



To All The  
Dioceses  
Of The World

# ASIA MISSION AD GENTES

## NEWS BRIEF

No. 22 issue, May –July, 2012

### DISCERNMENT RETREATS

Dear Brothers and Lay Missionaries,

We began the first of our cluster retreats for 2012 at the Salesian Retreat House with our friends from China and Davao. The venue was at the Cheung Chau Isle, located about half an hour off the coast of Hong Kong by speed boat, Cheung Chau is part of the so called "Hong Kong Territories"!

The second one will commence on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August in Bangkok for Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia. The third one will take place in Dhaka (Bangladesh) and will start on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October. These retreats have a central theme and purpose: to prepare our hearts and minds for a discerning dialogue with God and with one another.

On the first day of our retreat, we reflected on the graces that we would ask of our good Lord for this retreat. In conclusion, we *asked for the grace of cultivating attitudes that will allow us to enter into a discernment process; hoped that this discernment will lead us as individuals, communities, countries and sector into a communion of vision and hearts for the AMAG mission and projects*

The AMAG Council and the AMAG Spirituality Commission have spent a good number of hours and energy reading through the Circulars and letters of Brothers Sean and Emili, the two latest General Chapter Documents and some chosen books and articles. We also went back to Brother Charles Howard's circular on discernment and found it inspiring. Our aim was to prepare two written documents: Firstly, to facilitate the discernment retreats; Secondly, to offer a good instrument of work for the meetings in the communities and in countries that will follow after the cluster retreats.

Paco, one of our missionaries in Talit (West Bengal – India) who is a member of the Spirituality Commission and I are facilitating these days of intense personal and community prayer as well as sharing. We have taken the first of the AMAG Council documents and we are following it step by step. It is beginning to prove an effective tool in opening the hearts of those participating in this Cheung Chau retreat to the grace of discernment.

And speaking about the importance of discernment, allow me to share a recent experience. While visiting the Provincial House of the Maryknoll Missionaries on Stanley Hill, Hong Kong, I had the chance of meeting Brother Bob – an American Maryknoll Brother. He spent a good numbers of years as a missionary in Africa, twenty of them in Egypt. For the duration of all those years he served mostly as a builder and engineer. He left a good number of church buildings, hospitals and schools standing in different countries in Africa. At seventy, he returned to America with a rather weak health and wondered whether it was the end of his years of active service as a Maryknoll Brother. His health eventually improved before the end of the year, during which his Superior General, was inviting people to move to China. Brother Bob volunteered and moved in as a tourist and stayed there for a month. He found a missionary group working with lepers and they offered him work training locals to make shoes for lepers. Brother Bob returned to the USA and took up a three-month course in shoe-making. Subsequently, he returned to CN and for the past 13 years has trained over a thousand shoe-makers to produce the kind of shoes that have remarkably improve lepers' ability to walk. Brother Bob has been providing this form of service on a tourist visa, and every month, he takes a train to Hong Kong, renews his tourist visa for another month and goes back. It took that kind of "discernment in action", as Brother Charles calls it, for Bob to move where he moved and to stay where he stays!

May our good Mother and St. Marcellin grant us all the wisdom and courage for these discernment retreats to become effective spaces to align our actions with the powerful actions of God!

Good reading to you all!

Luis



(Neiva with FMSI Brothers: Jim, Vicente and Manel)

# FMSI: LINK PERSON TRAINING PROGRAM

By: Neiva Hoffelder

*Neiva Hoffelder being the link person between the AMAG Sector and FMSI Geneva on Child Rights attended the "FMSI Link Person Training Program" from 21 May – 2 June 2012.*

The workshop was held at the General House in Rome, with additional days spent in Geneva where the group also attended the Universal Periodic Review and met with some personnel from Human Rights NGOs.

The 32 participants were from 22 different countries and they represented 27 Administrative Units and International Centers of Marist formation. It was coordinated by the staff of FMSI Geneva: Jim Jolley, Manel Mendoza and Vicente Falqueto.

The program included an introduction of the UN mechanisms of operation, especially the ones related to human rights, the role of the civil association and the functions of FMSI. It also offered an in-depth study of the UN Convention on the Child's Rights, especially Articles 28 and 29, regarding the right to education and its purpose.. The program provided several personal reflections and group work for a better understanding of the contents and practice as well.

It helped the participants to understand what needs to be done and how to navigate through the realities which they find themselves in.

The program was concluded by the message of Br. Emili, who highlighted the point of our becoming experts of evangelization and adding on the importance of us being experts in the rights of children and young people. He said:

*"I hope that in eight years' time when we look back, we can say that the Institute has taken some very significant steps in this direction. In fact, this program, like the one conducted for the Provincials and province delegates in March entitled "International Seminar on the Protection of the Child", are without doubt very concrete steps in this direction."*



The Federation of Asia Bishop Conference—Office of Consecrated Life (FABC-OCL) convened participants for a symposium on 23rd to 26th of June in Huahin, Thailand. Bro. Diego Zawadzky was in attendance.

The symposium explored relevant perspectives on consecrated life towards a collaborative role in the mission of the church in Asia. 13 areas of concerns were outlined for discussion covering, among others, topics on experiences of collaboration, leadership, cultural sensitivity, vocation promotion, creative fidelity, vows and witnessing.

## FABC-OCL SYMPOSIUM III

23<sup>rd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2012 HUA-HIN THAILAND





## HABIT-TAKING OF AMAG NOVICES

By: Br. Canisio Jose Willrich, FMS

The Liturgy for Habit-taking was held on the 15th of May at the Immaculate Conception Novitiate Chapel in Cotabato, Philippines. Among the 11 novices, 9 are from the East Asia Province (Jevest, Lloyd, Jeffrey, DeoDudz, Jordan, Philip Caesar, Cian Marco, John Allen and Aljon - Philippines), while 2 are from the AMAG Sector (Quy - Vietnam, Sytha Cambodia).

The celebration was presided by Fr. Danilo Sergio, OMI, and attended by Brothers, relatives, friends and the Formation Commission of AMAG. The AMAG novices and the 9 novices of East Asia are expected to join the regular Novitiate for 2 years. Currently, 5 novices are in the 2nd year - the missionary year. The Novitiate team is composed of Br. Lindley (Novice master), Br. wency (Community superior), Br.Joe (Vocation animator) and Br. Canísio (AMAG).



We are happy and congratulate our new novices, especially the first 2 novices of the AMAG Sector. We wish them happiness and faithfulness to the call of God and extend our congratulations to their families and those who had worked closely with them in their formation.

We wish Quy, Sytha and the 9 novices of East Asia a wonderful experience and encounter with God in the Novitiate! ***The Novitiate is not a place of passage, but rather a place where a person takes a step forward, a transition, a conversion.***

Let us be united with them in our daily prayers.



# A Reflection:

## EXPERIENCE IN CAMBODIA

By: Joseph Tri (Postulant)

### Lavalla School and Villa Maria: A Future for People with Disabilities.

*The disabled hand shines the statues, sews the embroidery, with a sharp needle, the eyes are bright with a sparkling smile and from within the eye, "for tomorrow" they make an effort and they still find purpose in each day.*

*At Villa Maria I looked at the products that you made despite your disability and witnessed here your hard work, and I better understand the extraordinary energy latent in every human being.*

#### **Art...**

*At first, perhaps people buy your products largely because of your disability, out of charity. Gradually many of the products you make, Mary statues, flowers, fabric art, and embroidery, become much loved as beautiful and unique.*

*In particular, the statues made by people with disabilities create a lot of interest, for those looking to buy. Many foreigners also buy paintings and commented that "these statues bring a breath of trust in God and Mary and become our favourite picture because of that."*

**"Everybody has to live and make life more meaningful. Disabled people need and want to live by their own labour. Love of life helped them to stand firm."**

*The desire for life was put into work, into every stitch, needlework, each petal, every brush stroke. After all, love of art can lead to the desire to live a full life.*

*That is the destiny of some less fortunate people, orphans, children born with defects of the body, or those born in a family in a particularly difficult situation . Each child has the misfortune of other disadvantages compared to their peers, but despite all that, by their will and energy, and with the help of teachers, students are progressing to integrate into the community, contributing their small effort to the development of society.*



*Lavalla School and Villa Maria, by helping children in difficult circumstances, ensure that children with disabilities have a more complete integration into community activities, reducing the burden on families and society.*

#### **Pailin...**

*The students in Pailin try to help their families work on the farms, in a very rough climate. The children have few new clothes to go to school, thin summer dresses, bare feet. The children are still surrounded by the love of their family*

*There are many students who must travel many kilometres to school. The morning and afternoon timetables are so close together that they do not have enough time to return home for lunch. Seeing the problem, the Brothers arrange cooking lunch for many children. Before eating they gather in the dining room and I was with them. I still didn't understand what they were saying but looking at those innocent eyes and seeing their gentleness made me feel that I was attracted to their laughter, their jokes ...*



## Reflection continued...

### To a New World.

*Having little chance to access computers and little basic knowledge of computer science, is a disadvantaged for the students here in Pailin.*

"When I finish at school I come to the Brothers' Centre to study computers," Chantee said. Since studying in the computer room with the Brothers is free, Chantee and her friends in the country have a better opportunity to learn and become more familiar with computers. "There are many things we do not understand, and our parents don't know when we ask them, and Brother explains for us, we don't waste our time, and Brother lets us practice on the computer, and encourages us to read a book." Using modern computers, in clean rooms, Chantee said: "When we are at the Brothers' Learning Centre, we usually come here to get access to new knowledge, opening my mind, and go to college."

The Brothers are always available throughout the day to serve the educational needs of the children. One Brother said: "The children who come here are mostly children from poor families, using their time to help their parents, often with very little free time. They just have to read, have lunch and then hurry on home. Each child needs to learn to use computers from the volunteers in Pailin. In addition, they always have two basic computer classes. "The library has books of all kinds, from comic books, fairy tales to literature,



(Antonio, Michael and the aspirants visit the Sisters of Charity in Phnom Penh, Cambodia)

art, and science suitable to meet the needs of children of all ages.

According to Brother, the Director of Learning Centres, computer rooms and library, the Brothers are always available throughout the day to serve the educational needs of the children. Brother said: "The children who come here are mostly children from poor families, using their time to help their parents, often with very little free time. They just have to read, have lunch and then hurry on home. Each child needs to learn to use computers from the volunteers in Pailin. In addition, they always have two basic computer classes. "The library has books of all kinds, from comic books, fairy tales to literature, art, and science suitable to meet the needs of children of all ages.



### On-going English Training

Lay Missionary Alice Lee, continues to make working visits to Pailin, Cambodia, sharing ideas and methods on the teaching of phonics and helping children to learn to read and to tackle new words on their own.

Early in July she moved to the community of Samut Sakhon, Thailand and made herself available to teach the children of the Burmese migrants.

# Introducing our New Ad Gentes Postulants

After finishing their Aspirancy in their own country, the following young men have been accepted for the postulancy formation programme in the Philippines. They transfer to Davao on 13<sup>th</sup> August, where they will be joining Cong who is already in his second year of formation there, and their formators, Brothers Pepito and Hilario. We asks God's blessing on them, and pray for the special care of Mary and Marcellin as they discern their call to be Marist Brothers.



**Bão(Peter), 20 years old**



**Hữu(John), 21 years old**



**Thuân(Anthony), 21 years old**



**Trí (Joseph), 23 years old**



## ORIENTATION SESSION FOR AMAG VOLUNTEER

A four-week orientation session that began July 17, 2012 was facilitated by Bro. Diego Zawadzky and Agnes Reyes for Ms. Evelyn Kow, a volunteer from Malaysia.

Capped with the theme: "*Coming together to build a Marist community sent on mission to Cambodia,*" the sessions prepared were aimed at providing Evelyn with the necessary personal accompaniment and orientation on mission realities in Asia and Cambodia in particular.

Evelyn volunteered for a year to teach English at the Catholic Church Student Center, Phnom Penh .

In 2011 national census, India's population was estimated 1.21 Billion, that is, 17.23% of the world's population. In this census report, the State of **West Bengal** is identified as the 4<sup>th</sup> densely populated area in reference to India's 28 States and 7 Union territories. Of the 91.3 Million population of **West Bengal**, the "population bulge" in its demographic profile fall heavy on the youth-age cluster.

In a study conducted on Indian youth and demographic transition, it is projected that the youth working age population is likely to be 800 million by 2016. This leads to the challenge of addressing questions of how to access education, skills training, and employment opportunities to advance the potentials of India's human capital for its development: the youth. This is the milieu that calls an action for the Marist Brothers to take concrete steps in promoting the welfare of the underprivileged youth.

Tapping the potential of young people has been central in the mission of our Brothers in Talit, West Bengal. Particular focus of their mission work is to address the learning needs of the Santali Tribe youth who are school drop-outs and provide them with skills for productive engagements for their future. Ignoring them will only add to the complexities of social risks of having these Santali youth being unemployed, poor, unjustly treated, and socially displaced.

It is the intention of the Marist Brothers to implement a project that will hone skills of the Santali tribal youth. The proposed Vocational Training Program on specific technical trade aims to help them gain access to active working labour force, making them productive, and contributing to the development of the community they belong.

The Marist Brothers are committed to help particularly the Santali Tribe youth with the intention of addressing the following problems: (1) Tribal youth discrimination in workforce; (2) Gender inequality in the education of tribal youth, (3) Youth unemployment and (4) Alleviation of Economic poverty.

### Sources Noted:

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/census2011/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

[List\\_of\\_states\\_and\\_union\\_territories\\_of\\_India\\_by\\_population](#)

Dr. P Sivakumar, Dr. Dhanya: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1762130>

In the period of Two (2) years, the project aims to accomplish the following:

- (1) To equip 180 Santali Tribe school drop-outs with knowledge and skills that will develop their competence for work. During the year, 30 will be trained in Computer, 30 for Tailoring/Sewing, and 30 for English Communication proficiency. With 90 beneficiaries targeted each year, the project aims to assist a total of 180 youth.
- (2) To provide equal opportunities for boys and girls by bridging disparity in tribal education which preference fall highly in favour of boys. The project aims to accommodate 50% youth-girls and 50% boys.
- (3) To empower the tribal youth by preparing them for work productivity.
- (4) To prepare the Santali Tribe school drop-outs take active role in the community they belong and upon finishing the program, they contribute to the economic needs of their respective families.

## Let's help---

Interested organizations or generous individuals willing to help address the needs of the Santali tribal youth of India may contact :

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