

# The Peacebuilders

*"Keeping the ICF Circle informed; Connecting with Community of Interreligious Peacebuilders"*

**Vol. 2, No. 2** Bi-monthly E-Newsletter of the Interfaith Cooperation Forum **March-April, 2019**  
of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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## ICF Program Committee Met in Chiangmai, Thailand

The new set of members of Interfaith Cooperation Forum's Program Committee held its first meeting on March 15-17, 2019 at YMCA International Hotel in Chiangmai. An important agenda during the meeting was the discussion on the Term of Reference (ToR) that lay down the term of office of the members, their tasks and responsibilities. The Program Committee is now defined as a forum of alumni of different ICF activities, peace activists,



L-R: Nam Boo Won, APAY General Secretary, Rina Yannike Krebru, Sirikanya Chaiwongkeaw, and Ranny Rith.

Photo Credit: m. orevillo-montenegro

and experts on inter-faith issues. Being an interfaith forum, the Committee is composed of members coming from different faith traditions,

with consideration of gender balance. The Program Committee will have a maximum of nine (9) members "representing the countries where the ICF Alumni community exists, not necessarily from the National Forums," and will meet once a year.

This Committee is expected to work as an advisory committee to the ICF Coordinator to plan the yearly activities in accordance to the project

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## 18 Participants attended ICF Peace Institute I in Cagayan de Oro



On March 29, 2019 evening, the ten-day Peace Institute organized by Interfaith Cooperation Forum concluded with a simple ritual. Nineteen participants received their certifi-

icates for attending the Institute from March 19 – 29, 2019 (March 30 as departure date) held in Jesuit-owned SEARSOLIN-Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. The participants were recommended by the YMCAs and peace networks. Among the 13 female participants, 2 Muslims, 8 from different Christian traditions, and 3 Buddhists. Among the 5 male participants, 2 were

Muslims, 2 Christians, and one Buddhist student monk. The participants came from Cambodia, Laos, Philippines, and Thailand. The President of Cagayan de Oro YMCA, Atty. Noel Beja and General Secretary Sol Marie Ucab of Cagayan de Oro YMCA graced the closing ritual. Atty. Noel Beja gave a brief speech, challenging – the participants to be

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## ICF Program Committee Met in Chiangmai, Thailand

guidelines. The members will also act as a "liaison of the National Forum or ICF Alumni community of his or her respective country." Furthermore, the members of the Committee are expected to "play an active role in implementing the events of ICF, especially when organized in their respective country." Each member will serve for two years only, in a staggered scheme. This means, each year, two members will step down, and two new members will be appointed by the APAY General Secretary upon the recommendation of the ICF Coordinator. This will give an opportunity to other ICF alumni to serve through the Committee. The APAY General Secretary, the Executive Secretary responsible for Mission and Response, and the ICF Coordinator sit in the Committee as members but are exempt from



Tirmizy Abdullah and Sirikanya Chaewongkeaw presented their workshop output.  
Photo: m.orevillo-montenegro

the abovementioned staggered term of office. Being a project of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, ICF is governed by APAY.

The two-day meeting included greetings from the General Secretary Nam Boo Won on behalf of APAY and a presentation on the work of APAY by the Executive Secretary Duncan Chowdhury gave. He also led the discussion on the Program Committee's Term of Reference. The agenda included the setting of hosting schedules for ICF activities such as the thematic workshops, Peace Institute and School of Peace. Another item was the role of the ICF Alumni and national forums in the forthcoming External Evaluation of ICF for its program implementation within the period from 2014 to 2019. The Committee also had a workshop on

possible inputs for the next phase of the ICF activities.

Some members of the Committee, namely, Biplob Rangsa (SoP 2012-Christian, Bangladesh), Shreeram Chaudhary, (SoP 2006-Hindu, Nepal), and Tirmizy Abdullah (SoP 2010-Muslim, Philippines), presented some updates and challenges faced by their respective national forums. The other members took turns in moderating the discussions, leading the morning meditations and the closing rites. Other members of the Committee are alumni of the School of Peace 2018. They are Ranny Rith (Buddhist, Cambodia), Rina Yannike Krebru, (Christian, Papua, Indonesia), and Sirikanya Chaiwongkeaw (Christian, Thailand), Hein Thura Htet (Buddhist, Myanmar), could not come to due conflict of schedule with his university exams.



Biplob Rangsa celebrating his birthday during the Program Committee meeting.



Duncan Chowdhury giving orientation on the ToR for the Program Committee.  
Photo: M. Orevillo-Montenegro



Doing the Energizer  
Photo: M. Orevillo-Montenegro

## 18 Participants attended ICF Peace Institute in Cagayan de Oro



Cagayan de Oro YMCA President, Atty. Noel Beja (seated) and GenSec Sol Marie Ucab (standing).  
Photo: m. orevillo-montenegro

instruments of peace. He graciously took part in the ritual of giving the certificate of completion to the participants and the facilitators who were present during the closing rite.

The sessions started with a sharing of the participant's "River of Life" or life story and sharing of expectations, with Baidido Saganding facilitating. Then, the ICF Coordinator Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro presented the history of the YMCA and its development in Asia. This topic helps the participants understand that ICF is a project of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY). She also facilitated the lecture-workshops on Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis, Conflict Resolution vis-à-vis Conflict Transformation as Peacebuilding Frameworks. Ofel Cantor of the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform traced the five decades of conflict and peace talks between the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front, one that made significant progress until 2017 when President terminated it. Tirmizy Abdullah, SoP alumni now a university professor, sketched the history of the Moro

people, the conflict with the Philippine government and the emergence of the Bangsamoro Organic Law as the outcome of the peace process.

Biblical scholar, Lily F. Apura led the discussion on Peace and Religion, while Amina, a certified NVC facilitator and husband Nathaniel Mambuay facilitated the workshop on Nonviolent Communication. Myra V. Waddington, peace studies and psychology professor, facilitated the workshop on Trauma Healing, as well as the section on Mediation and Negotiation. Overall, the Peace Institute's pedagogy included enhanced lectures, group work, workshops, simulation games, role-playing, community visits, dialog, and use of songs. Morning meditations considered the faith traditions of the participants. It included sitting and walking meditations from Buddhist practice.

ICF is indebted to Amina and Nathaniel Mambuay of Silsilah Forum-Cagayan de Oro for serving as the Local Partner in arranging for the venue, community visits, and other hosting tasks. Baidido Saganding also came to help in the documentation. Both the Mambuays and Saganding assisted the ICF



Workshop Group  
Singh, Janet Navarro, Abdul Rahim (Joe)



L-R: Muriel, Amina, Baidido and Atty. Noel Beja

Coordinator in attending to the needs of the participants and invited facilitators.

The Institute was, in a way, unique because it was intergenerational, though unintentionally. One participant was in her fifties, while three are in their teens. But the participants were able to blend and bond with each other quickly. There were challenges and conflicts during the period. However, the facilitators turned the sessions into a laboratory for the participants to learn the real-life challenges that come their way. Since Buddhism is not quite familiar to Filipinos, the presence of the Buddhist participants, and of a Buddhist student monk helped the group understand better the Buddhist tradition. Generally, the Peace Institute went well. ICF wants to thank all the peace networks and YMCA chapters in the above-mentioned countries for their support by sending participants to the Peace Institute I. ICF hopes that the participants will be given the opportunity to share and practice what they have learned during the Peace Institute. ☸ ☸ ☸

- muriel orevillo-montenegro



## ICF Alumni Feature: Mohammad Ayatulla Rahaman

**Note:** ICF uses the term "alumni" in an inclusive sense. This section is dedicated to feature one who went through any of the ICF programs such as School of Peace, Peace Institute (formerly mini-SoP), or even a thematic workshop. ❧ ❧ ❧

### My Journey as a Peacebuilder



**My Roots.** I am Mohammad Ayatulla Rahaman, 27, from Nepal. My father, a self-made man, and my mother raise me and my three brothers in the rural village of Simta, Kaprichaur, Surkhet

District. I am half of the identical twin. My twin brother is Mohammad Jiyaul. In Nepal, Muslims are a minority. We grew up in a Hindu community. This experience made me feel open to all religions.

**Cultivating Volunteerism.** In school, I joined every school program such as speech competition, quiz contest, role play. I volunteered in different school activities, as I felt I had leadership skills. In Grade 10, my twin and I trained with the Y-Peer education program of Nepal Red Cross Society in Surkhet upon my father's prodding. There, I learned about the history of the Red Cross, its basic principles, life skills, reproductive health, and family planning. I became a youth leader, and I organized the Junior Red Cross Circle in my school.

I went to high school in Badhakholi, which was from our village in Mehelkuna. My twin and I had to wake up at 4:30 in the morning and walk for 1 1/2 hours to school and another 1 1/2 hours to go back home every day. During this time, I volunteered in a hospital near the school that had a Voluntary Counseling Center under the Surkhet District Chapter Red Cross. There, I earned the experience and skill in youth counseling. In 2009, my father inspired my twin and me to go for Red Cross life-membership. We walked for an hour from our village to the town

to catch the bus for Birendranagar to file our life membership application. At age 17, my twin and I became a lifetime member of Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS). From then on, I was involved with NRCS Sub-Chapter of Ghumkhahare.

**Juggling College Life and Volunteer Work.** I moved to Surkhet valley to get a bachelor's degree in Education. In college, I was able to give organize a student core group of the Red Cross in coordination with the Surkhet district chapter. We were able to secure a campus office for the Youth Red Cross Circle in the Independent Student Union's building. The Circle campaigned for reproductive health, leadership, life skills, human rights and advocacy against women discrimination, among others. We enlist the help of doctors, health workers, and volunteers in the area. We campaigned also in the Madrasah where Muslim adolescent girls study. In Muslim culture, family planning and contraceptive devices are totally banned. Through this program, the participants gained adequate information and now they are talking



Education campaign in a Madrasah

Photo: mohammad ayatulla rahaman

## A Cursory Reflection on the Challenge of Terrorism: The Why and the Wherefores by Muriel Oreillo-Montenegro

Note: This article is also carried by the APAY News, April 2019.

The violence that happened on Easter Sunday morning in Sri Lanka two weeks ago left me asking repeatedly the question: why?! I do not understand enough the anatomy of terrorism, even as I did some research in

the past. I know that it is complex, that it is not an ideology, and that it is not a "personality trait." Moreover, among those who carry out terroristic acts have only one commonality: their "normality." They are normal human beings who have families

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Photo Source: wkow.com

### Mohammad Ayatulla Rahaman: My Journey as a Peacebuilder



Red Cross Campaign in a Community

about reproductive health and personal health freely. I also led the blood donation campaign. It was a very rewarding and meaningful work for me. The youth donors got to have physical check up, while we also helped those patients endangered from loss of blood through the campaign. Then, I got elected as a board member, and, later, as vice president of the District Red Cross chapter. I also became a member Global Unites that is guided by the 4 Pillars principles: Conflict Transformation, Youth -Led, Grassroots and Non-violence. Meantime, I became a master Trainer for the Youth Peer Education on the issues of gender, women discrimination, peace, and responsible citizenship. These engagements motivated me to pursue a Master's degree in Sociology.

**Volunteerism and the Work for Peace.** I hold that my volunteer work that began with Junior Red Cross Circle is somehow related to peace. My work at an FM radio and local newspaper as a reporter enhanced my advocacy. Then, in a Youth Press Conference I met Bibek Kumar Shahi. He invited me to join the School of Peace National Forum. Upon his prodding, I was set to join the School of Peace 2012 but the schedule ran in conflict with the university final examinations. I finally participated in the SoP in 2017 in Indonesia. It was a happy moment for me, meeting participants from different countries. As an alumna of the SoP 217, I became a founding member of Shanti Nepal, the new name of the organization. My peace journey goes on. Meantime, I continue freelancing and working as a journalist in the national level newspaper, and online digital media here in Nepal.

My view of respecting people was affirmed in School of Peace. If there is no respect, there is no peace. I take people seriously. We need to make good relations with everyone. Conflicts may happen; and some are even sensationalized, like religious conflict. Yet, these conflicts are not only about reli-



Mohammad Rahaman  
Twins

Photo: Mohammad Ayatulla

gious reasons. They have other roots, such as politics, claims on natural resources, and other things. It is unfortunate that people with high positions of office use the people, religion, caste, and other categories to pursue their vested personal interests. We must try to find the root cause and what is behind the problems.

I always believe in humanity. Religion, property, bank account, and others must not make us forget the humanity of a person. I am open and I can adjust everywhere with everyone. I am willing to share my knowledge and skills wherever, whenever there is an opportunity. I like to work with the youth and social field because I enjoy being with the people and I feel my responsibility and work for the society. This I believe: Always have a smile, for smile brings positive vibes. Share a smile with everyone and make people happy. ☺☺☺



By Mohammad Ayatulla Rahaman  
SoP Alumni 2017,  
mdayatulla2012@gmail.com

Below:  
Phra Theeratphid  
(Singh) with the  
Ulama



Singh with Songkan  
and Hermoine Grace

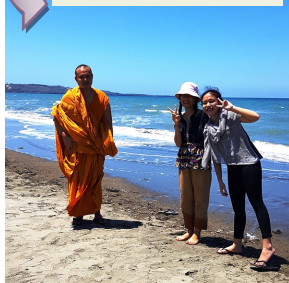
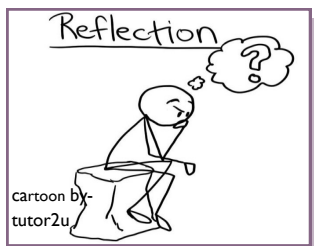


Photo credits:  
m. orevillo-montenegro



This institute has enlightened me to see a new world I have never experienced before. It helps me to realize the conflict that always happens in our daily life.

ICF's Peace Institute brought me more confidence that I want to teach the suffering people who hunger to understand this chaotic world. Many times, they came and invited me to give them a lecture about peace. But it was quite hard for me to explain to them because I did not have a deep knowledge of the subject.

After I completed the Peace Institute, I find resources now to help me a lot to explore and share my experience to share with my lay people.

During the Institute, I

## Reflection Corner:

On the ICF Peace Institute in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

### From A Student Buddhist Monk's Experience

By Phra Theeratphid Salawinpornpana

I learned about understanding conflict, conflict analysis, NVC, negotiation, and mediation. I learned the way to live with other religious people. Furthermore, I learned so many things from the Lumad communities where there are diverse beliefs. I was happy to visit the Masjid where I knew more about Islam. I also enjoyed the wonderful beach, where we had reflections on our experiences in the Lumad community and in the Masjid.

The only problem I had during the Institute was listening to the different English accent and academic vocabulary. At first, I did not understand what the participants were talking about. However, after two days,

I was already able to catch up and understand every sentence.

I am so proud to be one of the participants of this Peace Institute. I guarantee that this program can help people around the world not just only to the young generation, but also the older generations to gain an understanding of peace and what we can do. This world wants peace. This world needs peace. And this world should stay with lasting peace. Finally, thank you so much to the organizers that create this wonderful program. Thank you YMCA Chiang Mai for inviting me to join this seminar, I bless all of you that you may be happy, healthy, be endowed with wealth, and peace forever. 🙏🙏🙏

## "The Peace Institute changed me."

By Songkan "Kitkat" Soulivongkham

The ICF Peace Institute I was held to enhance the youth capacity to promote peacebuilding. There were youth participants from four countries. In the institute, there was a good exchange of ideas and learning from each other about different cultures, religions, traditions, and beliefs.

When I was recommended to participate in this Institute, I was worried. I was nervous, anticipating especially the language barrier and diverse lifestyles of others. I thought I would not go well with the participants. But as the days went by, we, the participants

gelled incredibly well with each other.

It was such a nice experience ever for me. This was my first time traveling alone out of Laos and that excited me. I must say I wouldn't trade this experience with anything in this world. I have learned a



Kitkat (L) with Ping Ping  
Channvilay (R) of Luang  
Prabang, Laos



## “The Peace Institute changed me. . .”

lot in just two weeks in the Philippines: cultures, traditional beliefs, religion, and understanding conflict. We had many activities, such as workshops, lectures, study tour. All these made me grow well in improving my skills in communication, teamwork, and public speaking. It changed me to be a positive, creative, and adaptive person.

I also learned how to understand the conflicts we have and how to find a way to solve the conflict. I learned how to live life together with people who come from different backgrounds, different country, and different person-



Songkan (L) with Johana Pandapatan (R)

alities. I can say that I loved and enjoyed every single moment there, even if sometimes my friends and I in the Peace Institute were naughty and argued

about some point of views. But I still love it because those were the times when we learned to know each other better. We helped each other, exchanged ideas, and examined our attitudes.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to all the people at the Peace Institute. You helped me to know, understand and be happy about everything. The experience is very helpful for me for my plans in the future. Lastly, I would give my love and wishes to everyone mentioned above to be healthy, happy, gorgeous and wealthy forever. ❧❧❧

## “Learning and Practicing peace is a long process.”

by Erika L. Fronteras

Before going to the Peace Institute, I used to admire those people with luxuries in life. But now I admire those who have inner peace. This Institute helps us to become peacebuilders. I have learned that one's life becomes a masterpiece when a person learns to master peace.



Erika (middle) working on the group's Onion Ring with Leonida Wu (Dumaguete) and Abdul Rahim Balabagan (Cotabato)

Learning and practicing peace is a long process. The process of becoming a peacebuilder within a span of two weeks was not easy and I know there's a lot of things that I, that we, still need to learn. Yet I know that it is not only me but all of us, learned that when we cannot control what is happening around us. So I have to challenge myself to control the way I respond to what is happening because, in that way, I will find power. One cannot resolve anything unless one is willing to take someone else's words as important as one's own. We need to treat our "enemy" with compassion. We need to give our attention to the present moment. We come with our diversity of faiths, colors, and creeds, but we can unite as one. Our unity becomes



Erika (2nd from Left) is flanked by Muriel, Amina and Atty. Noel Beja

Photo: m. orevilla-montenegro

our strength and diversity, our power. I have learned the different cultures and beliefs of every participant that attended the Institute, and I was so blessed to be a part of this chapter ♥

Erika L. ronttreras is from Davao YMCA.

## ICF Coordinator speaks on Hospitality and Spirituality in a Multi-faith World in Tokyo, Japan



Panelists Dr. Yook Jae Chang and Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro

Photo: Calvin Mok, UBCHEA

On March 13, 2019, the ICF Coordinator, Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro served as a panelist and shared her reflection on "Hospitality and Spirituality in a Multi-faith World" during the Asian Campus Ministry Forum. The forum revolved around the theme, "The Role of Campus Ministry in Multi-Religious Contexts." The United Board for Christian Higher Education (UBCHEA) and International Christian University (ICU) organized the forum and was jointly sponsored by the Foundation for Theological Education in Southeast Asia (FTESEA). A from March 11-15, 2019 in Tokyo, Japan. Around 45 campus chaplains, heads of schools, ministers, and facilitators attended.

Orevillo-Montenegro reflected on her experiences of how Christian communities held on to a narrow and bigoted attitude towards people of other faiths, especially towards the Muslims. Pointing out that while the biblical story of Abraham has been regarded usually as a great model of

hospitality, it is a story that privileged the men. Instead, she lifted up the story of Lady Wisdom-Sophia's kind of hospitality in the account of Proverbs 8-9. Lady Wisdom's call reverberates in the ministry of Jesus who practiced open commensality, dismantling hierarchy that privileged the powerful. She asserted that ultimately, hospitality as an expression of our spirituality points to our practice of justice and peace. It points to our understanding of the meaning of Jesus as Christ. She urged the participants to listen to the call of Wisdom-Sophia incarnate in Jesus. It is the call to make this world a better place to live in. It is an invitation to make people experience the reign of God on earth and a foretaste of God's kingdom in heaven.

The occasion became a reunion between her co-panelist, Dr. Yoon Jae Chang, who is now the Chaplain of Ewha Women's University in Seoul, Korea. Yoon Jae and Muriel were mentored by the famous Dr. James C. Cone at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. It was also a reunion with Dr. Angela Wong Wai-Ching of UBCHEA, Dr. H. S. Wilson of FTESEA, and Dr. Ahmad Rofiq of Islamic University of Indonesia. R. Rofiq was a resource person for the School of Peace 2018. Among the resource persons also was Dr. Pramaha Boonchuay of Doojai of Mahachulanlongkornrajavidyalaya University in Chiangmai. He will be one of the resource persons of the Peace Institute 2 in Chiangmai in August 2019. ☸☸☸

*Hospitality as an expression of our spirituality points to our practice of justice and peace.*



Photo: Calvin Mok, UBCHEA



## A Cursory Reflection on the Challenge of Terrorism . . .

and are ordinarily part of a community network. They go to school or universities. They have jobs and livelihood activities. They also give loyalty to a chosen closed group – be it ethnic, cultural, religious, national, or political. Certainly, religion is not a direct cause of terrorism or political radicalism, but I recognize that some believers use religion to legitimate and mobilize people to advance their goals, ideologies, or, their frustrations. The impetus for terrorist acts is the fear of “extinction by another group.” So they kill people “by category” and they claim responsibility on behalf of their own group identity. In this light, we can say that terrorism is a strategy, a tactic that uses violence to create fear and attain a specific goal. Somehow, it is a result of unjust political systems. It is any type of political violence that has no adequate moral and legal justification. Terrorism has been practiced by “both rightist and leftist objectives, by nationalistic and religious groups, by revolutionaries, and even by state institutions such as armies, intelligence services, and police.”

Terrorism is an evil act. While we view earthquakes and tsunamis as natural evil, terrorism is a moral evil. It is because it is basically a willful act of moral agents, of human beings. Sometimes, I wonder if Hannah Arendt’s expression, the “banality of evil” is applicable to the suicide bombers in Sri Lanka or elsewhere. Observing Adolf Eichmann’s trial, Arendt proffered that he was a “normal” human being who has no capacity to think deeply about the consequence of his actions. Yet, the suicide bombers of Sri Lanka go beyond Eichmann towards the “tragic” as they make a synchronized ritual to kill themselves along with their victims. Religion calls it a sacrifice. In René Girard’s view, tragedy makes us discover that the root of evil is in the heart of humanity, in humanity’s arrogance, delusions, and incapacity to get it. He speaks of the “irreducibility of evil,” that evil cannot be redeemed. This view calls upon us to de-mystify our

religious thoughts. It means abandoning the idea that both good and evil come from one source, the Creator. Then, one will be free from the problem of asking why an all-omnipotent and good God allows evil to happen. Accordingly, we will wrestle with the greatest challenge of turning to humanity, to ourselves, and of facing our accountabilities as human beings for the evils that are happening in this world.

There are no easy answer and solutions to the questions on the whys and wherefores of terrorism. I only know that even when the individuals known for their terrorist acts have died, terrorism continues to happen. Some terrorism experts suggest that instead of demonizing the terrorists, we must focus on the determinant

*Accordingly, we will wrestle with the greatest challenge of turning to humanity, to ourselves, and of facing our accountabilities as human beings for the evils that are happening in this world.*

contexts, structures and systems of evil that becomes possibly the breeding grounds that lure even good people to become perpetrators of evil. A psychologist notes that negative labeling makes us “disrespectful of the high level of the intellect behind these deeds, however distorted or diabolical it may be.” Thus, we need to examine how our social, political, economic, cultural and religious value systems could be distorted to justify an evil act. In line with the root-cause theory of terrorism, experts suggest that society must address the social, economic and political roots of terrorism and provide early interventions. Another task is for us to break down stereotypes that we hold about people around us – be it religious, racial, ethnic, economic, and others ways. The social neuroscientists suggest that we train our brains to cultivate

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Blood stains are seen inside a church after a bomb blast in Negombo, Sri Lanka April 21, 2019. REUTERS/Stringer Photo credit: reuters.com

## INTERFAITH COOPERATION FORUM

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Visit the ICF Website  
at:

[interfaithforum.org](http://interfaithforum.org)

### "Keeping the ICF Circle informed; Connecting with Community of Interreligious Peacebuilders"

The Interfaith Cooperation Forum is a program of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs. It values the significance of interreligious understanding and unity. Thus, it offers opportunities for study and appreciation of the different perspective of religions on peace, and discern the role of religion in peacebuilding. Yet, considering that unpeace is brought about by many factors, including the onslaught of neoliberal economic globalization, more people experience poverty, internally displaced people are increasing as communities are destroyed, native wisdom and values are overrun by Western and consumerist outlooks, patriarchy and racism persists, and climate change is now felt as the destruction of the Planet Earth seems unabated.

Peace is celebrated as a gift from the Divine, yet, we, the earthlings have the responsibility to make peace a reality. Although its contribution may just be like a drop of water into the lake, ICF seeks to equip young people of different religious traditions, especially from the marginalized communities of Asia and Pacific, to make waves of peace-building actions.

### A Cursory Reflection on the Challenge of Terrorism . . .

the pathways of empathy and compassion, and to see a situation from the other's perspective.

In the aftermath of the horror that happened on that fateful Easter Sunday, we hear different voices and views on the incident. Some tend to use the situation to put forward their various interests, including political interest. There was blaming on security negligence. Meantime, many

lives are lost. The wounded continue to struggle to hold on to dear life. The victims are dead. Those who survived and lost their loved ones continue to wail in grief; some refused to be comforted. In the midst of all these, the call from a Sri Lankan priest, J.M. Joseph Jeyaseelan, CMF, to his fellow Sri Lankans and to the people around the world must be heeded when he said:

*"[T]his is not the time to be guided by emotions pitting one ethnic or religious group against another. This is not the time for us to make guesses and start to victimize one or another group. . . May they who endure the crisis and loss soon receive shalom/salaam. May they also find the strength someday to murmur these words: 'May they be forgiven for they didn't know what they were doing.'"* ❧ ❧ ❧

### Peace Institute | Photo Gallery



Photos: m. Orevillo-montenegro