

FABC Newsletter

No. 216

July – September 2026

IN THE CONFERENCES:

Appointed: Archbishop Walter Erbi as Apostolic Nuncio to Indonesia and to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (A.S.E.A.N.); Bishop Albert Hemrom as Coadjutor Archbishop of Guwahati, India; Reverend Mother Marian Nirmalini, Superior General of the Sisters of the Apostolic Carmel, as Consultor of the Dicastery for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life; Father Piotr Pytlowany as Bishop of Karaganda, Kazakhstan; Archbishop Antonysamy Savarimuthu, Archbishop of Madurai, India, as Apostolic Administrator of Dindigul, India; Archbishop Midyphil Billones, Archbishop of Jaro, Philippines, as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Kabankalan, Philippines; Father Paweł Janusz Kubiak, O.M.I., as Superior of the *Mission sui iuris* of Turkmenistan; Father Thomas Animoottil as Auxiliary Bishop of Kottayam (Syro-Malabar), India; Bishop Crispin Barrete Varquez as Bishop of Tagbilaran, Philippines.

Retired: Bishop Thomas Paulsamy as Bishop of Dindigul, India; Bishop Adelio Dell'Oro as Bishop of Karaganda, Kazakhstan; Father Andrzej Madej, O.M.I. as Superior of the *Mission sui iuris* of Turkmenistan.

Died: Bishop Cletus Chandrasiri Perera, O.S.B. (78+), Bishop Emeritus of Ratnapura, Sri Lanka; Bishop Emeritus Abraham Youlios Kackanatt (82+), Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Muvattupuzha (Syro-Malankara), India.

FABC DATEBOOK

- 27 – 31 October 2026, FABC-OSC Bishops' Meet 2026, organized by the office of Social Communication (OSC), at Macau.
- 29 November – 2 December 2026, *Discernment-Planning Meeting for FABC Offices* organized by the FABC Central Secretariat at the Camillian Pastoral Care Center, Bangkok, Thailand.
- 2 -6 December 2026, *Conference on Gospel and Indigenous Living Traditions*, at the Camillian Pastoral Care Center, Bangkok, Thailand, organized by the Offices of Evangelization (OE), Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (OEIA), and Theological Concerns (OTC).

FABC PAPERS NO. 198

This paper comes from the XII FABC Plenary Assembly with the theme: *The Call to Synodal Conversion and the Mission to be Bridges and Bridge-builders in Asia* with the Scripture quote, "You will see greater things..." (Jn 1:50). It was held at the Hotel Mulia Senayan, Jakarta, Indonesia, July 20-26, 2026. This paper compiles: Homily of the Opening Mass; Opening Speech, President of KWI; Remarks by the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Nasaruddin Umar; Messages of Fraternal Delegates: CELAM, SECAM, CPCO, FCBCO, USCCB; Message of Ecumenical Partner CCA; Opening Presidential Address; Homily of the Closing Mass; Closing Speech, President of KWI; and the Plenary Assembly Final Message.

FABC PAPERS NO. 199

This paper comes from the XII FABC Plenary Assembly with the theme: *The Call to Synodal Conversion and the Mission to be Bridges and Bridge-builders in Asia* with the Scripture quote, "You will see greater things..." (Jn 1:50). It was held at the Hotel Mulia Senayan, Jakarta, Indonesia, July 20-26, 2026. The title of this paper is *Pathways for the Implementation of the Synod*. It comprises the two talks given at the Plenary Assembly: *The Importance of the Local Church Following the Synod* by Cardinal Mario Grech and *Pathways for the Implementation of the Synod* by Fr. Giacomo Costa sj. This paper would be of interest to many people and groups dealing with the Synod, given the topics and the two speakers.

FABC PAPERS NO. 200

FABC Paper 200 is a periodic index of the FABC Papers 176-200 (2022-2026). FABC Papers 100, 125, 150, and 183 are also all periodic indexes. These are all done by Fr. James H. Kroeger, M.M. This periodic index, like the others, includes a narrative synopsis of each paper, then a list of subjects treated in the paper, and then an index to the persons mentioned in the paper. The FABC Papers began in 1976, and with these indexes, all of the 266 issues of the FABC Papers over the past 50 years have been indexed in the above-mentioned FABC Papers.

FABC PAPERS NO. 201

FABC Paper 201 is from the Office of Theological Concerns (OTC). It is titled "Formation for Missionary Disciples in the Asian Synodal Church." In the light of implementing Synodality and promoting it as a way of life (*modus vivendi et operandi*), the FABC OTC wishes to offer to all church groups – Parish Councils, BECs, Youth, Clergy, Religious, Lay Ministers, etc. – a formation module instead of its usual theological paper. The formation module is divided into two parts. Part I is *Journeying Together Amid Asian Realities: Context, Challenges and Tensions*, and Part II is *Asian and Synodal Values: Teachings and Reflections*.

BISHOP MEMBERS FOR THE OFFICE OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS (OSC)

The Central Committee met on 24 July 2026 in the Hotel Mulia, Jakarta, Indonesia, during the XII FABC Plenary Assembly. They approved two new Bishop Members for the Office of Social Communications (OSC) 1. Bishop

Paul Toshihiro Sakai, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Osaka-Takamatsu, Japan, and 2. Bishop Peter Chao Yung-Chi, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Taipei, Taiwan. Their first term begins on 1 January 2027 since all of the bishop members are new and they will not end their terms the same year. However, these two new bishops can participate in Office activities beginning on 11 August 2026.

FABC NATIONAL SYNODAL TEAMS MEETING

Under the guidance of Cardinal Pablo David, Chairman, and the FABC Commission for Synodality, 63 representatives of the FABC National or Conference Synodal Teams, along with the FABC Commission, met in Baan Phu Waan, Bangkok, from 31 August to 4 September. These represented 16 FABC Bishops' Conferences and the Associate Members of Nepal and Hong Kong. The theme was *Deepening Synodality – Fruits, Challenges, and Support*. The purpose of the gathering was to reflect on the fruits already experienced through synodality, to identify and analyze the challenges encountered in implementing synodality, and to explore concrete ways FABC can support local churches in advancing synodality. One practical part of the gathering was to look at the roles of the Synodal Teams at the Conference level and at the Diocesan level and to look forward to the Diocesan Ecclesial Assemblies that will be held in the first half of 2027 and the Conference Ecclesial Assemblies that will be held in the third half of 2027, according to the implementation phase of the synod. These are based on the recent additional documents from the General Secretariat for the Synod, *Towards the Assemblies 2027–2028* and the *Recollecting: Notes for Bishops and Synodal Teams*. The FABC Executive Board issued a letter immediately after the orientation workshop for the National Synod Teams of the Episcopal Conferences in Asia to encourage the bishops to begin planning for both the Diocesan and Conference Ecclesial Assemblies. All of this will lead to the Continental Ecclesial Assembly in the first half of 2028.

CONTINENTAL BODIES MEET TO FORM A STEERING COMMITTEE

The secretaries of the CCEE (Consilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae), CELAM (Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano y Caribeño), CPCO (Conseil des Patriarches Catholiques d'Orient), FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences), FCBCO (Federation of Catholic Bishops' Conferences of Oceania), SECAM (Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar), and the key collaborator, Msgr. Josef Sayer met for an online meeting on September 7, 2026. This was a follow-up to a Symposium at the Brazilian College in Rome on June 28, 2026. In Rome, all of the Presidencies and secretaries were present from the previously mentioned Continental Associations of Bishops' Conferences, along with some Cardinals of the former C 9, Cardinal Mario Grech, and some representatives of the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). The Rome Symposium proposed that the secretaries form a Steering Committee to coordinate the cooperation among these Continental Bodies in the future.

FIRST ASIAN CATHOLIC DIGITAL MISSIONARY ASSEMBLY HELD IN RVA, PHILIPPINES

The First Asian Catholic Digital Missionary Assembly was held from September 10 to 13, 2026, at the headquarters of Radio Veritas Asia (RVA) in Quezon City, Philippines, bringing together more than 100 Catholic digital missionaries, content creators and communicators from across Asia. Jointly organized by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences – Office of Social Communications (FABC-OSC) and Radio Veritas Asia, in partnership with the Vatican Dicastery for Communication through the Fully Present Network, the assembly was held under the theme *"Influencers to Witnesses: A Synodal Way for Digital Mission in Asia,"* inspired by Acts 4:20.

The assembly featured keynote presentations, formation sessions, synodal conversations, group discussions, cultural programs and liturgical celebrations. Speakers and resource persons included Dr. Natasa Govekar of the Vatican Dicastery for Communication, Fr. John Mi Shen, Fr. Columba Jordan, CFR, Pie Mabanta-Fenomeno of SIGNIS Philippines, and representatives from the World Youth Day Seoul 2027 organizing team and other Catholic communication organizations.

Bishop Marcelino Antonio Maralit Jr. of San Pablo, chairman of FABC-OSC, delivered the keynote address, he joined the delegates in their activities, offering guidance and, importantly, listening to their experiences and concerns as digital missionaries.

Archbishop Gilbert Garcera of Lipa, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), presided over the inaugural Mass and challenged the participants to "whisper the Gospel" through digital platforms and into the continent's digital spaces. Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David of Kalookan, Vice President of the FABC, presided over the closing Mass on Sept. 13 at the Good Shepherd Cathedral in the Diocese of Novaliches. In his homily, he urged Asian digital missionaries to bring the Gospel to the digital peripheries, emphasizing the missionary responsibility of reaching people in the places and spaces where they are present today.

At its heart, the assembly called Catholic communicators to move beyond the role of digital influencers and become authentic witnesses of Christ. It emphasized a synodal, collaborative and mission-oriented approach to digital evangelization, encouraging participants to use digital platforms not simply to attract attention, but to point people toward Christ and bear witness to the Gospel in the digital world.