



CATECHESIS ON BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES



SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY BEC SUNDAY 2023

BECs in Synodality with Basic Human Communities

This Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity 2023, our 5th BEC Sunday, let us reflect on our communion, participation, and mission in the Basic Ecclesial Communities as we also journey with the whole Church on the road of Synodality and continue to be in solidarity with Basic Human Communities soaked in socio-economic-political-ecological concerns.

The Church is basically a mystery of communion (CFC#1362). This communion, however, is not merely brought about by sociological or cultural factors but a communion that is rooted in God's own Trinitarian communion – the unity-in-diversity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. St. John Paul II in *Ecclesia in Asia* expressed it beautifully: *“United to the Son in the Spirit's bond of love, Christians are united to the Father, and from this communion flows the communion which Christians share with one another through Christ in the Holy Spirit”* (EA#24). And because the Church is patterned after the unity of the Triune God, her primary mission then is to be the sacrament of the unity of the whole human race and serve the cause of unity in all dimensions. Therefore, we can say that the Church, our Basic Ecclesial Communities, is a mystery of communion by her relationship with the Triune God both in her nature as communion and in her unifying mission.

Our BECs have been at the forefront of the Synod on Synodality which envisions to revitalize communion, participation, and mission within the Church. In fact, in the Synthesis released after the National Consultation, it was highlighted that BEC is among those considered as “structures of listening” (CBCP, 2022, p.3). Some even considered the weekly BEC meetings and prayer gatherings as “spaces in Church life that allow people to speak out” (CBCP, 2022, p.4). BECs were also acknowledged in being important spaces for building up the Church's life of worship. Indeed, BEC serves as avenues allowing active participation in the life of the Church (CBCP, 2022). BEC as a new way of being Church is not just an accolade but a reality that must be concretized, as quoted from the Synthesis:

“The majority of the dioceses mentioned that among their top priorities is to revitalize and strengthen the BECs. As the “new way of being Church,” BEC is the proper space on which we can cultivate a culture of encounter

and through which we can reach out to sectors, especially those marginalized and neglected. (CBCP, 2022, p. 9)

Or the recent Pastoral Letter of CBCP:

“We call on the urgency of realizing the PCP II’s vision of Church of the Poor by renewing and intensifying BECs, as the local expression of the church, in all parishes, to empower grassroots communities towards sustainable development and social transformation.” (CBCP, 2022, p. 29)

It is undeniable to BEC should be the direction that the Local Churches in the Philippines must really go. But the challenge form BECs in those areas without BEC yet, to animate existing yet weakening BEC, to sustain and transform active BECs, or to find new expressions and approaches to BECs as way of life, remain difficult. Difficult yet necessary.

What lies ahead BECs today? During the Asian Continental Assembly on Synodality by the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC), one of the direction given was to transform BECs to Basic Human Communities:

“Our Basic Ecclesial Communities will not be truly incarnating synodality as a lifestyle if our communities only stick to themselves and their own ‘churchy’ concerns. If they are to be true to their mission, i.e., to be like yeast in a mass of dough, then we must build the kind of Christian communities that will lead to Basic Human Communities (FABC, #148).

“We must also be more ready to let go of ministries that no longer serve their purpose and be disposed instead to identify the charisms generously bestowed on us by the Holy Spirit and create new ministries, not just the kind that would get the faithful to serve the Church, but more importantly, those that empower them, as members to serve all society. Our laity should use the best resources of our faith to help especially in managing conflicts at all levels, to engage proactively in the politics of the common good, especially in the work for peace and reconciliation based on justice and mutual respect for human dignity (FABC, #149).

True enough after the various social, economic, health, political, and environmental concerns we have been through. Basic Ecclesial Communities cannot

solely focus on "ecclesial" concerns. We must go back and re-root ourselves to our Basic "Human" Communities, for here is where we began and where we also belong. BEC is the integration of faith and daily life; hence, we cannot simply dismiss the concerns of our everyday life, the concerns of our Basic Human Communities – the ground through which our Basic Ecclesial Communities have grown and continue to stand. Our work for societal and political reconciliation and renewal; fight for social justice, equality and inclusivity; eradication of oppressive structures; improving quality of health and living; promoting ecological conversion, and finding solutions to climate emergencies; dialogue with other Churches and faith-traditions, etc., are all essential to our mission in the BECs towards forming a truly human and humane community.

The Solemnity of the Holy Trinity is a celebration of God's life and love – the source of our being and doing. It is also the celebration of sharing and giving, openness to listen and dialogue, communion, participation, and mission in the Basic Ecclesial Communities. Let us allow our people to experience in our BECs the unifying presence of God and the consoling love of God. Let us transform our BECs into signs of hope and truly seeds of the Kingdom of God, as we pray:

God our Father, the Fount of all goodness
thank you for your gift of renewal
by giving us Basic Ecclesial Communities
as context and challenge
to live out our faith meaningfully.

We implore you
that amidst the various challenges we face,
we may obtain the fire of new joy
in renewing our families, neighborhoods, and Parish,
the courage to transform our Basic Ecclesial Communities
into Basic Human Communities,
and the strength to strive amid hindrances
to our works of service.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God forever and ever.
Amen.