



Institute of Spirituality in Asia

BULLETIN 2015

(An Annual Report on ISA Programs and Activities)

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Dear Readers,

Warm greetings from the Institute of Spirituality in Asia (ISA)!

Once again, in our desire to establish affinity with our students, alumni, sponsors, benefactors, partners, collaborators, friends and members of the ISA Family both local and international, we have prepared the 2015 ISA Bulletin.

We offer you a short description of our public lectures, seminar-workshops, spirituality fora, summer courses, research studies, publications, meetings of the International Academic Advisory Board (IAAB) and of the Board of Trustees (BOT) and many other activities.

We are proud to say that ISA has contributed to raising people's awareness on the importance of spirituality here in the Philippines and in neighboring countries.

Particularly worthy of mention is the field of publication. On September 17 of this year, a publication of ISA won twice in the 2015 Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards (CSCBA), an honor which was re-confirmed at the Catholic Mass Media Awards on November 4 at the Aliw Theater, Pasay City.

Desperately Seeking God's Action: Yolanda Survivors' Hope Beyond Heartbreaking Lamentations by Karl M. Gaspar, CSSR, Ph.D. bested all other entries in the categories of Spirituality and of Ministry.

We can recall that last year, 2014, another book of ISA, Grace Nono's *Song of the Babaylan: Living Voices, Medicines and Spiritualities of Philippine Ritualist-Oralist-Healers*, placed first in the Spirituality category.

Also last year, *Spirit Moves*, the first-ever volume of ISA's journal on interdisciplinary discourse in spirituality *Living Flame* with lead author Prior Provincial Very Rev. Fr. Christian Buenafe, O. Carm., Ph.D., Fr. Rico P. Ponce, O. Carm., Ph.D./S.Th.D. and others won in the category of Ministry. And two years earlier in 2012, *Spirituality and the Church of the Poor*, ISA's 11th Lecture Series on Spirituality, ranked first for Theology.

Aside from the five first-place awards for four books, five other publications of ISA have been finalists in the CSCBA.

We are convinced of the vision of ISA as a research-based and academic institute. We will strive to live by this vision as we pursue programs guided by these two distinct characteristics of our institute.

The good Lord continues to bless us by continuously providing us people of spiritual insights and wisdom like you. We can only say that you have been a big part of our success. And so, we thank you and all other people who, in one way or another, have become part of the ISA Family in the realization of our vision, mission and goals!

We look ahead to 2016 with renewed spirit, vigor and enthusiasm. We can do so because we are confident of your being one with us in our pursuit of a meaningful, timely and relevant spirituality responsive to the needs of our times.

We wish you all a merry Christmas and a bountiful New Year. God bless us all!

Respectfully yours,



Fr. Rico Palaca Ponce, O. Carm., Ph.D. /S.Th.D.
ISA Executive /Academic Director



Day of Mindfulness (DOM)



In partnership with the Institute of Spirituality in Asia, Plum Village Philippines had the first session of “Day of Mindfulness” on February 1, 2015. The participants were mostly teachers and mindfulness practitioners based in Manila.

The “Day of Mindfulness” usually takes place at ISA on the last Sunday of the month. It was initiated by the Plum Village Hong Kong headed by Bro. Phap Kham and later entrusted to the Plum Village Sanghas Core Group based in the Philippines.

The “Day of Mindfulness” is based on the teachings of the founder, Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. He is a spiritual leader, poet and peace activist revered throughout the world for his powerful teachings and bestselling writings on mindfulness and peace. His key teaching: through mindfulness, we can learn to live happily in the present moment—the only way to truly develop peace, both in one’s self and in the world.

Master Thich Nhat Hanh wants the communities that he builds and his lay students to apply his teachings on mindfulness, peace-making and community-building in schools, workplaces, businesses – and even prisons – throughout the world.

PLUM VILLAGE PHILIPPINES - BOAT OF COMPASSION SANGHA
in partnership with the INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY IN ASIA
invites you to

Days of Mindfulness

OPEN GROUP PRACTICE OF MEDITATION IN THE TRADITION OF
ZEN MASTER THICH NHAT HANH & PLUM VILLAGE

Sundays 9AM-3PM * 2015 Schedule: February 1 * March 1 * March 29 * April 26 * May 31
June 28 * July 26 * August 30 * September 27 * October 25 * November 29

TITUS BRANDSMA CENTER, 24 Acacia St., New Manila, Quezon City
For details/inquiries, find us on Facebook: Plum Village Philippines



Lenten Reflection

Fr. Bernard Roosendaal, O.Carm. facilitated reflections entitled “Five Wounds of the Church Today.” He gave the first talk on the last Friday of February (February 27, 2015) on the topic “Neglecting the Gentle Breeze.” Session 2 was on March 6 on “Forgetting the Importance of the Poor” - the second wound of the church today. It was followed by “The Focus on Hierarchy” on the third Friday of Lent, March 13.

The talk on the fourth Friday of Lent (March 20) was about “Ecclesiocentrism” and for the last Friday (March 27), “Women in the Limbo.” All the sessions were held at the chapel of the Teresa of Avila Building, New Manila, Quezon City, and averaged fifteen to fifty attendees per session.



February 28, 2015

Public Lecture: “Following the Footsteps of Leadership of Saint Teresa of Avila in the 21st Century”

This activity was held on February 28, 2015 with Dr. Marissa Cos Alcantara, aO.Carm as speaker. She is an entrepreneur, speaker/facilitator, book author and mentor in spirituality and organization development.

The lecture was attended by more than twenty participants, majority of whom were Carmelites. It featured a comparative study between the leadership style of a woman in the sixteenth century during the time of the Carmelite Saint Teresa of Avila and that of today’s ERS (homemakERS, housekeepERS or carERS)... the women.



March 28, 2015

Public Lecture: “Lay Spirituality”

Mr. Roger Macatol, a Ph.D. student of the Institute of Spirituality in Asia, spoke on “Lay Spirituality” last March 28, 2015. He is the national coordinator of Lay Forum Philippines and the executive director of Amaya Lay in Mindanao. In keeping with the topic, he attracted mostly lay people to his public lecture which traced the rich history and experience of the Church in Mindanao, where the laity have partnered with the bishops, clergy and nuns in building up Basic Christian Communities from the 1970s onward.

Mr. Macatol also traced the experience of Lay Forum Philippines at the national and regional levels where the laity shared valuable insights and reflections in forum sessions as they sought to ease their pain, angst, sorrow, anguish as well as their happiness in serving the least of their brothers and sisters.



April 20-26, 2015

Summer Course on Asian Spirituality

The 2015 Summer Course on Asian Spirituality was held on April 20-26, 2015 at the Titus Brandsma Center, New Manila, Quezon City. It attracted 47 participants coming from different religious schools and organizations. Its topics and speakers:

- a) April 20, 2015 (Monday), 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
“Christian Elements of Asian Spirituality Face-to-face with Globalization”
Dr. Emmanuel De Guzman
- b) April 21, 2015 (Tuesday), 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
“Taming the Mind and Purifying the Heart through Anapanasati Meditation from the Christian and Buddhist Perspective”
Fr. Baltazar Ronato, O.Carm.
- c) April 22, 2015 (Wednesday), 8:30 – 4:30 pm
“The Essence of Hindu Spirituality and Practices”
Ms. Yogita Sharma



d) April 23, 2015 (Thursday) 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
“Islamic Mysticism and the Pursuit for Peace”
Fr. Eliseo R. Mercado, OMI, Ph.D.

e) April 24, 2015 (Friday) 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
“Liberation in the Context of Tibetan Buddhism”
Mr. Virgil Antonio, OCDS

f) April 25, 2015 (Saturday) 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
“Dakilang Paramdam: Rereading the Role of the Holy Spirit in the Asian Context”
Dr. Rebecca Cacho



May 2, 2015

Public Lecture: “Elijah’s Mantle: The Spiritual Legacy of Elijah and Elisha in the Bible and Beyond”



At the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies (IFRS), ISA joined the Notre Dame of Sion nuns in organizing a talk entitled “Elijah’s Mantle: The Spiritual Legacy of Elijah and Elisha in the Bible and Beyond” held on May 2, 2015. Rabbi Fred Morgan, the speaker, is from Australia and has been involved in Jewish-Christian relations for the past thirty years. He is honorary president of the Council of Christians and Jews in Victoria, Australia. Upon retiring from the active rabbinate, he was appointed Professional Fellow in the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy of the Australian Catholic University.



June 5-7, 2015

Seminar-Workshop: “The Psalm as the Highest Expression of Spirituality in the Old Testament”

This retreat-seminar-workshop with 28 participants was facilitated by Fr. Martin Pierik, O.Carm. It invited participants to explore the beauty of the Word of God through the actual reading and praying of the Psalms with further analysis and suggestions, and thus to experience the beauty of God’s creation, revelation and redemption, of which each human person is the highest expression.



June 13, 2015



Public Lecture: “Psycho-Human and Spiritual Integration from the Jungian Perspective”

This well-attended event was facilitated by Dr. Maria Teresa Gustilo-Villasor, a licensed psychologist and psychometrician. She has a private psychotherapy practice and is an associate lecturer at the Ateneo Center for Family Ministries and at the Asian Social Institute. In her lecture Dr. Villasor presented Carl Jung’s perspective on psycho-human and spiritual integration, an individual’s journey from unconsciousness to more and more consciousness of something bigger than oneself.



July 1-7, 2015

Babaylan Conference



ISA co-organized the Babaylan Conference on July 1-7, 2015 in Balay Agusan, Purok 7, Barangay San Teodoro, Municipality of Bunawan, Province of Agusan del Sur, Caraga Region, Northeastern Mindanao, Southern Philippines.

Fr. Rico Palaca Ponce, O.Carm, Fr. Gilbert Sabado, O.Carm. and Mr. Antonio Jamora represented the Institute.

The event was spearheaded by Grace Nono of the Tao Foundation for Culture and Arts, the Center for Babaylan Studies, Ginhawa and the Asian Social Institute. It attracted more than 50 participants.



The event was a mutual listening between a handful of Filipino babaylan (ritual healers) and other elders, and a number of Filipinos and Filipino diasporans in the fields of music and arts, religion, healthcare, gender studies, peace studies, environment studies, and postcolonial studies.

The theme was “Pamati (Listening to the Water and Songs of Ancestors”); pamati proceeded as a teasing out of voices, particularly of the silenced, and of empathetic listening. This enabled participants to know each other as Kapwa (identical) and as members of specific communities, ancestries and natural environments. It also opened the possibility of collaboration between the Babaylan and the groups supportive of their dream and vision.



August 5-7, 2015



The 15th Spirituality Forum was held on the theme “Secularization and Spirituality: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities in the Philippine Context.” Keynote speakers were Fr. Rico P. Ponce, O. Carm., Ph.D./S.Th. D., Executive Director of the Institute of Spirituality in Asia, and Fr. Dave Dean Capucan, Ph. D., S. Th. D. Rector of Saint Joseph Formation House. Other topics and speakers were:

1. “Secularization and Spirituality in the Context of the Family” with Dr. Filemon A. Uriarte, Jr. Chairman of the Couples for Christ Institute
2. “Secularization and Spirituality among Clergy and Religious” with Most Rev. Mylo Hubert C. Vergara, D.D., S.Th.D. Bishop of the Diocese of Pasig
3. “Secularization and Spirituality in Education: Building Communities of Encounter” with Fr. Gerard Francisco P. Timoner III, OP, Prior, Dominican Province of the Philippines
4. “Secularization and Spirituality in the Corporate World” with Ms. Susan Romero-Vidal, former Human Resources Manager, San Miguel Corporation

The 117 participants came from religious congregations of Asia and the Netherlands, as well as from different schools and institutions in the Philippines. As is customary, the forum was followed by a plenary sharing by the members of the Institute of Spirituality in Asia International Academic Advisory Board (IAAB).



August 14 – September 20, 2015



Public Lecture: “Consecrated Life and the Poor”

In celebration of the Year of Consecrated Life and of the Year of the Poor and through its Board Chair, Fr. Christian B. Buenafe, O.Carm., ISA scheduled a lecture and facilitated a series of talks entitled “Reflections on Consecrated Life and the Poor—its Spirituality and Challenges.”

Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija

Sixteen nuns of Carmel of Our Lady of Nazareth in Cabanatuan City attended the lecture-reflection on August 14, 2015.





Lila, Bohol

Eighty members of the Association of Religious Women in Tagbilaran (ARWIT) attended the talk of Fr. Buenafe on August 15, 2015. Venue was the Carmelite Monastery of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Joseph the Worker. The participants come from sixteen religious congregations working in this diocese.



Cebu City

On September 5, 2015, around 20 members of the Carmelite Family (Friars, Associates, Carmelite Sisters of Our Lady, lay Carmelites and Albertine students) gathered at San Alberto Carmelite Formation Center in Nasipit, Talamban, Cebu City.



Roxas City, Capiz

On September 13, 2015 Fr. Buenafe spoke before eighty diocesan and religious priests from the Diocese of Kalibo, Aklan and from the Missionary Servants of the Poor. Also present were lay groups from this diocese and from the Archdiocese of Capiz, seminarians from Sto. Nino Seminary of Kalibo and religious sisters— Carmelite nuns, Religious of the Virgin Mary, Sisters Servants of the Poor, Missionary Catechists of St. Therese, Daughters of Mary of Leuca, Merciful Sisters of St. Joseph, Crucified Sisters, Adorers of the Eucharist, and Franciscan Missionaries of Divine Mercy Sisters.



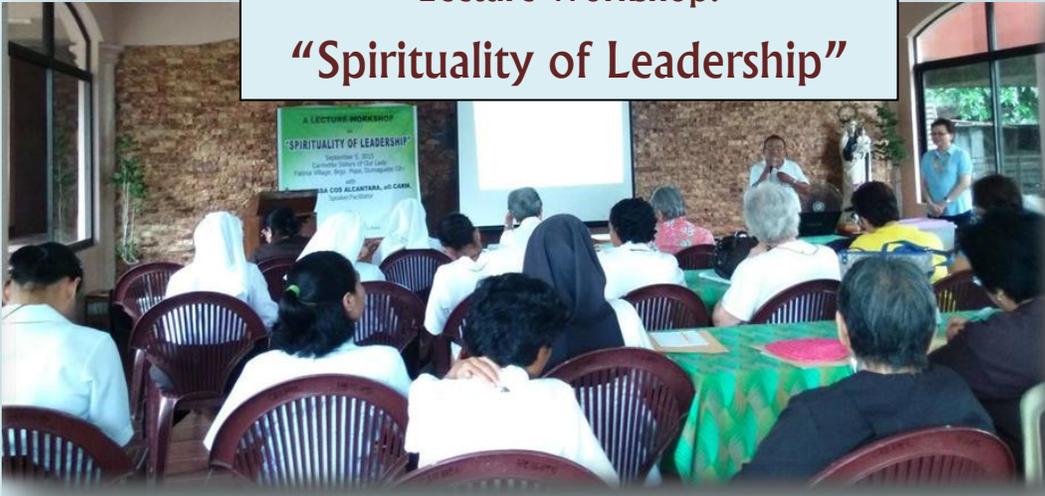
Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental

On September 20, 2105, around eighty religious sisters - Carmelite Sisters of Our Lady, Sisters of Mount Carmel and Ursuline Sisters of Somasca – attended the forum. There were also representatives from St. Joseph Seminary, Third Order Carmelites, Carmelite associates, lay leaders and members of Basic Ecclesial Communities and of Mother Butler Guild.



September 5, 2015

Lecture-Workshop: “Spirituality of Leadership”



The Carmelite associate based in Dumaguete City, Ms. Melvin Koerkamp, aO.Carm. together with the Carm.O.L. Sisters organized a one day lecture-workshop on "Spirituality of Leadership" facilitated by Dr. Marissa Cos Alcantara, aO.Carm. There were 44 participants coming from Carmelite family of Dumaguete and core leaders of the BEC of Dumaguete Cathedral. This event was hosted by the Carmelite Sisters of Our Lady in Fatima Village, Piapi, Dumaguete City.

September 12, 2015

Public Lecture: “Spirituality and the Ministry of Christian Leadership”



The Prior Provincial of the Order of Carmelites in the Philippines, Fr. Christian Buenafe, O.Carm., Ph.D., gave a public lecture on “Spirituality and the Ministry of Christian Leadership” before more than 40 participants.

He presented the findings of his survey of a number of superiors of major religious orders and congregations in the Philippines on the topic of Christian leadership. Also, he proposed a number of fresh definitions and insights on this topic as lived out and experienced by contemporary religious leaders.



Publications and Awards

The publication of ISA *Desperately Seeking God's Action: Yolanda Survivors' Hope Beyond Heartbreaking Lamentations* by Karl M. Gaspar, CSSR, Ph.D. topped in the categories of **Spirituality and Ministry during the 2015 Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards. Another publication of ISA's journal "Spirit Moves: The awarding** was held at the Mall of Asia during the 36th Manila International Book Fair – the first time it was hosted by the country's premiere book event.

The keynote speaker for CSCBA 2015 was Most Rev. Mylo Hubert Vergara, D.D., Bishop of Pasig and President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) Episcopal Commission on Social Communications and Mass Media. A video message came from Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, a member of ISA's Board of Trustees, who could not come in view of preparations for the international meeting on the family set in Philadelphia a week after CSCBA and for October's synod on the family set at the Vatican.



November 6-8, 2015

Mindfulness Educators' Retreat



ISA partnered with the Plum Village Philippines to organize a three-day mindfulness retreat for educators/students at the Titus Brandsma Center. The facilitators were monks coming from the Plum Village Hong Kong headed by Bro. Phap Kham.

There were 35 stay-in participants: teachers from both public and private schools and also a number of students.



November 28, 2015

Public Lecture: “Deepening Spirituality through Hatha Yoga”

Fr. Baltazar Ronato, O. Carm. shared insights from his quest for a deeper appreciation and understanding of the sacredness of the body. In his talk he also incorporated his personal experiences and observations on the unexplored yet very popular practice of *Hatha Yoga* in the light of the Theology of the Body of St. John Paul II. He clarified how the two cultures and faith-traditions actually show the sacredness of the body.



Book Launching: “Indigenous Earth Wisdom”



ISA has reprinted a publication of the Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary, “Indigenous Earth Wisdom.” On November 28, 2015, the Institute welcomed the authors of this documentation of the cosmologies of the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera - Judy Cariño-Fangloy, Merci Dulawan, Vicky Macay, Maria Elena Regpala and Lucia Ruiz - to a successful launching of their book at Titus Brandsma Center.



December 4, 2015

Concert for a Cause: “Himig ng Tulaog: Uyaying Sierra Madre”



In partnership with Tahanang Pag-asa and with Protect Sierra Madre, ISA coordinated a concert held at Titus Brandsma Center in the evening of December 4, 2015. Most of the performers and almost-200 guests are advocates for the preservation of this mountain range running through many of the provinces of Luzon. Some of the proceeds will be used for other similarly worthy causes.



December 5, 2015

“Paskong Ginhawa at Pagsamba”



“Paskong Ginhawa at Pagsamba” was a creative and meaningful celebration about and beyond Christmas held at Titus Brandsma Center on December 5, 2015. This was made possible with the new partnership between ISA and Ginhawa, Inc. (short for Growth in Wholeness and Well-being Associates). Ginhawa is a non-profit organization for the integration of spirituality, creativity and well-being. Its members are mostly teachers-facilitators and artists-healers who advocate integral well-being through transformative learning sessions, events and direct services to persons, groups, communities and organizations.



Seminar-Workshop: “Psycho-Spiritual Integration and Enrichment”

Three professors from the University of Santo Tomas facilitated a seminar-workshop on “Psycho-Spiritual Integration and Enrichment” for almost twenty participants.

The sessions allowed each participant to identify his/her strength and weaknesses through Enneagram. Results helped in positive development leading to inner joy, peace and happiness.

The sessions also focused on the integration of mind, body and soul.

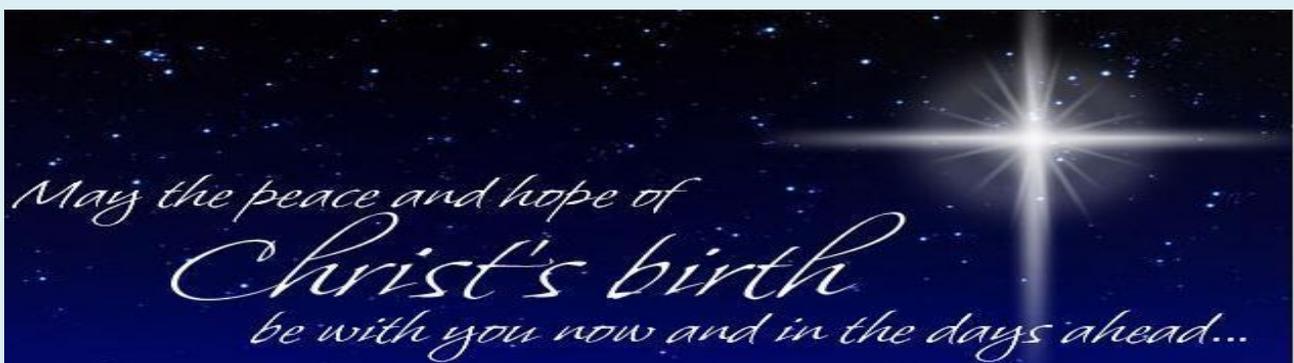
Real people, stories and emotional hurts in the past influence lives and block potentials. The workshop offered the opportunity to help demystify the human condition and empower people once more, relieve them of frustrations and hopelessness to take charge of their lives and strengthen the connection with the Creator . . . for richer, for poorer . . . in sickness and in health . . . to cling to Him forever.



December 15, 2015

Christmas Fellowship

After the monthly staff meeting, ISA and selected friends and volunteers all had a Christmas fellowship lunch at Robinsons Magnolia. This was a celebration for thanking everyone for their love and support to ISA. The Prior Provincial of the Order of Carmelites, Fr. Christian Buenafe, O.Carm., joined the celebration.



*May the peace and hope of
Christ's birth
be with you now and in the days ahead...*

