

Evaluation Report on :

“March Into The Bright Decade”
Pastoral Exhortation
Interim Report And Proposals

The Committee for Promoting the Cardinal’s Pastoral Exhortation :
“March into the Bright Decade”

February 2, 2001

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Preamble

On Pentecost Sunday 1995, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Cardinal John B. Wu, adopted the theme “Proclaim the Gospel of the Lord, Spread the Kingdom of God” as the objective for the pastoral mission of the Diocese in the following five years. The objective has seven major spheres of work, namely Formation of the Laity, Small Communities of Faith, Ongoing Formation of Priests, Brothers and Sisters, Mass Communications, Education, Social Services and Relation of the Diocese with China and with the Church in China. Ever since then, leaders of related organizations and institutes have been working hard on promoting and implementing the various plans and recommendations. Despite limited resources and shortage of manpower, a degree of success has been achieved by concerted efforts. It is hoped that the Diocesan Synod which has just begun will be able to put more concretely all the related proposals and plans into practice.

The evaluation method adopted by the Committee for Promoting the Cardinal’s Pastoral Exhortation was relatively simple. Starting from September 1999, all organizations concerned were invited to reflect and review on the concrete plans recommended in the seven major spheres, and to submit reports accordingly. All the reports were carefully studied and analyzed at the meetings of the present Committee. They were then compiled into one full complete report by the Secretariat of the Committee. After being finally discussed and passed at the meeting of the Committee on 14th August 2000, the complete Evaluation Report was submitted to the Cardinal, and it was planned to be released to the public through Kung Kao Po and Sunday Examiner. Each of the members of the Diocesan Synod would also be provided with a copy of this Evaluation Report for reference, so that the pastoral directions of the whole Diocese could be followed through.

1. Formation of the Laity

It was pointed out in the Pastoral Exhortation Interim Report that five essential aspects (a deep faith, a sense of the Church, love for Hong Kong, concern for China, and the mission of evangelization) had to be cultivated in the laity formation work, and that the various formation organizations in the diocese should arrange specific formation items as target for these five essential elements.

1.1 Diversified Formation Work

1.1.1 Diocesan Office for Laity Formation

The Diocese has all along been greatly concerned with laity formation work, and between 1990 and 1994 established three regional Laity Formation Centers in three different districts, Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, to share and to follow up on the work of laity formation. In order to pool resources and to support the activities of laity formation and the promotion of small communities of faith in Deaneries and Parishes, the Laity Formation Centers were re-organized on 1st March 1998 with the setting up of the Diocesan Office for Laity Formation (hereafter called the Formation Office).

The ideals and mission of the Formation Office were to enable the local laity to share one's faith with others, to know how to integrate it into daily life, and to continue to develop oneself into a mature Christian. It was also the object of the Formation Office to conduct diversified and universal faith formation programmes and activities, and to support Parishes in developing small communities of faith.

The Formation Office has always put emphasis on organizing formation programmes, including both self-organized outreach collaborative programmes. Self-organized programmes were based mainly on the different 'signs of the times' in design, all were short and in unit form without duplicating the systematic long programmes run by the various tertiary institutions in the Diocese. The recently organized "Lay Ministry Programme" was also conducted initially in unit form, the aim being to constrict it into a systematic formation programme in one or two years' time when mature. The outreach programmes, on the other hand, were organized in response to the invitation of the parishes, and its contents were designed in collaboration with them.

As mentioned above, the principal aim of the Formation Office was to conduct formation programmes of different kinds and diversified topics to meet the various needs and interests of the laity, to help them to understand the local society as well as

the characteristics of the Chinese culture, and to heighten their awareness of a sense of the Church, love for Hong Kong, concern for China, and their evangelical mission. Apart from the above mentioned, the Formation Office also conducted a general open talk on formation once every two months for the purposes of studying the Bible, deepening the faith and achieving an integration between faith and daily life.

To support the formation work of the Deaneries and Parishes, and to enhance the sense of belonging to the Church among the laity, the Formation Office frequently collaborated with the Deaneries and Parishes in running outreach formation programmes, sending personnel officers to the Deaneries and Parishes to conduct formation talks or activities, making it convenient for the parishioners to attend, and at the same time encouraging the participation of the laity from other Parishes.

Apart from this kind of collaboration with the Deaneries and Parishes, the Formation Office also, upon invitation, sent formation officers to Deaneries and Parishes to conduct formation programmes or activities which were mainly internal training for local parishioners.

Every month, the Formation Office would collect information on formation activities run by different Diocesan organizations in order to compile an updated comprehensive list of Catholic Formation and Evangelization Activities in Hong Kong. This list was then sent out by fax and e-mail to all Catholic schools including secondary, primary and kindergarten, Caritas units, Diocesan organizations, associations of the faithful and over two hundred individual laymen. It would also be sent to all Parishes for display on their notice boards. This would not only allow the parishioners to acquire knowledge of the formation activities run by the various organizations and to choose whatever kinds of activities they found suitable to join, but would also help indirectly to increase their sense of belonging to the Catholic Church

To enhance the sense of belonging to the Church, an Orientation Day for the newly baptized was conducted every year by the Formation Office together with the Hong Kong Central Council of Catholic Laity. During the event, the newly baptized were welcomed into the Church and were given some introduction to the formation resources. The Orientation Day had a threefold objective: 1) to acquire knowledge of the relationship between the Universal Church and the local Church through watching a video; 2) to get to know the formation organization through games and to encourage the laity to participate in the formation programmes; and 3) to understand the needs of the laity and the problems they had to face through a debate on faith.

In collaboration with the Chinese group of the Hong Kong Catholic Charismatic Service Committee, a training programme on witnessing for evangelization was conducted by the Formation Office in 1998. After the Evangelization Rally named “Contradictions of life” (生命的音符) which was held in March 1998, the Formation Office continued to provide manpower support for the preparation of another large-scale event for evangelization named “Freedom Chained by Daily Habits” (飛越人間鎖) which was held by the Hong Kong East Deanery at Queen Elizabeth Stadium Wanchai in 1999. The theme of this event was adapted from the well-known “Christmas Carol”, a drama with a message saying that people should free themselves from worldly burdens.

The Formation Office had also been invited by the University of Hong Kong Catholic Society, HKUSU, to share the skills of evangelization. Difficulties in evangelization on campus were also looked into.

Ever since its establishment, the Formation Office has been making great efforts to conduct general Biblical Formation programmes, and to offer outreach formation programmes and services either at the Bishop Lei Pastoral Center, Sai Wan Ho, or in collaboration with various Deaneries and Parishes.

Starting from 1995, the Catholic Faith Hotline of the Formation Office has been providing information on faith formation. The number of people gaining access to the hotline was steadily increasing. Comprising nine telephone lines and one fax line, the Faith Hotline was providing a 24-hour daily service of Catholic information. Users could listen to the contents by telephone, obtain the information by fax, or contact the Formation Office directly during office hours. Since 1998, 26 Catholic organizations had joined the Faith Hotline service in providing formation materials of their own.

Starting from 1st May 1998, the Formation Office and the Hong Kong Catholic Social Communications Office has been jointly providing hotline information about the schedule of the Mass celebrations in English in various Parishes. People who wished to make enquiries could call 2885-3800.

During the Book Exhibition in July 1998, the Formation Office sent officers to the venue to distribute information leaflets on the Faith Hotline, explaining the hotline operation to the visitors and providing trial use on the spot. The response was very positive and over 50,000 copies of information leaflets on the hotline were distributed. With the assistance of Caritas – Hong Kong, 105,000 copies of the hotline information leaflets were given out at the Caritas Bazaars held in six different districts

in Hong Kong at the end of October 1998. Arrangements were also made to distribute the information leaflets and to introduce the Catholic faith to the new immigrants at a carnival held specially for them by Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service on 29th November 1998. From the end of December 1998 onwards, a 10-second promotion display of the Faith Hotline was provided for passers-by at Causeway Bay and Mongkok. Two large electronic advertising boards were used and the display was made once an hour, three days a week.

The Laity Formation Resource Centre was established right after the setting up of the Formation Office in 1998. It provided more than 300 formation videos for loan on behalf of the Hong Kong Central Council of Catholic Laity, and collected various kinds of information such as on non-traditional Christian denominations, newspaper clippings on duplication of living species. It also provided information on faith formation for members of small communities, such as Bible-study materials, catalogues of activity materials for small gatherings, spiritual formation materials for individual members, materials of sacramental liturgy, information on Catholic and Protestant book shops, retreat venues and theological seminaries and so forth. The role of the Laity Formation Resource Centre was different from that of the library of the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy. The Resource Center was intended to help teachers of Religious knowledge in schools, leaders of associations of the laity in the parish, Sunday school tutors, catechism class instructors, and leaders of small communities of faith and so forth, to acquire the required reference materials for formation, teaching and gathering, and for use in Church services.

To keep up with the rapid development of information technology on internet, the Formation Officer started a homepage in February 1999 for making available formation materials (such as the Faith Hotline information), and allowing more people to acquire whatever was necessary through the latest electronic media.

The Formation Office had distributed to schools and Parishes more than 70,000 free pamphlets on “Knowing more about the Catholic Faith series: To know the Catholic Faith” (「天主教信仰知多 D 系列之認識天主教信仰」) in which simple wording and lively pictures were used to introduce the Catholic faith so as to suit the different needs of a wide range of people. A second pamphlet of the series was also published, carrying the theme “What is Evangelization”.

Over 30 talks on faith formation held in the past have been recorded and edited in audio tapes. More than 1,000 copies of these audio tapes have been produced for sale to organizations and individual laity.

Reflection and Recommendations

Laity formation programmes or activities such as open talks, short programmes, workshops, live-in camps, long-term programmes and so forth, can be designed according to the length of time available. Generally speaking, long-term programmes are more influential and penetrating than the short ones. What is more important, however, is how the content can affect the participants. Tutors usually accelerate participants' reflection through person to person effects, kindling again their internal flame, and strengthening their will to fulfill the mission of evangelization.

Most of the laity participate in the formation programmes mainly for the purpose of self-enrichment. They tend to emphasize participation in parish and liturgy activities, but less the integration of faith into daily life. Formation organizations should in the future direct participants' attention to service in the Church and to the commitment to evangelization. Formation organizations should also co-ordinate or through different ways, encourage life-long learning among the laity, for instance, through the recognition of credits obtained at other organizations. They should continue their contact with the programme participants, so that they will eventually serve their own parishes.

1.2 Systematic Formation Work

1.2.1 Holy Spirit Seminary College (Philosophy and Theology)

Starting from 1970s, the Holy Spirit Seminary College admitted laity to study philosophy and theology programmes, with a view to enhancing their quality, and deepening their faith in both knowledge and implementation, so that they can join in the mission of the Church and share in the task of evangelization. Up to 1999, over 150 laity had successfully completed either the 2-year Bachelor of Philosophy course, the 4-year Bachelor of Theology course or the 4-year Bachelor of Religious Studies course. Three of them had also completed the 2-year Master of Theology programme.

It seems to have been wasteful that in the real situation, batch after batch of graduates has not been absorbed into the organizational structure of the Church. Nevertheless, most of the laity who studied Philosophy and Theology were in fact from the professional ranks. Rendering full-time service to the Church after graduation is only one way to carry out mission; it is not at all confined to employment within Diocesan organizations.

In 1995, Cardinal John Baptist Wu conducted a mid-term evaluation on the “March Into The Bright Decade” Pastoral Exhortation and issued an Interim Report and Proposals in which seven points were made regarding the concrete plan for the formation of the laity. It was stated in the sixth point that the Diocese would “increase transparency in parish affairs, promote lay ministries, employ graduates of the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy and of the Biblical Institute, allow the faithful greater scope for participation and co-operation, providing them with opportunities for greater participation in decision making”.

The Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy would rely on the experience of the graduates to give reports, conduct analysis and reflection on the concrete recommendations in the Pastoral Exhortation.

First of all, before looking into how Theology and Philosophy graduates were involved in the mission of the Church, one has to have some basic understanding of the background and the motive of their admission to the College. Generally speaking, the students’ background and motive could be divided into 5 main categories:

(i) The committed and the ready to commit

Participants of the programmes were mainly lay people, but there were also some women religious, candidates for the permanent diaconate or religious life, core members of the Church campaigns, and volunteers preparing for overseas evangelization work. It was hoped that the programmes would provide them with some basic Theological training so that they could proceed further in their respective formation courses.

(ii) The in-service employees of the Diocese

The students in this category were mainly employees of the Diocese working in various committees and organizations, or engaged in pastoral care in hospitals. Because of either service need or interest, they joined the programmes after working hours, hoping to gain some help for the improving of their work.

(iii) The in-service teachers

These were mainly teachers working in Diocesan or Religious schools, secondary or primary. Having to promote religious activities and to teach Bible or Ethics in school, they took up the programmes with a view to acquiring more adequate and in-depth religious knowledge so that they could enrich themselves for their work, and bear witness in their daily life.

(iv) Active members in Parishes

Quite a number of the students were active members of parishes. They had a very close relationship with their parish and were even leaders or active members of the various parish communities, being involved in services of the parish council, catechism classes or associations of the faithful. They were hoping that by joining the programmes, they could deepen their own faith and serve better in the parish.

(v) Laity in general

The students in this category did not have any particular relationship with Diocesan organizations or parishes. They participated in the programmes merely to enhance their own faith; they did not have any concrete plan to use their expertise or knowledge after graduation.

The object of establishing the College was to provide Theology and Philosophy programmes on different levels. Except for the Bachelor of Religious Studies programme, other programmes accepted visiting students to take in or offered selective modules. Students having fulfilled all the requirements would be awarded the related degree. Contents of the College programmes included basic elements such as Theology Studies, Biblical Studies, Liturgy, Social Teaching, Spiritual Formation and so forth. Individual lecturers would, according to the contents, add reflections on local situations. As part of its objective, the College would also like to see her students make use of what they had learned in devoting themselves to the mission of the Church. This of course was also what the students were looking forward to.

Upon the evaluation of whether the objectives were achieved and in response to the needs of the students, the College discovered that there was room for improvement in two areas:

- (i) Reflection on pastoral activities and on living one's faith.
- (ii) Guidance and formation for increasing one's knowledge and deepening one's involvement in the service mission.

Therefore, starting from 1996, the subject of Laity Ministry had been incorporated into the curriculum of the Religious Studies Faculty of the College. The purpose was to strengthen the awareness of the students' mission and to help them understand their close relationship with the Church. Besides, the Faculty also

comprised a post of Pastoral Care Training Coordinator, aiming to better equip the students for Church participation.

In regard to personal growth, the College provided workshops on spiritual care and development for individuals. For building up community spirit, apart from the monthly prayer gathering and the trip to the oasis (綠洲之旅), the College also encouraged each class to set up faith sharing groups through which the students could exchange their experience in faith among themselves. To be equipped for the mission, the students were provided during the mid-term or the summer vacation, with different kinds of opportunities for gaining experience in pastoral care such as services for the Church in Taiwan, the poor in the mountain areas in mainland China, the mentally handicapped and the AIDS patients. Reflections from the viewpoint of faith were made under the guidance of tutors in all such activities.

After three years of exploration, the students' responses were positive:

- (i) With regard to the committed or the candidates preparing for commitment, although they had already a clear mission or a distinct call, the programmes further enhanced their ability to reflect on their faith.
- (ii) In the case of the in-service employees of the Diocese, by nature of their work, they were already part of the Diocesan organizations, participating directly in the evangelization role of the Church. The experience gained from the programmes helped them internalize their commitment to serve the Church.
- (iii) For the in-service teachers whose work was to promote religious activities in schools, faith formation, and to give lessons on Ethics or Bible and so forth, the College programmes helped develop their work and deepen their participation in the Church's mission.
- (iv) Vacancies in the Diocese or the Parish level were rather limited. Because of the financial situation, many Parishes were unable to employ pastoral care assistants. Moreover, being employed as pastoral assistants was not at all the only way for the graduates to share the work of evangelization in the Church. Nevertheless, under the pattern of current parishes, it seemed that the students' participation was restricted to joining the parish council, the associations of the faithful or the catechism classes. It was hoped that the College programmes could explore and promote more diversified modes of participation.
- (v) Apart from the well established Church missions mentioned above, the

College also encouraged the graduates to fulfill their mission through some other new ways outside the Church organizations, for example, opening religious book shops, participating in some formation work of the Church in mainland China, continuing to study in order to share and to write as a means of evangelization, taking part in promoting Theology education, establishing small groups of faith for professionals and so forth.

Reflection and Recommendation

From all the above mentioned situations, it is obvious that the graduates of the Holy Spirit Seminary College are willing to serve the Church. Most of them are ready or at least willing to try in different ways to participate in the mission of the Church. However, the work of evangelization includes not only teaching but also sharing the experience of the faith. At present, the College programmes are primarily meant to satisfy and equip the students with knowledge. In regard to personality and spiritual growth, it would require an all-round system to further intensify and deepen what they have learnt. It is recommended that the Diocese should allocate more resources for the whole-person formation of the laity so that it can be developed with good balance between theory and practice.

Meanwhile, many of the graduates are learned professionals. They should be encouraged to make use of their expertise and be helped to develop their faith through reflection on their life situation as well as to pursue Theology for cultivating multi-missions for the Church.

1.2.2 Catholic Biblical Institute

The Hong Kong Catholic Biblical Institute was established in 1988. The function of the Institute is to uphold the spirit of clause 25 of Vatican Council II's "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" (梵二「啓示憲章」第 25 條) to provide the faithful with academic formation of the Scriptures, and to promote Biblical Studies and Biblical pastoral care in the local Church. The Institute currently comprises 74 members, including 58 Diploma graduates. Nine programmes have been provided (up to 1999) since the commencement of the Diploma course, with a total of 120 graduates. Apart from serving the Divine Word at their own Parishes or faith communities, they have also preached and given lectures in the Institute on subjects such as : "General Biblical Programme" (聖經普及課程), "General Theology Programme for Macau Laity" (澳門教友神學普及課程), "The New Testament Training" (新約操練), "The Old Testament Training" (舊約操練), "Talks on Biblical Topics" (聖經專題講座), "Biblical Formation Activities in Parishes" (堂區聖經培育活動) and so forth. Publications have been issued, including: The monthly magazine "Peace" (《和平》月刊), "The Holy Scriptures

Bi-monthly” (《聖經雙月刊》), “Parables – Study of the allegorical meaning of the stories in the Gospels” (《譬—福音中的比喻研究》), “Jesus in the Heart through the Gospel Words – Interpretation of the Gospel excerpts for Sundays and Festive Days” – The years of St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke (《清泉掬水—主日節(慶)日福音釋義》-- 瑪竇、馬爾谷、路加年), “Light in the Desert – Interpretation of the Bible Reading excerpts for Sundays and Festive Days – Year A and Year B” (《荒漠燃荊—主日節(慶)日讀經釋義》--甲、乙年). Articles have also been translated, for example: “The Catholic Religion – Search for Biblical Truth” (「天主教對聖經真理的探討」) published in “Reflection on the Infallibility of the Bible” (《聖經無誤的再思》), “Exegesis in the Church” (《思高聖經學會 50 週年公開聖經講座》), “Interpretation of the Apostolic Exhortation” (「宗座文告註釋」) first serially published in “The Holy Scriptures Bi-monthly” (《聖經雙月刊》) and then in “The Holy Scriptures Quarterly” (《聖經季刊》). These publications and translations have greatly assisted Biblical pastoral care, benefiting both Hong Kong and Macau.

Looking back at the development of the Institute, the person-in-charge would very much desire a permanent location for the Institute. On the other hand, the graduates, enthusiastically involved in the writing on and preaching of the Divine Word, would bring new life and energy to the Institute. It is a great pity that the Institute is currently facing a serious shortage of manpower and resources, and therefore unable to provide on-going programmes for the graduates. Fortunately some students have joined the Distant Learning Degree Programme on Theology in other institutions such as the Australian Catholic University and the South African Catholic University. It is hoped that the graduate students will capitalize on these opportunities to consolidate their academic foundation and to bring what they have learnt to the service of the Divine Word in the Diocese of Hong Kong.

1.3 Formation Work of the Diocese as a whole

The Diocesan Office for Laity Formation and the Diocesan Tertiary Institutions had taken up only part of the formation work. As a matter of fact, the main location for laity formation should still be the Parish.

The faithful feel that Sunday homily is very important to them. If the homily was delivered in-depth and in an appealing way, the faithful would be very happy, because it could help them in their daily life during the coming week. It is now more than ten years since Cardinal John B. Wu paid great attention to upgrading the quality of the homily content of the clergy. He had invited professionals to translate the key points of the catechism, the Ten Commandments, the sacraments and so forth, and had them published in Kung Kao Po and the Sunday Examiner, so as to make it

convenient for the clerics to adapt for use and to incorporate into their homily.

The formation organizations found that many of those who were willing to receive formation were young people, but they would need to have time and enough financial support before they could participate in formation activities. Since young people in general had to work hard for a living and could not spare too much time for formation, the Parish had to play a more important part and be developed into a home-like, warm and compassionate community where the parishioners could cultivate close relationships with one another, and in which they would grow through mutual support and nourishment.

Over the past few years in particular, the Diocese has attended to enhancing the transparency of various matters in the Parishes, promoting lay ministry, employing graduates from the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy and from the Catholic Biblical Institute, allowing the faithful to have more opportunity for participation and co-operation, and extending the policy-making capacity for the laity.

The parish priests were helped to understand the overall direction of development in the Diocese, so that they could keep up-to-date in their pastoral work and laity formation. Before the hand-over of a parish from one priest to another, the Diocese prepared a checking list to make sure that the hand-over procedure would proceed systematically and under the witness and advice of a responsible person representing the Diocese.

Moreover, members of the Diocesan Curia have, in these past few years, been paying frequent visits to Parishes. Before each visit, two copies of the matters over which an exchange of views was expected, would be sent to the Parish so that the people concerned could make the necessary preparation, and the contents for sharing could be more comprehensive.

In 1995, the Diocesan Youth Commission was established to co-ordinate and organize youth activities. After that, various Youth Affairs Groups were organized by Parishes or Deaneries, for example the Live Band Group of St. Bonaventure Church which was established to serve the Parish and the prison, and to provide entertainment for those who desired it.

In 1991, the Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs was established by the Diocese. The following year the Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers was set up at San Po Kong, to develop the work of evangelization in the factory district. More recently, this year (2000) the Diocese has set up a second Pastoral Centre for

Workers at Star of the Sea Church, Chaiwan, to provide service for the working class. Also, the Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese has recently organized a “Social Concern Special Team” (關社特工隊) to absorb more lay participants and to enlarge the capacity for lay ministry.

In 1993, the Diocesan Pastoral Centre for the Disabled was set up on Princess Margaret Road. Regular gatherings and formation activities were held at the Centre, and the resources have been well utilized. The Diocesan Liturgy Commission has also put great efforts into the co-ordination and the strengthening of the Parish lay ministry such as the Lectors Group and the Eucharistic Servers Group.

In 1996, the Diocesan Committee for the Permanent Diaconate was established, and in 1997, two devoted Catholics, having completed the required formation programme and the practical training, were ordained Deacons and will serve in this ministry in the Hong Kong Church. Apart from liturgical services, the Permanent Deacons have been providing quality social service, including visits to prison, hospital pastoral care service for the handicapped and the elderly, and so forth. Recently they have also recruited more than ten volunteers, and new plan to establish a “Funeral Service Group” which will further develop their ministry to those in need.

As far as education was concerned, it was hoped that there would be more professionals joining the “School Management Committees” and to serve on this ministry after receiving formation. This service could be strengthened according to the direction and the reform of the education system in Hong Kong, and become another kind of lay ministry.

Within these five years, the Hong Kong Catholic Social Communications Office has been developing a computer home-page especially for the Diocese. This new kind of information technology would bring laity formation to a new milestone of expedition.

Reflection and Recommendations

- (i) The work of formation will be constructed to meet the different needs of all levels in society. Besides the youth, workers, handicapped and imported labourers, families should also be taken care of.
- (ii) Parishes should, especially on Sundays, provide children (Catholics and non-Catholics) with space for activities and opportunities for receiving faith. It is believed that by doing so some non-Catholic parents will also be attracted to the Church to learn about the Catholic faith.
- (iii) Strengthen the use of Kung Kao Po as a means of formation.

- (iv) The Diocese, schools, parishes and organizations should make good use of the walls and any other parts of their premises which are in direct contact with the public as media for evangelization, e.g. to hang up banners, set up mail box, install electronic board and television screens and so forth.

2. Small Communities of Faith

2.1 Diocesan Office For Laity Formation (Formation Office)

The Diocesan Commission for Laity Formation and its subordinate Formation Office were primarily established for the purpose of laity formation and also for the promotion of small communities of faith. However they seem to have been rather passive in achieving these objectives. They have only been able to offer service to organizations or Parishes which have asked for help, but have not been able to work to full effect in promoting and establishing small communities of faith.

Work in the past five years

The Formation Office was often invited to parishes to introduce small communities of faith to the newly baptized and the other laity. It also had regular follow-up services for the various small communities of faith.

Three years ago, the Formation Office made a review of the catechetical process. Catechumens normally received two to three years' formation before Baptism, but after that there would be no more follow-up activities. It was discovered in the review that if the newly baptized were invited to join small communities of faith, they would maintain a lasting relationship with the Parish/Church, and their faith would also be helped to grow; otherwise, they might, because of the various kinds of social and family pressures in life, gradually fall away from the Church. According to rough statistics, the number of lapsed laity reached as high as 70,000 to 80,000.

To prevent the unhealthy situation of the laity's falling away from the Church, a programme for the newly baptized was launched. In the beginning, the programme was planned to last for nine months, but having only a few responses and after discussing with the Deaneries, the Formation Office decided to use a flexible design for the length and the content of the programme according to the actual needs of the Deaneries. Nevertheless it was still found that the programme was not quite able to give the participants sufficient energy to transform their lives.

By taking the initiative or upon invitation, the Formation Office made frequent visits to some established small communities of faith, hoping to encourage them and to provide them with some substantial support, such as introducing them to Bible-sharing or some other related formation resources.

The Formation Office cooperated with Caritas Hong Kong in 1995 to promote

the “Christian Family Movement”, small communities of faith composed of Christian families. The “Christian Family Movement” comprised thirty small district groups attached to Parish units and led by Catholic social workers of Caritas. The Executive Secretary of the Formation Office being a core member of the “Christian Family Movement” was mainly responsible for supporting the various small Christian Family Groups, by liaising, central filing, coordinating and promoting different kinds of Christian Family activities, such as the Christian Family Day and other open activities, social concern activities, overseas pilgrimages and spiritual formation camps and so forth. In 1999, other related family pastoral care organizations, The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, The Couple Co-creation society, The Family Service of Caritas Hong Kong and the Focolare Movement were invited to participate in the Third World Meeting of the Holy Father with Families, as part of the Jubilee year, to be held in Rome on 14th and 15th October 2000.

The Formation Office was also ready to provide the small communities of faith with different kinds of formation materials for use and for reference, including topics such as : “How to start a small community of faith”, “Gatherings of the newly baptized”, “To grow in the community”, “Bible-sharing on Sunday Gospels” , “The Social Concern Service – New Heaven and New Earth”, “The Biblical Interpretation Series – The Call, The Church”, “The Biblical Interpretation Series – The Sacraments”, “The Spiritual Formation Series – Prayer I”, “The Spiritual Formation Series – Prayer II” ·

A workshop on the “Three Perspectives in Establishing Communities” conducted by a Jesuit priest was held in March 1998. 54 members of small communities participated. Guided by the priest, the participants shared their experience and problem encountered in leading the communities, and once again were reaffirmed in their own mission.

In August 1999, a seminar on “Exploration into Parish Small Communities” was held. A total of 50 participants came from more than ten different Parish communities. With the sharing of the guest speakers and through discussion among the participants themselves, they explored the difficulties and challenges in developing small communities in the Parish. One of the speakers, pointed out that it was most important to make the laity understand and realize the need to join community, otherwise, no matter how strong the emphasis was laid on the advantages of the community, there would still be only a few parishioners taking part in establishing small communities in the Parish. Nevertheless, in spite of the huge number of perceived difficulties, the participants were still full of confidence, and firmly believed that the development of small communities of faith was an effective

and practical way of formation for parishioners.

2.2 Self-initiated Small Communities of Faith

Cardinal John Baptist Wu's "March Into The Bright Decade" Pastoral Exhortation gave proper guidance and facilitated the development of the various small communities of faith in the Diocese. A good example can be found among the laity in Kam Tin. They had their own tradition and were always in harmony during Masses and gatherings, forming a small natural community of faith. Some other family organizations such as the Christian Family Movement Group, the Charismatic Movement Group and so forth were also very active small communities of faith.

Basic Christian Communities had already existed before 1991; and in 1993, the Hong Kong Federation of Basic Christian Communities (hereafter called "The Federation") was officially established for coordinating the Basic Christian Communities of different districts and Parishes, and for organizing joint gatherings and so forth. The Federation regularly assisted the Parishes to follow up with the development of the Basic Christian Communities. Going through these years, the Federation had successfully gained recognition for its work, and had recruited 60 community members. Nevertheless, because of the shortage of leaders, and also of the introverted nature of the communities, further outreaching expansion was hampered, and the development of the Federation inevitably slowed down.

Reflection and Recommendations

Greatly affected by the ambience, the small communities of faith could hardly achieve outstanding progress. The serious economic recession in society had caused a tremendous increase in work pressure with consequent instability, and the public at large was in tension. With individualism soaring in the social perception, human relations weakened. Living in the atmosphere of insecurity, distrust and paramount self-interest, people would suffer a lack of friendship and lose the treasure of neighbourhood. All these were reasons leading to the difficulties in organizing or sustaining the small communities of faith.

Small communities of faith were still confined to a minority in Parishes. Should their focus be switched to families, the scope of their function could definitely be widened. The manner of meeting of these small communities was rather introspective. Follow-up actions were rarely taken. With no strong emphasis on the Christian mission and no links to daily life, once the topics for sharing were exhausted, the participants would get bored and even leave the community. The

leaders of the small communities of faith played a very important role. It was a pity that most of the leaders lacked leadership skills such as the skills of Bible sharing, leading small groups and so forth. Also the encouragement of the Parish for the small communities of faith would directly affect their development in the Parish.

It is therefore recommended that different kinds of small communities of faith should be developed. The small communities for neighbourhood support especially should be strengthened. It is believed that it would be a good way to let the laity first establish their human relationship with one another, and then bring it up to the faith level so that eventually both can grow together.

3. Ongoing Formation of Priests, Deacons, Brothers and Sisters

3.1 On the Diocesan Level

All the on-going formation activities for the clergy in the Diocese were based on the Apostolic Exhortation “Pastores Dabo Vobis” 《我要給你們牧者》 as the warp, and on Cardinal John Baptist Wu’s Pastoral Exhortation “March Into The Bright Decade” and its Interim Report And Proposals “Proclaim The Gospel of the Lord, Spread The Kingdom of God” as the woof. They were all arranged after thorough discussion by the Committee for the Ongoing Formation of the Clergy. Along the way, mutual understanding and co-operation were promoted among the clergy as well as between the Religious Congregations and the Diocese. Formation being an endless life-long pursuit of the clergy, they all endeavoured to make continuous progress in accordance with the aim and the scope stipulated in the Pastoral Exhortation. Quite a number of important activities had been held in the recent years.

Every year in early January, the Diocese would conduct a three to four days’ formation camp for the clergy in which topics like “Evangelization”, “Study of Catholic Catechism”, “The Holy Spirit and Evangelization”, “From Holy Trinitarianism to Personalism of the Clergy”, “Catholic Matrimony” and so forth were thoroughly studied. Speakers included local and overseas clerical experts, pastors, Protestant ministers, religious priests and missionaries, pastoral sisters, laity fervently involved in evangelization, government officials, municipal councillors, social workers, lawyers and so forth. Participants generally felt that these arrangements could help not only to extend their horizon but also deepen their understanding of Hong Kong, Mainland China as well as Asia in the aspects of new situations and challenges. These could also strengthen the participants’ enthusiasm for their pastoral work.

In the middle of the year, the Diocese arranged a few half-day Learning Sessions, inviting experts in Theology, Liturgy, Pastoral Ministry, social and other aspects as speakers; Priests, Deacons, Brothers and Sisters were exposed to topics such as the Basic Law; the challenges to be faced during the transitional period of 1997; the new Apostolic Exhortation on “Faith and Reason” and the new instructions related to marriage problems; the proposals prior to the Asian Bishops’ Conference and the subsequent reports; the new edition of “Catholic Funeral and Requiem Services”; the development, management and maintenance of the Diocesan Premises and so forth. The participants in general were enthusiastic, and felt that they derived great benefit from the sessions.

At the same time, the Diocesan Vocations Commission actively contacted the various Deaneries, introducing the work and the plans for promoting vocations. To strengthen the promotion of vocations, three ways were recommended: (1) Every year on Vocation Sunday or when priests or deacons were ordained, a vocation exhibition could be arranged at the Parish concerned, and a prayer gathering held on the eve of the ordination ceremony. (2) The Diocesan Vocation Commission should strengthen its co-ordination with the Parish priests and their acolytes. (3) The Diocese should look for some young priests and form small groups to develop pastoral care for the youth, and to provide formation for the growth of the seeds of vocation. At the same

time the Diocese should make it clear to parish priests that these young priests once assigned to this job must be allowed to have enough time to fulfill this mission and be exempted from other heavy duties at the Parishes. The Diocese of Hong Kong could perhaps further take the Taegu Diocese of South Korea as an example, in forming a small Vocation Group in each Parish, especially for praying, making substantial contributions, exploring and promoting vocations.

The annual and monthly retreat of the Diocesan clergy has been carefully discussed and arranged by the Committee for the Ongoing Formation of the Clergy. Topics like “Spiritual Formation for the Diocesan Clergy”, “The Divine Words”, “Liturgy”, “The Holy Spirit”, “Spirituality of the Father” and “Acts of the Apostles” have been chosen as the themes of the annual retreats one after another, each linking up with the contents of all the monthly reflections of the whole year. Each monthly retreat would begin and end with Eucharistic adoration, so as to allow the participants to enter into serenity, to experience an encounter with Christ and to bring Christ into the heart of life and existence. Finally the occasion would be marked by a communal session in which the three Vicar Generals would share with the participants some important issues of the Diocese.

In the proposed organizational restructure of the Diocese in 1992, it was planned that the Diocese would launch a trial plan for permanent diaconate. On 1st February 1996, a Diocesan Committee for the Permanent Diaconate with members appointed by Cardinal John Baptist Wu was established to promulgate, provide formation for and promote the ministry of permanent diaconate.

In the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, with the permanent diaconate being part of the clerical ministry, the deacons would:

- (i) assist the celebrant, who could be a Bishop or a priest, with the liturgical ceremony, read the Gospel, conduct the homily and deliver the Holy Communion in both species;
- (ii) administer Baptism and Matrimony, perform Funeral services and assist with Liturgy of the Word;
- (iii) work on pastoral management and services, and be dedicated to various forms of charity services such as education, prison visits, hospital pastoral care, looking after the patients, caring for the elderly or the youth, reaching out to the people on the edge of delinquency.
- (iv) assist the Bishop in cultivating areas of evangelization.

On 5th July 1997, the first two deacons were ordained by Cardinal John Baptist Wu. They were then sent to different Parishes and concentrated on various kinds of social work such as prison visits, hospital pastoral care and so forth. There were also five candidates for permanent diaconate receiving different levels of formation in dogmatics, as well as practical training for parish and social services.

In collaboration with the Church in Taiwan for over one year, the Chinese translation of “Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons” issued by the Roman Congregation for Catholic Education and the Congregation for the Clergy was completed and published in early 2000.

The candidates for permanent diaconate had three kinds of regular gatherings. The first kind was a bi-monthly family gathering. Visits by rotation to

different families were made, documents were studied, sharing and prayers were conducted. The second kind was also a bi-monthly gathering which was specifically held for a retreat and sharing among the deacons and the candidates for permanent diaconate. This kind of gathering was usually held at the venues of the men's and women's religious institutions and missionary societies so as to know more about the charism of different Religious and Missionary Communities. The third kind of gathering was a half-yearly outdoor social activity to which friends and relatives of the deacons were also invited so that more people could know about the actual life of the deacons.

The Diocesan Committee for the Permanent Diaconate prepared an information pamphlet, stipulating some procedures for admitting aspirants to candidature which would normally, take nine months to one year. It was also stipulated that it would take four years or more for candidates to proceed to the permanent diaconate. Every deacon or candidate for the permanent diaconate would be assigned a personal spiritual director as well as a Parish and social service tutor.

The future plans would be reported to and promoted at the Board of Diocesan Consultors, the Council of Priests, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the various Deanery meetings. Contact had been initiated with overseas Chinese deacons. Through mutual communications and sharing, the permanent diaconate could be more completely and effectively developed, and the vision of "Proclaim the Gospel of the Lord, Spread the Kingdom of God" could be more concretely realized.

3.2 Association of Major Superiors of Religious Women

In recent years, the Association of Major Superiors of Religious Women (hereafter called "the Association") has been very positive and active, frequently joining with the various women religious institutions and missionary societies in organizing training or spiritual formation camps, arranging for liturgy and talks on topics related to education and other social issues. All these activities not only benefited the religious women, but also strengthened the spirit of unity and harmony among the Religious and Missionary Communities, and set beautiful examples of witness.

In the past three years, the Association has been organizing and coordinating various formation activities and items, inviting local and overseas speakers to deliver talks for the religious women of different communities. The

formation work was mainly designed according to the following four levels: (i) ongoing formation for all the local religious Sisters, (ii) formation activities for the junior Sisters, (iii) the formation programmes for novice-mistresses and the novices, and (iv) concern for the Mainland China.

(i) On going formation programme

A series of workshops/seminars has been held since January 1998. Topics included “Self-Discovery” and “Leadership-Innovation-Spirituality”.

In response to the needs of the Sisters who were facing middle-age crises, a three-day workshop on the theme of “Mid-life to Aging” was sponsored by the Association from 28th to 30th May 1999.

From time to time the Association also invited overseas and local speakers to give talks on spiritual formation, culture and religious life.

(ii) Formation programmes for novice-mistresses and novices

In the 1998 annual general meeting of the Association, it was proposed by many Major Superiors that ongoing formation activities should be organized for the novice-mistresses and novices. As the number of novice-mistresses in Hong Kong was quite small, some kind of peer group should be formed for them so that they could share with one another. Since January 1999, the Association organized five gatherings for the novice-mistresses and the novices, and three especially for the novice-mistresses, inviting speakers to give talks and to share with the novice-mistresses on challenges to religious formators today. All these activities had never failed to be seen as positive and helpful, and therefore should continue into the future.

(iii) Programmes for junior Sisters

The Association had assigned one person to coordinate formation activities for all local junior Sisters. Since 1999, several gatherings for junior Sisters have been held, each with a specific theme. The themes for year 2000 were:

- a) Different congregations sharing their own charisms.
- b) Organizing pilgrimage activities to visit the older local churches and to learn more about the history of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong.
- c) Learning through games and communications so as to promote friendship and love among young Sisters.

(iv) Concern for the Mainland China

Many of the religious congregations in Hong Kong were international communities which had started missionary activities in Mainland China well before the takeover by the Communist Party. From 1950s to 1960s, especially during the Cultural Revolution, all the foreign missionaries were expelled from China. In 1980s under the “Open Door” policy of China, some of the missionary congregations were able to go back to China and resume their apostolate work at their former mission stations. In these past years, the religious Sisters of the local and international congregations had established at least the following four aspects of service in the Mainland China:

- (a) To assist in the formation of young Sisters; (providing material and financial support, sending formators and personnel to assist in the formation of junior Sisters of different religious congregations, including those situated in some poor districts).
- (b) To teach foreign languages in tertiary institutions; (many missionaries had entered China through the help of AITECE, an organization registered in both Hong Kong and Beijing, and taught languages such as English, French, German,... etc. in various universities and institutes. So far, about a thousand missionaries and lay faithful had obtained through that organization the permission of Beijing government to work in China. That organization was established in Hong Kong by the Missionary Society of St. Columban (S.S.C.) in the 80’s. The goal of this organization is to convey the Gospel values to the Chinese students by way of professional commitment and living witness as missionary teachers).
- (c) To work together with handicapped people at the special education organizations in some districts; and to train nurse-Sisters to serve in village clinics.
- (d) To teach theology and scripture at regional seminaries of the Church in China; (these Sisters are also teachers of the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong).

Reflection

The Catholic Church has witnessed the development of the Hong Kong society over the past one hundred and fifty years. Since the founding of the local Church, education, social services and pastoral care have all along been the three main aspects of her apostolate commitment. The religious congregations and the Diocese of Hong Kong have cooperated and responded to the urgent needs of society. They have contributed their resources, including finance and manpower, and joined hands in developing the above mentioned apostolate work. After 1997, Hong Kong experienced a series of crises of which the economic depression is the most critical one, deeply affecting the whole of society. The various educational reforms initiated by the government have brought anxiety, confusion and restlessness. Everyone is asking: what directions should education be taking? The Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, being one of the sponsoring bodies managing the largest numbers of

prestigious schools in society, is also perplexed by the situation, and has joined hands with all the religious congregations involved in the apostolate mission of education to look for solutions and a possible way out. With the rapid changes in politics, economy and society, the social services and the pastoral work of the local Church are also experiencing a crisis of transformation.

3.3 Association of Major Religious Superiors of Men

Regular gatherings were held by the Associations of Major Religions Superiors of Men to share with each other their experience in pastoral care and evangelization, and to facilitate communications. Since each of the religious and missionary communities had its own unique charism and spirit, they seldom organized joint formation activities, but only participated positively in the meetings of the Associations of Major Religions Superiors of Men and shared with each other their experience in different kinds of work and life situations.

4. Mass Communications

The Hong Kong Catholic Board of Communications and The Hong Kong Catholic Executive Board of Communications are two different but closely related organizations, the former being responsible for the formulation and the review of the Diocesan policies of communications, the latter for the execution of the communications work of the Diocese. Although there has been a turn-over of about half of the leading staff of these in the Diocese, the operation is still smooth. A brief report on the work of the various related communications organizations in recent years is given below.

The Diocesan Audio-visual Center (DAVC) had continuously been working very hard and has achieved considerable progress. A few years ago, it started producing videos on Talks on Theology for the Church in China. Upon the signing of a 20-year contract between the Sky Cable TV and the Catholic Church in Thailand, a 24-hour channel was unconditionally handed over to the Catholic Church, and the DAVC being a member of the OCIC-Hong Kong was invited to provide English and Cantonese Christian programmes to be broadcast through that channel by satellite to various places in south-east Asia. DAVC also arrived at an agreement with a commercial organization, so that the DAVC products could be placed on loan or for sale at the 25 video tape shops under that organization; and the Catholic Video Magazine could also appear as a special type of video tape advertisement in the publication owned by that organization comprising 200,000 members. Moreover, DAVC has produced religious laser disc with a flavour of Chinese music, and has also provided the Diocese with media education (such as holding seminars on “How to face the media” for the pastoral ministry) and formation of human resources (such as organizing creative workshop on evangelization and practical training sessions for post secondary students during summer vacation). In the middle of 1999, an agreement was reached with The Hong Kong Cable Television that the “1001 Lamb” programme produced by DAVC would be broadcast on the Children Channel starting from January 2000, as a series of 25 episodes, each running 45 minutes with 2 repeats per day, scoring an applauded audience rating of about 130,000 viewers each night. During the Christmas 1999, DAVC in collaboration with the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, successfully put the “Inauguration Ceremony of the Holy Year: The Opening of the Holy Door” on live broadcast through the News Channel of Cable TV. The whole event was voiced over in both Chinese and English by the clerical ministry of the Diocese. Since January 2000, the Cantonese Christian programme produced by DAVC started broadcast on Radio Veritas - Asia as well as on the web-site of DAVC, the latter having gained an increase of audience rating from

6,000 to 11,000 listeners per day. The most welcomed programmes included “100% Jesus Talk”, “Jesus talks on net” and “Father Act I & II”. The Putonghua Christian broadcast commenced in August 2000. In March 2000, DAVC again came to an agreement with Cable TV, that starting from 9th July 2000, a Catholic programme series “The Beginning and The End” comprising 26 episodes would be transmitted on A Channel every Sunday night. In early June 2000, DAVC established KATV, a Catholic TV Channel on web-site comprising five bands of frequencies through one of which “The Beginning and The End” series was broadcast simultaneously. About 16,000 visits to the DAVC web-site were scored everyday.

Hong Kong Catholic Social Communications Office (hereafter called “the Office”) continued to collaborate with their Protestant counterpart in providing two programmes on radio: “The Abundant Life” on Saturdays and “Sunday Service” on Sundays. Representing the local Catholic Church, the Office had actively participated in supplying articles for the weekly “Buddhist Compassion”, a supplement attached to Sing Tao Evening or Sing Tao Daily. A total of 90,000 copies of this supplement were published, bringing the message into family homes and creating an outreach effect of evangelization. It was a pity, however, that because of financial constraints, this supplement ceased publication in 1999. In regard to the social issues which were brought up, the media normally preferred direct contact with the persons or the organizations concerned in the Diocese for a response, and therefore the Office would not need to handle too many questions from the press. To avoid possible infringement of the new copyright ordinance, the Office cancelled the newspaper clipping service in the middle of last year. Efforts were then directed to the development of evangelization on internet, as well as to the scheduling of the services and duties of the Diocesan clergy with a view of keeping a catalogue of different kinds of records.

In recent years, the contents of the Chinese “Kung Kao Po” have become much livelier and more diversified. Timely reports on Diocesan activities, news, literatures and documents were made, information related to faith and spiritual formation was provided. Besides, a special section called “Joyful Youth” was created for children. Active response towards the various changing issues in society could also be given. “Kung Kao Po” has also recently switched to main direction of making thematic reports on social issues to that of covering the news of the Diocese. Many people had suggested inviting Filipinos to work closely with the English language “Sunday Examiner”. However, although several discussions were held and attempts made, it still could not succeed. This was probably due to the fact that one of the priests of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (C.Ss.R.) had already published a bi-monthly magazine in both English and Tagalog especially for the Filipinos. The

magazine had rich contents and sold at a low price.

The Catholic Truth Society continued to publish about a hundred books, the titles and contents of which included: Exegesis, Theology, Liturgy, Catechism for secondary and primary schools and kindergartens, Ethics and Religious readers, Sacred Music, Religious Arts and Literature, and others. Only about 10% of these titles were new products. Though, in general, because of limited human resources, the number of new products was few enough; yet to meet the demand from the public, the contents and the production technique of the books had to be improved continuously.

The Catholic Centre Book Store and Religious Articles Department has all along assisted not only in promoting and selling all the publications in the Diocese, but also in providing diversified services for Catholics and non-Catholics. Besides the Catholic Centre, there were of course other sales units of religious articles which were not directly under the management of the Diocese, but which provided similar services, thus being a complementary to each other.

On the whole, arduous efforts and continuous progress have been made in the past years, following the pastoral directions for Social Communications given in Cardinal John Baptist Wu's "March Into The Bright Decade" Pastoral Exhortation Interim Report and Proposals, and stipulating that all the work of Social Communications in the Diocese should be directed towards:

- (1) proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord,
- (2) forming the laity, and
- (3) enhancing dialogue and contact between Church and society.

5. *Education*

On Pentecost Sunday 1989, Cardinal Wu issued a Pastoral Exhortation in which he mentioned the wide range of pastoral commitments of the Hong Kong Diocese. In the Exhortation, the Cardinal encouraged us to have confidence in the Lord of history and to believe that He will prepare a bright future for us. Cardinal Wu also encouraged us to follow the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, to face the world, to imitate Christ, and to make ourselves ready. In this way, we were to fulfill the historic mission of building the Kingdom of God with humility and conviction together with like-minded Christians and non-Christians. Such work will make the year 2000A.D. into a genuine turning point in history and a moment of God's grace. The Cardinal described education, pastoral work and social service as the three pillars of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong, and he listed the following areas of concern in education:

- (i) The Diocese and Religious Congregations together will improve the quality of education by studying, planning and formulating practical measures in the coming year, and to implement them step by step. They will share tasks and cooperate in the same direction for the ideal of all-round education in Catholic schools.
- (ii) The religious atmosphere in Catholic schools will be strengthened, and the message of the Gospel will be preached to students in both words and deeds.
- (iii) Administrators of Diocesan and Religious schools should continue urging the Government to improve Hong Kong's education system. Our ongoing ideal is to provide an all-rounded education, and to teach students to fulfill their social responsibilities.
- (iv) Education in ethics and democracy should be seriously promoted, the Chinese culture should be deeply understood and respected, and Chinese as a medium of instruction should be seriously considered.
- (v) Since schools supplement the education of children by their parents, schools and parents should work together closely, so that students may be exposed to the same set of attitudes towards life and value system both in school and at home.

Five years after the publication of the Pastoral Exhortation, the Diocese reviewed and evaluated our work in education from 1989 to 1994 and put forward our hopes for the future. Catholic schools faced with a degree of optimism, new challenges that emerged during this period, such as the Target-oriented Curriculum, mother-tongue

education, School Management Initiative and whole-day primary schooling. The Diocese's pragmatic and clear support for teaching in the mother-tongue won praise from educators and other members of the community. The period 1994-1999 saw the greatest changes of the decade. Hong Kong experienced the pre-1997 uncertainty and the challenges that emerged after the return of Hong Kong to the motherland. The brain-drain of educators became most serious in 1995, and this lowered the quality of the teaching profession. Because of fears about the future, changes in families and the number of students with associated problems increased. As a result, the burden on educators became heavier. In his Pastoral Exhortation, the Cardinal reminded us to equip ourselves with a renewed spirit and new and specific abilities to welcome and bring about the dawning of a new era. In the past five years, The Catholic Education Office (hereafter called the Education Office) overcame difficulties and radical changes of the times, trying hard to become firmly rooted in Hong Kong and open to China and the world.

5.1 Response towards the Pastoral Exhortation's directions in education

In the past five years, The Education Office intentionally strengthened the bonds with the Religious Congregations and made genuine progress. The staff of The Education Office visited all Religious Congregations that sponsored schools (10 men's congregations and 15 women's congregations), exchanged experiences in running schools with the Superiors, priests and nuns, and proposed ideas that would foster mutual support, hoping that cooperation will strengthen communion, complement mutual strengths and address weaknesses. Activities organized in such cooperation include Character Achievement 97, Character Achievement 98, Character Achievement 99, Catholic Teachers' Day, 'Love for Hong Kong, Concern for China' civic education materials, 'Love & Life' education materials, Ambassadors of Evangelization, Young Pioneers of Christ, etc. We invited Religious schools to join in a seminar on the Privacy and Equal Opportunities Ordinances, and development programmes for school managers. During Christmas 1998, more than 40 principals (including priests, nuns and the laity) of Catholic schools and kindergartens visited schools in the Shandong province upon the invitation of the National Ministry of Education. In response to the direction laid down in the Pastoral Exhortation, The Education Office fostered the union of Religious and Diocesan schools and common efforts to labour for the ideal of all-round education in Catholic schools.

Catholic schools should have their own religious characteristics. One of our educational objectives is to strengthen the religious atmosphere in Catholic schools by

spreading the Good News to our students in word and in deed. Principals steer schools and their intentions mould the direction, ideals and the pace of development of the whole school. This is why a whole-day spiritual retreat has been organized annually for principals of Diocesan schools, with the hope that their faith would be deepened and that the religious atmosphere and activities of their schools would be positively influenced. The lack of religious education teachers is our greatest worry. The heavy teaching load prevents enthusiastic Catholic teachers from putting effort into the work of evangelization. The difficulty in admitting Catholic students under the current admission systems of secondary and primary schools renders the building of a religious atmosphere in schools a daunting task. The Pastoral Exhortation's interim proposals included the creation of the post of school pastoral worker to assist the work of evangelization. This is a good suggestion which, we believe, would lead to fruitful results. Since the government will not subsidize pastoral assistants who are non-standard staff of aided schools, their cost will be borne by the sponsoring body. Two Religious Congregations are employing pastoral assistants with good preliminary results. And progress was made in this area in the past five years despite the financial difficulties.

Apart from annual spiritual retreats for principals, we have organized annual orientation camps for new Catholic teachers employed by our schools to boost their enthusiasm in carrying out the work of evangelization in schools. Two years ago, several principals from Religious and Diocesan schools established Young Pioneers of Christ and Ambassadors of Evangelization by applying ideas borrowed from the Community Youth Clubs. The initial results were good, and now over two hundred Catholic teachers from Religious and Diocesan schools are involved in these initiatives.

Besides running their own schools, Supervisors and Principals of Religious and Diocesan schools are very concerned about changes in educational policies, because the latter influence the philosophy in running schools. The Catholic Board of Education (CBE) plays an important role in unifying opinions because its members are mostly Superiors of Religious Congregations and senior decision-making officials of the Diocese. When the government invited opinions on various policies, such as the Target-Oriented Curriculum, School Management Initiative, Chinese as the medium of instruction, curriculum development, mode of subsidizing schools and the status of School Management Committees, The Education Office always expressed the views of Catholic schools. Many of our principals participate in various education bodies. The Episcopal Delegate for Education expressed the Catholic schools' opinions through participation in high-ranking consultative bodies such as the Board of Education. As a result, the Pastoral Exhortation's objective of urging the Government

to improve the SAR's education system is met. Most of our students accept the principle that they should fulfill their social responsibilities, and our graduates' performance in this aspect in the past has been deeply appreciated by the Hong Kong community.

The Pastoral Exhortation emphasized the need for education in ethics and democracy, a deeper understanding of and respect for the Chinese culture, and a serious consideration of using Chinese as the medium of instruction (MOI). The provision of ethical training is a fundamental task of Catholic schools, and the promotion of democracy as an impetus for progress in society is a responsibility of every educator. To carry out these tasks, The Education Office invited the Catholic Institute for Religion and Society to write and publish booklets on Christian ethics as well as the 'Love Hong Kong, Concern for China' civic educational materials. The implementation of these curricular initiatives was unfortunately not satisfactory because of the tight curriculum schedule in schools and the lack of attention paid to the non-examination curriculum. With the general desire of reducing examination pressure in our community, the implementation of these initiatives could be improved in future.

In 1995, the Diocese took the lead on implementing mother-tongue education by setting the target of using Chinese as the medium of instruction in 50% of the lesson periods in the 25 Diocesan secondary schools during the following three years. Subsequently, the Education Department (ED) on the one hand claimed that it enforced the teaching in the mother tongue, on the other hand allowed schools to be exempted from the policy and remain as English-medium schools. The ED's position in mother-tongue education is ambiguous. Under the pressure from parents, alumni and teachers, some schools applied to the ED for the use of English as the MOI. Parents traditionally believe that English-medium schools are superior because they guarantee their graduates admission into universities and ultimately good jobs. Parents do not understand teaching in the mother tongue and the learning of English are two separate issues. Even some teachers do not understand this distinction and resent teaching in the mother tongue. With more parents now accepting mother-tongue education, time will tell. The implementation of mother-tongue education is not aimed at suppressing English. Instead, to improve our students' proficiency in English with the objective of forming biliterate and trilingual students, our schools will maintain Hong Kong's competitiveness at this confluence of Chinese and Western cultures.

The Pastoral Exhortation pointed to the importance of home-school cooperation. Through such cooperation, students will hopefully experience the same set of attitudes

towards life and the same value system in school as at home. Supervisors and Principals understand the importance of cooperation from parents, and most schools have established Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). It is hoped that with parental involvement in schools, parents will understand more about their children's schooling and assist them in forming correct learning attitudes. Since two years ago, the ED has encouraged the establishment of PTAs and has given relevant financial support, showing fostering home-school cooperation remains a priority.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Plans

The *March Into the Bright Decade* Pastoral Exhortation showed us a direction, and the interim evaluation gave us a chance to adjust our policies. Our work in the past decade has borne much fruit and has given us greater hope for the future. The spirit of the Exhortation must persist if 2000 A.D. is to become a genuine turning point in history and a moment of God's grace.

5.2.1 Strengthen the work of evangelization

Apart from promoting 'Ambassadors of Evangelization' in secondary schools and 'Young Pioneers of Christ' in primary schools, we should reconsider the establishment of pastoral worker posts because the ED now grants aided schools greater flexibility in using government funds. School pastoral workers will alleviate the burden of Catholic teachers in their work of evangelization. Ambassadors of Evangelization and Young Pioneers of Christ have made a good start and have a bright future. The Education Office has high expectations of these two schemes and is exploring greater opportunities of evangelization by liaising with Religious and Diocesan schools in each parish. Since teachers can play an important role in the work of evangelization, The Education Office has invited kindergarten teachers to join catechetical classes, with a hope to strengthening our team of Catholic teachers to work for evangelization. Participants have joined these classes fully voluntarily and have shown good response to this initiative which will later be extended to primary and secondary schools. The Education Office searches for support for evangelization work through different channels and urges that we practise what we preach, in order to spread the faith the Lord has planted in our hearts.

5.2.2 Concern for the education of newly arrived children

The education of newly arrived children from the mainland has aroused much attention in the Church. The two evening schools for newly arrived children opened by the Diocese in the winter of 1997 have received support within and outside Church circles. The Education Office has recently made a proposal to the government of establishing 'Transient Schools' to solve the adaptation problems experienced by

newly arrived children before their admission into mainstream schools. The government has agreed to this proposal in principle and is now looking for suitable premises to provide such service, possibly in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. These children who came to Hong Kong through proper procedures are Hong Kong citizens as well as new blood for our future society. Whether they can receive a proper education today influences their ability to contribute to Hong Kong in the future.

5.2.3 Supporting the education reforms

The SAR government is carrying out thorough education reforms that affect Hong Kong's future. The Education Office supports these reforms in principle. Since the reduction of examination pressure is a key point of the current reforms, The Education Office has proposed a 'through-train' model to the ED. This model reduces the number of public examinations between Primary One and university admission to one, thus getting rid of the pressure and time-consuming drills brought about by the Academic Aptitude Test and allowing children to learn with joy. The Education Office will continue to apply for new schools in the fulfillment of our mission of sowing deep roots in Hong Kong with an openness to China and the world. The essence of the education reforms is to cultivate a generation of young people who enjoy learning, are effective in communication, have a sense of commitment, are willing to use their creativity, and with an eventual outlook towards lifelong learning. The use of information technology in education is now a mainstream development. The Education Office recognizes this emerging trend and concentrates its human and material resources to equip Catholic schools to the highest standards in this aspect.

5.2.4 Further development of personnel

The Education Office understands the importance of high-quality personnel and has planned development programmes at three levels:

School's leaders: Supervisor, Managers, Principal and Assistant Principals.

Middle management: Managerial staff such as heads of department and committees.

New recruits: new teachers and clerical staff.

These development programmes are ongoing initiatives that match the latest education policies and Catholic educational ideals. Hopefully the staff that undergo these programmes will be better equipped to provide quality Catholic education for students.

6. Social Affairs

6.1 Promoting the “Servant Role”

The rapid changes in society which Hong Kong has encountered in the past five years has directly or indirectly placed great pressure on many families. The uncertainty of the political future, the transformation and reformation of the economy, and added to these the more direct conflict in ideology between the East and the West after the reversion of Hong Kong to China, are all affecting the stability of the families.

One of the most visible examples showing how the social structure affects family life is that following on the economic co-development between Hong Kong and the Mainland, and with the Hong Kong industries moving northwards, economic activities between the two places became more and more frequent. People from Hong Kong, for work or for entertainment purposes, made northward-bound trips more frequently, resulting in temporary separations (pseudo single-parent phenomenon) in families, with ensuing extra marital affairs, thus leading to an increase in the number of divorce cases. Apart from that, the pressure caused by social and economic instability also directly affected the mental health of the individuals, leading to an increase in conflict and violence in families as well as in suicide cases. To meet the challenge of the times, families, as basic units of society, would certainly need community support in carrying out the responsibility of proclaiming faith, preserving cultural values, and ensuring the next generation a healthy up-bringing.

As stated in the Pastoral Exhortation, special attention was directed to specific aspects of family life in the past five years. Reviews and reflection on what has been developed in this regard can be summarized as follows:

- (i) Caritas, The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council and the Parishes have collaborated in promoting pre-marital preparatory activities.
- (ii) The marriage formation hotline, parallel with marriage formation activities, was established to encourage couples to maintain and enhance the dynamics of marriage life.
- (iii) Through the establishment of the marriage home-page and the publication of the marriage network periodical and other related books, couples were helped to improve their relationship and to enhance interest in their daily life.
- (iv) Caritas, the Diocesan Office For Laity Formation and Hong Kong Central Council of Catholic Laity has worked in promoting the Christian Family Movement. A total of 30 cell groups were established in various districts.

- (v) To understand the effect which extra marital affairs phenomenon has caused on marriage, a joint research was carried out by Caritas and The University of Hong Kong in 1995. It was discovered that the earlier the couple could try to face with a positive attitude the problem of an unfaithful spouse, the greater the chance they would have of rebuilding their marriage. Therefore an extra marital problem hotline was especially set up to encourage the people who were in need to seek help. In four years' time, a total number of more than 100,000 enquiries through this hotline was received. Later in 1999, the "little-ear hotline" was also established, counseling children who had to face the extra marital affairs of their parents. On the average, 30,000 enquiries per month were received.

At the approach of the new millennium, the global economic consolidation led to keen competition and increasing work pressure. With the polarization of the rich and the poor, the government would need to have better control on the welfare expenditure. To meet the increased service requirements with limited resources, and to support the families in weak positions, the professional efficiency of the social workers had to be further improved, as well as better cooperation within the different organizations of society in order to help families which were in need.

People, who had worked on family services for years, felt keenly the capabilities of the service users. It was recommended that in the future, partnership with the service users should be created, allowing them to share their experience with others who were in similar situations and to assist families which were still struggling.

The family is a school for personal growth, a resting place for the exhausted, and a safe protection and rescue for the ones in trouble. Therefore, the social services of the Church endeavoured all along to consolidate and to strengthen the functions of the family, so that it could take good care of its members. All services were ultimately delivered with a hope that people could positively encounter hardship in life, not to feel ashamed of one's own disability or limitation; and that a society of mutual love and care could be built.

There were various kinds of services set up to achieve this goal, for example, the mentally handicapped people were provided with outdoor work, car-washing, delivery services and so forth, so that they could be integrated into society and make their own living.

- (i) Small supporting groups were set up to assist people who had to take care of the sick or the mentally handicapped members in the family, and to write about their

caring experience, so that mutually accepting attitudes among members in a family could be promoted and they be enabled to walk hand-in-hand through life. Some parents of the mentally handicapped children even wrote and performed dramas on their own, encouraging communication between the abled and the disabled.

- (ii) Training in self-confidence was provided for the young new arrivals. Families of the new arrivals were brought together to participate in community services, such as visiting private homes for the elderly, organizing activities to look after the needs of the new arrivals, helping them to start their new life positively, and eliminating discrimination against them.
- (iii) Arrangements were made for Drug addicts under treatment to be visited on holidays by their family members, so that their efforts made in quitting drugs could be shared and recognized by their family members who could in turn support them in starting a new life. These drug addicts were also enabled to make friendly visits to hospitals and sanatoriums, so that a mutually accepting and caring society could be built up.

The people who were patiently caring for others in the family as well as those who had special needs were all facing their own problems and difficulties with courage, taking up the servant role and freeing other people with hope in their heart. In future days, the social service organizations of the Church, in particular Caritas, should continue what has been done, to strengthen the caring function of the family for people who need help, especially for the weak minority such as the sick, the mentally handicapped, the rehabilitating drug addicts, the new arrivals and so on, who had to be looked after at home; and also to deepen the communion between the abled and the disabled, and to promote the spirit of mutual assistance and support among neighbours.

6.2 Promoting the “Prophet Role”

Generally speaking, the Episcopal Vicar for Social Services seemed to be responsible for coordinating the social service organizations, not the social concern groups. Therefore no meeting of the social concern organizations was called for the purpose of strengthening the prophetic voice of the Church, enhancing co-operation with the Protestant Church and other organizations, and encouraging the out-coming of more prophetic organizations.

The lately established “Parish Social Concern Supporting Group” could perhaps be regarded as a joint organization in the Diocese especially for the formation of social concern. Nevertheless, since its terms of reference were limited to supporting

the social concern groups in Parishes and providing related formation, it was not yet able to fully function as stipulated in the Pastoral Exhortation with regard to coordinating all the social concern organization in the Diocese in responding to social issues.

Although there was no officially established mechanism in the Diocese for strengthening overall responses to social issues, there were, however, various Diocesan organizations including Justice and Peace Commission, Commission for Labour Affairs, Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students and so forth, which would collectively or individually, or together with the Protestant organizations and other civil organizations, express views on some social issues; pointing out social injustice, especially discrimination or negligence such as the right of abode in Hong Kong, overseas labour, the basic rights of recipients of integrated social assistance and so forth.

Their views would be submitted to the Diocese or Parishes for reference. The Justice and Peace Commission and the Commission for Labour Affairs would also gauge allied signatures of the parishioners in different Parishes upon individual cases so as to promote more laity responses. Apart from these, the Cardinal and the Bishops had, in case of some important issues such as the right of abode in Hong Kong and the attitude towards the new arrivals, either announced Pastoral messages or expressed opinions through interviews by Kung Kao Po. This was not only a prophetic voice in society, but also a guide for the Catholic population in the Diocese, and should be strengthened. To enhance this prophetic role, better co-ordination and communication with the various social concern organizations should be established.

In the past few years, the Justice and Peace Commission and the Commission for Labour Affairs have held a number of social concern gatherings in different formats, encouraging exchange of views among social concern groups in different Parishes. Besides, according to the needs and situations of individual Parishes, they had also collaborated with Parishes in conducting different kinds of social concern activities. Nevertheless, many limitations still existed, such as: social concern was not treated as a priority in the Parish which had too many things to care for, not much support was given by the priest, little response was obtained from the parishioners and so forth. Because of these limitations, it was difficult to encourage more laity in raising their social concern awareness which in order to be achieved would require more long-term development strategy, all-round faith formation, and follow-up supports for the social concern groups after their establishment.

The Diocesan Catechetical Centre had, in the 2-year Catechesis training

programme, continued to strengthen the topic on “Social Teachings of the Church”.

In accordance with the “Catholic Catechism”, a Catechesis handbook “Faith and Evangelization” which was suitable for the use of the tutors of the catechetical classes was compiled. This handbook interpreted the contents of the catechism, focusing on the life situations of the catechumen, providing recommendations for responses to life, strengthening the catechumen’s understanding of the kingdom of God, encouraging him/her to put the teachings of faith into practice in their daily life, to live in accordance with the social teachings of the Church and to care for society and people around.

The Parish Group of the Diocesan Catechetical Commission prepared some models of gathering suitable for the newly baptized who were attending their second catechetical classes. One set of the models made provision for meditations and reflections based on current social issues, the Bible, Catholic catechism, and contents of the documents and teachings of the Church.

The Diocesan Catechetical Commission and the Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese also combined efforts in conducting workshops on “Social Ethics and Catechesis” for tutors of catechetical classes for adults.

Concern was also shown to parents of mentally handicapped children about their efforts to give faith formation to their children as well as seeing whether it would be possible to provide them with catechetical materials.

6.3 Diocesan Youth Affairs

The Diocesan Youth Commission was established directly under the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong on 1st August 1995, especially for coordinating and promoting all pastoral work for the youth in the Diocese, being responsible directly to the Bishop of Hong Kong. Since its establishment five years ago, the Diocesan Youth Commission (hereafter called “the Commission”) has undergone a change of Commission membership three times and of office location twice. A lot of effort and achievement was made by youth workers. The work of the three terms of the Commission can be briefly reported as follows:

6.3.1 The First Term (1995-1997)

(i) Establishment of Diocesan Youth Centre: According to the Report on Diocesan

Pastoral Work for Youth, the Diocesan Youth Centre was established, mainly for promoting and implementing the recommendations made by the Commission.

- (ii) Organization of youth activities: In collaboration with Secondary Schools and Parishes, various formation activities, summer tuition classes, youth concerts, participation in the World Youth Day and so forth were organized.
- (iii) Establishment of Network: The Committee worked hard in communicating with youth organizations and youth workers in the Diocese, visiting Parishes and other Diocesan organizations, contacting schools in Kwai Tsing District, participating in BILA on youth and so forth.
- (iv) Collecting information of youth organizations.

Summing up: The First Term of the Committee of the Commission was mainly involved in seeding. All things were developed through trial and exploration. Though satisfactory results were still to be achieved, the existence of the Commission was already a significant symbol of the development of pastoral care for the youth of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong.

6.3.2 The Second Term (1997-1999)

Based on the development achieved by members of the First Term, members of the Second Term started right after assuming office to review again the current situation of the work of pastoral care for youth in the Diocese, and to make some necessary reforms, establishing various small functional groups for taking up different kinds of work: In order to enhance the effectiveness of the Commission in promoting pastoral care for youth, Commission members had from the very beginning of their term of office been involved in the restructuring of the Commission. After thorough discussion, the Committee began with setting up a Formation Group, a Networking Group and a Spiritual Formation Group.

The Networking Group started from the nine Deaneries in making contacts as quickly as possible with the young people who had attended the World Youth Day, and talking to them before deciding on the direction for development. On the other hand the Spiritual Formation Group was able to take up the role of coordination, collecting spiritual formation items from various religious congregations and disseminating the information. Responses to the spiritual formation gatherings held in the seminary were normally very positive.

6.3.3 The Third Term (1999-2001)

To cope with the actual work situation and the needs of the youth, the direction

of the future work of this Commission would be as follows:

- (i) Schools: Emphasis would be laid on the formation of the Animator. Attention would be drawn to working in aspects different from those taken up by the Catholic Education Development Committee and the Catechetical Centre, and yet maintaining a relationship with the two organizations.
- (ii) Deaneries and Parishes: Assistance would be provided for establishing and developing Youth Affairs Small Groups in various Deaneries. Developments of these small groups could differ from one another, and the problems which they had to face were numerous, for example:
these small groups had only very few members and were neither sure of their own function and position nor clear about the relationship among themselves.
- (iii) Research and Development (Resource Centre):
Efforts would be made to understanding the present situations of the young people and their pastoral care, reviewing the direction of the Commission and making recommendations for other working groups and so forth.
- (iv) Spreading of the Information: Through communications with other Diocesan organizations (such as the Diocesan Audio-Visual Centre and the Diocesan Sacred Music Commission), the young people would be provided with space to express their faith, and a new evangelization culture would be cultivated with youth characteristics.

6.4 Services To New Arrivals

Owing to the difference in dialects, customs, culture, living environment and social systems between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the new arrivals are confronted with a lot of difficulties in adapting themselves to the way of living in Hong Kong. With the kind of discrimination that the local people might have against them, they could hardly be helped to integrate into Hong Kong. The female new arrivals in particular were facing the greatest pressure in adaptation. Before getting used to the way of living in Hong Kong, they themselves had to take care of others. Although family reunion was the hope which they had been longing for, yet many of these women who lived without their husbands for a long time found that when they met and lived together again with their husbands, they were unable to adapt themselves to married life and the way of communications with their husbands, hence quarrels or marriage crises. Moreover, most of the husbands of these female new arrivals came from the low-income class and were older. With the undesirable financial situation of the family, especially with the economic depression, many of the new arrivals had to live in poverty.

6.4.1 On the Diocesan Level

On 1st August 1997, the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong established the “Diocesan Ad Hoc Committee for New Arrivals” the name of which was later in January 200 changed to “Diocesan Ad Hoc Committee for Services To New Arrivals From Mainland China” (hereafter called “the Ad Hoc Committee”), with special concern for people moving from the Mainland to Hong Kong. In the summer of 1997, recommendations was made by the Ad Hoc Committee to the Diocese for opening evening schools to admit children who had newly arrived at Hong Kong from the Mainland, and who in spite of being at school age, were still not yet in school. In the winter of the same year, the Diocese accepted the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee, and opened two evening schools for these children, one at St. Francis of Assisi’s English Primary School in Shek Kip Mei, and one at St. Joseph’s Anglo-Chinese Primary School on Kwun Tong Road. It was perhaps due to this pioneering endeavour of the Diocese, that greater concern for the schooling problem of the newly arrived children was shown by the Hong Kong government, and more assisting resources were injected into this aspect. Not long after the establishment of these two evening schools, almost every child at school age arriving at Hong Kong was admitted to a mainstream local school; and hence the function of the evening schools soon became no more than providing supplementary private tuitions for the children who were already studying in day schools. This was quite different from the original purpose of the establishment of these evening schools, and therefore after one year, the Diocese decided to close down these two evening schools which had already successfully done their part in contributing to the needs of society.

Although the Ad Hoc Committee had been formed for only a few years, it had, in collaboration with Caritas, held twice every year the “New Migrants Day” which was a territory-wide variety function attracting both the new arrivals and the laity, and encouraging the latter to accept and care for the former so that they could soon be integrated into the Church and the community.

It was envisaged that in the near future, the government would grant permission for the Diocese to open a “Transient School” for the newly arrived school children, assisting them to adopt as soon as possible to the education system in Hong Kong. Besides, it was also hoped that together with Caritas, the “Pre-migration Services” which was arranged in the Mainland, could be strengthened, so that our fellow-countrymen who were about to come to Hong Kong could be provided with necessary counselling service well in advance.

6.4.2 Caritas – Hong Kong

According to the needs of the people of different age groups, Caritas – Hong

Kong appropriately provided family-based supporting services to families newly arriving at Hong Kong.

- (i) Induction and Extension Programmes were provided for school children who had newly arrived at Hong Kong. (About 1,585 school children per year on average were served). Educational activities in small groups and in communities were also designed to assist these school children to adapt themselves to the new teaching mode and to catch up to the required standard. With the help of these programmes and activities, they were able to know more about Hong Kong and to make friends with the local children.
- (ii) The young people who had newly arrived at Hong Kong were helped to establish small groups for mutual assistance. (About 3,000 persons per year on average were involved). Activities were organized to assist other newly arrived young people, for example: providing technical and vocational training, English learning small groups, vocational talks, transferrals and so forth.
- (iii) “Hotline for New Arrivals Women” was set up. (About 380 calls per year on average were received). Calls were received by social workers who would provide emotion counselling services, family visits or referrals as necessary. Other activities such as organizing small groups for mutual assistance, talks on child management and marriage counselling were also provided. (About 10,000 persons per year on average were served).
- (iv) Mutual assistance network for newly arriving families was set up. With links and mutual supports established with the local families, integration was more easily promoted. Moreover, there was a 24-hour telephone hotline providing information of Hong Kong. (About 5,500 enquiries were received per year on the average).
- (v) To encourage integration and communion, the Diocese and Caritas had three times jointly organized the “New Migrants Day”, promoting mutual understanding and acceptance between the local people and the new arrivals. (About 400 persons were served each year on the average).

Apart from strengthening the existing services to new arrivals, the Diocese and Caritas have, as mentioned before, already planned to set up counselling services in Guangzhou. The purpose was to let the people in the Mainland, who were about to migrate to Hong Kong, have a better understanding of the society of Hong Kong well beforehand, so that they could make necessary preparations both psychologically and practically in advance; and after arriving at Hong Kong, they could also seek help from Caritas. Moreover, Caritas would work in tandem with the Diocese for the “Transient School” for children who had newly arrived, mainly in providing school social work services for the children and their families.

7. Relations of the Diocese with China and with the Church in China

While receiving the Catholic Bishops of Taiwan at Castel Gandolfo in the suburb of Rome on 15th August 1995, Pope John Paul II released to them a speech with a theme of reconciliation and communion in which the most outstanding point was: The overseas Church, namely the Church in Taiwan, in Hong Kong and in Macau were no more addressed as the “Bridge Churches” by the Pope. They were addressed as “Sister Churches”, which indicated the equal standing of these Churches as well as their mutual close relationship.

Thereafter, contacts, exchange and collaboration between the Mainland and the related organizations as well as individuals in the Diocese of Hong Kong were made according to this new direction and new relationship emphasized by the Pope.

First of all, on the level of the Diocesan organizations, members of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission were invited to give lectures on the “The Spirit of Liturgical Reform” in Mainland China, and to assist the Diocese of Shanghai in publishing Handbooks for the Holy Mass to be used throughout the whole country. The Diocesan Catechetical Centre was invited to conduct seminars and workshops at various seminaries for religious men and women, to share the experience of evangelization, to promote the contemporary catechetical methodology and to briefly introduce the content of the new edition of “Catechism of the Catholic Church”. The Holy Spirit Seminary was happy to be responsible for the formation of the two seminarians from the Diocese of Beijing. The Holy Spirit Seminary College of Philosophy and Theology continued to arrange for professors to go to various public seminaries to teach Theology and Philosophy, to offer short training programmes for the professors of the seminaries in the Mainland, providing in particular spiritual formation for seminarians and young priests so that they could go into more in-depth prayer and understanding of the priestly life. Several members of the Hong Kong Central Council of Catholic Laity were invited to the Mainland to observe and to share the experience of evangelization among the faithful. The Holy Spirit Study Centre continued to collaborate with the local and overseas supporters in providing resources for the formation of the seminarians and the nuns, the building and renovations of seminaries and churches, and the publication of religious books; and also in continuing communications with related people in overseas Churches and the Church in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau, holding annual and monthly meetings, exchanging experience, enhancing reflection and promoting cooperation.

Secondly, on the level of other organizations and individuals in the Diocese, the

Catholic Institute For Religion and Society, together with “Yi” and the Hong Kong Chinese Theology Association, had in the middle of the year arranged a few Mainland-Hong Kong sharing sessions and study camps so that the clergy, laity and religious research scholars from the Mainland could come to Hong Kong to observe and share experience with the local people; and also more Parishes or the faithful would take the initiative to establish small social concern groups, strengthening connections with the brothers and sisters in the mainland, and sharing mutually in both material and spiritual aspects.

In regard to Caritas-Hong Kong, the organization continued to go to the Mainland upon invitation, to conduct formation programmes with more and more variety; and to organize timely and appropriate rescue and assistance for victims of various kinds of disasters.

On the whole, the relations of the Diocese with China and with the Church in China during the past years could be assessed as availing of the opportunity for continuous development; especially in the areas of liturgical and catechetical reform, and in Theological and Philosophical and spiritual formation. Of course there have been dramatic ups and downs in the recent months: at first the spreading of the exciting news of establishing diplomatic relation between China and Vatican in the near future followed by the sad news that the five Bishops in Beijing were illegitimately ordained without the permission of the Pope. Nevertheless, the Lord and Truth are sure to gain victory. Facing the future, the Diocese should be always with hope in fulfilling the mission entrusted by our Lord for evangelization, reconciliation and communion.

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Hong Kong Catholic Social Communication Office

Committee for the Ongoing Formation of the Clergy

Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese

Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs

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Diocesan Commission for Laity Formation and Diocesan Office for Laity Formation

Diocesan Youth Commission and Office

Hong Kong Catholic Board of Education and Catholic Education Office

Diocesan Catechetical Commission and Diocesan Catechetical Centre

Diocesan Ad Hoc Committee for Services to New Arrivals from Mainland China