



Institute of Spirituality in Asia

BULLETIN 2014 (An Annual Report on ISA Programs and Activities)

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Dear readers,

Greetings of peace and good health from all of us in the Institute of Spirituality in Asia (ISA)!

We are now in the first quarter of the 21st century, a tremendous time which allows us to enjoy advances in technology and in access to financial and career opportunities. But we have also seen how these developments can impede our practice of faith and spirituality.

Asia is known to be the home of great and ancient spiritualities. Unfortunately, with globalization and evolving social dynamics, we are often exposed to violent images as well as to stressful and rapidly changing environments. We are seeing how these factors make it difficult for us to live-out and share important tenets and values. And so, we ask: What is the picture of our spirituality in the 21st century? How are the great and ancient spiritualities of Asia responding to the challenges and demands of contemporary times?

ISA commits itself to continue providing opportunities wherein people can nurture and deepen their spirituality. Through our spirituality fora and public lectures, ISA shall continue to serve dioceses and parishes, formation houses and seminaries, religious congregations and societies, schools and church-based programs and practical formations of transformed servant-leaders.

The main components of ISA's programs are Research and Publications; Academic Program; Workshops and Seminars on Spirituality; Spirituality Fora and Public Lectures on Spirituality; and maintenance of a specialized library on spirituality.

Please allow us to share with you our **2014 ISA Bulletin**. It is our yearly effort to establish an affinity with our students, alumni, sponsors, benefactors, partners, collaborators, friends and members of the ISA Family, both locally and internationally.

We offer you a short description of our activities, including seminar-workshops, summer courses, books and similar outputs, research monographs, meetings of the International Academic Advisory Board (IAAB) and of the Board of Trustees (BOT) and many others.

We hope and pray that you or some of your colleagues can join us in the different activities to be organized by our institute in 2015.

We thank all of you and all other people who, in one way or another, have become part of the ISA Family in the realization of its vision, mission and goals.

Merry Christmas to you! May all your dreams for the coming year be fulfilled and may you find joy and love.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rico Palaca Ponce', with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

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

PUBLIC LECTURE

To start 2014, ISA held the Public Lecture on “**Sexual Transformation and Integration in San Juanist and Tibetan Buddhist Context**” by **Mr. Virgil Antonio, OCDS**. This was held on **January 31, 2014** with 55 participants at the Titus Brandsma Center, New Manila, Quezon City.

The talk explored the possibility of integrating the profound spiritual treasures of two great spiritualities available to anyone who is fully determined to free oneself from all the sufferings in the world.

The lecture also explored the depths of San Juanist spirituality which brings one back to the fundamental Carmelite spirituality of the Prophet Elijah and Brother B. and the experiences of the early Carmelite hermits at the Wadi in Eshia.

The speaker joined the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites in 1991 and has been with the order since then. He is also a teacher of mysticism in the context of inter-religious dialogue, particularly Christian and Buddhist mysticism. At the moment he looks after the Arya Tara Rigpa-Rime Gompa, an ecumenical contemplative community, and gives long and short retreats and seminars ranging from Dzogchen- Mahamudra to Christian Mysticism to Community Transformation to Deep Ecofeminism to World Mysticism and East-West Contemplative Spirituality.



PUBLIC LECTURE

In the afternoon of **February 28, 2014** at the Titus Brandsma Center, a Public Lecture was held on “**Women and Spirituality**” with **Prof. Arche Ligo** as resource person. There were 36 participants who attended.

The presentation looked into the themes of women and spirituality. It also sought to raise women's perspectives in the area of spirituality, address differences/relationship between faith, religion and spirituality, and contextualize the theme of spirituality in Filipino/Asian women’s situations and issues.

The presentation used Asian feminist hermeneutics for its analytic framework to identify elements present in women's spirituality.

Prof. Ligo is a faculty member of the Women's Studies Program of St. Scholastica's College, Manila, and a professor at the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies.



MARCH 2014

PUBLIC LECTURE

Dr. Ma. Concepcion Abaya gave a lecture on “**Culture of Unity – A Paradigm for Peace and Harmony**” on March 28, 2014 for almost 30 participants coming from different organizations, religious congregations and universities in Metro Manila.

Dr. Abaya has a doctorate degree in Peace and Development from Notre Dame University, Cotabato City through a Mindanao Advanced Education Project (MAEP) scholarship. She also holds a Ph.D. in Sociology degree from Xavier University and a Master in Arts in History degree from the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City through the Roberto Villanueva Scholarship Program.

She is a member of the Focolare Movement, just like a guest speaker who graced the occasion - **Dr. Crescencia Gabijan**, a professor from the University of Santo Tomas.



APRIL 2014

2014 SUMMER COURSE
“Filipino Spirituality”

The summer course on “Filipino Spirituality” was successfully held on April 28-May 3, 2014 at the Titus Brandsma Center. It was attended by 20 regular participants plus six participants who came on selected dates. They were from different congregations, organizations and institutions.



The topics and speakers were:

- 1) **April 28, 2014: “Spirituality: A General Introduction”** given by **Fr. Rico P. Ponce, O.Carm., Ph.D.** the Executive Director of the Institute of Spirituality in Asia
- 2) **April 29, 2014: “Christian Elements in Filipino Spirituality”** given by **Fr. Christian B. Buenafe, O.Carm., Ph.D.** the Prior Provincial of the Order of Carmelites, Philippine Province of Blessed Titus Brandsma
- 3) **April 30, 2014: “Filipino Spirituality: Towards a Discursive Reflexivity”** given by **Dr. Robert V. Panaguiton**, an associate professor from Ateneo de Zamboanga University, Zamboanga City
- 4) **May 1, 2014: “Filipino Lay Spirituality”** given by **Dr. Jose de Mesa** a professor of Systematic Theology at the Inter-Congregational Theological Center (ICTC) and a visiting Luzbetak professor of Mission and Culture at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago
- 5) **May 2, 2014: “An Approach to Filipino Spirituality through Dance”** given by **Ms. Leah Tolentino, M.L.A.** a lecturer and part-time faculty of the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies. She is also the director of GINHAWA, which integrates creativity and spirituality at the service of well-being.
- 6) **May 3, 2014: “The Impact of Pandama on Filipino Spirituality in Mutual Dialogue with Newman's Spirituality”** given by **Dr. Rebecca Cacho**, a full-time theology professor at St. Scholastica's College and a part-time professor at the graduate program of De La Salle University, Manila.

MAY 2014

SEMINAR-WORKSHOP

A Retreat Seminar-Workshop on “**Sexuality Transformation in San Juanist and Teresian Context**” was held on May 23-25, 2014 by **Mr. Virgil Antonio, OCDS**. This retreat seminar–workshop explored the depths of San Juanist spirituality, and brought the 20 participants back to the fundamental Carmelite spirituality of the Prophet Elijah and Brother B. and of the experiences of the early Carmelite hermits at the Wadi in Eshia.



JUNE 2014

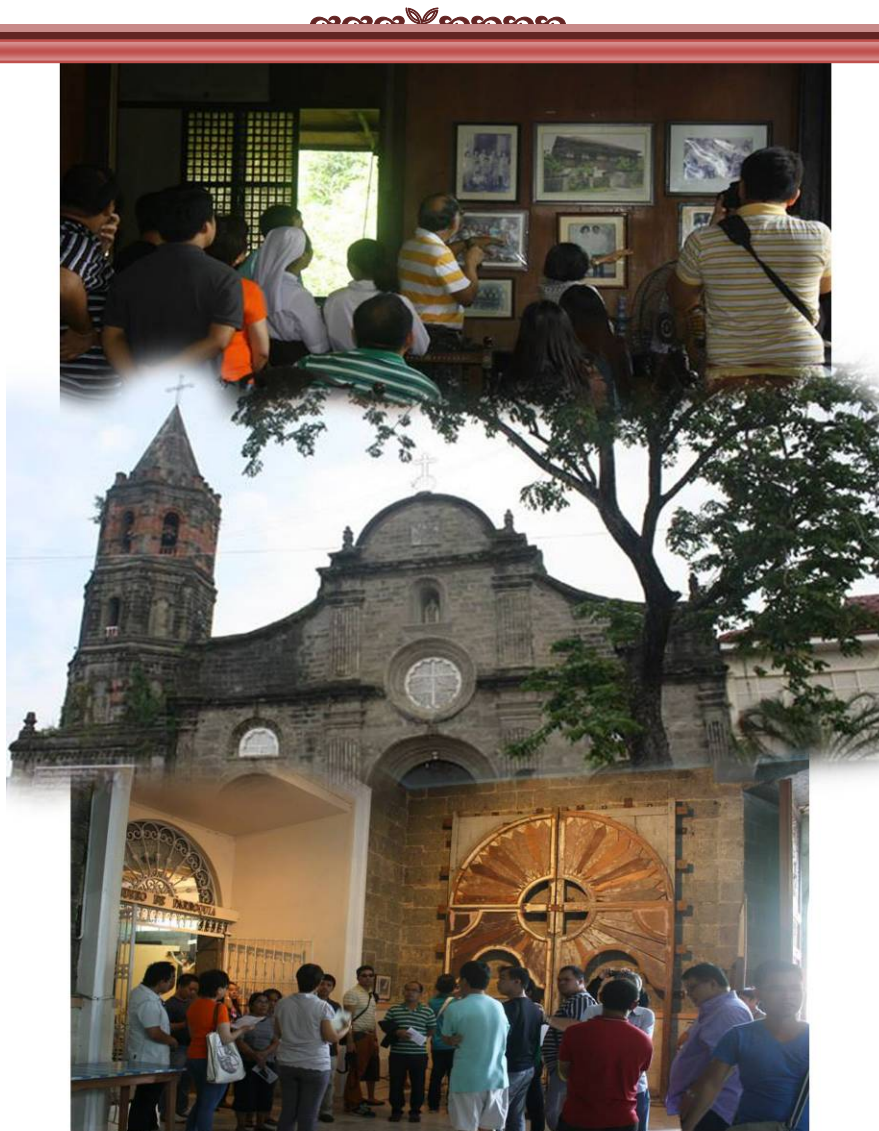
PUBLIC LECTURE

The topic of “**Toward a Liberating Spirituality in the Context of the 21st Century**” had **Prof. Renato T. Dela Cruz** of Miriam College as speaker. Attended by 21 participants from different institutions, organizations and religious congregations, his talk was held last on June 28, 2014 at the St. Elijah House, New Manila, Quezon City.



PILGRIMAGE-TOUR

For the very first time ISA organized a pilgrimage-tour on July 12, 2014. The theme of “Exploring Spirituality: A Pilgrimage to Historical Churches of Bulacan” attracted 35 enthusiastic and prayerful participants. They visited the following: National Shrine of Divine Mercy, National Shrine of Saint Ann Mother of Mary in Hagonoy, Basilica Minore of Immaculate Conception and Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Malolos, Church of San Juan Bautista in Calumpit, Bulacan, Church of San Isidro in Pulilan, and Church of Santo Niño in Bustos.



AUGUST 2014

14TH SPIRITUALITY FORUM

The 14th Spirituality Forum was held on August 6-8, 2014. The theme was “Dancing with God in the 21st Century: Spirituality in the Asian Context”.



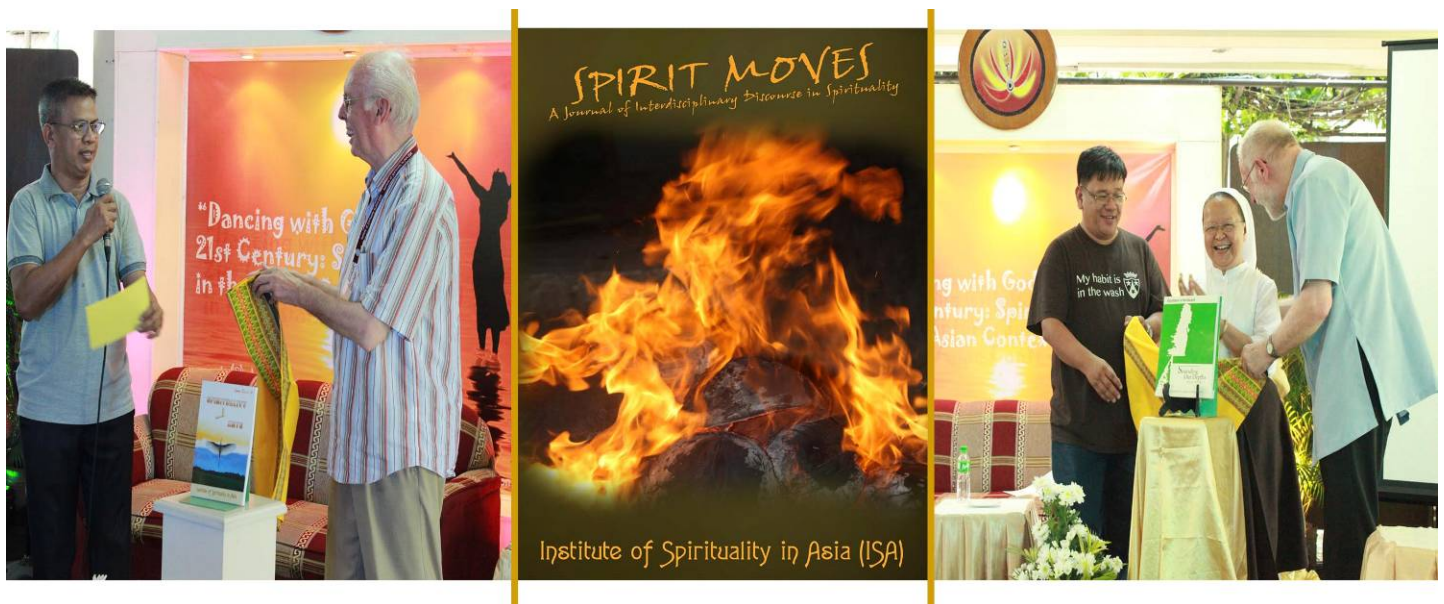
Prof. Dr. Crescencia Gabijan delivered the keynote address. The other topics were:

- 1) **“Buddhist Spirituality: Issues, Concerns, Challenges and Opportunities in the Context of Asia Today”** with **Prof. Dr. Alfredo Co**
- 2) **“Dancing with God in the 21st Century: Spirituality in the Context of Disasters”** with **Bro. Carlito Gaspar, CSSR, Ph.D.**
- 3) **“Hindu Spirituality: Issues, Concerns, Challenges and Opportunities in the Context of Asia Today”** with **Ms. Yogita Sharma**
- 4) **“Silencing My Soul: Concerns, Challenges and Opportunities of Jewish – Christian Spirituality in the Context of Asia Today”** with **Prof. Dr. Kees Waaijman, O. Carm**

The forum was attended by 117 participants coming from different religious congregations in Asia and the Netherlands, and by lay persons coming from different schools and institutions in the Philippines. As is customary, the forum was followed by a plenary sharing by the members of the ISA International Academic Advisory Board (IAAB).

BOOK LAUNCHING

ISA launched three books during the 14th Spirituality Forum. The first was the first issue of ISA Journal entitled “Spirit Moves”, a journal on interdisciplinary discourse in spirituality. The second was a facilitator’s handbook written by Sr. Flor Pauline Duran, Carm.O.L., the superior of the Carmelite Sisters of Our Lady; it was entitled “Sounding Our Depths”. The third was “Lecture Series XII on Spirituality”.



BOOK AWARDS RECEIVED

ISA continues to win **Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards**. Two publications won as best books during the **2014 Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards** held on August 27, 2014 at the Arzobispado, Intramuros, Manila. “Songs of the Babaylan: Living Voices, Medicines, Spiritualities of the Philippine Ritualists-Oralists-Healers” by Ms. Grace Nono was awarded **Best Book in Spirituality**. Another book that received an award is the “**Living Flame: A Journal on the Interdisciplinary Discourse in Spirituality**” for **Ministry** category.



SEMINAR-WORKSHOP

A seminar-workshop on **“Communication Spirituality: Developing a Disposition for Christian Communication”** was held on September 9-11, 2014. This was facilitated by **Ms. Angela Blardony Ureta, aO. Carm.**, a seasoned producer and writer of multi-awarded television and radio programs. Twenty-one participants coming from different schools and religious organizations completed the course.



SYMPOSIUM

The Institute of Spirituality in Asia, the St. Joseph Formation Center and the Socio-Pastoral Institute organized a **Symposium on the Theology of Bishop Julio X. Labayen, OCD** on September 16, 2014, at the Maryhill School of Theology. The symposium focused on the **“Theology of Bishop Labayen on the Laity”** and had **Dr. Jose de Mesa** as speaker.



BOOK AWARD

“Songs of the Babaylan: Living Voices, Medicines, Spiritualities of the Philippine Ritualists-Oralists-Healers” by **Ms. Grace Nono** got its second award, this time from the 2014 Gintong Aklat Awards organized by the Book Development Association of the Philippines during the Manila International Book Fair at the SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia, Pasay City. The book was chosen the best in the **“Arts and Culture”** category.



BOOK FAIRS

As a member of the Asian Catholic Communicators, Inc. (ACCI), ISA participated in the **35th Manila International Book Fair (MIBF)** on September 17-21, 2014 at the SMX Convention Center, Pasay City.

On September 26-28, 2014 at Mega Halls 1 and 2 in Mandaluyong City, ISA joined the 2014 National Art Fair organized by the Department of Trade and Industry.



OCTOBER 2014

PUBLIC LECTURE

Prof. Dr. Eliseo R. “Jun” Mercado, Jr., OMI, Ph.D. gave a lecture on **“Bangsamoro Basic Law Prospects for Peace and Progress”** last October 9, 2014 at the Titus Brandsma Center. There were more than 30 participants, mostly members of the Focolare Movement.



LECTURE-MEDITATION

For the second time ISA hosted the **“Mindfulness: Happy Teachers will Change the World”** activity at the Titus Brandsma Center on October 11, 2014. This collaboration with the Plum Village Hong Kong drew more than 20 participants.

The course helped educators to gain specific experience, increase their knowledge of practical tools and of mindful methods that are specifically relevant to them, and learn how to form and sustain mindful communities in schools, universities and homes. It also enabled participants to explore the workings of their bodies and minds, and to use the power of silence and self-care to increase clear thinking and action.



PUBLIC LECTURE

A Public Lecture on “**Spirituality of a Selected Group of Filipino Adolescents with Absentee-Fathers**” with **Dr. Milagros Cortez-Arrebillaga**, a licensed guidance councilor, as speaker was held at the Titus Brandsma Center on October 25, 2014.

The lecture highlighted the experiences of a selected group of Filipino adolescents with absentee-fathers working abroad. It focused specifically on self-concept, perception about their fathers, feelings in the absence and periodic presence of their fathers, and specific behaviors influenced by the said absence.

The spirituality of the participants that surfaced from their lived experiences was also discussed.

The session featured noteworthy statements from some of the participants and/or family representatives who were accessed for validation purposes.



ATTENDING THE CATHOLIC MASS MEDIA AWARDS (CMMA)

As an awardee of the Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards of CMMA, ISA was invited to the 36th Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMA) Night last October 29, 2014 at the GSIS Building, Roxas Boulevard., Pasay City.

Fr. Rico P. Ponce, O.Carm. and Fr. Christian B. Buenafe, O.Carm. attended the said event with the trophies of the books “Songs of the Babaylan” (Best Book in Spirituality) and “Living Frame: Spirit Moves” (Best Book in Ministry).



NOVEMBER 2014

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

Last **November 14-16, 2014**, the ISA Team of **Fr. Rico Ponce, O.Carm.**, **Dr. Marissa Alcantara, aO.Carm.** and **Ms. Joy Kialkial** was in Kupang, Indonesia for an International Workshop on “**Spirituality of Leadership and Management**”. They organized this workshop in partnership with **Widya Mandira Catholic University** through the rector of the university, **Fr. Yulius Yasinto, SVD**, and a Ph.D. graduate of ISA, **Fr. Yohanis Masneno, SVD**.

In the afternoon of the first day afternoon, the opening ceremony started with the **Eucharistic Celebration** presided by **Fr. Yasinto**, with **Fr. Ponce** as homilist. Introduction of the participants followed, and objectives were set by **Fr. Masneno**. The first **workshop (Diad Sharing)** – **short input** came after dinner, and was facilitated by **Fr. Ponce** as ISA Executive/Academic Director.

On the second day, the workshop started with the **Eucharistic celebration** presided by **Fr. David Amfotis, SVD** with **Fr. Masneno** as homilist. After breakfast came an input from **Fr. Masneno** on “**Setting the Mind and Heart to Lead and to Manage with the Spiritual Direction**” and a group sharing which was later discussed in plenary.

After lunch and siesta, an input from the ISA Assistant Academic Director **Dr. Marissa Alcantara, aO.Carm.** on “**The Four Pillars of Leadership and Management**” followed, plus group sharing and reporting in plenary.

On the last day of the workshop, **Fr. Ponce** presided over the Mass, together with **Fr. Yasinto** as homilist. An input and workshop from **Fr. Ponce** on “**Biblical Models of Leadership and Management**” came after breakfast.

The participants presented plenary reports, after which **Fr. Ponce** gave the final input and closed the morning session. The post-lunch activity had ISA Academic Assistant **Ms. Joy Kialkial** presenting the Institute of Spirituality in Asia – Perspective for Collaboration. Then followed a written evaluation of the workshop from the participants and the distribution of certificates. The **Widya Mandira Catholic University** gave certificates of appreciation to the speakers signed by the rector **Fr. Yulius Yasinto, SVD**. The closing remarks came from **Fr. Rico Ponce, O.Carm.** and the closing liturgy, from **Fr. Yulius Yasinto, SVD**.

The workshop officially ended at 4:00 in the afternoon.

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP



PUBLIC LECTURE

Dr. Carmen Alviar, a professor from the University of Santo Tomas, gave a public lecture on **“Spirituality of Work in an Academic Setting”** on November 22, 2014 at the Titus Brandsma Center, New Manila, Quezon City. She gave a two-part lecture.

The first part gave the biblical basis for spirituality and work, and discussed various views on work and the development of basic values of work in individuals, families and society.

The second part gave the results of a study on how selected faculty members perceive themselves and view their work. The objects found in their workplaces that remind them of God’s presence and that inspire them in the performance of their work were identified and described.



PUBLIC LECTURE

The last Public Lecture for 2014 was successfully held at the Titus Brandsma Center on **December 6, 2014.**

Mr. Ramonito Perez, a professor from La Consolacion College, Bulacan, spoke on **“Spirituality of Forbearance: A Response to the Emerging New Religious Movement in the 21st Century”** He drew 20 participants coming from different organizations and institutions.

The session clarified questions and issues on the religious pluralism of the post-modern generation, and promoted harmony of religious beliefs via a listening and forgiving heart embedded in the theology of the Cross and the Holy Trinity.

The presentation also provided a reasoned response to the confusion and tension brought about by emerging pluralistic beliefs via a spirituality of forbearance, which will find ways to settle misunderstandings between mainstream religions and the cultic beliefs of the New Religious Movement of the 21st century.



BOOK LAUNCHING

A new book of Bro. Carlito (Karl) M. Gaspar, CSsR, Ph.D. on **“Desperately Seeking God’s Saving Action: Yolanda Survivors’ Hope Beyond Heartbreaking Lamentations”** was published by the Institute of Spirituality in Asia and launched at the Titus Brandsma Center on December 15, 2014. It was again launched on December 18, 2014, care of the Redemptorists of Bajada, Davao City.

Another two launchings are scheduled for January 2015. The first will be on January 12, 2015 at the Redemptorists in Cebu City and the second will be on January 15, 2015 at the Redemptorists, St. Gerard Pastoral Center, Real St., Tacloban City.



CHRISTMAS FELLOWSHIP

The Institute of Spirituality in Asia's 2014 Christmas Fellowship took place on December 19, 2014. It began with the Eucharistic celebration presided by ISA Executive Director Fr. Rico Ponce, O.Carm. A program followed for ISA staff, alumni and students who were all invited.

