

Sabbatical Renewal Experience

8 January to 3 May 2024



On Monday the 8th of January 2024, the first Sabbatical Renewal Experience program of 2024 at the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila began. Not every participant was able to be present on the first day, due to other commitments, and we would eventually be joined by two members who swapped from the Leadership program.

By the time we had completely gathered, we numbered twenty-three participants from twelve countries around our globe: Papua New Guinea; Korea; India; Australia; Indonesia; Malaysia; Philippines; Tanzania; Sri Lanka; Canada; Laos; and Nigeria. A truly international

and intercultural community.

Our twenty-three participants included two lay people, four religious brothers, eleven religious sisters, two religious priests and four diocesan priests. The diversity of vocations was matched by a diversity of life experience and length of life.

The value of our community life, at the EAPI, was further enriched by the presence of 40 participants undertaking the Pastoral Leadership and Management for Mission program. Many of these participants were

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significantly younger than the average age of our Sabbatical program members. We shared many weeks of learning with the PLMM group—which was not always welcomed by everyone as then we had afternoon sessions as well as the morning :)

Over the course of four months, we prayed together, sat at table together, travelled together, learnt together and laughed together. The following pages offer reflections from each of our program participants, reflections on different aspects of our shared journey, and an abundance of photo memories.

We will return to our own portions of the Lord’s

Harvest but we will remain united in this common shared experience, in the bond of love for each other that we have fostered, and in our common faith in the goodness of God at work in our lives and at work in the world. We will undoubtedly keep each other in our memories and in our prayers until the day we are reunited around the table of God’s children in heaven.

The Sabbatical program participants are deeply indebted to the leadership of the EAPI, Sr Ley our program coordinator, Fr John the EAPI Director and Fr Khoan who facilitates the PLMM program. We are also much obliged to the many staff of the EAPI in administration, the kitchen, maintenance, housekeeping, and security for doing their very best for us at every moment on our journey.

Participant List

	Name	Called	Congregation/Diocese.	Country of Origin
Fr.	Damian McGrath	Damian	Townsville Diocese	Australia
Fr.	Laureano Arquiza Rodillas	Larry	Geraldton Diocese	Australia
Fr.	Robert Kam Leen Wong	Robert	Society of Jesus	Canada
Br.	Arul Rajendran	Arul	Montfort Brothers of Saint Gabriel	India
Sr.	Cecily Savariyar Adimai	Cecily	Sisters of St Joseph of Lyon	India
Sr.	Hermin Buulolo	Hermin	Sisters of Charity of Our Lady Mother of Mercy	Indonesia
Sr.	Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih	Rosa	Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo	Indonesia
Fr.	Sayyane Xayavong	Say	Oblates of Mary Immaculate	Laos
Br.	Joikul Egbertus Bin Sevelinus	Egbert	De La Salle Brothers	Malaysia
Sr.	Mary Peck Yong Thee	Mary	Franciscan Missionaries of Mary	Malaysia
Sr.	Stella Abike Akinwotu	Stella	Sisters of St. Louis	Nigeria
Bro	Vincent Uchenna Abadom	Vin	Marist Brothers of the Schools	Nigeria
Sr.	Alexandra Manukialona	Alex	Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSC)	Papua New Guinea
Sr.	Susan Gevia	Susan	Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSC)	Papua New Guinea
Sr.	Maridel Soloveres Compendio	Madel	Missionaries of the Assumption	Philippines
Sr.	Sylvia Cabatbat Cantor	Sylvia	Missionary Sisters of our Lady of the Angels	Philippines
Dr.	Byun Jin Heung	James	Diocese of Uijeongbu	Republic of Korea
Fr.	Chang Jung Kim	Luke	Military Ordinate of Korea	Republic of Korea
Fr.	Jaehyun Jun	Ben	Archdiocese of Daegu	Republic of Korea
Ms.	Sun-Mee Hong	Pia	Diocese of Uijeongbu	Republic of Korea
Sr.	Yusil Kim	Elisabeth	Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing	Republic of Korea
Sr.	Dineshika Fernando	Dineshi	The Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux	Sri Lanka
Br.	Masini Remegius Kaswamila	Masini	Monfort Brothers of St Gabriel	Tanzania

From the EAPI Director

Congratulations on the rejuvenation of your soul!

People are molded and shaped by encounters. As a young man or a woman, you met Jesus, and I believe that that encounter has shaped who you are today. Through that encounter, you met yourself fully and met others anew. In the midst of that encounter is EAPI.

When Sr. Ley saw you working on creating a short video, she said, "EAPI has turned into a big studio." I say, "That's right. And, I would say, the whole EAPI is a meeting place and a learning place." You should have learned a lot in the last 17 weeks. I'm not just talking about the modules. You seemed to learn more from each other. In the table conversations, in the outings and walks, in the daily Masses and especially in the Sunday Masses, in the various activities, you have met people, you have met yourself, you have met God. I have watched with envy as you have been slowly disarmed over the past four months. You may be exhausted from all your efforts on the front lines of pastoral and missionary work. Maybe you have been hurt by complicated relationships. You may have been misunderstood by one of your most

trusted ministers and experienced moments of anguish. But at EAPI, everyone starts anew. I have seen you regaining your laughter and your youth. I see you as adolescents again. You are beautiful because you have reclaimed your dreams.

Now you are leaving. The world is the same. You have changed. I am proud of you for leaving your comfort zone and stepping out into the world. You are not alone. You have another support group through EAPI. I hope that you meet often on WhatsApp and continue to encourage each other. May this meeting at EAPI be a compass in your life. May God bless you!

Fr John Chong Chechon



From the SRE Coordinator

I am a relatively new program coordinator of the SRE here at EAPI. I only started in June 2023. Before that, I myself was an SRE participant. This is just my third sabbatical group, my second as coordinator. What makes it unique? What and how will I remember this group many years from now?

To begin with, SRE January 2024 is the biggest group so far with 23 members. The Sabbatical Renewal Experience, as we know it today, only began in August of 2018 with 19 registered participants. Before that, the sabbatical program had different names (ex. SPE, SLE – don't ask me what they mean, I do not know :)). The biggest number registered for SRE was in January 2020 – 32 participants! Wow! We know what happened to that group... covid 19 came, all participants were sent home and EAPI closed its doors. They did not finish the program!

In September 2022, EAPI reopened with a 10-week SP (Sabbatical Program) with 14 participants. Then the numbers started going up again – 18 SREs in January 2023, 19 in August 2023 and now 23! Since we are limiting SRE participants to 20 per batch, SRE January 2024 might just go down in EAPI history as the biggest ever SRE batch that graduated – pre and post pandemic!

Also worth remembering is the presence in this group of two lay people both of whom are married, have children and even grandchildren! Both are also Koreans! In programs made up mostly of priests, religious brothers and religious sisters, lay participants are treasures who make the journey more enriching, memorable and yes, unique! Thank you James and Pia!

And finally, I will remember this group for their positive contribution and active participation in the life of the whole EAPI community. Each one excelled in his/her own field. Each one was available to and appreciated by, not only the SREs themselves but also the participants of PLMM as well as the EAPI employees and staff. Dear SRE January 2024, you are truly a



gift to EAPI! Thank you! And each of you has touched my life. Thank you. Among other things, I will not forget...Rosa's expert care of the community during our covid outbreak; Damian's notes, website and IT expertise; James' magic patches and his wife; Arul's film; Macini's gentleness; Egbert's beans in the garden; Mary's pillow and practical advice; Madel's dancing skills; Vin's interventions in class; Pia's profound insights; Luke's acting and funny bones; Eli's quietness and seeming fragility (yet, Covid did not get her!), Hermin's need for sleep and rest; Larry's health and generosity; Ben's beautiful homilies; Say's shyness; Robert's calm and calming presence; Susan's open and honest sharing; Alex's concern for mother earth through her banana peel collection; Cecily's honest and useful feedback; Dineshi's community building activities; Sylvia's fidelity to her congregational commitments; and Stella's deep and graceful way. Truly, each of you is a gift! Thank you dear friends! Till we meet again!

Ley Salazar, fdnsc

Participant Reflections

Brother Masini Kaswamili

Hi, my name is Masini R. K. from Tanzania and I belong to Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel Congregation, East Africa Province. The Province comprised five countries, namely Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Malawi. Our mission is Education mainly to youth.

I came to EAPI after being exhausted in the field of teaching and administration in our schools for a number of years. And therefore felt the need to rest and landed here in the Philippines for a Sabbatical.

No wonder, from January 6th to May 3rd, 2024 I'm enjoying my spiritual classes over here. Different modules are taught by different Fathers of the Society of Jesus. Yeah, the modules are enlightened, thoughtful, enriching, enthusiastic and open up the mind to see the brightness in the darkness of the world. There is an experience of joy, peace, knowledge, spiritual growth and fulfilment from the modules.

Last but not the least, I would love to thank the whole group of 60 strong people of God, the faithful, ie, Priests, Religious men and women plus the laity and the Director and Coordinators coming from different faces of this globe for their charming and friendly personality that made the campus welcoming to each one of us regardless of our positions and the mission we had but experiencing peace and harmony. Take care and be blessed one and all. Asanteni sana.



Fr. Chang Jung Kim ("Luke")

I was ordained a priest (a part of the Diocese of Suwon) in September 2004. I was commissioned as a military chaplain with the rank of captain in July 2008 (now my rank is a lieutenant colonel). Up to the present I have worked at eight different bases.

On the one hand, I was a minister at the military parish, doing everything that being a minister requires. On the other hand, as a military chaplain, I have worked in educating, counselling, and encouraging the soldiers and the officers.

Due to various ministry and military requirements, my spiritual life has been neglected. I expect to grow spiritually leaving aside the ministry and putting my entire focus on the renewal of my spiritual life.

Up until now, including last term, I have lived as if I was on retreat. In that time I healed my wounds, discovered the meaning of the past, and gained spiritual and physical strength to live in the future. I am especially grateful to spiritual leader, Father Chong, who led me well, and to all participants who awakened me to minister for the Catholic church with hope and passion. Above all, I praise the amazing grace of God who love me deeply despite my shortcomings.



Participant Reflections

Sr. Stella Akinwotu SSL

I was born 65 years ago, a Nigerian and a Yoruba by tribe. I entered the Institute of Sisters of St Louis in October 1979 and made my first profession in August 1982, while my final profession was in September 1988.

I worked as a teacher, school counsellor, and pastoral worker. I was once a director of our Vocational Skills Acquisition Centre and Retreat and Catechetical Centre. I also worked as a formator and a member of the Nigeria Provincial Leadership Team. My last assignment was Organic Vegetable Farm work.

I had worked all my life and sometimes held two apostolates concurrently. Therefore, I came for a sabbatical to rest and renew.

The possibility of living and journeying together despite our cultural and individual differences is a big take-home for me. Indeed, a synodality community is possible. The spiritual activities such as spiritual direction, Masses, retreats, monthly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and my prayers have been of great spiritual upliftment. I also saw the importance of self-care. I have been helped to look at my “Containers” the way I see, view, do things, and change those that could change.

I pray for the grace to Accept the “containers” I cannot change, the Ability to change the ones I can and, the Wisdom to know the difference.



Sr Susan Gevia MSC

When coming to EAPI for Sabbatical, my intention was to rest, slow down and have time for myself. A space to pray and get in touch with my Lord in prayer.

Because for some years, always working, no time for myself or relaxing, so now I would like to spend this time to deepen my spiritual life. I need time to adjust into prayer. Therefore, I experienced here at EAPI I am relaxed and was happy about the different Modules that help me for my mission at hand. There are some Modules that I am glad that have been a help for me so even the retreat that we had in Tagaytay was very much appreciated.

Never had such an experience but I am prepared and looking forward for letting go of the past and looking forward to the future in the years to come. I am energized and ready to work with my Provincial.

It will be my first time to be with her full time work but I believe in God that everything will be according to his will not human thinking but he's will be done.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to my well being while staying here at EAPI especially to the Facilitators. Thank you very much.



Participant Reflections

Ms Pia Hong Sun Mee

Upon marriage, I followed my husband's family and converted from Buddhism to Catholicism. One day fifteen years later, suddenly, I felt unfamiliar looking in the mirror.

“Who am I?” “Who am I?”

It was a voice resounding from deep inside. I am a daughter, a sister, a mother of two children, and a wife to a man. As a math teacher and a devout Catholic. But it looked like islands floating in the sea. I prayed hard because I thought I would find the sea if I prayed.

Around that time, I came across the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and I began to awaken. When I closed my eyes, I was with God, and when I opened my eyes, I was on the cliff called the world. If I jump off a cliff It was on the wings of an eagle, As a result I had grown up.

And 25 years have passed. A prayer community was formed, and responsibility gradually increased. In recent years, I have continued to experience the death of people close to me. I was exhausted due to concentration for a long time.

That's why I came here to EAPI.

I am a layperson who is not good at English. So, Here I am a child. I could feel the nonjudgmental consideration and warmth in their eyes. My room is like my mother's womb. It grows overnight and greets the new morning with excitement.

I felt relieved and focused on prayer. I prayed until the core of my heart became one big rock. The things I wanted to be but couldn't become, the things I should have done but couldn't, and the sorrow of separation gathered together to form a large rock, and on that rock, on the altar, was the body of Jesus.

Only then did the fear, anxiety, and panic within me burst out from inside me with a persistent cough. I lost weight and stayed up all night for several nights.

On the one hand, I discovered myself anew through learning in class and sharing with them.

As the Passion of Jesus approached, an 8-day retreat began. The wind was strong in Tagaytay. The wind made the clouds flow quickly. Every night, I watched the clouds drift by and saw the stars. The fear, anxiety, and panic within me became a point of contact with Jesus, and my heart became warm with the desire to die with Jesus.

After the 8-day retreat, we returned to EAPI and participated in the Passion Procession of Jesus for 5 hours in Sacred Heart parish. The corpse of Jesus was so vivid.

In the middle of the night on Good Friday, I walked around the empty campus and found Jesus. The darkness and silence shook my abyss and the dawn light began to burst. I was resurrected with Jesus.

As I write this, I am deeply grateful to the new family who have joined EAPI. We haven't even broken up yet, but I miss you. I tried so hard to become a good believer, to pray and study hard, but I experienced that God was with me in my helplessness, and that he was more heartbroken than me and died with me.

He was born anew within me



Community Life

A Tapestry of Voices: Finding Unity in Diversity

Imagine a vibrant table, microcosm of the world, where 21 nationalities weave a tapestry of cultures. Languages ebb and flow, punctuated by laughter and clinking of glasses. Despite the occasional struggles to understand a phrase or a joke, a sense of shared humanity binds this diverse group.

This is the essence of community life a beautiful paradox where differences become bridges. We come together, not in spite of our religious backgrounds or varied spiritualities but because of a fundamental human need for connection.

Even with a single God worshipped in different tongues and with distinct rituals, faith transcends these outward expressions. It's the silent understanding that flows beneath the surface, a shared belief in something greater than ourselves.

This gathering is a testament to the power of community .It reminds us that beneath the surface of our varied cultures and traditions lies a common thread the desire for belonging,

for understanding, and for the comfort of shared experiences

A Celebration of Unity in Diversity: Culture Nights and Games Day

Culture nights and games days are vibrant celebrations of humanity's rich tapestry. Imagine a kaleidoscope of 21 nationalities, each with its unique culture, language, and traditions, coming together in a spirit of unity. Despite the challenges of communication posed by language barriers and dialects a deeper connection emerges,

These events transcend religious differences. People of various faiths, each with their own charismatic expressions of spirituality, find common ground in their shared belief in a higher power. It's a testament to the Universality of the human spirit, where faith transcends language and cultural divides.

Through cultural performances, storytelling, and games, participants share stories and traditions, fostering understanding and

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Community Life

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appreciation for each other's backgrounds. Laughter and joy become the common language, uniting people in a celebration of our shared humanity.

Cultural Extravaganza (Day Trips)

Similar to religious holidays that bring people together in shared traditions, cultural events create a platform for celebrating diversity. Participants embark on a journey of discovery experiencing the richness of the other cultures through games stories and firsthand encounters. Even if a joke doesn't quite translate or a proverb loses its nuance in translation, the enthusiasm, the energy, and the spirit of familiarity resonate universally.

Cultural exchange events, like day trips around Manila and Quezon city, offer a glimpse into the local way of life. Participants become temporary travelers, exploring historical landmarks, sampling regional delicacies, and interacting with the residents. These experiences chip away at cultural barriers, fostering empathy, understanding, and a new found appreciation of the beauty of human diversity.



Sr Alex



Participant Reflections

Fr Robert Wong SJ

I was doing pastoral ministries in the Archdiocese of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in and out for almost nineteen years. The last seven years were the most fulfilling despite the onset of the pandemic. It was time to reevaluate my priorities after going through some serious health issues. I requested for a sabbatical rest from my superiors, hoping I will be revived in body and spirit.

I am happy I came to EAPI, which I had heard about many years ago when I made my tertianship (preparing for final vows) at Loyola House of Studies. The schedule of the program is not very demanding. The different modules allow me to reflect on my personal and Jesuit vocation experiences. The “quiet time” for rest and self-care is a real bonus where I have experienced much peace. It is a grace and gift from the Lord, and I am very grateful. Living and interacting with fellow participants from twenty-one countries has enriched my human and Christian development.

The 8-day retreat at Tagaytay is my high point in the program. I received much clarity for my future assignment. I am returning to the Jesuits of Canada Province with renewed strength and courage for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. Amen!



Sr. Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih, CB

Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo

I wanted to join this Sabbatical Program at EAPI with the main motivation to take a rest after a long time of internal service in the Congregation. In the past 18 years, I had been doing my ministry at the Congregation internally. After this long service I asked myself whether I wanted to have a break or not. Some friends suggested to me to have sabbatical in the US or any other countries that offer such program. After a long consideration and discernment, I told myself that ...yes...I need a break. Thus, sabbatical time will serve the best for this. I chose EAPI, since there have been some sisters from my Congregation who have joined this program. Another reason for me is it is in the Philippines. In terms of distance, it is not so far from my country. I didn't need to travel for long and also, I did not have to process the visa.

Have I achieved the goal of my sabbatical. I can say 'yes'. Although the schedule is quite tight and there have been many activities at EAPI, I have been able to rest and recharge. At least I can take a distance from the hustle and bustle of the congregational life.

Thanks to EAPI family. We develop into a big family here. To all that come into my life and create a story here, I want to say, thank you, salamat po, terimakasih seribu.

I hope this story we create will last forever.



Participant Reflections

Br Joikul Egbertus Bin Sevelinus

is a La Salle Brother with extensive experience in both formal and non-formal education settings. Throughout his career, he has served in classrooms and student hostels within the La Salle community in Sabah, East Malaysia. Brother Joikul holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education with a major in Guidance and Counseling, and a graduate degree in Education with a major in Spiritual Formation. Prior to joining the La Salle Brothers, he trained as a government teacher and specialized in Bahasa Malaysia, Malaysia's national language.

Currently, Brother Joikul is on a sabbatical leave from January 1, 2024, to July 31, 2024. He is dedicating this seven-month period to professional renewal and growth. The first leg of his sabbatical involves participating in the four-month Sabbatical Renewal Experience program at EAPI. Following the EAPI program, Brother Joikul will volunteer for one month at the University of St. La Salle Bacolod, directly serving those in need within the university's programs.

Brother Joikul's approach to teaching centers on fostering a love of learning and creating a positive and inclusive classroom environment. He believes students possess inherent knowledge, and the role of the teacher is to facilitate learning and empower students to learn independently. Beyond academics, Brother Joikul is passionate about music, gardening, and culinary arts, which he integrates into programs for students at the hostel.

Learning at EAPI

My four-month sabbatical at EAPI has been a transformative experience. The program offered a unique blend of structured learning sessions and rich informal interactions. Faith sharing, liturgy, prayers, shared meals, games, and even celebrations became avenues for spiritual growth. The well-balanced schedule allowed for reflection alongside a sense of relaxation.

The silent retreat provided a powerful space for personal prayer and a deeper encounter with God. Sharing my spiritual journey with a dedicated spiritual director allowed me to see my growth more positively and discern where God might be leading me in my next ministry. Beyond personal reflection, the program fostered a profound sense of unity.

Interacting with participants from diverse countries, cultures, and backgrounds highlighted our shared humanity and connection as God's people. The inclusion of laypeople, priests, and religious created a vibrant community where synodality, the practice of walking together, was a lived experience. Through these interactions, I learned invaluable life lessons and gained a deeper appreciation for the richness of human diversity.

Equally impactful were the sessions on technology. They highlighted the importance of staying updated on modern advancements to effectively reach out to the people in my ministry. This realization has opened doors to new possibilities for connecting me with the young people I am and will be working for aside from sharing the message of faith in a way that resonates with the modern world. The entire program, refreshingly non-academic, focused on enriching self-growth through faith and community.



Participant Reflections

Brother Arul Rajendran

I am Br Arul Rajendran from India. I am a brother of Montfortian family. Montfortian Education is based on the ideals and beliefs of our patron Saint Louis Marie De Montfort. I have been working in school based mission as principal and vice principal of our Montfort schools around the southern part of India more particularly in Tamil nadu. I also enjoyed a period of time as a post graduate teacher. I love teaching and guiding the young ones who are the pillars of the nation.

My purpose in coming here is to develop greater self-awareness of my leadership style and behaviours and also to learn techniques for self-management to improve emotional intelligence and resilience. Even more, I wanted to create a personal development plan based on self-assessment and feedback to continue growing as a leader in my mission field.



Fr "Benedict" JaeHyun Jun

I am Father Benedict JaeHyun Jun from Korea, a diocesan priest of the Archdiocese of Daegu. This year, marking my 25th anniversary of ordination, I have been granted a sabbatical year.

Through the EAPI sabbatical program, I aimed to reflect on my past life and seek new directions for my remaining priestly life. Now, as the 4-month journey is coming to an end, I feel as if I am standing at the starting line of my priestly life once again. Living with religious and clergy from other countries has been an experience that will greatly assist me in living as a happy member of the Catholic Church in the future, and I believe it will also serve as an inexhaustible well, helping me to cultivate a community of love and communion wherever I am.

I express my gratitude and love to everyone, including the EAPI staffs, who have been with me on this journey.



Sr Sylvia

I am Sr. Sylvia C. Cantor, from the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Angels, MNDA. I came to the Sabbatical program hoping to discover the deeper calling of God and to be renewed. Now at the end of the four month, I could say I am ready, with open hearts to accept any possible assignment with courage and hope to be a better person in Jesus's name.



Participant Reflections

Sr Mary Thee Peck Yong FMM

I am a member of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary and my nationality is Malaysian (Chinese).

I have spent 25 years in missionary life in Taiwan: working for young people; working with teenagers at risk; working in the spiritual center; working in pastoral care and evangelization in the parish. After completing my duties as the local superior, I was granted time to rest and to recharge, so that I could face my next mission, especially the task of serving as the provincial bursar.

At EAPI, we experienced the different cultures. Although we did not know each other, we were willing to share openly and got to know each other better through sharing. I learned a lot from them. Every well designed module was very helpful to me and inspired me a lot. Personal spiritual direction is a great help. In addition to time, EAPI provides a wonderful environment, which is the biggest advantage of this sabbatical.

I am grateful for this precious time to rest, reflect and prepare for the challenges and opportunities that await me for my new mission.



Fr Larry Rodillas

I am Fr Laureano “Larry” Arauiza Rodillas, born on July 4, 1971 in Majayjay, Laguna, the Philippines. I was ordained in the Philippines on 4 October 2002 but I am now working in Australia as a diocesan priest. I am Parish Priest of St Mary’s Northampton in the diocese of Geraldton. In our diocese, after every 10 years of service, we have an option for sabbatical leave. When I realised that there is a sabbatical programme in the Philippines, I grabbed the opportunity to attend the EAPI.

I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for the incredible sabbatical experience I have had here at the East Asian Pastoral Institute. It has been a transformative journey. I'm very thankful for that opportunity.

The whole staff are very supportive. The mentorship and encouragement have helped me to navigate, to grow and to develop my self.

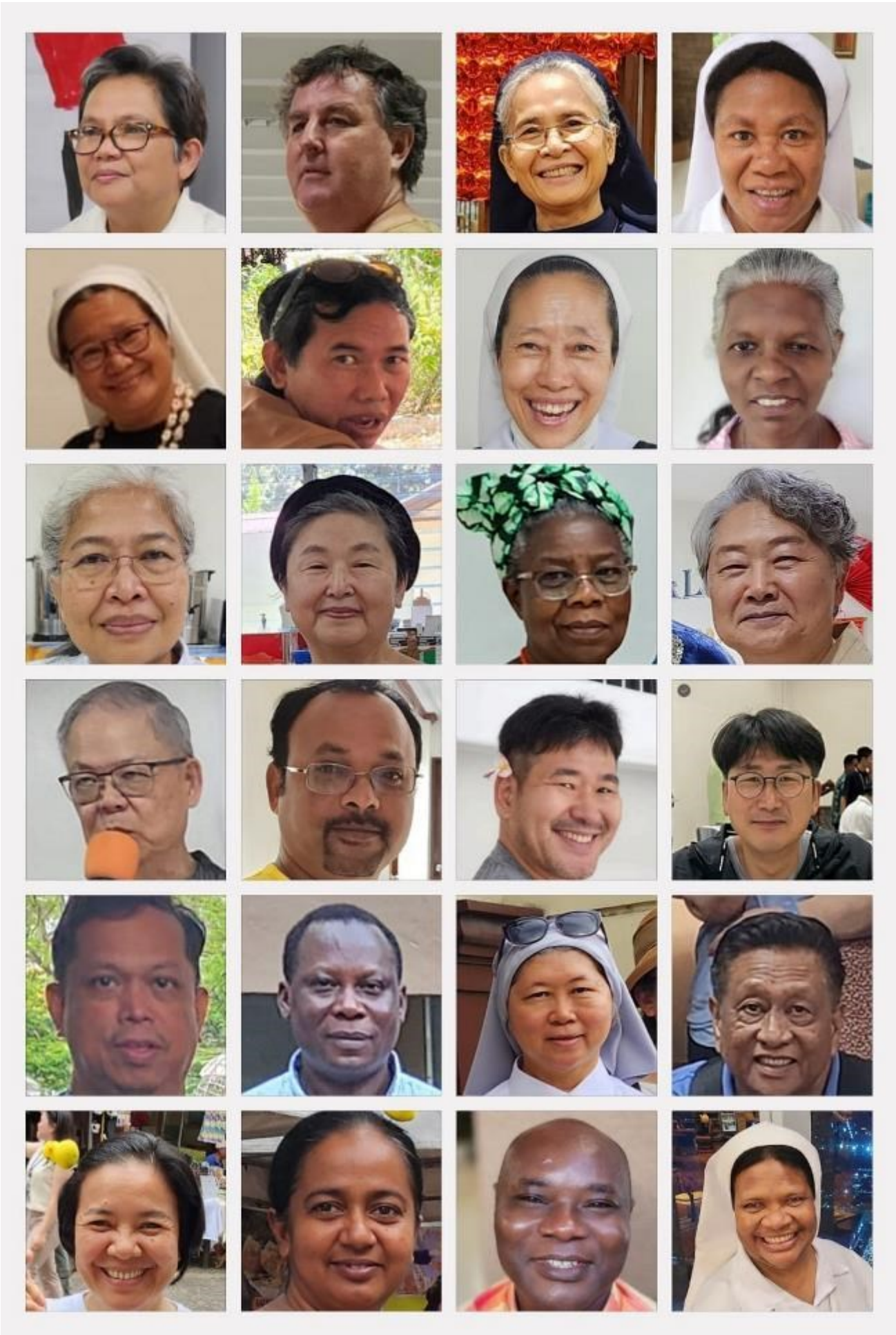
I am returning to my place in Australia with renewed energy, fresh perspectives, and a lot of insights. The sabbatical at EAPI offers rich cultural experiences, different knowledge that helps me in my personal life, and also as a diocesan priest I am ready to take up again new challenges in my life. I thank you Lord for this wonderful sabbatical experience.





our virtual self as a child, and nowadays.

By Pia



Just as God has protected us, God will continue to guide us with love.

Community Life

My personal experience of community life in EAPI

One of my biggest fears coming to a center like EAPI was how to live with people of diverse cultures and religious communities. But as we are about to wrap-up our stay here, I find myself reflecting on the tapestry of experiences we've woven together. We arrived as individuals from various religious congregations and diocesan communities, each of us carrying his\her unique threads of formation, spirituality and tradition. Yet, in this short span, we've learned to weave these threads into a vibrant quilt of community life. We did not take time to start bonding and build an authentic community.

We begin our days with well animated masses and inspirational words of reflections from one of us who presided over the mass. The way we do things, the food we like, our mode of dressing brought out vividly our unity in diversity. Animating mass in different languages especially during our cultural day, varied melodies of our songs did not clash rather they so much synchronized making the liturgy so colorful that transcended our differences.

The communal meals were a time of sharing not only the food but stories and laughter. We exchanged insights and debated passionately yet respectfully, and found common ground in our commitment to service. It was during these

meals that I realized our diversity was not a barrier but a bridge, connecting us through our shared human experience.

Perhaps the most profound aspect of our time together has been the support we've rendered to one another. Whether it was a word of encouragement, a listening ear, or a helping hand, we stood by each other. In times of personal struggle, People were ever ready to help. I must testify that I found solace in the collective wisdom and compassion of the group. Nevertheless, Living together wasn't without its challenges. We encountered moments of misunderstanding, where cultural nuances and doctrinal viewpoints seemed to create a gap between us. But it was through dialogue and a genuine desire for unity that we found our way back to each other, often emerging stronger than before.

As we continue our journey, I am filled with gratitude for the lessons learned and the friendships forged. Our community experience is a testament to the power of faith to bring people together, to find commonality amidst diversity, and to build bridges of understanding. Thank You EAPI for offering us this rare experience.

Br. Vincent Abadom FMS



Participant Reflections

Fr Sayyane Xayavong OMI

First of all, I would like to introduce myself. I am Fr Sayyane (Say). I come from Laos. I belong to the religious congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate or OMI. This is my first time attending the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI).

One of the reasons I am attending an EAPI program is that I would like to take time off from my parish ministries after some years of ordination.

Here, I like to reflect on what I have learned, experienced and what I have got out of this program. For the past four months, I embarked on a journey dream of - a sabbatical. Stepping away from the busy life and responsibility in parishes was a chance to reconnect with myself and explore new environment, new cultures, new friends from many nations.

As the time went on day after day, weeks after weeks, all things were all about slowing down. The pressure to be "ON" all the time dissolved, replaced by a newfound peace. I spent hours in class with friends from many nations in order to learn in areas that had always fascinated me. Refreshing some subjects that I have learned before was excellent. Also, this was a great time to reflect on my prayer life. This self-examination proved very helpful. I revisited the core principles that guided my responses, evaluated my strengths and weaknesses, and identified areas for personal improvement in the future.

I have been living with many people from different nations. This was not imagination; it is real for me. This is a lively community where conversations flow in a dozen languages, laughter echoes with diverse accents, and meals are a celebration of global flavours. That's the world I've inhabited these past four months. I've explored the customs, traditions, and lives of people from 21 countries.

One of the most fascinating aspects of this experience has been facilitating

communication. This has helped me appreciate the beauty of diverse perspectives and the importance of clear, respectful communication with one another.

Besides this, living amongst people from many nations has been a humbling and enriching experience. I've witnessed the incredible resilience of the human spirit, the power of shared stories, care for others and the creativity that blossoms when cultures interact.

For example, I've seen how cultural Mass and cultural nights, with presentations from different countries, though rooted in different traditions, celebrate the importance of one family and gratitude in God.

While cultural differences exist, this experience has also highlighted the fundamental values that bind us all - a desire for connection, a love for our families, our communities, our congregations, our nations and a yearning to understand the world around us.

As my sabbatical draws to a close, I return to my core purposes feeling refreshed and energized. My understanding of the world and the people who live in it is richer, and my ability to communicate has grown.

The most valuable takeaway, however, is the simple joy of learning and exploring. This sense of wonder is something I'll carry with me as I continue to serve and grow.



Participant Reflections

Sr Maridel S. Compendio

My name is Sr. Maridel S. Compendio, a permanent member for 18 years of the Missionaries of the Assumption (m.a.). We are based in Cabaguio Ave. Agdao Davao City, Philippines. My last assignment for more than eight years was in the Archdiocese of Honiara, Solomon Islands

I was supposed to take the EAPI SRE in August 2023 schedule but due to health reasons, I have it this year which I believe is meant to be. As an adage says: “Nothing happens by chance.” I may add, “Yes, nothing happens by chance, so I might as well make this chance happen.” God gave me this beautiful once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, so as the days go by, I embrace and savor each present moment to the fullest.

The “ordinary day-to-day life” like listening to one another, learning together, a simple smile, care, support, camaraderie, eating and walking together, laughing at small things, and even the ample space for prayer and silence are all extra-ordinary for me because I’m focusing more on God’s presence and love in the very moment, more mindful with a non-judgmental attitude. All the ups and downs, lights and shadows, events, modules, multicultural communities, and places are part of an inclusive and magnificent tapestry of my life’s journey.

Daghang Salamat sa tanan!



Sr Alex Manukialona, MSC

I have spent 22 years in religious life as a member of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. During these years, I have mostly worked in finances for my congregation, the diocese and at secondary teachers college.

Each year, our congregation sends two sisters to attend programs at the EAPI. Sr Susan asked if I would like to accompany her on this year’s Sabbatical experience and I said yes.

Now, I have almost completed the Sabbatical Renewal Experience at the East Asia Pastoral Institute (EAPI). I have participated in courses which I believe will benefit my work, my community and my congregation. They have helped me to love my work and the people that I will be working with more. I hope that I am able, in a spirit filled manner, to contribute more creatively in my work and life as a Religious.



Participant Reflections

Fr Damian McGrath

I am a priest of the Diocese of Townsville in north eastern Australia. I served in the same parish for the past fifteen years. Last year, with another term concluding, my Bishop asked me to transfer parishes. I was not very keen and could not convince him to leave me in paradise. So, I asked one thing, that he grant me a Sabbatical before any new posting.

I chose the EAPI because it is relatively close to Australia, has an intercultural focus, and is relatively economical compared to what is on offer in Europe and the US. Having already been to the Philippines about 8 times on Mission Trips, it is also very familiar to me.

I was hoping to find space to “let go” of my past appointment so as to create space for whatever the future holds. I am surprised by how easily I found the process of “letting go” and am delighted by how much this opens me up to whatever lies ahead. I also wanted to focus on my physical health and spiritual life and have found the program mostly amenable to this. And, I really needed to rest, which has been easier some weeks than others.

These four months have been a graced opportunity to reconnect with God and with myself and my own story, accompanied by a wonderful cohort of companions to whom I am deeply grateful for their patience and kindness.



Sr. Hermin Buulolo, SCMM

Upon deep reflection, I embarked on a journey to the EAPI seeking refreshment and rest, after 19 years away for my homeland, including 7 years as a formator at the novitiate house in Marikina, Philippines, and 12 years serving on the General Board in the Netherlands. With my term ending in 2023, I recognized the need for rejuvenation before embracing new responsibilities, leading me to choose EAPI for a sabbatical year in the Philippines.

Participating in this sabbatical course has been an exceptional and enriching experience, both valuable insights from the course instructors and meaningful interactions with fellow participants. The inspiration gained has fuelled a deep enthusiasm to further my learning journey. This experience has also emphasized the importance of collaboration and empowerment, ensuring the active involvement of all God’s people in fulfilling the church mission. Moreover, I’ve discovered a newfound capacity for acceptance and letting go, which has brought about meaningful changes in my life.

By fostering open dialogue and utilizing discernment, decisions become the product of shared reflection and collective wisdom. I’m open to embrace the possibilities of tomorrow with courage and curiosity, for the future holds boundless opportunities for those who dare to dream and strive.



Participant Reflections

Dr James (Jacob) Byun Jin-heung

My current position is as a researcher at the Catholic Institute of Northeast Asia Peace and an adviser to the Episcopal Committee for the Reconciliation of the Korean People. Since 1990, I have been working for the Korean Catholic mission to North Korea, using my major in North Korean studies. To this end, I have traveled to North Korea dozens of times from 1998 to 2015 and have worked with North Korean religious leaders for inter-Korean religious exchanges. To share this process and results, I taught North Korean Studies and Unification Ministry at Catholic Theological Seminary from 1995 to 2017.

The first reason I joined EAPI was to have the opportunity to practice my English and share my experiences with people from other countries.

The English training, although a 4-month course, has not been without its challenges. However, I am deeply appreciative of the unwavering support and kindness shown by all the participants, despite their roles as clergy and brothers and sisters. As a participant, I felt compelled to reciprocate this kindness by contributing an article to EAPI's online journal (APmS). This article, titled 'Understanding and approaching North Korean religion- Focus on timing flows and features', will be published in the May issue of APMS.

Sr. Yusil Kim "Elisabeth" osb

I wanted to take time to rest through my time at the EAPI because my body and mind were tired. There were no other big purposes or goals; I just wanted to rest, reflect on my past days, and recover. So I hope for a life that was more deeply aligned with and closer to God than when I returned to everyday life.

However, for me, who wanted to rest quietly, life here was a great challenge, and every day required courage. For the first time since I was born, I spent a long time with people from so many diverse countries and cultures. As time passed, unfamiliar things became familiar, and the challenge of being with people of such diverse backgrounds began to be perceived as a gift. In particular, the retreat during Holy Week was a grace-filled time of trusting in God's mercy, and through that time, I was able to encounter the joyous Easter. Each moment at EAPI was a realization of the great blessings that God had prepared for me.

All the times that helped me awaken to what I had been missing in my busy everyday life, and the times I was grateful for being together, will be great source of strength and gift in my future religious life. I am grateful for all the help from everyone that made these times possible, and I feel the joy and excitement of being sent out again.



Spiritual Life

“O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you.” (Psalm 63:1-5)

There was no lack of time for prayer during our time at the EAPI, there was enough and more time for both personal and community prayer, for reflection and for rest during these four months. This nourished us profoundly, satisfying our thirst and deepening our union with God.

The precious time received for prayer and different spiritual activities during these 16 weeks in EAPI is highly appreciated.

Daily Eucharistic Celebration presided by our dear priests from different nationalities strengthened us through Holy Communion and the breaking open of the word of God. It was the time in which we brought the special intentions of our EAPI community to our prayer. We, as an international group, prayed together for common intentions of the world and also in the church.

Weekly team mass built and strengthened the bonds of unity among our respective teams. Two special intercultural masses helped us to value other cultures and participate in the liturgy in a meaningful way.

Knowing only the meaning of unknown words, with different tunes in different languages, the community sang together with one voice the hymns of praises to our God. We experienced the unity in diversity that goes beyond the boundaries of languages, nationalities and cultures.

Monthly adoration too was a time for all of us to come together before the Eucharistic presence of our Lord as a community. It was a time we recollected our journey before the Eucharistic Lord. Our collective gathering strengthened us mysteriously.

“The Lord is near to all who call him, to all who call him in truth.” (Psalm 145:18)

Paul VI chapel, the prayer rooms inside the EAPI building, and the Gesu church in the university campus compound led all of us to deepen our relationship with God through personal prayer.

It was a scene that touched the heart, at the moment of the sun’s setting, to see many of our participants walking within the campus grounds praying rosary. This personal act in silence connected us with one another beyond our words and actions.



Spiritual Life

We also received the opportunity to practice Spiritual Conversations among the participants in small groups during some of our weekly modules which helped us to listen deeply to one another seeking the will of God for better discernment.

One of the special gifts which we received from the Jesuits at EAPI was an appreciation of, or deeper appreciation of, many Ignatian ways of prayer and discernment.

The eight day Ignatian retreat was a wonderful time to reconnect, recollect and renew our union with God. Apart from the one hour points for prayer, the rest of the time during the day was for personal prayer and reflection. In these moments, we tasted the sweetness of God in our lives. The beautiful surrounding of nature and the kind weather helped us also to move into an atmosphere of silence and solitude. In that "mood", we each gave one another their sacred space respectfully.

*"My soul glorifies the Lord;
My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour "*

We feel grateful for this time of renewal in our spiritual life and thank the director and the coordinators for creating this sacred atmosphere during this period of our Sabbatical Renewal Experience.

Sr Dineshi



Open and Close to You

*I never knew how generous I could be; when I am stingy
I never knew how silent I could be; when I talked aimlessly
Never I knew I could be still; when I am so restless
Never I know I can connect; when I disconnect*

*I ask, seek, knock, and stay
Hoping ill-willed intentions will go away
Trying and doing my very best
Trusting God will do the rest*

*Silent, listen, silence, listening, verb is the essence
Place, passage, posture, be in God's presence
Preparing my prayer garden for discerning of the Spirits, meditation
A lifetime endeavor, with desolation and consolation*

*Attractions, distractions, shadows along the way
Gaps, distances, resentments, whack of inconsistency
Balance, surrender, service, call to simplicity
Awareness, mindfulness, conversion, call to authenticity*

*My senses pining to stay longer in my "inner court" effortlessly
My soul yearning to go deeper into my "holy place" thirstily
My spirit "looking at God", the deepest longing, flaming constantly
Only the grace of contemplation, a foretaste of heaven, may I say?*

*It is only a matter of time, a nick of time, in a split second, a real union
In this lifetime, I believe God possesses us in different ways without expectation
No beating the clock, no deadline, I will just be, passive, open, no exertion
God's grace is for every one of us, granted without interruption*

*God is in our experiences, embracing our humanity
The grace of interior knowledge to see Jesus more clearly
As the star pointed at the child, so with Joseph and Mary
The love of the Holy Family leads us to Jesus closely, day by day.*

**Sr Madel
Tagaytay retreat March 2024**



Participant Reflections

Br Vincent Abadom

My name is Vincent Abadom, and my life-journey began on June 7th, 1973, in the vibrant city of Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria. From a young age, I felt a profound calling to serve God and humanity, which led me to the congregation of the Marist Brothers of the Schools. I took my first vows in 1998, committing myself to a life of service and education.

In 2004, I solidified my dedication with my perpetual vows, marking a lifelong commitment to the Marist life and principles. My service has taken many forms over the years, from shaping young minds as a teacher to guiding the spiritual growth of others as a spiritual director. I've embraced the roles of school administrator, therapist, novice master, and even provincial leader, each position offering me new challenges and opportunities for growth. Through it all, my mission has remained unwavering: to educate and to love, to be a beacon of hope and a pillar of support for those around me.

I recently celebrated some significant milestones: my 25th year anniversary as a Marist Brother, my 50th Birthday and the successful completion of my mandate as a Provincial leader. As the echoes of this momentous occasions reverberated within me, I realized that it was time to pause, to step back from the hustle and bustle of life, and to embark on a sabbatical. EAPI (East Asian Pastoral Institute) became my first choice due to its conducive atmosphere- a place where I could delve into introspection, where the quietude allowed my thoughts to flow freely. Here, amidst the lush greenery and the whispers of ancient wisdom, I sought solace and clarity. I yearned to listen to my body, to discern its whispers, and to prepare myself for the next chapter of my mission.

As I am about to conclude my sabbatical, I felt that the impact of was profound. It allowed me to reconnect with my innermost self, to rekindle the flames of passion that had fueled

my service for a quarter of a century. As I walked the tranquil paths of EAPI, I reflected on the lives I had touched, the lessons I had learned, and the challenges that lay ahead. The whispers of the wind carried not only the wisdom of the ages but also the promise of renewal. With each passing day, I felt rejuvenated, ready to embrace my new mission with a heart full of gratitude and purpose.



Participant Reflections

Sr Dineshika Fernando (HFB)

Having a totally different plan for next two years in my life, I wonder how I came to EAPI and to this Sabbatical Renewal Experience. I feel this is what was meant to be for me at this particular time in my life journey. It was the mysterious way my Creator God is at work in me.

After a heavy workload of responsibility the last few years, and feeling fed up with planning my next step, in a moment of inspiration I felt an inner need for a “pause” - not for any particular learning or training ... but just time to be open to the grace of God while simply being, setting aside my heavy baggage, time to rest with my own self and with God.

Having joined in many meaningful modules, mingled with the EAPI community, had an abundance of precious time for prayer and reflection, along with the 8 day Ignatian retreat, and had more time for rest and exercise, I have found my desire fulfilled. This is a time in which I have experienced the

freedom of the children of God (Rom 8:21) and a time in which I have received grace upon grace (Jn 1:26). I will not forget this time. My burdens are lighter, my worries have disappeared and my future plans are becoming clearer.

I thank my Creator God, my dear Provincial and the leadership team for allowing me to have this wonderful experience. Many thanks to Frs John & Khoan and Sr Ley along with the EAPI staff for the environment created here to be ourselves freely. I thank wholeheartedly to my every dear SRE companion for being with me during these 16 weeks on the journey, and PLMM friends for your support in various ways on the journey.

I consider this experience as a special grace in my life, a precious gift I received in this 25th year in my religious life.

Let my heart sing the chorus which was always repeated by my founder “Glory to God alone, Glory to God alone through Jesus, Mary and Joseph.”



Participant Reflections

Sr Cecily Savariyar

I am Cecily Savariyar. As a sister of St. Joseph from India, I felt the need for a pause from my varied experiences in religious life, including missions in West Africa and leadership roles in Lyon, France, and India. Seeking a sabbatical, I discovered EAPI. Unaware of its offerings but drawn to the idea of personal renewal, I landed here. The program provided a pause from my responsibilities, allowing me to relax, rest, refresh and renew, away from the demands of my province and congregation.

During my time at EAPI, I realized that “coming together with different perspectives from different walks of life, diverse Charisms/ cultures yet living a fraternal community life is possible”.

The various themes, from synodality to digital mysticism and self-care, enriched my vision and mission, prompting deep reflection on my goals, values, and aspirations. The retreat offered a transformative opportunity for introspection, fostering clarity of purpose and guiding me towards a path aligned with my authentic self.

Now, with a renewed sense of purpose and clarity, I am filled with gratitude for the experiences and connections created during

my sabbatical. With resilience and passion, I am eager to “embark towards the other shore” of my life, ready to navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead with a sense of purpose and vigour.

My experience at EAPI highlights the value of creating spaces for individuals to step back, recharge, and gain fresh insights, ultimately contributing to the vitality and resilience of religious communities worldwide.

Thank you. Many Blessings.



“

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face.
And may the rain fall soft upon your fields.
Until we meet again,
May you be held in the palm of God's hand.

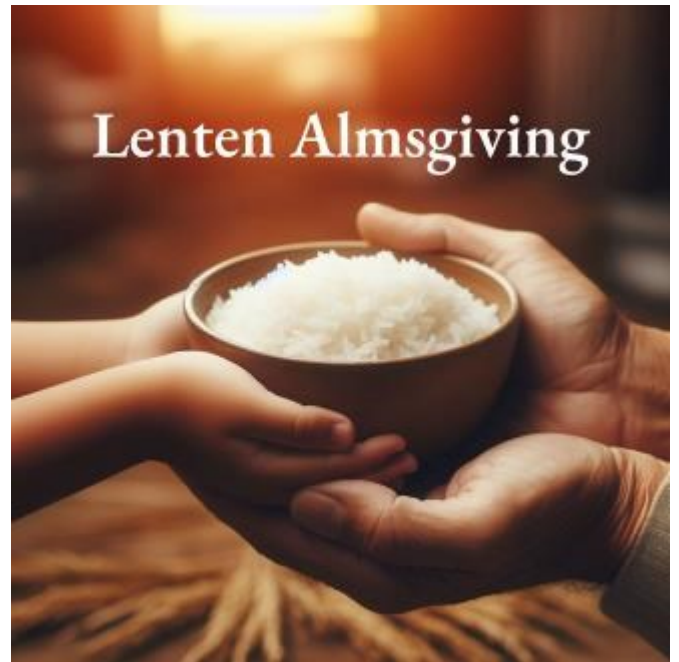
”

Lenten Giving Program

During the season of Lent, the Sabbatical Renewal Experience group decided to take on an almsgiving project and to invite the wider EAPI community to join with them. The original thought was to contribute to a local parish for their distribution. It was then decided to seek out a local community which was directly engaged with assisting those in need. Sr Rosa's community in Quezon was suggested. The Sisters of Charity of St Charles Borromeo work tirelessly for care for the local community's children and for the homeless. They have established a scholarship program which assists many children and young people in the neighbourhood to complete elementary school, high school, and even undertake college programs. They currently provide 33 students and their families with food and gather the students monthly for Mass and formation.

Members of the SRE visited the Sisters during Lent and at the start of the Easter season so as to witness first hand to their work. During Lent, a simple offering box was placed in the chapel for the collection of donations.

The SRE was able to contribute PHP 38,656 (and USD 100 + € 50) to the Sisters. Many young people will be supported due to the generosity of our EAPI community.



Valedictory Address

D2 My dear friends,
It is indeed an honour for Sr Dineshika and me (D1 and D2) to be entrusted with speaking on behalf of our 21 companions on the best-ever 2024 Sabbatical Renewal Experience at the EAPI.

D1 We come from not just from 12 different countries but 4 different continents. We come from four different decades of life, crossing generations. We come from different states of life: lay, consecrated and ordained. We come from varied ministerial backgrounds: education, parish life, congregational leadership, university education, the military, lay volunteering, to name just a few.

D2 Over the past four months, we have prayed together, sat at table together, travelled together, learnt together and laughed together. For four months, we have walked a common road, though each of us has taken our own particular and personal journey.

D1 Some of us came here to rest. Some of us came here for healing. Some of us came here because we were asked to. Some of us came here of our own choice. But, no matter what it is that brought us here, we have been drawn together as a community of love and laughter and learning.

D2 We have discovered that no matter how profoundly different our individual backgrounds, or our cultural stories, that we are united by something much greater than what divides us - the love of God for us in Jesus.

D1 On this night, above all else we are grateful. Each of us is thankful for different blessings that we have received from the hand of a generous God.

D2 In the words of our companions: we are thankful for friendship and a renewed spirit; for the unity in diversity in our



community; for a spirit of renewal; for the work of the EAPI staff and for friends within the SRE community; for warm comforting love and encouraging me;

D1 for the generous and heartfelt warmth of everyone; for the good, true and beautiful experience of the EAPI community; for the experience of an intercultural community; for the gift of EAPI to humanity; for enriching and inspiring lectures and wonderful experiences; for the precious opportunity for a new experience

D1 for the friendship, hospitality and generosity of all members of the EAPI community; for learnings and experiences both within and outside the classroom; for the gift of renewed energy; for the transformation on my

container; for the simple opportunity to be at EAPI;

D2 for the enriching experiences at EAPI and an eagerness to embrace the future; for the gift of community and for those who inspired us with their teaching; for the goodness of God and for companions on the journey of life; for your smiles.

D2 I hope that it is obvious that we feel very blessed by God. We know that these blessings did not simply fall from heaven. Particular individuals, groups, moments and experiences have all been instruments of God's grace for us...

D1 Tonight we have been blessed by God through the hands of all those who have prepared for this night, those in administration who helped prepare certificates etc, the musicians who played at Mass and have been a grace to us every day of these past four months, the staff who prepared this room and tonight's meal...

D2 Thank you to our friends in PLMM who took charge of these festivities and have ensured that we are well entertained as we take our leave. Thank you for the very kind words with which you have honoured us, this evening.

D1 We are in a special way grateful to those members of the Culture Team and the incredible decorating team led by Sr Anna who have simply "wowed us" with their thoughtful and loving display. Could we please offer them a round of applause as a sign of our appreciation.



D2 On our four month journey, we have been blessed through the members of the leadership team of the EAPI - Fr John, Fr Khoan, and Sr Ley. Fr John has been a gentle and generous presence with an ear open to hearing our stories. Fr Khoan was an enthusiastic presence in our combined classes and member of the community team. Sr Ley was always ready to encourage and support us, to listen and to guide us.

D1 Could I invite Fr John, Fr Khoan and Sr Ley to please stand. Could we all offer them a sign of appreciation through a round of applause. Please accept this small token of our appreciation.

VIDEO 1 - I thank my God - Leadership



D1 We have been blessed through the many staff members of the EAPI who have assisted us in so many practical ways during our time here: the administration team; the housekeeping team; the food service team; and the security guards. You have printed out pieces of paper, organised visas, exchanged our US dollars. You have washed our sheets and ensured that the entire environment

here is beautifully kept. You have provided us with breakfast, lunch and dinner, morning snacks and merienda. You have unlocked our doors when our keys were inside and signed for our deliveries.

- D2 Could I invite those members of our staff who are here to please stand. Could we all offer them a sign of appreciation through a round of applause. Please accept this small token of our appreciation.

VIDEO 2 - I thank my God - staff



- D2 We have been blessed through our companions on the PLMM program. Thank you for praying with us and playing with us, for walking with us and talking with us, for time spent learning together and laughing together, for time spent at meals here or elsewhere and for the occasional cold beer. Thank you for being true brothers and sisters to us as part of the wider EAPI family for this term.

- D1 We know that you will feel our absence next week, in the chapel and the classroom, in this dining hall and in the community room. Please know that even though we will not be with you in body, we will be with you in spirit. We will keep you in our prayers.

- D2 Could I invite all members of the best ever 2024 Sabbatical Renewal Experience to please stand and show our appreciation to our

brothers and sisters in the best ever 2024 PLMM program through a round of applause.

VIDEO 3 - I thank my God - PLMM

- D1 Most of us are only here because someone sent us. All of us have only survived and thrived because many others have supported us. While they are not here to thank personally, we are grateful for our Bishops or Congregational Leaders who have sent us here. Pia and Dr James are thankful to their families who supported them in taking this time out from family life. All of us have been supported by the prayers of many back home or around the world. Some of us have relied on the generosity of benefactors or the offer of a scholarship through the EAPI. Some of us are relying on others to carry on our ministry until we return home.

- D2 We give thanks to God for all those who have enabled us to make this journey as well as all of you who have been our companions on the journey. We would all like to say thank you - to all of you, here present with us, and all those who have supported us - and we would all like to give thanks to God.

VIDEO 4 - Thank You Thanks be to God

- D1 I would now like to invite our companions on the SRE journey to come forward and to sing a song of blessing over the community that has travelled the road with us and supported us these past four months.



Missioning Mass

Feast of Saints Philip and James

When our SRE participants first met to make plans for this Missioning Mass, one of the first things they agreed on were the Mass readings because the readings of the day are perfect for the celebration. There was no need to look anywhere else! How blessed we are that the last day of this group's Sabbatical Renewal Experience falls on the feast of the Apostles Philip and James. Apostles - As we know, an "apostle" is – "one sent on a mission." And today, on the last day of the SRE, the EAPI is sending out on mission our 23 SRE participants, apostles in today's world.

To you dear SREs, our Risen Lord says **"GO OUT...DO THE WORKS THAT I DO!"** The time has come for you to GO OUT of EAPI (but please do return again when you can) and there to the 13 countries where you are going back to, there - to DO THE WORKS OF JESUS! And what are the works of Jesus? Let me share 3 with you.

One, PREACHING - Jesus preaches!

Paul in the first reading continues this preaching work of Jesus. He passes on to others what he himself received. He preached Jesus to others – Jesus who died, was buried and rose again. Jesus who appeared to his apostles, including James, Jesus who appeared, last of all, to Paul himself. In the four months that you have been here dear SRE



friends, you have shared that you have received much. This week we listened to you capture through images and symbols the gifts of these four months. Through the new friends you have met, the new insights you have gained, the new experiences you have had...the Lord has appeared to you too. The invitation now is to pass on to others what you have received! We look forward to hearing Christ's message go out to all the earth through you!

Two, BRIDGING - Jesus bridges! In the Gospel Jesus says "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus is the way, the bridge, to the Father. Like Jesus, we are being sent to become bridges, connecting people, bringing people to Jesus, and through Jesus, to the Father, "Like bridges over troubled waters." Yes, over troubled waters. EAPI is like a paradise (at this moment a very hot paradise!), a bubble, a space of learning, healing and renewal, as it were, a Mt Tabor. You are now about to go out of this bubble, about to go down





from this mountain...back to the battle field, right, Fr Luke? Back to where we find people struggling through life, crossing troubles waters. The invitation is to be a bridge, to help people cross safely, to the bosom of the Father. Jesus is the way. Go out and be a “way” to Jesus and to the Father.

And three, REVEALING -Jesus reveals!

Jesus exposes, reveals the Father whom we do not see. Philip, whose feast we celebrate today, tells Jesus “Master, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Well, he gets a little scolding from Jesus who says to him “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father...I am in the Father and the Father is in me...the Father who dwells in me is doing his works.” As you go out of EAPI, you will be encountering many people again. Your own families, brothers and sisters in community, your superiors and bishops, your parishioners and colleagues, the people you will be serving and working with...who will they see when they see you? Like Philip, people will go to you and say Father, Brother, Sister, Ma’am, Sir, Dr ...show us the Father, show us Jesus, that will be enough for us! We know that in these four months, you have changed. The person who is now going out from EAPI is, in some way, for some, maybe in a big

way, for others, maybe in a small way, is in some way different from the person who came last January. The question and the challenge, I guess, is whether this person who is now going out of EAPI, is a clearer revelation of our loving God. We claim that the SRE participant in the time that he or she is here, “rediscovers the richness of his/her being, appreciates more profoundly the graciousness and beauty of God’s creative love, and thus is prepared to re-engage in the mission of the Church with greater generosity and compassion.” It is our hope and prayer that EAPI has helped you become clearer revealers, clearer exposers of our generous compassionate God.

So Go out and Do the works of Jesus – Preach! Bridge! Reveal! Go out with joy and enthusiasm! Jesus is with you saying “Amen, Amen I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do and will do greater ones than these!” Go out with courage for Jesus assures you “If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.”

So Go out there and do the works of Jesus! Amen!

Ley Salazar, fdnsc



We bless you, O God, and we praise your name.
In your merciful providence you sent your Son into the world
to free us from the bondage of sin by his own blood
and to enrich us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
Before he returned, triumphant over death, to you, Father,
he sent his apostles, the bearers of his love and power,
to proclaim the Gospel of life to all peoples
and in the waters of baptism to cleanse those who believe.
Lord, look kindly on your servants:
we send them forth as messengers of salvation and peace,
marked with the sign of the cross.
Guide their steps with your mighty arm
and with the power of your grace strengthen them in spirit,
so that they will not falter through weariness.
Make their words the echo of Christ's voice,
so that those who hear them
may be drawn to obey the Gospel.
Fill the hearts of your those we commission with the Holy Spirit,
so that, becoming all things to all people,
they may lead many to you, the Father of all,
to sing your praises in your holy Church.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.





