

UNIFIED FORMATION FRAMEWORK (UFF)



Archdiocese of Manila
Office for the Promotion of the New Evangelization

RATIONALE FOR A FORMATION

The Archdiocese of Manila is made up of various groups – priests, religious, lay organizations, and many activities are being done to advance the work of the Kingdom of God. It is always a big challenge how to bring some form of unity in the various works being done so that a common direction and a common outlook may guide those who work in this local church.

Cardinal Tagle had tasked the formation team of the archdiocese, which is made up of the heads of the various ministries working on formation, under the guidance of the Bukal ng Tipan group, to come up with something in common in the area of formation that could be followed in the whole archdiocese. This mandate was given in 2015. After several meetings of the formation team this reality has crystallized. There are already many formation programs being implemented by the different groups which are suited to their own ministries and beneficiaries. It is therefore very unlikely that all should be given a uniform formation program. However, while the peculiarities of each group may be respected, some elements may be followed by all in a common formation framework. So the basic lines may be identified to be common to all while the specific contents and how these elements are to be implemented may be done by each group or formation program.

One thing that helps is to have a common vision as a local church. This was done at the time of Cardinal Rosales around 2005. From this common vision, many ministries and church groups working in the archdiocese revised and aligned their own visions. The lay leaders of the archdiocese were consulted in several Manila Archdiocesan General Pastoral Assembly (MAGPAS) sessions whether the vision of the archdiocese is still relevant, how much it is alive in the consciousness of the people, and how it influences the direction of the archdiocese. From those attending the MAGPAS sessions a rough survey was done. They were also tasked to conduct a simple survey among the unchurched about their perception of the Church and its vision. In a clergy recollection, the priests were also asked about their dreams for their local Church with the changing situation of our times. In all it became clear that the vision is still valid but it needs to be further reinforced and the common values flowing from the vision be identified and worked on.

VISION

A people Called by the Father in Jesus Christ
To Become a Community of Persons
with Fullness of Life
witnessing to the Kingdom of God
by living the Paschal Mystery
in the Power of the Holy Spirit
with Mary as our Companion

CORE VALUES AS THE PASSION:THE HEART AND REASON FOR BEING

As the people of God, we are called to live in communion with others, guided by our vision. From this vision, we come out with the core values of our Archdiocese, which will serve as the heart and reason for our being. It answers the question Why? Why are we doing what we are doing? What gives fire to our identity? Values guide our decision-making. Values give us our reason for being. Passion gives us the energy to go on, especially when things are difficult. Passion gives Vision its wings!

Again, a series of consultations in the form of recollection and group sharing was done among the lay leaders and the clergy. The following core values were identified which are drawn from the vision and the needs of our times.

CORE VALUES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA

COMMUNITY

As the womb where we grow: Unity; Spirit of communion; Belonging; Cohesiveness; Solidarity; Pariticipation, Lay empowerment, Accountability, Shared gifts and talents, Teamwork.

COMMITMENT TO SERVE

As the fruit of our unity: Mutual aid, Solidarity, Responsibility, Volunteerism, Compassion for the poor, Willingness to serve, Charity, Service, Hunger and thirst for righteousness, Care for our common home.

MEEKNESS

As spiritual strength of the community: Humility, Poverty in spirit, Purity of heart, Serenity with fortitude.

MERCY

As stance of service: Mercy, Care or concern, Compassion-Comprehension, Compassion.

A COMMON FORMATION FRAMEWORK

The journey of the two apostles on the Road to Emmaus is highlighted by their encounter with the Risen Lord who did not only accompany them in the midst of their confusion but explained to them the meaning of the Scriptures. It was a moment of divine encounter. As Pope Benedict XVI stated: Christianity is not an ethical system (it is not about rules, it's not about norms of being a Christian). It is about a person that we should encounter and we need to know. Thus, we are all reminded that any program that hopes to form and shape the heart of the person entails an encounter with the Risen Lord whether priest, religious, or lay. It entails an encounter that would transform the person, that will transform the thinking process, that will transform even one's values, that will transform one's involvement in the community or in history.

The core of Christian formation is encounter with Jesus Christ. Growth in Christian Life is closeness to Jesus. In the Emmaus story, the Lord Jesus encounters his disciple in various ways. Jesus initiated the encounter by journeying with his discouraged disciples (Lk 24:13-24). He walks beside them and allows them to give words to their pains and frustrations. Although they had the correct facts about Jesus, even up to the resurrection story, yet they failed to see the good news. Jesus then enlightened their experience and their facts with the Scriptures as he made an ambulant Bible study with them (Lk 24:25-27). The attitudes of the disciples to him changed with his Bible explanations. Their hearts burned away the coldness within them and they were now more concerned about their companion. They invited him to stay with him as night was upon them. This act of charity led to fellowship at table (Lk 24:28-32), where they recognized Jesus in the breaking of bread. Recognizing the Lord in their midst urged them to make a quick return to the group of apostles that they had left behind in Jerusalem in spite of it being late in the night (Lk 24:33-49). There their experience of the resurrection was confirmed by the account of Jesus' appearance to Peter, and by the very appearance of the Lord Jesus himself. Jesus encountered in the community sent them to mission. Here several moments of encounter with the resurrected Jesus are presented to us: encounter with Jesus in our pains and sorrows, encounter with Jesus in the Scriptures, encounter with Jesus in the sacrament and encounter with Jesus in the Christian community and mission.

We can take these important moments of encounter as the elements of our framework of formation. In whatever formation programs are being done in the Archdiocese of Manila by any group doing work in this local church, these elements should be present.

WHERE ARE WE COMING FROM?

1. What are the important events/issues happening in our community at present?
2. What is currently happening around that affects you? Your community?
3. How do you/we feel about all these? (joys and sadness, hopes and frustrations, etc.)
4. What would you/we like to ask Jesus?
5. What do you think are the possible questions of those not involved in the Church?
6. How is Jesus accompanying us in our present situations?
7. Where is Jesus amidst all these experiences? In the experiences of our community?

ENCOUNTER AND CONVERSION

Personal

1. What is Jesus telling you in your situation? What gospel value is He challenging you to consider?
2. How could you encounter Jesus in a much deeper way?
3. What JESUS EXPERIENCE would change you and your situation?
4. What JESUS EXPERIENCE (sacraments/celebration/community worship) would awaken your heart or keep your heart burning?

Community

1. What is Jesus telling our community in our present situation? What gospel value/s is He challenging us to live out?
2. How could we encounter Jesus in a much deeper way? How would we be able to say: "Stay with us, Lord!"
3. What JESUS EXPERIENCE would change us and our situation?
4. What JESUS EXPERIENCE or experience with Jesus (sacraments/celebration / community worship) would awaken our hearts or keep our hearts burning?
5. What life experiences would make us aware of the presence of Jesus?

HOME-COMING

1. How will your Jesus Experience strengthen your identity/capabilities?
2. How will your JESUS EXPERIENCE encourage you to fulfil your mission?

3. How will your JESUS EXPERIENCE unify or build up your community?
4. How will our JESUS EXPERIENCE transform our perspective (how we see things in our life)?
5. What shall we do in order to experience that Jesus is fully alive in our current situation as a community? As a barangay / municipality / nation?

COMMISSIONING (AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES) TOWARDS A RENEWED COMMUNITY

1. How will I live out my JESUS EXPERIENCE in my family? In my day-to-day life?
2. As one community, how will we live out our JESUS EXPERIENCE with joy and gladness?
3. How will we share this experience to other communities? Church group? Outside Church circles? Society? World?
4. How does this experience help build up the Kingdom of God?
5. How will this experience make God's mercy truly felt?
6. How will this experience encourage you to serve God with humility, tranquility and fortitude?

In undergoing a formation program with a framework that allows diversity, we are allowing the Holy Spirit to move in us by listening to the Word of God, receiving the sacraments, doing works of charity and evangelizing mission. In going through this unified formation framework, we are responding to God's love in this moment of history, for God speaks to us in our historical context. It is here and now that we encounter Jesus who is ever present and ever alive!