

Update Report: East-Asia Oceania Region

Centro Loyola de Padre Hurtado

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East – Asia Oceania Region

I Introduction:

In this presentation, due to time constraint, I shall only highlight the recent developments, emerging trends and issues in the beginning of this sexennium {last two and a half years 2003-2005} in the **East-Asia Oceania Region**. Other data like the numbers of houses, priests, solemnly professed brothers, students under formation and the number of ordinations can be found in the Statistics accessible in the Carmelite website.

Secondly, I will be using two terms to convey to you the developments, emerging trends and issues: **LIGHTS**, which refer to the strengths and resources of the different regions, and **SHADOWS**, which refer to the significant areas that need to be addressed to ensure the stability, growth and viability of the Order in the different regions.

II. Geographical Location:

The **East-Asia Oceania Region** is composed of the following:

1. Taiwan – Singapore General Delegation
2. Australia – Regional Vicariate of Anglo-Irish Province
3. Indonesia – Regional Vicariate of Manjummel Province
4. Japan – General Delegation
5. South Korea – Commissariat
6. Philippines - Commissariat

It is also worth noting that Carmelite Monasteries are present in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Cambodia {a new foundation of Seoul Monastery}, New Zealand, Western Samoa, Papua New Guinea, and Viet Nam. A new foundation is being seriously considered in Myanmar by the Carmelite Monastery of Singapore.

III. Update by Geographical Region:

1. Taiwan – Singapore General Delegation

Lights:

Formation is being addressed in the region. Despite the low turnout of applicants not only for the Carmelites but also for other religious communities, there are a significant number of young men who are now in their initial stage of formation.

The delegation is administering two parishes, one in Singapore and one in Taiwan. These ministries allow the Carmelites to have a closer experience with the people especially the youth. It is also an opportunity to share the charism to the people.

Shadows:

- 1.1. The delegation has to continue to address the need to have a comprehensive initial and on-going formation program.
- 1.2. The delegation was initially formed for a missionary work in China. As such, an initial process of discussion, planning and preparation should be made for its short term and long term realization of its mission.

2. Australia – Regional Vicariate

Lights:

- 2.1. The vicariate has recently embarked on restructuring their presence in Australia to make its presence more effective and readily accessible especially to the youth.
- 2.2. Their parish and retreat ministries have been effective venues to respond to the needs of the local churches in Australia.

Shadows:

- 2.1. There is a need to re-evaluate their recruitment, initial and on-going formation programs in the light of the situation in Australia.
- 2.3. There is a need to explore other forms of joined ministries to effectively address the pastoral needs of the local churches in Australia.

3. Indonesia – Regional Vicariate of Manjummel Province

Lights:

- 3.1. The vicariate is one of the most fruitful and fast-growing in the region blessed with many vocations.
- 3.2. The local churches are very much appreciative of their presence and many bishops have asked them to be present in their dioceses to respond to the spiritual needs of the clergy and the people.

Shadows:

- 3.1. With growing number of young men wanting to join the Order, there is a need to streamline, update and contextualize their initial formation program. Secondly, Indonesian Carmelite Fathers who are involved with formation work must be prepared as they take more responsibilities in formation work.
- 3.3. Indonesian fathers must be prepared to take other ministries especially those ministries traditionally proper to the Order, by sending them for further studies focused on spirituality and the rich spiritual traditions of the Order.

4. Japan – General Delegation

Lights:

- 4.1. In their recently concluded chapter, new initiatives have been made on the following areas:
 - 4.1.1. re-alignment of personnel
 - 4.1.2. re-evaluating and prioritizing of the different ministries
 - 4.1.3. re-focusing and re-evaluating their common vision-mission in the light of new developments in Japan
 - 4.1.4. prioritizing of initial and on-going formation stressing of the greater role and participation of Japanese Carmelites
- 4.2. There is greater interest and cohesion of the Japanese Carmelites in the affairs of the Order in Japan

Shadows:

- 4.1. There is a strong need to address the need of a comprehensive and a common initial and on-going formation program for the Japanese delegation
- 4.3. There is a need to prepare adequately Japanese Carmelites for formation work and for specific ministries that the Japanese Delegation is now involved with
5. South Korea – Commissariat

Lights:

- 5.1. The Commissariat has been blessed with many vocations into the Order.
- 5.2. The Commissariat has been very effective in sharing the Carmelite charism to the laity as reflected in the large number of secular Carmelites both in South Korea and in the United States especially with the American-Koreans around the Los Angeles area.

Shadows:

- 5.1. The Commissariat should continue the prayerful reflection as to whether to embark on a missionary endeavor in Mainland China.
- 5.3. The Commissariat should continue to periodically re-evaluate their initial formation-program in view improving it and to continue to prepare Korean Fathers for formation work.
- 5.4. The Commissariat should address the need of preparing adequately Korean Fathers to minister to the large number of secular members of the Order and explore other forms of ministry in South Korea.

6. Philippines – Commissariat

Lights:

- 6.1. After a long period of low turnout of vocations, the Commissariat has been blessed with many students prompting them to build a new student-house to accommodate their increasing number, including three students from Viet Nam.
- 6.2. The Commissariat has embarked on a new mission-work in Viet Nam.

Shadows:

The Commissariat should explore, with the consultation and coordination with other Carmelite circumscriptions within the East-Asia Oceania region, the possibility of becoming the center for greater coordination for common endeavors in spirituality, formation, other forms of ministries and future common initiatives for the region.

The Commissariat should continue preparing Filipino Carmelites to specialize in spirituality with emphasis on Carmelite spirituality.

IV. Conclusions:

A few observations are worth mentioning as we look up the total picture of the Carmelite Order in the whole East – Asia Oceania region:

1. There is a perceived strong need of Carmelite presence, both of the men and women, in most of the churches in the region. Many bishops, for example in Indonesia and Myanmar, have requested for a Carmelite presence in their dioceses to address the need of a deeper experience, understanding, and guidance on prayer.

2. Vocations abound in the region except for isolated circumscriptions like Australia and Japan. This entails that the region is focusing on the area of formation and preparing Carmelite fathers for the work of formation.

3. The so called "**Shadows**" of the different circumscriptions are in reality, consequential issues or "negative issues of growth" of the different Carmelite communities in the region.

4. Finally, with the recently approved "**Statutes of the Conference of the Major Superiors of East – Asia Oceania**", the region is further strengthened by the common efforts of the different circumscriptions for the Order to grow.

The future of the Order in the **East – Asia Oceania Region** is very hopeful. Signs of growth abound and deep appreciation of the Carmelite charism is very much felt.

But the work ahead demands a greater faithfulness and creative attitude as the Order encounters **East - Asia Oceania Region** with its unique features, characteristics, challenges and issues.

Finally, in behalf of Fr. General, **Fr. Luis Arostegui, ocd** and the members of the General Definitory I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation and fraternal support to the superiors of the East – Asia Oceania region for their commitment, dedication and concern for their respective communities.