

# PASPAC REPORT TO GENERAL CHAPTER 2024.

## INTRODUCTION

The Configuration is made up of four Provinces (REPAC, PASS, MACOR and SPIR) and two vice Provinces (THOM, MAIAP).

We comprise of 10 Nations, with two being communist governments and eight democracies.

Apart from our own zone of the Asia/Pacific region of the world, there are communities in Israel and Sweden and members of various Paspac members work in the Generalate and in the United States, Canada, UK, Ireland, Bermuda, West Indies and Peru.

## CONTEXT

The Passionist Asian Pacific Configuration is geographically vast. Its territory covers one third of the globe. The distances across the configuration are enormous e.g. *to cross REPAC (takes 8 hours flight) / Crossing SPIR (8.5 hours flight) / India to Australia (10hours flight) or Japan to Indonesia (8 hours flight)*

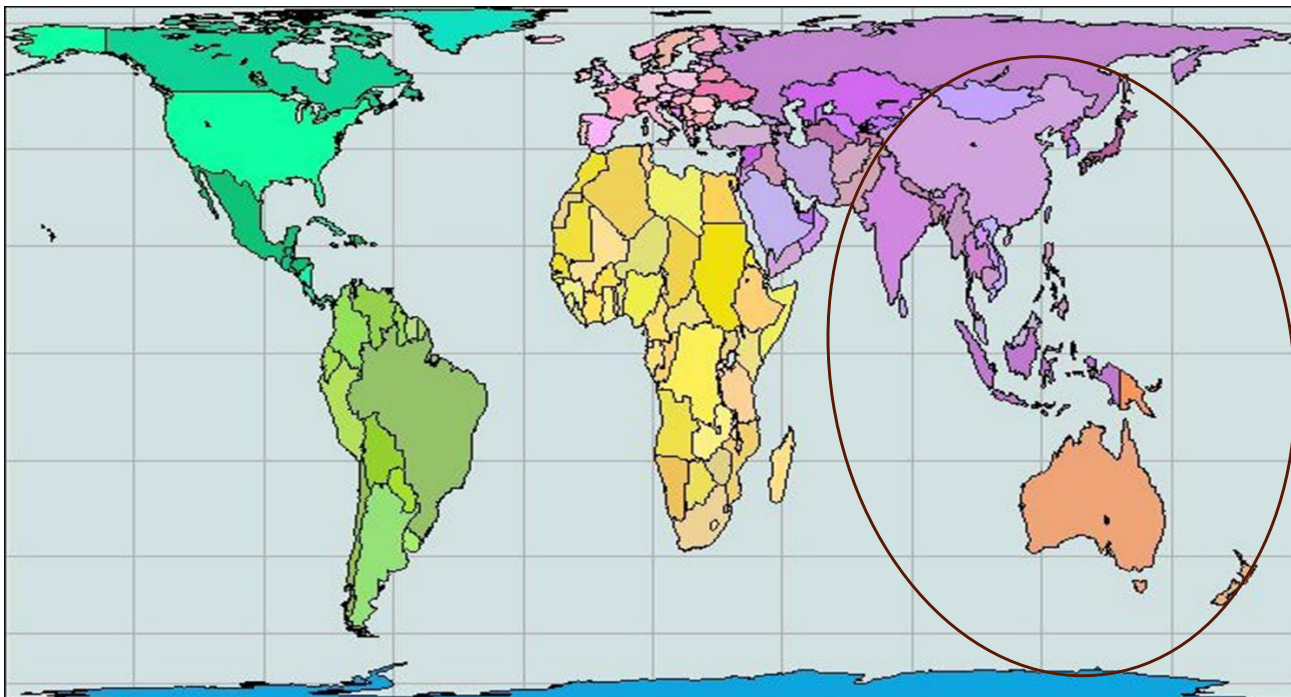
We operate across at least 13 major languages (not related to each other) but our working language is English – which is a second language for most of our members. There are countless indigenous languages within our countries.

Movement between countries is not simple with many of our countries requiring us to apply for entry visas.

Christianity is a minority religious in all countries of our Configuration with the exception of the Philippines where it is the majority religion.

## PASPAC CONFIGURATION REPORT

map.



## STATISTICS

| PASPAC              | REPAC | MACOR | MAIAP | THOM | PASS | SPIR |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| COMMUNITIES         | 37    | 4     | 1     | 8    | 17   | 10   |
| PROFESSED RELIGIOUS | 194   | 32    | 9     | 57   | 62   | 80   |
| NOVICES             | 10    | 2     | -     | 2    | 4    | 6    |
| POSTUALANTS         | 31    | 4     | -     | 23   | 25   | 16   |

Totals: As a Configuration we have four hundred and thirty-four (434) professed members (clerics, brothers, vowed students in formation) and currently twenty-four Novices (24).

# Major Challenges and Ministries

The major social issues within our configuration are: violence in society at large and against women and minorities, environmental degradation and its effect on indigenous people, poor civil government, persecution of minorities, loss of democratic rights and in two countries communist Government oversight of all activity. In some areas the citizens are being polarized and there is civil mistrust of Government in society, and we are assisting where we can in the ministry of care of migrants.

In many places we are challenged to achieve good outcomes in dialogue with Bishops in order to promote our Charism and gain some financial assistance from Dioceses where we give considerable help through our ministry.

In response to the social challenges across our Configuration our major Passionist ministries within our entities are to respond through our work in parishes, mission stations, in education programmes at University, school and local community levels, retreats, and initiatives that work with the poor through agencies and projects. We have numerous members working in foreign mission and internal formation ministers is also a major work. In our preaching and teaching we stress the promotion of harmony, indigenous rights and interreligious dialogue, so as to promote inclusion and brotherhood across our multicultural societies.

## Current Status of the Configuration

### **Communities.**

Across the seventy-seven communities of the Configuration there is a range of small communities focused around parochial or mission projects, numerous smaller communities engaged in local justice, education or outreach apostolates, formation communities and larger institutions with retreat houses. Across all our entities we continue to work at achieving the balance of life giving community and effective apostolate in our lives.

We are trying to build up fraternity in our communities and in our various Provinces and Vice Provinces. We are doing this through regional gatherings,

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gaudeamus days, common recreation times, creating supportive structures for local superiors', combining communities for days of recollection, monthly meetings for sharing (spiritual and practical matters), province assemblies each year (sometimes in zones or by internet), retreats in zones, seminars for brothers, local superiors and our professed men who are less than 10 years ordained or professed. We often have coordinators appointed for different zones,

We are supporting the leadership of the community leaders by means of retreats for the leaders, meetings of leaders for sharing and learning to help leaders to build community life against the push for individualism. We encourage the community leaders to have resources such as a 'supervisor' or 'spiritual director'.

### **Presence at the Peripheries.**

This is a significant aspect of the life of Paspac. Across the various countries projects range from deliberately opening new communities in zones with poor or needy people, working with migrants, creating ministry to indigenous people, participation in combined ministry for drug addicts, sponsoring youth ministry teams, participating in social justice ministry with marginalised and maintaining a commitment to poor parishes and promoting education for the poor.

### **Interculturality**

Within each entity there are now very few foreign missionaries. Many of our communities are mono-cultural (but in SPIR is very mixed. We continually need to create awareness of different styles of communicating that each culture uses and we have to maintain a sensitivity to the use of language, gender issues (and how different cultures relate to men and women). Some of our cultures have difficulty asking for funds.

### **Accountability**

In each Province or Vice Province the Major Superior visits each community annually (often with the Econome to help to train the local economies). We place a cap on how much each community can hold, and many entities have external auditors for an annual financial inspection and review. Some countries employ lay assistants while others manage finances by their own

members and most entities utilise the same accounting programmes in each house.

### **Formation Personnel**

Across each entity we need more formators and we recognise that training for formators is very important especially professional courses in areas of psychological or personal issues. Difficulties arise for all of us when a formator is transferred, external resource persons are important, and inter-institute formation is growing in many of our countries.

### **Professional Standards, Protection of Children and any Adults ‘at risk’.**

There are different standards in different countries, but we have policies from the Vatican, and we have documented our policies and procedures at the Paspac level. Each Province and Vice Province has policies that are in accord with Government or Church requirements. Civil laws are becoming very strict. Regarding our own policies we need to modify procedures at times to align with local cultures. We have trained some members in this field and provided in-service for our own members. We can learn from other orders and from each other.

### **Support for newly Professed/Ordained**

Within our Provinces and Vice Provinces we have gatherings for our younger men (e.g. up to 5 or 7 years professed or ordained ) as part of their on-going formation. Some provinces have well organised programmes for younger men with topics including preaching, psycho-sexual integration, difficulties in ministry. In some places this is a yearly programme. We discern a need to balance the self belief of many of the younger members with their actual capacity. As part of the Jubilee celebrations, the gathering in Rome of younger religious was very appreciated. There is a need to distinguish between extraordinary encounters/programmes & the need for ongoing ‘ordinary’ formation in situ (via mentoring, supervision, reading, study).

Finance for such on-going formation remains a concern for us. To offer formation or other support for our men in China is difficult due to the Chinese Government policies and travel restrictions.

### **Community as a place of Vocation Promotion**

Across 77 communities, not all communities are equally able to promote vocations. While we often have a contact person in each community, generally we have a province vocation director or team to coordinate this ministry. It is important to promote the right image of religious or priests – i.e. as a 'servant'. Vocations are high in some countries, less so in our more 'middle-class' areas. Parish ministry is a major source of vocations. While vocations are plentiful, we need to maximise or efforts to build the future.

The Financial obligations of candidates (to their families) is a new issue to be responded to in various ways.

### **JPIC as part of formation**

Not every seminary where our students study is addressing this issue; we have a JPIC commission in Paspac and most Provinces and Vice-Provinces have a person to coordinate this awareness. Some areas focus more on justice issues, others on environmental issues. We often depend on individuals promoting issues

### **Myanmar Mission**

We had invested considerable effort in beginning this mission. Research, meetings with church officials and dialogue within Paspac led to the establishment of a presence (2-3 missionaries). They made a contribution immediately. However political turmoil and suspension of an elected Government which placed new restrictions on foreign presence, led to us discontinuing our presence in the mission. We remain in contact with the Bishop through our General Consultor.

We do not consider the mission closed. We know we cannot operate at the moment, but we continue to hold funds for Myanmar, we still have some religious willing to enter the country or work from a community in India (across the border), but political issues make it not possible yet. We continue to be hopeful about the future.

# Evaluations.

## 1. Level of Solidarity

How are we going and what are the next steps?

We have had significant exchange of personnel and most of this has been for formation. A lot of arrangements have been bi-lateral. However there are various projects for ministry that have involved sharing personnel across the Configuration (Israel and Papua New Guinea are combined projects).

There has been some financial sharing and help for different members of our Configuration and we do have a small Paspac Fund. However most financial matters are handled within each entity.

Since Covid ended, the Paspac Council has been able to meet again and has scheduled meetings each six months over 2023 and 2024.

## 2. Configuration Mentality

There is a good awareness of our identity as a Configuration but for many of the reasons already mentioned in this report, we are not able to have many common projects. The leaders are more aware and try to work together, but the general membership knows Paspac more as a Conference.

We prefer to continue to work as a collaborative body.

Distances, very significant cultural differences, and the multitude of languages all suggest to us that we remain as we are – a cooperative, collegial configuration.

We have had some common projects (e.g. the International Novitiate program), but we have no other common formation house.

We have four common Paspac commissions – Personnel, Finance, Formation and JPIC. The leaders attend to the area of personnel, and each of the three commissions is currently working in some common programmes that can be brought into action in 2025.



# Challenges for our Future

- ✚ Formation of our own students and having sufficient formation personnel.
- ✚ Funding for our mission work and outreach. Creating new ministers and communities.
- ✚ Building up our infrastructure and funds.
- ✚ Particular assistance to our brothers in Japan as they age and live with diminishment.

## Summary Statement

As a Paspac Council we try to act in a Synodal fashion and plan for action across the Configuration, but mostly we have to act locally (subsidiarity).

The distance between entities, differences in languages and culture, the financial costs of travel and very different practices and priorities in each Local Church make it difficult for us to have a 'configuration wide' project or action that affects everyone. It is more a matter of us 'sharing' (in solidarity). Many of our projects are organised between individual entities rather than being 'configuration wide'.

We continue to recover from the set-backs that Covid caused – especially the suspension of travel and meetings – and we recommit to creating a 'sense of belonging' (syneisodos) with each other.

The fundamental natures of our various societies and ways of living suggest to us that we continue to operate as Provinces and Vice Provinces seeking an ever increasing level of solidarity, and that it is through the creation of respectful relationships with each other that we will advance most successfully.