



# SPU Manila INTER-OFFICE BULLETIN

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**SHARING... SHARING...**

## **SPU Manila represented in 32<sup>nd</sup> Executive Meeting of ASEAN-Japan Friendship Association for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (AJAFA-21)**

Contributed by Portia Zoleta-Vitug, RN, PhD



**Delegates from ASEAN countries and Japan**

The ASEAN-JAPAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is headed by an Executive Council, represented by the alumni associations among ASEAN countries and Japan. This year's Executive Council Meeting (ECM) was attended by all AJAFA-21 alumni associations and a representative from Japan International Cooperation Agency, Thailand.

The Training Programme For Young Leaders, the former Youth Invitation Program, began in 1984 for six countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand). During the past 20 years, the program has played a significant role in deepening friendship between Japan and ASEAN countries. The program has since expanded to cover 120 countries, and the total number of youths who have participated in the program through 2003 is more than 26,000.

The alumni associations of the Training Programme for Young Leaders were organized one by one in the six ASEAN countries, started with Indonesia in 1985 for the former training program. The original idea behind setting up alumni associations was to deepen the friendship that was cultivated through the program. Today, alumni associations for the Training Programme for Young Leaders have been established in the three new ASEAN member countries—Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam as well. (The alumni associations of Brunei and Singapore have been closed already.)

All of these associations were integrated into an organization called AJAFA-21, or ASEAN-Japan Friendships Association for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, in 1988 with the objective of fostering closer relationships between ASEAN countries and Japan through social, cultural, educational, and other activities. AJAFA-21 hosts the Regional Leader Forum, as well as the Annual Executive Council Meeting, on a rotating basis among the member countries. These activities help expand human networks not only with Japan but also with neighboring countries.



**Portia representing the Philippines**

*Being part of the Faculty of St Paul Manila, I am proud to share and to be chosen to represent the Philippines in the ASEAN -JAPAN Executive Council Meeting in Thailand.*

*This meeting provided the representatives of each country the opportunity for the development of their leadership and social skills through an intellectual discourse with executive officers and other delegates of the ECM from ASEAN region and Japan.*

*It fostered strong partnership among ASEAN countries and Japan.*

*Communication, Collaboration, Culture, Creativity, and Commitment. Each of the five Cs builds on the previous one, to form a complete structure which fosters teamwork and relationship building.*



**Portia receiving her certificate**

## **LENTEEN OBSERVANCES IN SPU MANILA**

### **Ashes and voices: SPU Manila Lenten observance begins**

Contributed by Vanderlianne Bernales

*The Paulinian*

St. Paul University Manila began preparations for the Lenten Season on 26 February 2020 with an Ash Wednesday Mass and a worship program, *The Feast*, in the Fleur-de-lis Theater.

Ash Wednesday opens the Lenten season with fasting, prayer, and receiving a cross mark on the forehead. It is observed 46 days before Easter.

This year, the traditional laying of ash was supposed to be replaced by ash sprinkling on top of the head as a precautionary measure to the circulating 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). But at the last minute, the organizers of the Mass changed it back to the marking of ashes on the forehead.

After the Mass, *The Feast*, a religious program composed of worship songs and an inspirational talk, was held for students. It was led by invited preacher, Bro. Lep Somera, head of *The Feast* SM Manila and his team.

In his talk, Bro. Lep shared his thoughts about sacrificing and fasting during the Lenten season.

"Sacrifice isn't about you losing, it is about you winning. We are (often) scared of letting go because we just think of what we are losing, when in fact we are winning," he said.

Culling from his personal experiences and struggles, Bro. Somera explained the importance of Ash Wednesday, in a comedic way suited to the young demographic of the crowd.

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS ON FRIDAYS OF LENT

From *The Paulinian*

On 29 February 2020, the first Friday of Lent, the Paulinian Liturgical Animators, SPC Sisters, members of the CMPA Council, and The Paulinian, along with the whole SPU Manila community, prayed The Stations of the Cross.

This Lenten Season, everyone is invited to follow the journey of Jesus on the way to His crucifixion and death every Friday at 5:00 P.M. at the University Quadrangle.



## A SISTER'S STORY



"Sister, retired na po ba kayo sa serbisyo?"

"Wala pong retirement sa amin, Father. Kailangan po kaming maglingkod hangga't kaya, lalo ngayong kaunti lang ang pumapasok. May tatlong parokya kaming iiwanan. Baka isama ako sa ililipat. 78 yrs na ako. 56 yrs na madre. Sana hindi nila ako alisin sa Kidney Center, cancer ward, Father. Mahal ko ang mga alaga ko."

**Food for thought during this Lenten season**