



Provincialate : 4A Chestnut Drive, Singapore 679330. Tel: 67602461 website: www.chij-sisters.org

News of our collaboration with IJ Sisters in Asia (the 4 provinces +1 District)

Congratulations dear Thai Sisters!



Sr Elizabeth (IJ Provincial Singapore) with the Thai sisters to celebrate the diamond jubilee of Sr Ann Marie Colasso, the golden jubilees of Sr Numpa and Sr Patchara, the silver jubilee of Sr Boonyarak, and the final profession of Sr Teresa Daraneeb On 3 May 2025.

(It was also the silver jubilee of Sr Rosalind, a Malaysian missionary in Myanmar)



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3rd Asian Forum of IJ Sisters and Lay Partners 2024
Charting a Path Forward with Collaboration, Unity and Faith



This Forum, held in Penang from 17 – 22 Oct 2024 hosted by the Malaysian province, was organised by Sisters Mary Theresa (Malaysia), Mutsuko (Japan), Elizabeth (Singapore) and Woranuch (Thailand), the Provincials of Asia, facilitated by Fr Mark Raper SJ and co-facilitated by Fr Lawrence Andrew SJ, and ably assisted by Ms Angela Christine Tan, the Forum Secretary, was a significant milestone for the Infant Jesus (IJ) Sisters in Asia.

From the vibrant gathering of 40 delegates from these countries, and Myanmar, the air was charged with anticipation and a renewed sense of purpose. United under the theme “If we only knew the gift of God, let us share this gift with our world thirsting for life-giving water” (John 4:10), the Forum sought to explore fresh ways to respond to the ever-changing challenges in society today.

It was not merely a meeting but a sacred journey of collaboration, discernment and deep reflection. During the course of the forum, we immersed ourselves in discussions on how best to live out and sustain the rich IJ legacy, rooted in the charism of Mother Mathilde and Fr. Nicolas Barre. A recurring theme in the sessions was the pressing call to embrace the shared mission with lay partners with



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open hearts and minds.

After the choir from Convent Datuk Keramat had graced the assembly with their harmonious voices, there was a video recording of Sr Mary Theresa who in her opening address welcomed the delegates and gave a brief history of the Province of Malaysia.

The Forum was further blessed by the presence of Cardinal Sebastian Francis, who inspired us with his vision of a synodal church. He emphasised that the Church must remain creative, inclusive and focused on those most often overlooked - the last, the least, the little, the lost and the lowly.

Sr Jane, General Councillor, then set the tone for the deep conversations that followed. She reminded us that despite our diverse experiences, cultures and perspectives, we are united by a common purpose to live out and advance the IJ mission following the inspiration of Mother Mathilde.

The legacy of Mother Mathilde, whose courage, faith and unwavering commitment to holistic education still inspire us today. A pilgrimage to the historic Light Street Convent, where her footsteps can still be felt, showed the importance of remembering the past as we chart a course into the future.

A key moment came during a synodal reflection, led by Fr. Mark. Using the 3-step synodal process - each step preceded by prayer and a spiritual conversation with the Spirit - Fr. Mark urged our groups to reflect on the essential questions: Who are we? Where are we going? Why are we going there? These questions stirred our hearts and prompted a collective response, focused on God being at the centre of all we do. Fr. Mark summarised it beautifully: "Like the Trinity, we are called to relate to and love one another," just as Fr. Barre and Mother Mathilde did.

Through the forum, three resounding calls emerged - Mission, Formation and Collaboration. The response to mission should be sensitive to cultural differences and the importance of reaching out to the poor and marginalised were highlighted. Continuous formation, rooted in IJ spirituality, is vital for both Sisters and lay partners, especially as we strive to grow in understanding of our shared mission. Above all, collaboration across the provinces is seen **as essential. The Forum called for**



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the creation of an Asian coordinating team to foster stronger ties, share resources and address mission needs more effectively.

Despite the challenges ahead - a lack of vocations, financial sustainability and different ideologies - the Forum reminded us that the Holy Spirit remains the true source of the IJ Charism. It was also a divine opportunity to pass on the charism to the laity, allowing it to take root in new and fertile ground. As Fr. Mark so poignantly put it, "It is the Holy Spirit that gives the charism, not the Sisters themselves. The Sisters' role is to discern, nurture, and guide this gift."

Mother Mathilde advises us to trust in Divine Providence to illuminate the way "when the path ahead is cloaked in shadow. Our journey is not ours alone, but one led by a hand far greater."

The discussions were rich and full of insight, and though we recognised the challenges, we were undaunted. There was a sense of urgency to keep moving forward, building lay leadership, fostering deeper relationships across the provinces and continuing to address the needs of the poor and marginalised.

The Asian lay delegate to the General Chapter in Rome next year was chosen by 14 delegates present (5 Associates and 9 Collaborators who had made a commitment to live the IJ Spirituality and Mission).and she is Mrs Mathews Shuquo.

As the Forum drew to a close, there was a palpable energy among us. We left with more than just new ideas - with a strengthened sense of unity, a deeper faith in the mission and a renewed commitment to work together with one heart and one mind, for the future of our IJ mission in Asia.

We are encouraged by Mother Mathilde to "persevere with joy in our hearts, for our labour in love is never in vain. The seeds we plant today with tears, tomorrow will bloom with joy."

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Congratulations to the new Thai Provincial Team



Sr Boonyarak, Sr Woranuch (Provincial) Sr Wannarat, Sr Nattaporn



Sr Joan with her Thai Novitiate Companions Sr Bernard and Sr Veronica

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Remembering Thai Sr Yupa in our prayers



Sr Yupa RIP



At Sr Yupa's Funeral Mass

Malaysia has new Collaborators!



Sr Mary Theresa Chua getting the badges blessed



Presenting the new Collaborators from Malaysia!



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Heartiest congratulations to our Japanese Sisters who celebrate 150 years of IJ mission in Japan



At the celebratory mass in St Ignatius Church

The Tokyo Prelate thanks Sisters of the Infant Jesus for their 150 years of service in Japan

<https://www.rvasia.org/asian-news/tokyo-prelate-thanks-sisters-infant-jesus-their-150-years-service-japan>

With the opening of Japan in 1872, the Bishop of Japan requested Mother General of the Infant Jesus Sisters to send IJ sisters to Japan to care for the orphans and disadvantaged and give education to girls as they did in France, Malaya and Singapore.

The first team of sisters under the leadership of Mother Mathilde left for the mission from Singapore.

The closing Thanksgiving Mass for the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Infant Jesus Sisters in Japan was concelebrated by Archbishop Leo Boccardi, Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Tarcisio Isao Kikuchi of Tokyo Archdiocese, and some religious and diocesan priests and lay partners, in the main chapel of St. Ignatius Church on 24 June, at 14:00 Japan time.

The General Superior, Sr Brigitte Flourez, and Sr Jane, General Councillor, were there to grace the occasion.

Melodious voices from the choirs of four of our IJ Schools filled the chapel with their rendition of the hymns.

Our IJ Associates together with Sr Maria were there to join in their celebration.

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IJ Associates celebrating with the Srs



Preparing to propose the toast



At Yokohama



With the oldest Japanese Sr



Sharing our mission

Heartiest congratulations to our Thai Sisters

On the occasion of the celebration of Sr Gabriel's 100th birthday, Sr Bernard and Sr Veronica's Diamond Jubilees and Sr Maria's Golden Jubilee in Jun 2023





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Sr Bernard and Sr Veronica



Sr Gabriel



Sr Bernard



Sr Maria

Congratulations to Myanmar for giving us another Sister!

Sr Martina made her First Profession on Saturday May 13th 2023.

<https://youtube.com/@cbcmosc8816>

Link for live streaming of Sr Martina's First Profession:

Congratulations to Malaysia for giving us another Sister too!

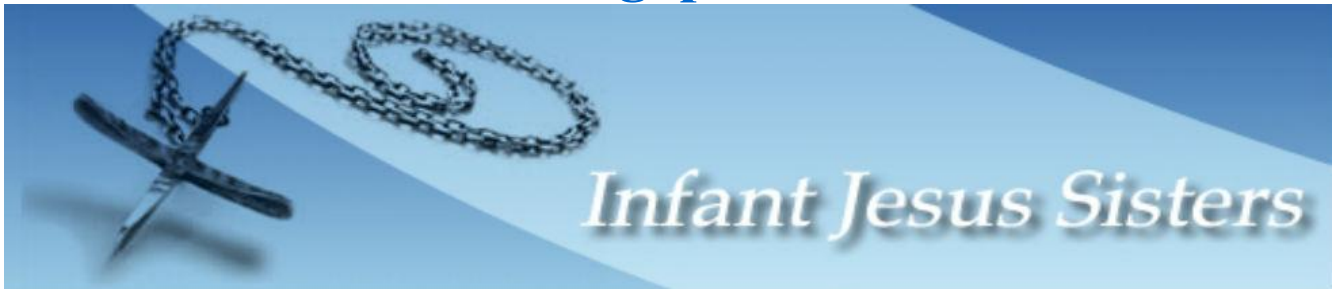
Sr Emily also made her First Profession on the same day.

What a wonderful coincidence!

(Our collaboration also includes interaction with IJ Schools and missions run by our IJ Sisters)

On Mar 29 2023, 28 students and 2 teachers from Yokohama Futaba High School, Japan, visited CHIJ St Theresa's Convent. The visitors were introduced at Assembly.

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Getting to know you



Introduced at Assembly

On 27 Mar 2023, some students and teachers from Shizuoka Futaba School visited CHIJ secondary, that has a standing Twinning Programme with the above-named school, Fukuoka Futaba and Yokohama Futaba since 2011, and Denenchofu Futaba since 2017. [... read more](#)

Congratulations to Myanmar for giving us the first IJ Sister Sr Josephine Kay Thi Oo who made her final profession in St Mary's Cathedral, Yangon on 4 Mar 2023.



*Sr Josephine is standing between Sr Brigitte (IJ General Superior) and Sr Jane (General Councillor)
(From LtoR- Jacinta, Sr Numpa, Sr Grace, Sr Brigitte, Sr Josephine, Sr Jane, Sr Teresia)*

Watch the ceremony here

<https://www.youtube.com/live/5bMt0MTyDZI?feature=share>



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Sr Jo making her commitment

Sharing of our overseas missions in Myanmar, Philippines and Laos

Celebrating the call to go beyond the horizon ...

Blessed Nicolas Barre must have smiled upon the IJ Sisters, Associates and friends who gathered at the Spirituality Centre at Chestnut Drive in Dec 2022 to celebrate the IJ Mission in Myanmar, the Philippines and Laos. Those present were deeply touched by the presenters' commitment, authentic and lived experience of their mission, from its birth to where it is today.

The brainchild of the Asian Provincials to reach out to their neighbours saw the development of trainee and trained teachers in Myanmar, a children's centre for the poor disadvantaged in Cogeo in the Philippines, and the provision of some essential services and education in Laos. This great combined effort of the Asian province (Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand) bore fruit with the help of willing hearts and cheerful souls, our lay partners, to bring dignity, justice and peace by sharing resources and promoting the well-being of a people living on the fringes.

Before embarking on the mission in each of the countries, an Asian Mission Team, comprising representatives from each Province, was appointed to make a feasibility study to discern our response to the call to serve. With collaboration and trust in Divine Providence, the project took off.

Ms Jacinta Cardoza presented the mission in Myanmar from the beginnings to where it is now. She shared the challenges faced along the journey in the last 22 years and the joy to see the growth of a community of young sisters and collaborators in Myanmar who decided on an integrative approach through education, that started in helping raise their awareness of their dignity as children of God, and equipping them with free academic and livelihood skills especially in teacher training, culminating in 14 batches of trained teachers.



Children at play in Myanmar



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Sr Neriza's mission in the Philippines is to reach out to the vulnerable and disadvantaged children, give them dignity and uplift them from their plight. Together with her is a team of concerned professionals who works with her through their Social Service outreach. With support from benefactors from Singapore, Sr Neriza, the only IJ Filipino Sister there, has started a children's centre for the little ones of the Infant Jesus. The provision of cooked meals before and after school, gives them the nutrition they need. Sr also provides an environment conducive to learning and guided help in their studies. The centre is equipped with computers for their home-based learning. The children are imbued with values and they pray together. Students who have graduated return to help the younger children on weekends and during the holidays.



Children working at the computers



Children at a meal at Sr Neriza's place

Ms Maria Swee shared on our mission in Laos which began with the Asian Mission team visiting Borkeo with a few Thai Sisters who had established some relationships with the locals. Volunteers and benefactors from the other Asian Provinces have been supporting the Team in the different projects in 5 schools - Namhodthai Primary School, Huayjod Primary School, Danthin Secondary School, Pana Primary School and Yangtai school -and have tried to meet some basic needs, like providing clean water, a water trough, a toilet, a food and nutrition programme; in education, like building up a library, computer facilities and teacher training in English. More projects are in the works. The villagers also come on board to help in the various projects.

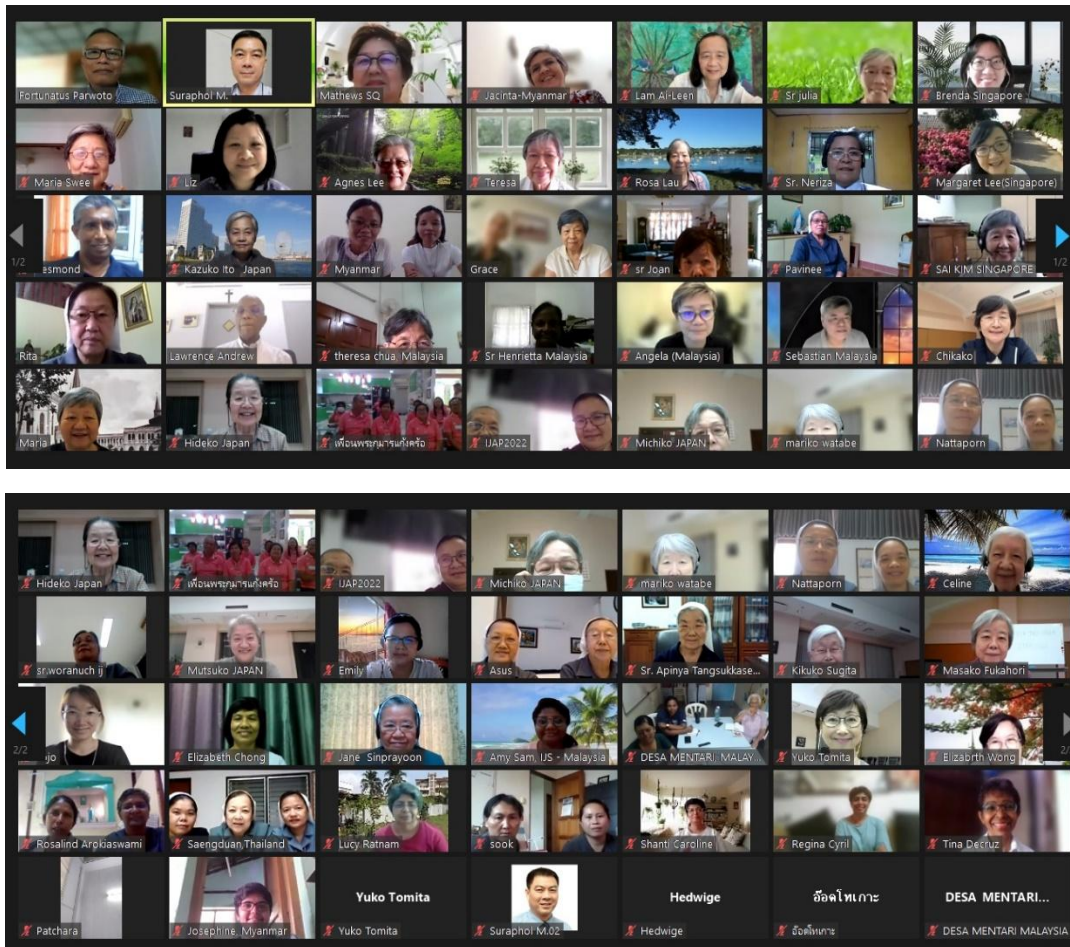
We pray that the IJ spirit lives on in the overseas missions, touching and transforming the lives of the disadvantaged and forgotten and also those called to respond.

Asian collaboration, when we dream alone, remains a dream but when we dream together, it becomes a reality!



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2nd Asian Forum of IJ Sisters and Lay Partners 2022



The 2nd IJ Asian Forum, that was held on 15 -16 October 2022 through a zoom platform, is another milestone for the 75 participants from the provinces of Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore and Thailand to work together to deepen our understanding of our IJ Charism as well as to bond as an IJ Family in Asia.

The focus of the first day was on drawing inspiration from the Charism, Spirituality and Mission of our founder, Blessed Nicolas Barre, and the ongoing journey of the Sisters and Lay Partners was the focus of the second day.

There were new faces among the group who greeted one another cordially and enthusiastically as members of one IJ family before the forum started.

The participants were warmly welcomed by Sr Jane, General Councillor, who in her opening address set the context and the tone of the forum. Sr emphasized the need to work together to



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deepen our understanding of our IJ Charism as well as our bond as an IJ Family. It would also foster our growth in spirituality, collaboration and unity among IJ sisters and our IJ lay partners in Asia. Thus, she is hopeful that the meeting would be another source of inspiration, and energy for us to continue our journey together in faith, hope and trust, in order to make Jesus Christ known and loved in our respective places of mission.

[The Song of Asia](#) aptly helped all the provinces to focus as one IJ family in Asia.

[The keynote address](#) by Sr Brigitte, IJ General Superior, inspired the participants to recognise that God's gift through our founder is to be shared with all people within the Church and people of good will. The participants were challenged to listen, discern and respond with generosity, together as Sisters and Lay Partners in the context of our realities today. It is a journey we must all make in solidarity in Asia to continue to synergise and collaborate for God's mission. The unity of purpose in living in union of heart (the link) of spirit (spirituality) and of mission (service to others) with the Sisters and Lay Partners is what will sustain our response.

The forum gave each province and district an opportunity to share its journey with Lay Partners on the first day and their work on the thrust and direction at the local level and as Asia on the second. Each province had time in their breakout groups to discuss their ongoing journey with the Lay Partners and attempt to chart how to further the journey with trust and hope with a Plan of action towards Direction and Thrust which will bring them forward.

The journey with Lay Partners is an ongoing process. It is to introduce them to the IJ Spirituality and legacy of Blessed Nicolas Barre, so that they will be filled with passion and commitment to build a Christ-centred society in our midst.

As the various provinces shared their vision of the direction they intend to take, there was an unspoken call for more communication and bonding, and to share resources and experiences.

The event was indeed a bridge to build interdependence and improve synergy to work as Asia, hearing the cries of our brothers and sisters in our neighbouring countries.

The sharing from the Laos Mission Team (which was born from the first Asian Forum) on their journey with 4 schools to contribute to the growth and development of children and youth in Laos was meaningful. The team's response in listening to the staff and working with the parents and local people is the way to go forward.

Fr. Fortunatus Parwoto, our facilitator, in his summary reminded us that our shared experience was a spiritual conversation with the Spirit being among us and leading us.

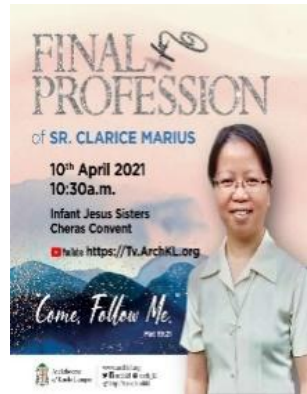
Grateful thanks to Fr Barre from the participants who sang the [Hymn to Fr Barre](#) in French and English.

Then we concluded the forum with one resounding voice to sing our IJ song [Hold on to our Dream!](#) We thank God for the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led forum as we go forward to live and grow the IJ mission in Asia and the world.



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We congratulate Malaysia for their newly professed Sister



Sr Clarice to make her final commitment on April 10

KUALA LUMPUR: Sr Clarice Marius will be making her final commitment as a sister of the Infant Jesus – Nicolas Barre on April 10 at the IJ Convent in Cheras.

With her motto, *God called and I followed Him* (Matthew 19:21), Sr Clarice shares her vocation story.

"There comes a time when we think of the meaning and purpose of life. This happened to me when I completed my schooling. I come from Kg. Tigot Keningau, Sabah, the



Sr Clarice Marius at the Tun Tan Cheng Lock College of Nursing.

7th child in a family of 10 children. I am a cradle Catholic and my parents instilled in us the love for the Church, family prayer and the Rosary.

"Growing up, I was aware of the realities of children in my village who were deprived of their basic need for an education. After school, I worked temporarily for a year before I enrolled myself at Monfort, Sabah.

"During this period, Sr Teresa Lee (Infant Jesus Sister) came to give faith formation classes. She shared her vocation story and the charisma of the IJs. I was attracted to their spirit of courage and zeal and their ways of reaching out to needy children. This automatically resonated with my initial search for meaning in life.

"After a few years, I continued to seriously search with the IJS in Seremban. It was there in mission that I had the opportunity to serve God's children regardless of their race, religion or social standing.

"While working with God's poor I discovered my gift of caring for the sick. After making my first vows, I joined the Tun Tan Cheng Lock College of Nursing (Assunta Hospital). I grew in my religious life and my ministry among the sick, especially the poor.

"Having gained experience over the years in caring for the sick, I believe the time has



Sr Clarice Marius comes from Kg. Tigot Keningau, Sabah.

come now for me to reach out to the poor, especially in the interior of Sabah, where the people are unable to get basic medical care.

"As I move on to this new area of work, I take with me the theme of our last General Chapter, 'I am sending you on a new path'."

Malaysia INFANT JESUS SISTERS

The Sisters of the Infant Jesus came to Malaya in 1852 and started their first school for girls in Light Street, Penang. Today, they have 56 schools under their care, though the nationalisation of the schools in the 1970s did not allow them to resume the initial responsibility of managing the schools till now.

Now the IJ Sisters live among people, with the resolve to remain united in spirit, heart and mission. They continue to serve the Church and the People of God through education and faith formation in the different Learning Centres, Pastoral/parish ministry, Home for the differently-abled women, youth apostolate and various fields where human and spiritual development is needed.

For further information please contact:
 Provincial House, Jalan Bukit Nanas, Kuala Lumpur.
 Tel: 03-20780615
 Email: ijsmalaysia@gmail.com

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Our 165th anniversary of IJ presence in Singapore was celebrated on 28 May 2019 at the National Stadium together with our sisters from Peru, Thailand, Malaysia and Ireland

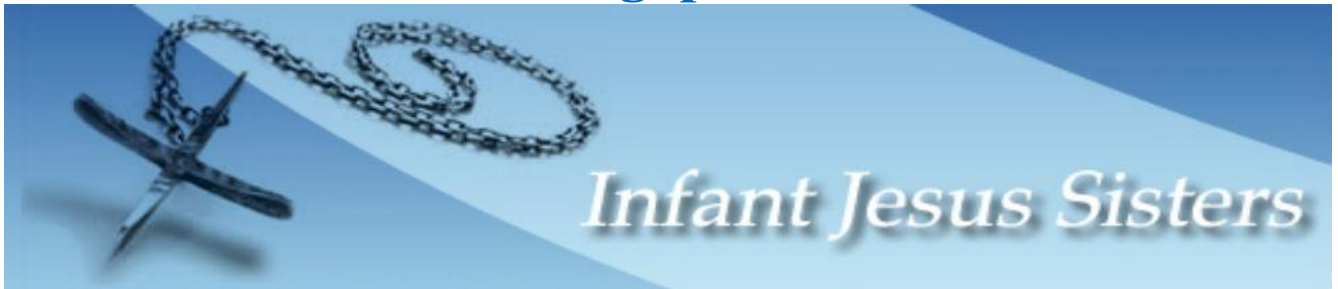


Sisters from Peru, Thailand, Malaysia and Ireland came to share our Joy

The Thai Sisters' response to covid-19 [... read more](#)



We join our Thai Sisters in congratulating two Diamond Jubilarians, a Golden Jubilarian and a new Sister making her first profession [... read more](#)



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Asian Forum of IJ Sisters and Lay Collaborators 2019



Asian Forum of IJ Sisters and Lay Collaborators

The Asian Forum of IJ Sisters and Lay Collaborators, organised by the Provincials of Asia, is the fruit of the first Asian Forum of IJ Sisters held in 2016.

The 41 participants from the Provinces of Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand and the District of Myanmar gathered in St Gabriel's Personal Development Centre, Bangkok from 15 -18 March 2019.

There was so much positive energy and enthusiasm generated when the group of sisters and lay partners met. For many, this was the first time they had encountered each other. The sense of belonging to the IJ "Family" resonated with all.

The warm welcome given by our Thai sisters and the sharing of each one's story of how they came to know the IJ "Family" brought the group closer. The getting to know one another and the fostering of bonds among the participants was one of the stated aims of the Forum.

Other aims included the call:

- * To deepen the understanding of the IJ Spirituality, the underpinning of the IJ Mission
- * To have a better understanding of the vocation of the laity as missionary disciples and the vocation of the IJ sisters within the IJ "Family"
- * To respond to new calls and discover new ways and approaches in our ministries together as the Provinces of Asia.



We are once again grateful to Sr Hirota Shizue (Filo) for being our resource person and facilitator. Sr Filo is a member of the Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz and its executive coordinator. She is a native of Japan and has served in the Philippines, Nicaragua and Mexico. She was a board member of the International Union of Superiors General and is currently an executive committee member of Pax Christi International. Our thanks go also to Mrs. Angela Tan, our lay partner from Malaysia, for accepting to be the secretary of the Forum.

Our Thai sisters led us in the opening prayer to listen with openness and generosity to the

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Our Thai sisters led us in the opening prayer to listen with openness and generosity to the Spirit who will lead and guide us at this Asian Forum. The participants were invited to share their hopes, aspirations and expectations of this Forum and the attitudes and dispositions they wish to bring to the Forum.

In a spirit of openness and an atmosphere of contemplation, the participants listened to the sharing by each Province of their journey together with the lay partners.



Participants from Japan



... from Malaysia



... from Myanmar



... from Thailand



from Singapore



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... from Singapore

On the second day, Sr. Maria shared on the IJ Journey with the laity from its foundation to the present day. Time was given for personal reflection. During the group sharing, the participants were invited by Sr Filo, to come up with key words that described the IJ charism.

During the Plenary at the Prayer Space a member of the group shared the meaning of their chosen words. As the participants walked in silence contemplating the words, they were made aware of the realities which concerned people with their struggles, hopes, dreams and doubts. Some realities mentioned were: family breakdown, human trafficking, environmental problems and climate change, individualism, xenophobia, poverty, racial and religious conflicts.

Sr Filo reminded us about the IJ charism, which is life and to make the charism come alive, we must look at the realities of today. It is the charism that expresses itself in the IJ Mission that unites us in our diversity coming from differing cultures, backgrounds and history.

We spent some time looking at the way we live out our *faith/discipleship* in the cultural context where we find ourselves.



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The next day saw us looking at the Church's call to the Laity and Religious after Vatican II. Sr Filo gave a presentation on Church - Communion, a New Ecosystem for sharing Charism and Mission and spoke about the Discipleship of Equals.

We then looked at the new path of collaboration as we move into the future.

- * How do we live collaboration in Mission?
 - * What are the challenges of collaboration?
 - * Can we think of any new way – a new structure?

We spoke about the different levels of collaboration, participation and sharing. Sr Filo, our resource person, reminded us that identification with the founding charism is a pre-requisite and is non-negotiable.

The Way Forward – Collaboration for our IJ Mission in Asia and beyond was the topic we discussed in depth and participants came up with concrete ways to do it.

What is God telling us in the here and now?

Inspired by the Spirit to continue the journey, the participants feel called to:

- * deepen our understanding of the IJ spirituality
- * articulate the process of belonging to the IJ "family", giving recognition and identity to our lay collaborators
- * have inter-provincial collaboration in Asia, put in place an Asian structure for collaboration and share resources and experience with one another

The feedback was very positive as all felt that this Asian Forum was both inspirational and meaningful and it has brought the Asian IJ "Family" together to take up the challenge of being prophetic witnesses in Asia recognizing there is unity in strength and collaboration.

***With renewed faith and hope,
we go forth in trust, assured of God's word:
"I am with you always." Mt 28:20***



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Asian Forum of IJ Sisters 2016



The Asian Forum, organised by the Provincials of Asia, was conceived two years ago. The Sisters of Asia from the four Provinces of Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand gathered in Bangkok with the following aims:

- to get to know each other better and build bonds as IJ Sisters in Asia.
- to listen to God's call to inculturate our Charism in Asia, keeping in focus our prophetic role in Asia today in the 21st Century and beyond.
- to look at new ways to respond to the calls and challenges of today and to see together the way forward in our collaboration in mission and the sharing of resources, to cross boundaries or even coming together as one in our response since we share the same vision and heritage.
- to collaborate together on joint projects e.g. formation and mission.
- to look at new forms of membership and
- to look at our interconnectedness and collaboration with our lay partners in mission.

This Asian Forum became a reality on the 6th November 2016 when 46 Sisters from the four Provinces came to Thailand to spend the next three days together to see, reflect and share on how they see the future of Religious Life (IJS) in Asia.

We are grateful to Sr Hirota Shizue (Filo), a Mercedarian sister for being our resource person and Sr Kathleen Geaney, a Columban sister for being our facilitator. We are also grateful to Mrs Mathews Shuquo, our lay partner from Singapore, for accepting to be our secretary.

The Asian Forum opened on 6th November with a welcome Thai dance by the students of Mary Immaculate Convent School in Chonburi. This culturally rich and graceful dance together with the hospitality by our Thai Sisters set the scene for our Asian Forum in the next few days.

The Sisters are grateful to Sister Marie and Sister Noreen for their presence and participation at our Forum.

*On the first day, we were invited to be still,
mindful of being in the here and now ...
and to have contemplative dialogue.*



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It is a contemplative way of being together; a way of engaging meaningful conversations that are rooted in deep listening ... We listen from an inner silence that creates a space where something **new** can emerge. We come together in a circle of peers, of equals (where no one is an expert, no one is teaching, dominating, persuading). We come with the intention of creating a field of presence and love by grounding our awareness in our hearts, our Source, our interiority, our God. And at the same time, we offer ourselves wholeheartedly to creating communion in this circle as we intentionally listening for something new to emerge.

We practice three skills of contemplative dialogue:

contemplative listening

contemplative speaking

*and intentionally creating a **WE space** among us as we listen to and build on one another's thoughts. Thus WE space will be a space of the Ruah... being fully aware and attentive to God's gift and grace revealed in the present moment, no matter what is happening in that moment.*

We were posed with challenging questions:

**Listen to what is stirring in you...
Deal with the diversity...
Journey towards a new way of being IJs in Asia and in the world...
Dream... Imagine... Be creative...
Trusting ... Audacious...**

How do we respond to the challenging reality in a new way?

What is God telling me as I look at the reality of Asia in the light of our Charism?

What is burning in my heart?

What is our dream for a common Asian response as IJs to the reality of Asia today?

This led to the setting up of an Asian Mission Team appointed by the Provincials with members (either a sister or a lay collaborator) from each Province/District to carry out feasibility studies on new calls in other parts of Asia, discern the response with the Asian Provincial Teams and network with existing NGOs. Sisters and lay collaborators, who feel called, have the IJ Spirit and passion for and experience of mission, good health and able to work as a team, are invited to offer their services.

We began each morning with prayer in the prayer space and ended each evening with mass in the chapel.

In the light of our IJ experience of collaboration with lay partners:

- What ways forward/new ways are opening before us?
- Name one or two concrete steps we can take at the Asian level in terms of collaboration with lay partners.
- Another dream is to have our next Asian Forum where both the Sisters and our Lay Partners will participate
- The Forum generated a lot of energy and enthusiasm and all felt that it was worthwhile, inspirational and life-giving.

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With renewed faith and hope,
We go forth in trust, assured of God's word:
"I am with you always." Mt 28:20

Photo gallery for Asian Forum 7th - 9th November 2016





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Gathering of Asian Province Sisters at Hua Hin, Thailand



*IJ sisters
from Japan,
Malaysia,
Singapore*

and Thailand provinces gather in Hua Hin, Thailand

With joyful hearts, 24 Infant Jesus sisters from the Asian Provinces met at Hua Hin from 12th to 16th November 2017. This assembly was made possible by Provincials of the four Provinces (Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand) who had decided to organize this gathering for those whose first profession took place between 1971 and 1995.

The theme of this gathering focused on “Laudato Si”, the 2015 Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis on care for our common home. Khun Lin, our facilitator from Thailand, set us on this short journey of recalling, remembering and contemplating our vocation as Infant Jesus sisters in the context of our Asian realities.

To read more about this memorable gathering, [click here](#).



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Thai Sisters and Teachers visit Singapore

Led by Sr Bang-Orn, Principal of Our Lady of the Immaculate Convent in Chonburi, a group of 5 IJ Sisters and 16 lay teachers from our IJ schools in Thailand visited Singapore from 2 – 6 July 2017.

In the short duration of their stay, they visited Marshall Cavendish publishers, CHIJMES, some IJ schools, primary and secondary, and IJHCC besides some places of interest.

The Srs and teachers found the visit to be an enriching experience and hope to implement what they learnt in their curriculum.



The Thai delegation welcomed by the IJ Fraternity members





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Meeting of Sisters from 4 Asian Provinces



Participants

Japan: Sisters Kazuko, Kimiko, Noriko

Malaysia: Sisters Henrietta, Lourdes Mary, Mary Agnes, Marie Therese, Rita, Rosalind, Stephanie

Thailand: Sisters Angela, Apinya, Jane, Maria, Peter, Yupa

Singapore: Sisters Agnes, Maria, Simone

Resource Person: Sister Maureen Chew

Hua Hin 15 January 2016

Asian Meeting of Profession Groups 1970-1976 in Hua Hin Thailand 6th-15th January 2016

The Sisters are grateful for the opportunity to come together and renew ties besides having the time to look back with gratitude, to live the present meaningfully and renew our commitment to God as we move into the future with greater generosity and renewed zeal in the service of God in the people He sends us to. We reflected on what to let go, what to let be and what to let grow and what we want to let shine. We spent much time with the Lord in the depth and prayer of the heart.

We deepened our understanding of the IJ Spirituality with the help of Sr Maureen, affirmed each other and built on our sense of belonging to the Institute. We reflected on how to accept our stage of life and how to grow old gracefully.



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We were given opportunities to look at the life of Blessed Nicholas Bounkerd, an ordinary priest from Thailand, who lived his vocation and life fully and was prepared to sacrifice his life for his faith. We learnt of the cultural richness of the people of Thailand and how those who are at the margins of society are being cared for.

We are grateful to the organisers, the Provincials of Asia, and to our hosts, Sr Jane and her sisters in Thailand, for making our gathering meaningful and life-giving. We were also blessed to have daily Mass.

Each of us wishes to continue to live our life as a blessing to others. This is expressed firstly by who we are - a person anchored in God and responsive to His call to us, supported by our sisters in community and mission, sharing and being available and contributing according to one's gifts and talents, at whatever stage of the journey each one is at. Each one is conscious of the need for on-going formation, the need to grow in depth and at the same time being open to change and widen our perspective.

These are proposed suggestions and recommendations for the future.

- (1) To plan another reunion with a retreat in 2 years' time in 2018 and perhaps another one in 2020.
- (2) To work together in the Asian provinces, to go beyond the boundaries of our respective provinces and countries in building mission partners and sharing mission.
- (3) To plan a meeting of IJ Sisters and Mission Partners in 2017, if possible, for a few sisters and lay partners from each province with the aim of sharing and deepening our IJ Spirituality and for interaction and networking among the sisters and lay partners in Asia.
- (4) To have in each province a committee to look at mission awareness and mission development for the future. These committees can network with other provinces in Asia especially.
- (5) To have joint initial formation for the Provinces in Asia, where every Province may contribute to 3 months (as an example) of the formation of our younger members. This will not only help the newer members to have a sense of belonging to the Asian Provinces and the Institute besides the Province they have joined but it will also help in their bonding as IJs.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we will continue to be co-creators with God, moving forward in faith, hope and love into the future knowing that whatever happens, we can be at peace as we can trust in our God who loves us excessively and unconditionally. "I am with you always" is the assurance given from Jesus.



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Gift of Josephine, the first Myanmar IJ sister on her first profession



Josephine, Kay Thi Oo, the first Myanmar Infant Jesus sister, professed her first vows at the Church of St Francis Xavier, Thanlyin, Yangon on Tuesday 3rd November 2015.

The ceremony began with a procession of about 10 local priests including Fr Matthew, Josephine's uncle, followed by her parents and siblings who gave her away. Among the two hundred and fifty who were present to join in the celebration of the first profession of Josephine, the first IJ sister who was born in Myanmar, were religious from different congregations, as well as Infant Jesus Sisters from Ireland-England, Thailand and Singapore. Srs Maria Lau and Noreen McGrath represented the Central Team.



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Josephine's peers from the Pyinya Sanyae Institute of Education (PSIE) sang with pride and gratitude as they witnessed one from their ranks being called and responding in faith to be a religious sister..

It was a touching moment when Josephine knelt down before her parents, kissed their feet and received their blessing before pronouncing her vows.

This event marks the beginning of a new phase for the IJ Myanmar Mission. The harvest is indeed great and we trust that the Lord will send more workers into the field.

Final Profession of Sr Santhamary Ganapragasam & Sr. Amy Sam Saminathan



L-R Sr Sr. Amy Sam Saminathan and Sr Santhamary Ganapragasam

Congratulations to **Sr. Santhamary Ganapragasam & Sr. Amy Sam Saminathan** who made their Final Profession in the Church of the Sacred Heart, Kampar, Malaysia on 12th September 2016.

Teachers from Myanmar had a 3-month intensive upgrading programme in 2014 and 2015

The first group of 10 teachers attended specially-arranged Maths and Science classes, had the opportunity to conduct Science experiments in a science lab, attend classes at the Institute of Education and observe teachers in our schools.

Another group of 15 came in 2015. Again, they had exposure to our CHIJ schools and classroom teaching, besides learning content and pedagogical skills.

2015: MYANMAR TEACHERS' IN-SERVICE TRAINING
IN SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA

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Asian Pilgrims in France - June 2015



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Asian Pilgrims in front of Mother Mathilde's birthplace, Suriauville, France

Over the years, many Infant Jesus Sisters have gone on pilgrimage following in the footsteps of Nicolas Barré.

This is the first time that a group of sisters and laity from the different Provinces of Asia went to pray in Mother Mathilde's native village. The mayor, parish priest and local people joined in giving them a wonderful welcome in Suriauville. Many people living there were overjoyed and amazed to learn of little Marie Justine's extraordinary life. Mass was celebrated by Mother Mathilde's great grandnephew who is himself a missionary in Japan.

Asia responds to the General Chapter



Row 1: Gertrude Tan (M), Celina Wong (M), Teresa Lee (S), Joan Tay (S);

Row 2: Antonia Manikam (M), Elizabeth Teoh (M), Marie Agnes Pereira (M), Kikuko Sugita (J), Elsie Lim (S);

Row 3: Maria Lau (CT), Atsuko Sayama (J), Seiko Koga (J), Theresa Vareevong (T), Masako Fukahori (J), Marie Paule Liew (M);

Row 4: Agnes Lee (S), Ikuko Tanimoto (J), Lucy Teseira (M), Lily Bong (M), Bernie Ng (M), Yasuko Matsumura (J), Gerard Haripong (T), Grace Chia (My), Cecilia Sinbad (M).

(Key: CT: Central Team; J: Japan; M: Malaysia; My: Myanmar; S: Singapore; T: Thailand)

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At our General Chapter in 2013 we were encouraged to “strengthen the relationships between provinces on the same continent.” (Acts of the Chapter 2013) So, we – sisters of 45-50 years of religious profession – in the Asian provinces of Malaysia, Singapore, Japan and Thailand took the initiative and met in Port Dickson, Malaysia from the 14th to the 20th January 2015.

It was a blessed week for all. The first two days were spent in a review of our lives and deep sharing across the different cultures. The next two days we went to Melaka to visit our IJ School and the historic sights dating back to St Francis Xavier. Melaka was his first port of call in 1545, en route for Japan.

After two days of deepening our IJ spirituality together, the last day was one of integration, thanksgiving and celebrating the four Golden Jubilarians – Elsie Lim (Singapore), Seiko Koga (Japan), Marie Paule Liew (Malaysia) and Gerard Haripong (Thailand).

And then it was time to say Sayonara while rejoicing for such an enriching week together.

We celebrated the 160 Anniversary of our founding in Mar 2014 with guest Sisters from France, Japan, Malaysia, Spain and Thailand.



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