

Witnessing the Gospel in East Asia

OFM East Asia Conference – Secretaries for Missions and Evangelization 2026 Meeting Statement

St. Francis Friary, Nagasaki, Japan | February 23–27, 2026

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel.” (Mk 16:15)

Introduction

We, the Secretaries for Missions and Evangelization of the OFM East Asia Conference, gathered in Nagasaki, Japan - a land marked by martyrdom, suffering, and resilient hope - to renew our Franciscan missionary calling. We came together bringing with us the realities of our peoples and the challenges of mission in Asia and placed the same before God in prayerful discernment.

Guided by the *Ratio Evangelizationis: Ite in Mundum* and inspired by the **Eight Centenary of the Easter (Transitus) of St. Francis of Assisi**, we reaffirmed that mission lies at the heart of our Franciscan identity. Mission is not first about what we do, but who we are as bearers of the Gospel of the Lord.

Encounter, Discernment, and Franciscan Identity

During our days in Nagasaki, we encountered one another and the living faith of the local Church. Through prayer, fraternity, dialogue, and reflection, we were led anew to the Gospel path of St. Francis, where missionary enthusiasm is renewed through encounter with Christ.

We recognized that mission in East Asia is **inter gentes**, dialogical and lived in minority. Our calling is to go among the people and to witness the Gospel through humble presence rather than power or dominance.

We reaffirmed that **fraternity is our first form of evangelization**. Intercultural fraternities are missionary signs that witness to communion across cultures and histories.

We also acknowledged that **minority gives credibility to mission**. Evangelization in Asia takes shape through dialogue of life, accompaniment of migrants, care for creation, and engagement in the digital world. When comfort or self-preservation replaces humility and availability, our witness is weakened.

We rediscovered that **contemplative presence sustains mission**. In pluralistic and wounded societies, a life of humble and deep listening becomes a quiet but powerful proclamation of Christ. We renew our missionary identity by living as brothers, embracing minority, and allowing prayer to shape action.

Shared Discernment and Conference Commitments

Through shared discernment, we recognized both the strengths and fragilities of the member entities of our Conference, including aging communities, uneven distribution of personnel, fragile missions, and the temptations toward maintenance or provincialism.

In response, we commit ourselves to:

- fostering a culture of mission over maintenance, prioritizing availability for frontier missions;
- strengthening the EAC Missions and Evangelization Secretariat as a platform for missionary coordination and solidarity; and,
- promoting common initial and ongoing formation focused on Franciscan mission ad gentes and intercultural fraternity.

In concrete, we resolve to propose to the EAC Ministers to undertake the following:

- to inspire, recruit and form friars from initial formation for mission ad gentes to be sent after their perpetual profession, especially for entities with dwindling number of friars;
- to formulate an EAC modified formation program for friars in initial formation in preparation for mission ad gentes;
- to formulate on-going formation and encounter programs for EAC missionaries and missionaries in Asia;
- to encourage inter-Entity missionary exchanges and shared personnel support, especially in fragile contexts; and,
- to actively collaborate with the Province of the Holy Martyrs of Japan in the Nagasaki Mission of Peace Project as a shared mission of peace by recruiting missionary volunteers; promotion of the project to the wider public through digital resources; and, encouraging of Nagasaki Franciscan Peace Pilgrimage in our respective entities and countries.

Gratitude and Sending Forth

We express our deep gratitude to **Br. Nicholas Shin, OFM**, EAC Secretary for Missions and Evangelization, whose generous service and careful coordination made this meeting possible. We also thank **Br. Augustine Kuwata, OFM**, Minister Provincial of the Province of the Holy Martyrs of Japan, and the brothers of the host Province for their fraternal hospitality and tireless assistance.

We are likewise grateful to the leadership of the East Asia Conference, especially **Br. Lino Gregorio Redoblado, OFM**, President of the EAC, together with the Ministers, Secretaries, and Coordinators, for their guidance and shared commitment to mission.

As we return to our Provinces, we do so renewed in missionary spirit. Our life as Franciscan brothers begins in contemplation and flows into mission. With humility and courage, we go forth

as brothers to all and all of creation, companions of the poor, builders of peace, and witnesses of hope.

In communion with the universal Church celebrating the **Eight Centenary of the Easter of Saint Francis**, we pledge ourselves anew to witness the Gospel in East Asia as brothers and minors.

“Let us begin again, for up to now we have done little.”— Saint Francis of Assisi