



International Council Visit Report

Indonesia

23 June to 11 July 2025

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The International Council responded to an invitation from the Indonesian National Council to attend their National Assembly, followed by more than two weeks of pastoral visitation to groups in Java. The visit was funded by the International Council, the Indonesian National Council, and individual donations from the International Council and Indonesian members. The visit, which took place from 23 June to 11 July 2025, was tightly scheduled and productive. I believe that the current benefits and potential future benefits justified the time and expenses involved in the visit.

Special commendation to Petrus Sidarta Maringka and Shirley Mohidi, who were the driving force behind the venture, supported by the Indonesian National Council and the two Provincials, both financially and in spirit. The organisation was superb, and the time and effort that must have been involved behind the scenes to ensure the scope of the visit and the smooth organisation is noted. As a result, there were significant possibilities for forming connections and relationships between the Indonesian laity and the international organisation and engaging in deep formation. I was privileged to observe a movement of empowered and committed laity who understood that their purpose is mission, and that mission is best undertaken standing side by side with the Religious. The image I have of the movement is that its members understand they are the yeast that will bring further life and growth to the Indonesian church and contribute to the well-being of the broader Indonesian society.



Program

I attended the Indonesian National Assembly, which included a training day for group leaders in delivering the formation program and an open meeting for all members conducted over the next two days.

Following the Assembly:

- I visited five of the six groups in Jakarta, all in MSC parishes.
- I visited one group in Bogor that has grown out of a group associated with the Daughters who run a large school in the area. That group now exists within the parish that is not an MSC parish.
- We then travelled to Central Java:
- I attended a joint meeting conducted on Sunday, where people travelled for many hours to attend. There were around 100 participants from groups in the Dioceses of Semarang, Purwokerto, Purworejo, and Central Java.
- We then visited Taro Anggro and MSC Parishes in Central Java, as well as ministries conducted by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.



The meetings followed a similar pattern, consisting of gathering, introductions, and a welcome, which was followed by an explanation of the group's characteristics, including membership, prayer, and mission activities. In the MSC parishes, the Parish Priests and Sisters were actively involved in the meetings and often, also members of the Parish Council – even if they were not members of the lay movement themselves.

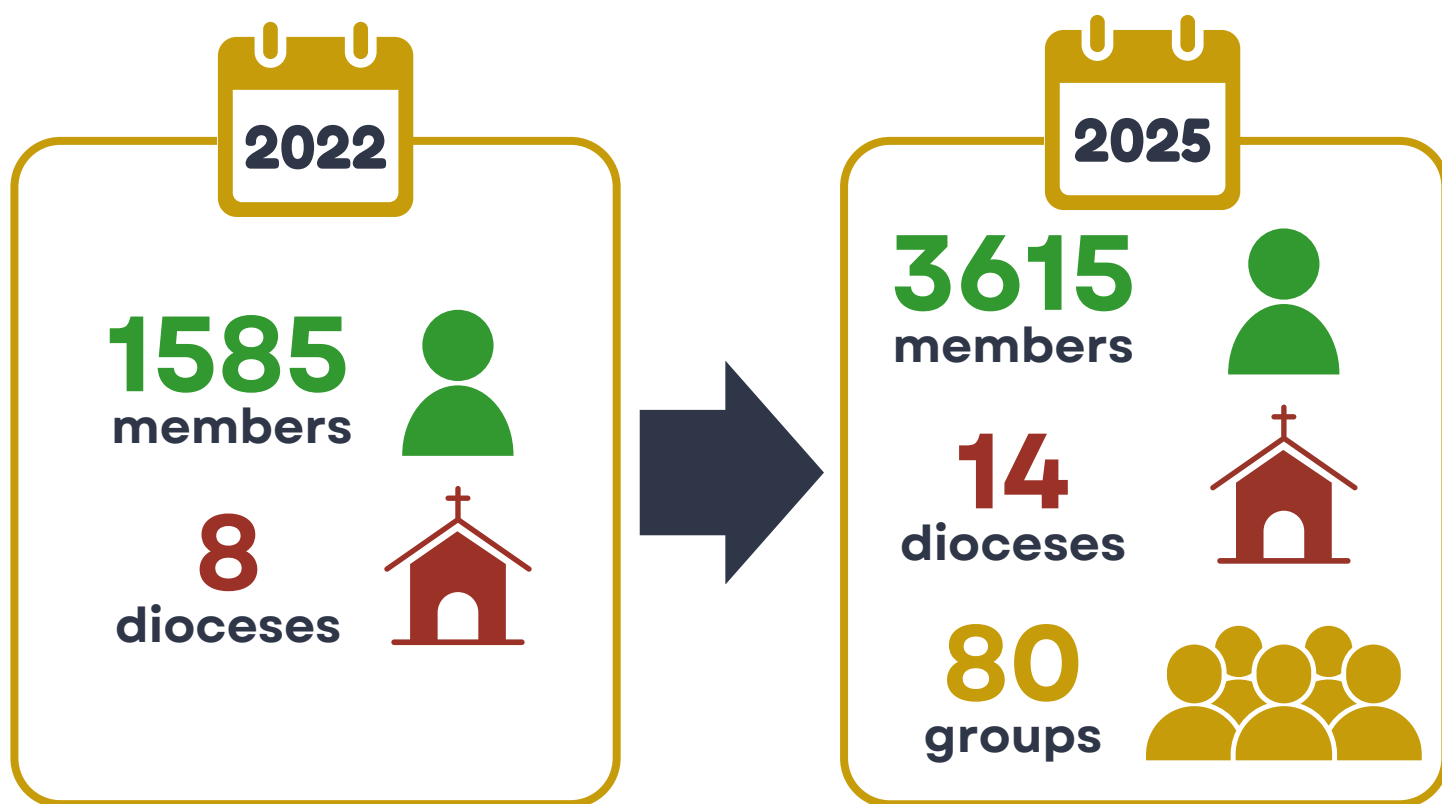
There was a joyful spirit in every meeting, accompanied by a strong sense of purpose and commitment to Spirituality of the Heart.

The Indonesian lay movement is extraordinary and serves as a benchmark for the rest of the world.





Organisational Structure



They have a National Council; the Chair is formally elected every three years in a system that replicates the election process adopted by the International Council. The Chair appoints Council members in collaboration with the Spiritual Companion.

The previous Chair, Hasan, was re-elected for a second term, and it is obvious that he is offering excellent leadership.

The role of Spiritual Companion is very significant, and Father Joni Astanto MSC is young and has a passion and commitment to the lay vocation.

Each group has an organisational structure that reports to the National Council. The leadership teams are formally elected and appointed for a three-year term. In all the groups I visited, the Parish Priest was actively involved, usually as the Spiritual Companion.

A key factor in the growth has been the development of the Ametur Team. The team consists of significant MSC, FDNCS, TMM, OLSH Brothers, and Laity, and one of their tasks has been to develop a sequential formation program to be delivered to new members by the lay leaders/facilitators in each group. Leaders were trained to deliver the explicit formation program to new members on the first day of the pre-Assembly and have been provided with a Handbook that provides an explicit outline, including prayers, songs, and supporting PowerPoint material for each of the formation sessions.

Organisational Structure

What I observed was the enactment of the joint Vision Statement from the International Council and the Trigeneralate. The growth figures speak for themselves.

“ *We envision the Chevalier Family to consist of three branches (only two are currently operational): the Religious and the Laity.*

We envision a Laity who are deeply formed in Spirituality of the Heart, through the lens of their family of origin (FDNSC, MSC Sisters, and MSC men), but also who recognise and celebrate their unity in diversity.

We hope that this understanding of the Lay Charism can be a gift to the whole Chevalier Family.

We recognise that formation of the Laity into this expansive vision is a work in progress, and as an ideal, but not yet a reality, it is the responsibility of the Laity to form new members and to engage in ongoing formation. Currently, in many places, it is still essential and desirable for all formation to be offered by Spiritual Companions.

We ask that the formation of Religious into this expansive vision be a role that the Religious Congregations assume.

We further ask, that formation of Spiritual Companions rather than Spiritual Directors be undertaken by the Congregations so that this role comes to be seen as a key role within Provinces, ideally offered to younger members who have a passion for the laity and a capacity to form mature faith groups who are aware of their key role to contribute to the shared mission.

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The Reasons for this Growth (My Observations):

The Movement of the Holy Spirit

The Spirit is obviously present and moving, and is supported by:



Provincial Support

Fr Sam and Sr Ancilla have both explicitly instructed the members of their congregations to enable and support the lay movement to develop within their ministries. The understanding among the Religious of their role as Spiritual Companion, not Spiritual Director, appears to be well understood and is enthusiastically undertaken by the Religious.



Lay Commitment

The Laity in Indonesia have not sat back and expected the Religious to do the work. The lay movement is driven and supported by the voluntary commitment of the people, led by a very effective National Council.



Internal Organisational Structure to Support the Lay Movement's Growth

The first National Council was inaugurated three years ago, and since that time, the National Council has fostered and facilitated the growth that has occurred. Each National Council member is responsible for a region within Indonesia, and I observed pastoral care being offered to group members by the person responsible for their region. The lay movement is not led by the Religious but is supported and enabled by them.



A Sequential, Lay-Led Formation Program:

The two provinces, along with TMM, OLSH Brothers, and the Laity (the Indonesians refer to them as the Chevalier Family), have formed a Formation Team called Ametur to prepare a formation program. Key religious from the four orders have been appointed to the team alongside the Laity. They have produced an explicit and systematic program of formation that draws on the Movements of the Heart as the process. New members are led through the program, which consists of 21 modules divided into four segments that follow the Movements of the Heart. Four modules focus on Encounter, twelve on Intimacy, three on Conversion, and two on Mission. The formation is offered by local formators who have been trained to offer the program. The purpose of the pre-National Assembly I attended was to train the formators in the process. I attended one meeting where I witnessed the process in action, and it is working. Beyond the formation, there was genuine community and an awareness of the purpose of the formation for mission.



The Reasons for this Growth (My Observations):



A society where religious community and faith are still a core factor in people's lives...

and where the social welfare needs in the society are not always adequately met by the government. There is excellent scope for mission on the doorstep of the members. The strength of the Indonesian Catholic community at the parish level and its significance in the lives of the people are crucial to the growth that is occurring.

Some Observations:

There was joy, passion, and commitment amongst the members.

There was genuine questioning in many groups about the role of the lay movement in parish life and its formal place in the hierarchy of organisations within the parish. There may need to be some more explicit formation of the community regarding the role of the lay movement as a part of the Charism structure.

Outcomes of the Visit

An opportunity to witness and learn from the Indonesian Lay Movement. These learnings will be shared with the International Council and will inform many of the Council's decisions.

An opportunity to deepen relationships with group members and, in particular, the religious and the National Council, which will enable greater cooperation in the future.

An opportunity to increase the awareness of the role of the International Council and its potential to support the Indonesian movement.



Further Observations

What the Indonesians have done is a model for formation, especially for countries where the parish level of the church is still functional and valued by the people. It would not work in the same way in places such as Australia and Europe, where parish communities are not as strong.

However, I don't think we should give up on these places. My initial thought is to call a meeting of key people in Australia and Europe to ask the question: Where and how can we enable the Spirit to move in a way that enables a vibrant lay movement to emerge and engage in mission to these societies? Perhaps this could be an agenda item at the upcoming joint Trigenalate meeting.

There is work to be done in Indonesia. In almost every conversation I had, participants questioned how the lay movement fits into the traditional parish structure, including their Parish Councils and formal groups. What I think I was hearing were questions and ponderings about power and position, and perhaps, the yeast in the bread metaphor may be a helpful image to draw from.

While this is essentially a lay-led movement, the presence of the Religious is vital. Without that accompaniment and the deep formation and understanding of our shared Charism that they possess, the lay movement will begin to struggle, so ongoing support is an essential requirement.



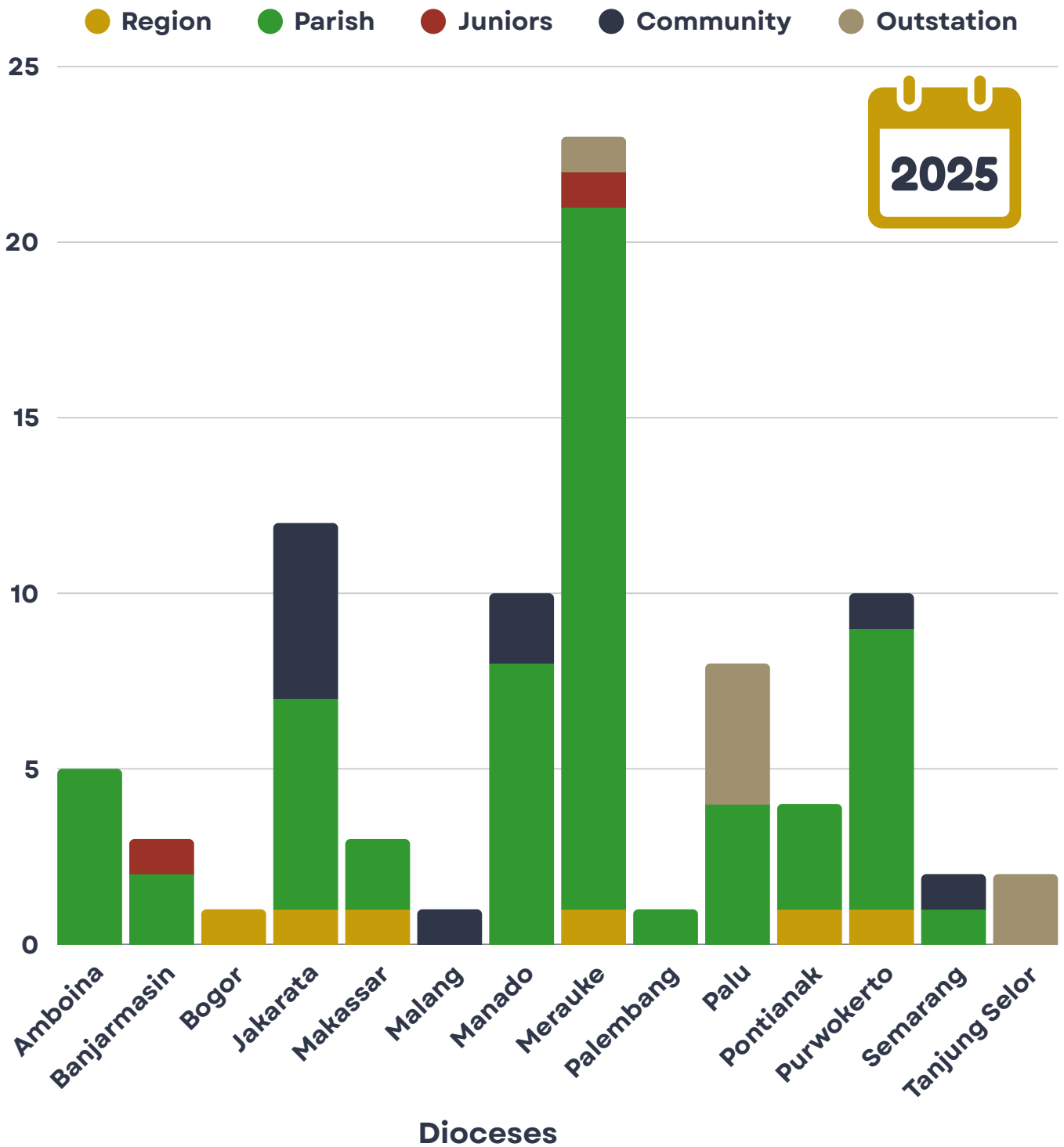


Activity Timetable

Date	Activities
23 Jun	Arrival at Soekarno Hatta International Airport of Jakarta.
24 Jun	Visit and meeting with Provincial MSC and FDNSC Indonesia. Welcoming dinner.
25-28 Jun	Attendance at the 2 nd Indonesian National Meeting at Wisma Samadi Klender, Jakarta.
29 Jun	Gathering with the Laity Family from the Diocese of Jakarta.
30 Jun – 3 Jul	Visits to MSC parishes in Jakarta.
3 Jul	Gathering with the Laity Family from the Diocese of Bogor.
4 Jul	Recreational Activities.
5 Jul	Travel to Central Java and visit the lay people.
6 Jul	Gathering with the Laity Family from the Diocese of Semarang and Purwokerto in Purworejo, Central Java
7 – 8 Jul	Visit to Taro Anggro and MSC Parishes in Central Java. Visits to the laity in Kapencar, who work as farmers.
9 Jul	Recreational activities in Central Java, including Borobudur and Yogyakarta.
10 Jul	Return to Jakarta before departing for Sydney, Australia.
11 Jul	Return to Sydney, Australia.



Laity of the Chevalier Family Distribution





The International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family



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