of sharing that strengthened an incipient relationship. And it is amazing to think that apart from Prof. Allan Basas, whom we met only once in Rome last year, with the others we had seen each other at most during the organizational zooms. But the relationship already goes far beyond that.



Roberto Catalano is the current Secretary of IACM. He is currently an Extraordinary permanent professor of dialogue theory-ethics at the Sophia University Institute, Florence Italy.





# "The Reunion Movement": A Reading into the Reunion of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

*Jigmy Thomas*

In a little more than half a decade's time, the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, one among the 22 Oriental Catholic Churches, belonging to the Antiochian liturgical family, would celebrate the centenary of her reunification with the Universal Catholic Church.

The eventful reunion of 5 members namely Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Bishop Jacob Theophilos, Fr. John Kuzhinapurath OIC, Deacon Alexander OIC, and a lay member Mr. Chacko Kilileth with the Catholic Church from the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church took place on 20 September 1930.



The great reunion can undoubtedly be considered as one of those specific kairos moments, within the mission history of Christianity in India. It paved the way for a much wider and continued reflection in the Universal Church on evangelization with a special focus on an ecumenical theology towards a universal catholic communion; an Oriental Christian social pastoral for the Indian demography; and reunion as a missionary model for the Church.

These seemingly juxtaposed points do not exhaust the objectives being continually achieved through the reunion movement, but they do point to some of the important milestones that are consistently, continually, and concretely being achieved through the trajectory of the Malankara reunion movement of 1930.



In its wholistic perspective, the reunion movement led by Archbishop Mar Ivanios must also be considered as a part of the global movement towards Catholic reunions that were taking place in other parts of the world among the Orthodox churches to the Catholic Church during the earlier periods of the 20th Century.



The historical reunions of the Russian Greek Catholic (1905), The Greek Byzantine Catholic Church (1911), Hungarian Greek Catholic Church (1912) provide us with a universal vision of the notion of Catholicity that was gaining momentum at that time.

These reunion movements among different churches and the centenary preparatory celebrations of the Malankara Catholic Church in 2030 provide an impetus in the context of the Synodal Church today to see “reunion” within the divine matrix of the restitution of mankind's relationship with God. In this sense, the 'reunion' of the Church in either of the forms of 'uniatism' or 'unionism' becomes a microcosmic expression of man's reunion with God himself who in the person of Jesus began the proclamation of the Good News with the words "μετάνοια"- reconcile or reunite yourselves with God.



Jigmy Thomas is a priest from the Syro-Malankar Church in India. He holds a degree in Licentiate in Missiology from the Pontifical Gregorian University and is actively involved in New Evangelization and promotion of interreligious dialogue.





# REMINDERS

- IACM APPLICATION AND RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership/Renewal Document can be accessed through this link:

<https://iacm-catholic.org/membership/how-to-become-a-member/>

Dollar Payment: \$30.00/year or \$75.00 for 3 years

Bank name: M and T Bank

Routing Transit Number, ABA: 022000046

Bank Address, City & State: M and T Bank,

One M and T Plaza, Buffalo, NY 14203

SWIFT/BIC: MANTUS33BUF

Euro payment: € 27.00/year or €70.00 for 3 years

Account Name: Missionari Oblati di Maria Immacolata

Bank name: Crédit Agricole – Cariparma

Ag. Di Roma 34 – Via della Giuliana 41

Roma 00192 Italia

Iban: IT34B 062300 504900 004346 1494

BIC: CRPPIT2P235

NOTATION: Credit 00-23120-001 IACM

Note:

To facilitate the issuance of the Membership Certificate and Acknowledgment Receipt, kindly email a copy of the deposit/fund transfer slip to: [suzette.nellas@gmail.com](mailto:suzette.nellas@gmail.com)

