

1. Good afternoon \_\_\_\_\_. Today, I will speak about TRANSFORMATION THROUGH JUSTICE AND PEACE EDUCATION.
2. I was told that the theme of this afternoon's discussion and reflection is on Engaging Communities for Transformative Education. I thought, though, that I could contribute better if I spoke about Justice and Peace Education which is essentially Transformative Education as Pathways to both personal and social transformation.
3. Why is there a need for transformation? Because we are in a context where challenges to peace and justice abound. An example is the prevalence of armed violence that kills one person every minute.
4. In the Philippines, we are host to two of the longest armed conflicts in the world, as well as of high crime rates and a war on drugs- all of which have claimed and continue to claim numerous lives.
5. It is not a surprise therefore that in the Global Peace Index that measures countries in terms of peacefulness we were ranked as one of the lowest placing 139 of 163. In the ASEAN, we were ranked least peaceful (Ad lib).
6. Clan conflicts also confront our people in Northern and Southern Philippines, conflicts that are waged due to territorial disputes or to defend family honor, among others. Our country is also home to 4.2 million small arms in civilian hands, according to the Small Arms Survey; one million of these, according to the police, are loose or illegal.
7. We are also confronted with the problem of extreme poverty. 12 million people, according to NEDA, are in such situation.
8. Inequality faces this country and the world. While a few families wallow in extreme wealth, 21.6% of the Filipino population live below the national poverty line.
9. Armed violence and injustice are not the only concerns that face us, we also are confronted with socio-cultural violence manifested in prejudice and discrimination against those who differ in ethnicity or religion. Hatred, fear or lack of respect and appreciation for diversity is translated into bullying in our classrooms.
10. It is heartbreaking to know that at least half of suicides, the third leading cause of death among the young are related to bullying. Victims of bullying in our classrooms go through feelings of hurt, anger, fear, alienation, shame, depression, disempowerment and loneliness. Bullying shatters their

self-esteem, results to decrease in grades or absenteeism, or to the victim dropping out of school.

11. Truly, transformation is not only needed in societal structures but in personal structures, as well. We are increasingly faced with attitudes and behaviors that do not reflect justice and peace. Civility and good manners seem to have escaped many of us and the youth we form. We see arrogance all around, or exclusion of those deemed to be not worthy. Our world is becoming too consumerist and material with us increasingly preoccupied with having more rather than becoming and being more, envious of the bounty that we see our friends post on Facebook. Once, while I was watching a UAAP game with my children and our team started to lose the game, one of the spectators behind us started to yell: (*naming the other team, bobo, bobo kayo, bobo bobo kayo*). I had to approach her to tell her that her name-calling broke my heart. Same on Twitter. A national official cursed on national TV and one tweeted "*Ha ha ha, nagmura na naman.*" I tweeted her to ask, is cursing really funny? Why disrespect and curse the woman who carried you in her womb, nursed you, nurtured you, raised you? Don't tell me please that it is just an expression. Language shapes consciousness, our attitudes and consequently our behavior. (pause) Our young have also become focused on the self, forgetting that they live in the world with others. And yes, the attitude of self-entitlement prevails in our midst. This morning at the airport, for example, a man just walked past us, placed his bag on the x-ray machine disregarding the queue. I was astounded. Where has civility gone? Are you the head of your institution (he was clad in a nice barong) used to being attended to first, and taking that entitlement with you in all spaces you occupy? Ah, there's a lot to do in the personal sphere.
12. There's a lot to do, as well, in the societal sphere. As Catholic educators, we are aware of our mission of evangelization. However, we are confronted with every day administrative concerns: the decreasing enrollment, our operational sustainability, the needs of the job market or the industry, hurdling national and global academic assessments, and visits of accrediting institutions, among many.
13. The mission of evangelization for PST is also challenged by a profit-driven globalization Technological revolution, of alternative facts, of messages

that tell us that the situation is a basket case: war is inevitable, violence is inherent in humans, bullying is part of being a teenager, poverty is caused by laziness, Muslims are terrorists. Our mission is also affected by extreme regionalism and political divisions in present-day society. A person, if not labeled a Duterte fanatic is a Dilawan. Red or yellow.

14. As Catholic educators, I feel that we have to show that we can transcend our regional affiliations. That our support is not for the Ilocano, or the Mindanao or the Bicolano or the Tarlaqueno but on the side of what the Gospel teaches us.
15. The teachings of justice and peace. We are taught for example not to repay injury with injury. That the dictum is not an eye for an eye, as it will make everybody blind.
16. With these societal and personal challenges facing us, what can we do? Justice and peace education is one of the many pathways we can take.
17. In JPE, we form the whole person. We build awareness on the forms of violence and injustice, their causes and effects and build theories on alternatives. We build empathy and compassion, hope and a sense of social responsibility. *"Hindi sapat na mabagbag, dapat ay mabagabag"* Hence, we also give opportunities for action and advocacy. In doing JPE, we aim to see change in our students' mindsets, values and attitudes that will in turn prod them to contribute to societal transformation.
18. The approach we take is the whole school approach. Our theory of change is that a Whole School Approach is an effective way of creating change/transformation. We integrate justice and peace in ten areas of school life: the curriculum, programs, practices, structures, research and materials, teaching-learning methodologies, practices, advocacy, and outreach and extension.
19. If they aren't there yet, we may want to explicitly state in our VM and school policies the concepts of justice and peace. We may want to declare our schools as Zones of Peace and Justice.
20. We may want to integrate justice and peace in our curriculum and teach key peace and justice concepts: that all humans are "brothers and sisters"
21. Or teach non-violence or non-harming as Jesus modeled to us. At the Garden of Gethsemane, he told Peter to put back the sword where it belonged as those who use the sword die by it. We teach nonviolence by

teaching and using dialogue as a problem-solving strategy. There are alternatives to war and aggression- and such skills may be taught in the classroom.

22. We teach respect for life- that all lives are important. Muslim, Christian, indigenous peoples, man, woman, gay, rich or poor, black or white. (In Rwanda)
23. We teach that human rights are indivisible, that human rights are to be respected and promoted and that basic needs should be fulfilled.
24. We teach respect, acceptance and appreciation of diversity and various forms of human expression.
25. We teach that resources of the earth should be equitably distributed and that we all have the responsibility to work towards a fairer sharing of resources.
26. We teach our students that we take into account future generations when we use the resources of the earth.
27. And we teach that women have equal rights with men and the right to be protected from abuse, violence and exploitation. (story of women's leadership)
28. Third, let us make our teaching-learning approaches and methodologies consistent with the values of peace and justice. Let us make them engaging, dialogical, participatory, cooperative and experiential. Authoritarianism should be thrown in the dustbin of history. The classroom is a perfect venue to practice democracy.
29. Fourth, let's share capacities with our teachers, employees, students on how to build -and be justice and peace. We cannot give what we do not have. Forming minds of peace are crucial. As UNESCO had said, if wars begin in the minds of men (and women), it is in the minds of men (and women) that the defenses of peace may be constructed.
30. Fifth, encourage students and staff to develop peace-related materials and research on peace and justice issues. How can we overcome the threats to peace? What pathways are effective to resolve and transform conflicts?
31. Sixth, consider building physical structures that will give a clear message that your schools are centers for justice and peace. In Miriam College, for example, we have a Center for Peace Education and other advocacy centers with physical spaces or offices, salary and utilities support.

32. Seventh, initiate programs that promote justice and peace. You may want to have a Peer Mediation program where students are taught how to mediate in conflicts among their peers. An anti-bullying program to save students from psychological violence and emotional abuse; a restorative discipline program to restore the offender's sense of self and his/her relationship with the offended.
33. Eighth, we may want to institute practices that will form consciousness on peace and justice issues. Observe, for example, the International day of Peace and take the chance to discuss the importance of ceasefire and non-killing or of the Mindanao Week of Peace to give space to talk about the historical injustice experienced by our Moro and IP sisters and brothers in Mindanao.
34. Ninth, we may want to open up spaces for our students to campaign on and lobby issues of peace and justice. Our students have campaigned for support for the Arms Trade Treaty and the Nuclear Ban Treaty both of which have been adopted in the United Nations.
35. They are actively campaigning against the proliferation of guns and against gun violence
36. They have actively engaged lawmakers on the Bangsamoro Basic Law and are lobbying lawmakers not to support the death penalty and the lowering of the age of criminality, among others.
37. When the BBL did not pass, I saw some of them from the lobby of Batasang Pambansa in tears. *"Mas naiyak pa kayo kesa sa mga taga-Bangsamoro"* one spectator sarcastically said, not understanding the empathy and compassion developed among us in the lobby for justice for people who are historically oppressed and marginalized.
38. And tenth, we may want to continue our fund-raising initiatives for causes of peace.
39. Join interfaith meetings and dialogues
40. Engage with "armed" groups to communicate your perspectives (Story MILF)
41. Reach out to community women affected by injustice and violence. We have shared capacities, for example, with Bangsamoro women on leadership and some of them threw their hat into the election ring. And some of them actually won!

42. We are engaging local governments to encourage them to legislate policies that will protect women from armed violence and create spaces for their participation and leadership in peace mechanisms.
43. We have a Twinning Project where our students are given the space to build friendships with students of Rajah Muda in Pikit, Cotabato.
44. Essays and poems they have written and published in a common newsletter called Pag-asa, the students from our school, a Catholic school and students from Raja Muda have described how their attitudes toward each other have changed- how the biases they had against each other have been shattered through this Project meant to build bridges of friendship and understanding. We call this a people-to-people peace process.
45. If we are asking where to start or how to strengthen what we already do, there's the PCSS to guide you. It has a set of standards, benchmarks and rubrics culled from Church documents to assess if where we are headed as Catholic institutions are consistent with the teachings of Jesus on justice and peace.
46. Or you may want to ride CEAP's vehicle for transformative education or the JEEPGY and we will be happy to join you in the goal of educating for peace, justice, the integrity of creation, gender equality, poverty alleviation, engaged citizenship and youth empowerment.
47. You are probably wondering what gains we have made by integrating justice and peace education and engaging communities. Our gains are modest. Research results have indicated changes in beliefs amongst our students for example in relation to war or their attitudes toward those who are different from them. We have students actually stopping fights on campus, increasing number of students in peace clubs, joining public actions, campaign work and lobby work. We have students in peacebuilding, humanitarian and human rights work. We have inspired other schools to declare their Schools as Zones of Peace or establish Peace Education Centers. We have inspired other schools to develop anti-bullying programs, inspired community women to believe that they are not secondary citizens motivating them to run for public office. We have inspired the creation of grassroots peace organizations working for conflict prevention and resolution.

48. Our engagement with communities and other sectors have also helped get women to be part of Councils of elders which for centuries did not have women members, develop a National Acton Plan on Women, Peace and Security that would ensure women's meaningful participation in leadership and in peace mechanisms and processes. Local governments are now legislating women's participation in governance. The Bangsamoro basic Law draft has very many provisions on gender equality and women's participation. And in the global front, we won in the United Nations two treaties: the Arms Trade Treaty which regulates the sales of arms to ensure that they don't land in the hands of those who will use them for atrocities and the Nuclear Ban Treaty which now prohibits States Parties from manufacturing, selling, deploying and acquiring nuclear weapons
49. These are modest gains considering the challenges that remain but we will keep on, God willing,
50. Thank you very much for your attention.