

CONGRESS OF ASIAN CATHOLIC LAITY ASSEMBLY CONGRESO DE LA ASAMBLEA DE ASIA LAICOS CATÓLICOS EN COREA



REPORT ON THE CONGRESS OF ASIAN CATHOLIC LAITY

The Australian President of the world body of the Cursillo Movement (OMCC) has returned from the recent Congress for Asian Catholic Laity in South Korea with a new appreciation for Australia's tradition of religious freedom.

Yvonne Carrigan was part of a four-person OMCC delegation which included Dr Adrian Farrelly, OMCC Spiritual Advisor, Francisco Kim and Don Nguyen. The congress was attended by almost 400 delegates from 20 countries including Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Delegates were also present from Turkmenistan, the youngest Catholic Church in the world, only 13 years old.

"Congress convenor, the Pontifical Council of the Laity, provided excellent presentations, giving new and clear insight into the Church in Asia. Chief organisers and host was the Catholic Church in Korea and their preparation and hospitality was outstanding."

Attending the congress held in Seoul from September 1-5 had left Yvonne "humbled" as many presenters spoke of the Church in Asia as a "creative minority" making up only three per cent of the population of the vast continent of Asia (120 million out of 4 billion), definitely a minority. "Being a minority is nothing new to the Church and that is where the creative dimension comes into play," she said.

Mrs Carrigan said "Certainly our attendance left us more aware of the graces which the Lord so freely offers - especially here in Australia where there is complete religious freedom, unlike the majority of countries represented at the congress,"

"We were blessed with the presence of cardinals, archbishops, bishops and priests of the Church in Asia and from the Vatican," Mrs Carrigan said. "Many committed and faithful lay people from the countries of Asia were present.

Cardinal Rylko of the pontifical council said in his opening address that 'Christianity not lived is irrelevant'. He stressed that we must be 'salt, light and leaven for the world' - a theme repeated in many of the presentations.

Cardinal Jinsuk of Korea in his welcome, reminded us that there is still a hunger for Christ, and that the whole Church must embrace this need, and the laity must be proactive agents of this challenge."

Mrs Carrigan said the Cursillo Movement was unknown in many of the countries which took part in the congress."It was a wonderful opportunity for the Cursillo members, myself, Fr Farrelly, Don Nguyen of Canberra, Australia (Vietnam in Diaspora) and Francisco Kim (Korea) to share our charism with those present."