

Report of Asia Continental CFM – January to June 2020

The Pandemic has slowed down CFM activities across Asia – none of the member countries had live masses or group activities during this period. Executive committee meetings and monthly meetings, wherever it was held, were done over Zoom.

The reality of CFM in Asia is that Christians constitute a tiny minority, except for the Philippines. And even within the Church a lot more needs to be done to increase visibility, awareness and membership of CFM. We need to share the enrichment we have gained through CFM with other families.

ACCFM Website

The ACCFM website has been updated with the help of Integro in Bangalore. Please do visit the website: www.cfmasia.org

Meeting with ICCFM Team

On 11th July we had a Zoom meeting of Asia Continental CFM country Presidents with the ICCFM team. It was lovely seeing each other and exchanging news. Each country President spoke about the situation in their country before lockdown and after lockdown.

Srilanka

We had planned a 5-day visit in June to Srilanka which had to be cancelled. CFM has spread to 3 new Dioceses besides Colombo - Anuradhapura , Galle and Kandy. The booklet “We Believe in the Family” which was prepared by CFM Thailand under the Evangelical Solodarity Project, was translated into Sinhalese language, and is now being translated into Tamil for the use of the new cells in Kandy.

The monthly wedding anniversary Mass followed by sharing of experiences was being held regularly before the Lockdown.

Rev. Fr. Ernest Portuhota, the Founder Chaplain of CFM Sri Lanka (he helped start the first group on 1st April 1967) passed away at the age of 88 on 16th June 2020. CFMers will miss him dearly.

Singapore

Their dynamic Chaplain Fr Bruno, MEP, was posted back to France last Dec and Fr. Dominique, MEP, also from France is the new Chaplain.

They held their AGBM and election on 31st July 2020 by Zoom because by Govt policy they must elect a new Treasurer every year.

Due to Covid, nothing much is happening in their Programs for the Youth and the Elderly.

Singapore has been given charge of expansion of CFM to Malaysia. But due to COVID they haven't been able to travel to Malaysia for followup.

Thailand

Fr Bunsong, former national chaplain, animated a 4-day residential program PRH ("Who am I?") for the CFMers of Chaiyaphum province.

A team of CFMers led by Fr Somchai Phongsiriphat, Vicar General, diocese of Nakohn Ratchasima along with national President Michael Sukeewat visited the Head Buddhist Monk of the province to wish him for the Visakha Day which is the most important festival of the Buddhists commemorating the birth, enlightenment and death of Lord Buddha. It is celebrated by everyone in Thailand with great enthusiasm.

The sole English CFM group has a new President couple – Alex and Shubha Joseph – expats working in Bangkok.

The Philippines

CFM Philippines started a weekly Radio program CFM-SE Naga on Radio Caritas. They invite guests from all walks of life to share their faith experiences through casual and spontaneous conversation. These are people who share the same CFM mission - to be evangelized and to be evangelizing.

In May 2020, as part of their Spirituality of Stewardship (SOS) Program, they kicked off Project Damayan giving financial aid to 170 families in 8 dioceses who were financially affected due to lockdown and COVID.

India

In January 2020 CFM Bangalore had their annual Family Day celebration.

Outreach program was conducted at an orphanage run by Holy Cross sisters where training was given on personality development. CFM Bangalore collected Rs one lakh for the relief work done by the Archdiocese in supplying food and other essentials to economically backward families who were struggling during the lockdown. The monthly Intercessory Prayer Group meets via Zoom. It is organised by a different group each month.

CFM Goa members made it a point to recite the Divine Mercy chaplet at 3 pm every day for the victims of corona virus and doctors, nurses and health workers. The President couple spoke to Deacons at the seminary about the need for CFM in parishes so that when they are assigned to a parish they will promote CFM.

In May 2020 the new Enquiry Booklet based on the book “We Believe in the Family” was published for the use of CFM India for the next one year.

In July a special Mass was relayed on the Redemptorist Media Centre YouTube channel for the intentions of all CFMers. Rev Fr Xavier Sanjivi was the main celebrant.

An issue of the national newsletter Family Trove was published in August 2020.

ICCFM

We participated in the two sessions of “An Hour Together in the Mission” organized by ICCFM along with the country Presidents / other country representatives.

The country Presidents have also contributed their Reflections on the Pandemic for the book which is being compiled by ICCFM as a reminder of this phase of our lives.

The one idea that comes out strong in each reflection is that people the world over have come closer to God during the Pandemic.

In these times, many a naked truth has also come to the surface like the horrific living conditions of the poor and the migrants and upheavals on every front including loss of income and jobs and the attendant misery and hardship.

People have also come to realise that life on earth is temporary and shoring up wealth in this world has little meaning. This realisation has helped many families to improve their prayer life. Like St Paul says in 2nd Corinthians, we too can say ‘When we are weak, then we are stronger in Christ “.

The pandemic did not catch God by surprise – He is always in control. But it is God’s way of drawing our attention to the need for spiritual enrichment. He wants us to invite Him back into our lives. He no longer wants us to be sitting on the periphery. He wants us to come in to his fold so that our sins can be cured along with the virus.

When God allows a crisis there is always a spiritual purpose attached to it. Salvation History in the Bible is full of it. So nothing takes God by surprise, not even Covid 19. We as CFM/CFSM families must use this period to experience love, forgiveness and compassion and forge stronger relationships within families and outside families, which could be the starting bock for evangelisation of self and community.

Dear friends, let's turn the ambience of Covid around, into a positive experience expressed through our common bond as Christians who love one another as Christ loves us.