

## **Wonderful Experiences at the 29th ASEACCU Student Conference**

Seiko Ino

The 29th ASEACCU student conference was held at Saint Louis University, Baguio City in the Philippines. The theme was “Global Goals in the Care of our Common Home; A Catholic Response.” From the day I was given this opportunity, I was excited and really looking forward to it. Over the five days of the conference, I thought deeply about our common home and myself, experienced other cultures, and made many new friends.

In lectures and discussions, we considered Catholic responses to climate action. We learned about environmental crises in Asian countries, the story of how Laudato Si came to be, and important aspects of ecology education in Catholic universities. I gained new knowledge on the environment and considered our actions. When I applied to attend this conference, I wrote that I believe that people can have overarching “brotherhood” ideas that transcend religious boundaries, and that the world would be a better place if people see others as family. In Laudato Si it says: “The earth is our home. We are to care for our common home...” I recognized the similarity between my thinking and Laudato Si and realized that the most important thing is our way of thinking. We need to see problems that happen in our common home as shared serious problems.

Through staying in Baguio City, I experienced many aspects of Philippine culture. The most surprising of those was the food. Filipinos said that it is normal for them to eat five times a day. I enjoyed many types of food, such as pansit canton, lumpia, and halohalo. Everything was delicious. Also, my friends and I tried “baluts” which are boiled duck eggs that have been incubated for about 17 days. They looked strange, so at first we were not that keen to eat them, but they tasted better than we expected. Most of the foods were new to me, but I enjoyed them all.

The most enjoyable thing at the conference was making many new friends from countries in Asia and Oceania. Every morning, on the bus to the university, we talked about each country’s culture and the students and professors from Indonesia, Cambodia, and the Philippines taught each other new expressions in our respective languages. The bus was filled with joy and laughter. Also, I became good friends with people from Korea and Indonesia. We have stayed connected and promised to meet again. At every mealtime, I enjoyed eating with my new friends and talking about our studies, hobbies, experiences and dreams. Everyone was friendly, considerate and positive. They were all strongly motivated towards their studies and were trying hard to achieve

their goals. I was greatly inspired. From morning to night, I had a wonderful time with my new friends. I was so lucky to meet them at the conference.

The ASEACCU student conference and people from other countries gave me new ideas and the opportunity to think deeply. I also became more interested in foreign countries and became more motivated towards my studies. Every moment at the ASEACCU student conference was part of an unforgettable experience for me. It was one of the best memories of my life. I appreciate being given this wonderful opportunity and am glad to have met so many people there.