



Fr Christopher Gleeson, SJ:

POST-CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

1. Firstly, the hospitality of all involved with organising the Conference was outstanding. Father Seah and Katherine Manalang were the soul of kindness, and I am most grateful to all my chauffeurs and good people who took me out for meals. Hospitality is one of the clearest signs of a strong community, and I found the Catholic community of Singapore to be marvellous hosts.
2. While I was prepared for the cultural and religious diversity of the Singapore Catholic school communities, I was surprised and somewhat challenged by the centralising controls exercised by the Education Ministry in terms of curriculum and staffing. I suppose this is understandable when one considers the 95% level of funding provided by the Government, but such centralised regulation does narrow the space available for innovative faith formation in Catholic schools.
3. In working with the Faith Formation people on Tuesday afternoon, it was clear to me that ongoing Staff Formation for our Chaplains and Chaplain volunteers is essential. Accordingly, I would recommend strongly the following:
 - That a capable communicator be appointed to establish and coordinate a network of Faith formators for Catholic schools in Singapore which would meet regularly for ongoing formation and to share resources being used in the schools
 - That this appointed person be given the opportunity to go to the Brisbane CEO, Queensland, to spend some time with Jill Gowdie who could help him/her establish the network and take them through the splendid online Staff Formation programme titled "Catching Fire". If for whatever reason this is not possible, invite Jill Gowdie to come to Singapore for a few days to share the rich Brisbane resources for Staff Formation.
 - That the appointed Network Coordinator, perhaps at the same time as visiting Jill Gowdie, might also explore the riches of the Kairos Senior Student Retreat programme in Australia with a view to bringing it back to Singapore. As explained at the Tuesday afternoon workshop, it is a student peer-led program, so it would be a huge advantage to bring three to four senior students as well.
 - That this same appointed Network Coordinator examine the best ways to offer School Board/Governors some formation – in the form of an Annual Retreat/Reflection Day for Chairs and Board members; prayers and reflection time for the opening of School Board meetings.