

**CATHOLIC BIBLICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE
PHILIPPINES (CBAP)
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP ASSEMBLY
FEAST OF ST. JEROME, DOCTOR OF THE
CHURCH AND PATRON SAINT OF BIBLE
SCHOLARS
30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I. PRELIMINARIES

*Jubilate Deo, omnis terra; servite Domino in laetitia.
Introite in conspectu ejus in exultatione. (VUL Ps 100:1)*

With these words from the Vulgate version of Psalm 100, we formally proclaim the three-year celebration of the silver jubilee of the Catholic Biblical Association of the Philippines (CBAP). We blow the “yobel” [יָבֵב], the ram’s horn, we joyfully shout to GOD, we serve the LORD with praise, we enter the DIVINE PRESENCE in exaltation.

This is the context in which I am making this President’s Report to the General Assembly of the CBAP.

Indeed, it is by GOD’s grace that we are conducting this 24th Annual Convention in person, face-to-face, safely, healthily, and happily. As of the latest count, our gathering has drawn 70 participants, evocatively “septuagintal,” inclusive of

- 24 CBAP members; $\frac{3}{4}$ candidates for admission to our association,
- 7 seminarians from the Immaculate Conception School of Theology, Vigan (thanks to Fr. Nick V. Aquilar),
- 13 lay people from the Diocese of Imus Biblical Apostolate (thanks to Dr. Marita Guevarra)

CBAP PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- some student-priests and seminarians from various dioceses,
- religious sisters,
- professors from the Adamson University, from the Ateneo de Manila and the Ateneo de Naga, De La Salle University, the University of the Assumption-San Fernando, Pampanga), the University of San Agustin-Iloilo, La Consolacion University-Malolos, and the University of Santo Tomas.

We have two (2) keynote speakers: Fr. Markl and Sr. Vargas; one is a guest from the University of Innsbruck, Austria, joining us virtually; the other, our very own, rejoining us in person after so many years as major superior of her congregation. We have nine (9) paper presenters from among CBAP members and members-to-be. All of them are blessings to be counted and thanked for.

So, on behalf of my fellow eyewitnesses and servants of the WORD, the officers and members of the Board of Trustees, I humbly present to you this President's Report for fiscal year 2023.

II. BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS

A. Herewith are the **officers and members of the Board of Trustees** who currently serve the Catholic Biblical Association of the Philippines (CBAP):

1. Clarence Marquez, OP, *President*
2. Maricel Ibita, PhD, *Vice-President*
3. Rex Fortes, CM, *Secretary*
4. Rogel Abais, SJ, *Treasurer*
5. Randolph Flores, SVD
6. Anicia Co, RVM
7. Cristino Pine, OFM
8. Marilou Ibita, PhD
9. Joel Camaya, SDB

- B. And your Board has been **meeting regularly**:
1. 13 November 2022, transition ZOOM meeting between old and new BOTs
 2. 26 February 2023, via ZOOM
 3. 23 April 2023, via ZOOM
 4. 28 May 2023, via ZOOM
 5. 02 July 2023, via ZOOM
 6. 06 August 2023, at the Loyola School of Theology, ADMU, QC
 7. 17 September 2023 at La Jardin, Baliuag, Bulacan
- C. and our following **working committees**:
1. Executive Committee
 - Randolph Flores, SVD, Member of the Board, Executive Director
 2. Finance Committee
 - Rogel Abais, SJ, Treasurer of the Board
 3. Committee on Credentials
 - Rex Fortes, CM, Secretary of the Board

We thank them for their generosity and service.

III. OUR FOUR BIBLICAL INTEREST GROUPS (BIG)

- A. Old Testament Group
- Randolph Flores, SVD and Miner Generalao as co-convenors
- B. New Testament Group
- Marilou Ibita, PhD and Anicia Co, RVM as co-convenors
- C. Biblical Archaeology/Inter-testamental (BAIT) Group
- Alejandro Gobrin, CMF

CBAP PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- Rogel Abais, SJ as co-convenors
- D. Bible and Social Engagements (BASE) Group
- Federico Villanueva, PhD
 - Maricel Ibita, PhD as co-convenors

With the interest group meetings this afternoon, we expect them to intensify their programs and activities, especially during our three-year Jubilee.

IV. LINKAGES

- A. Through our partnership with the Episcopal Commission for the Biblical Apostolate (ECBA) of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), and with the Philippine Bible Society (PBS), the CBAP has been effectively tapped to provide scholarly review of bible-related publication materials seeking the *imprimatur* from the CBAP. The newly launched ANG PINOY BIBLE carries the names of CBAP members as deputized censors of the Old Testament translation.
- B. The CBAP was ably represented by SR. MIRIAM ALEJANDRINO, OSB in the General Assembly of Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF), in Buenos Aires, Argentina, last April 2023. Other CBAP members like Bishop Pablo David, DD and Dr. Naty Pagadut were also present.

V. DIRECTIONS FOR THE JUBILEE

- A. It is proposed that the CBAP Jubilee should have the following objectives:
1. To enter into a dynamic process of **renewal** in the ministry of the WORD.
 2. To celebrate not self-referentially, but in a manner that is **oriented always already towards**

GOD - the **WORD** who creates us, the **WORD** made flesh and dwells among us, the **WORD** who is our life and salvation.

3. To **remember our history** not for self-glorification, but in recalling our origins **in the spirit of gratitude**, especially for the persons who were witnesses at our birth and our growth.
 4. To offer opportunities **to venture into “new worlds, new areopagus, new fora” in preaching the WORD**, in dialogue and solidarity with the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, to other believers of other religious traditions and non-believers alike; to spearhead events that powerfully and symbolically convey our embrace of the excluded.
 5. To reflect the creativity that is needed to incarnate the **WORD** today, through arts (plastic, performative, etc.) and the modern means of social communications; to try to capture the voice and imagination of the young, in sharing the ministry of the **WORD**.
 6. To harness the personal and institutional resources of our members and partner institutions in the optimal celebration of the Jubilee.
- B. During our Jubilee, we shall go inter-locally, journeying beyond our familiar locales in order to preach the **WORD**.
1. For our 25th convention in 2024, we are inviting ourselves to Iloilo (*madamo gid nga salamat*, Fr. Magin and the University of San Agustin!); and in 2025, dreaming to reach the promised land of Mindanao.
 2. Beyond the annual conventions, we shall go to other places, such as where our bishop-members serve as shepherds - to the Diocese of Kalookan,

under Bishop Pablo David (a bible event in solidarity with the urban poor) and to the Apostolic Vicariate of Taytay, Palawan, under Bishop Broderick Pabillo (a bible event in solidarity with creation).

3. The Bible Interest Groups could explore these venues as opportunities for their own programs and activities.
- C. The CBAP Primers for both Old and New Testaments shall be launched as revised editions during our Jubilee; plus other publications like monographs or journal articles by CBAP members.
- D. As we reach 25 blessed years, CBAP should strive to strengthen our practices and networks.
1. We should more actively engage the higher educational institutions and pastoral institutes, centers, apostolates to which our members and supporters are affiliated; through these HEIs, we could invite more bible scholars from abroad, from diverse backgrounds and interests.
 2. We should harness our engagements with CBCP-ECBA, PBS, and the CBF; and explore new institutional partnerships and collaborations.
 3. We should stabilize our finances and explore funding initiatives for projects.
 4. We should transform the CBAP into a more worthy, value-adding enterprise for our members, such as updated contacts with bible scholars from around the world, up-to-date links to bible resources, information on various biblical fora both here and abroad, venues to read and

research, to present and publish academic papers, etc.

5. For relevance's sake, we should optimize our physical office space at LST and operationalize our website including a virtual office/workspace to serve our digital clients.
6. By the principle of subsidiarity, we should let our Bible Interest Groups fly and soar, expand their programs and projects, generate interests and inspiration among people.
7. By the spirit of ecumenism, we have embraced scholars from various faith confessions. Let us build upon this. Also, we should institutionalize the "supporting membership" category for our constant friends and colleagues beyond strict academic credentials and confessional backgrounds; we should draw more people - religious and lay, pastors, teachers, students, catechists, fellow ministers of the Word - to the programs and events of the CBAP.

VII. CONCLUSION

As the Church undergoes the synodal process, we follow the prompting of the Spirit. Let us listen to GOD's WORD and discern the DIVINE WILL in the signs of our times. Let us listen to other voices and learn from other views. Let us render a fresh hermeneutic upon the exegesis of the sacred texts. Let us continue reading and proclaiming the WORD as "a double-edged sword cutting deeply between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, laying bare the reflections and thoughts of the heart."

As we reach this milestone of our 25th year, let the CBAP serve as a more effective instrument for promoting biblical scholarship that truly ministers to the people of GOD. Let us continue this journey of faith, this pilgrimage towards more

CBAP PRESIDENT'S REPORT

gatherings around the WORD, *pulong sa pulong*, proclaiming and incarnating the WORD, dwelling among us, seeing GOD's glory, pouring out grace and truth. Through the CBAP, let our world become truly a HOME of the WORD. SALITA NG DIYOS NA NAGING TAO, NAGING TOTOO, AT NANAHAN SA ATIN.

I am completing three years as President of the Board of CBAP, with two annual conventions conducted virtually and this 3rd one, returning to face-to-face. I am most grateful for the grace of office and this office of grace which I share with the other officers and members of the Board. And now, my watch has ended. We must decrease, always and only the WORD OF GOD must increase.

תודה רבה.

Εὐχαριστῶ

Maraming salamat po.



Clarence Cuevas Marquez, OI, MA, SSL, SThD

President of the Board

Catholic Biblical Association of the Philippines, Incorporated