



IFCA ASIA 10.3.2021

Intervention from the PHILIPPINES

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- our feelings in this pandemic: how is it affecting us and also challenging and changing us, in relation to the problems already present in our realities?

ANS:

During this time of the pandemic I share the feelings of anxiety and fear that many of my fellow Filipinos feel. It has been a year since our first experience ever of a community quarantine more popularly known as a lockdown. How have we been coping with the challenges brought about by the pandemic?

First of all, we turn to God in prayer not just individually but also as families, as communities, as a nation. The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines composed and circulated *Oratio Imperata* for protection against the Covid-19 virus. The prayer was revised in January 2021 to thank God for the vaccines developed and to bless all efforts to end the pandemic in our country and in the whole world.

Because of the pandemic, many Filipinos have lost their jobs like drivers because for several months public mass transportation like the Light Metro Rail Transit, buses, jeepneys, and tricycles were not allowed to operate. Many businesses have suffered many setbacks causing some to close down or to scale down.

These challenging times also brought out the best in many Filipinos. Church groups, non-government organizations, families, and individuals have been reaching out to the medical frontliners by donating food, personal protective equipment for them. Likewise, to the poor and the marginalized through food donations and sanitary kits.

We remain optimistic and hopeful that the procurement of the vaccines, the prioritizing of groups to be vaccinated and the mechanics for roll out will not be

tinted with corruption and politics so that herd immunity will be achieved soon. People need their means of livelihood back for the economy to bounce back.

We in the Sangguniang Laiko ng Pilipinas (Council of the Laity of the Philippines) have been proactive in organizing a series of activities to connect with our member organizations (Diocesan Councils of the Laity and National Lay Organizations) to encourage them to continue organizing related activities in their respective Dioceses and National Lay Organizations. These are some of the activities we have undertaken:

1. Walk for Life: Celebration of Life through Dance, February 20, 2021
2. Series of Lay Caucus-Online Conversation with relevant social issues on Mental Health, Transitioning towards Digital Evangelization, Economy of Communion, Journeying Towards the Care of our Common Home and Consecration Conversation with Fr. Calloway among others.
3. Preparation for the Consecration to St. Joseph
4. Preparation for our 22nd National Biennial Convention with the theme: *Celebrate as One in 2021: Gift to Mission, Gift to Unity and Gift to Christianity*
5. Active involvement in ecumenical activities initiated by other Christian groups

- our proposals for lay people in the church and Christian witnesses in the society with a catholic - international horizon/vision

ANS:

My proposal to the lay people in the church should be more proactive in listening to each other which the recent document *Fratelli Tutti* confirms that dialogue amongst our brothers and sisters can be an avenue to a better society. “Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the point of view of others”(Fratelli Tutti #203).

Likewise, as Pope Francis mentioned in the encyclical “I ask God to prepare our hearts to encounter our brothers and sisters, so that we may overcome our differences rooted in political thinking, language, culture and religion”.

Therefore, I would emphasize “**Dialogue**” in reference to Fratelli Tutti #198 and “**mutual respect**” because both are aspects of a culture of encounter rather than to a throw away culture.