



MARIST DISTRICT OF ASIA *News Brief*



New Beginning

“November can be a long month. It gets dark so early and the energy of summer seems a distant memory. But the season of winter is important and healthy. It puts us in touch with the need to pause, the need to be patient and that sometimes we have to journey in darkness.”
James McSweeney

New beginning, new commissions, new country coordinators – where are we in all this sense of newness? Are these just words? These words talk about newness but yet we find ourselves in old wineskins, old ways of thinking as well as old customs and traditions that make it difficult for us to move ahead where the needs are more, allowing resistance and fears to remain. Each one of us, sometimes unconsciously, start to “nest”, to feel secure and at ease, not having to face challenges or changes.

Our first love seems like an old story and the routine and the lack of results brew boredom and stir temptation in some of us. Just as the disciples questioned the prophet on the road to Emmaus and said: “Yes, we believe but now it is already the third day!” we want to see results, to feel that we are needed and accepted. But in reality, this may not be what is asked of us. Perhaps for some of you, a silent and fragile presence, like the servant who waits on his master in the middle of the night, is what is needed of you. It is not easy but sometimes this is the cross we are asked to bear.

December is here and soon it will be January. We are invited to pray and reflect as the 2nd Marist International Mission Assembly approaches. What is the significance of this invitation? For some of us Nairobi seems so far away.

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Advent is also around the corner and we have already received the material for the enrichment of our prayer life during this season. How can we fully utilize this material?

Contemplatives in action, Prophets and Mystics, Awaking the dawn – some of us may feel overwhelmed, intimidated and apprehensive. Some weeks ago, a Brother

said: “I don’t know about this contemplative attitude but I pray my rosary every day.” Another confessed that prayer was not his strength, so I suggested that he set aside half an hour for prayer daily, in order to be aware of God’s presence in his life. He promised me that he would make an effort.

During the last district meeting, Br Joe

Therefore, if Christ is at the centre of our lives, if our communities are important to us, we should give them quality time – we should make an effort to spend quality time with Christ as well as our brothers and sisters.

reiterated that this call for *a new beginning* invites us to give priority to the things that should be at the center of our lives. Therefore, if Christ is at the centre of our lives, if our communities are important to us, we should give them quality time – we should make an effort to spend quality time with Christ as well as our brothers and sisters.

I end by quoting Br Emili, “We have to accept that death forms part of life and that this process involves true suffering. What has been familiar to us is disappearing and we have not yet begun to see clearly what is new.”

Fraternally,

Juan.



Sunrise in Seoul



Provincial and district economies

Provincial and District Economes Meet

by Jose Grande

The meeting was held at the General House in Rome from 11 – 15 October 2013 and was conducted in two languages, Spanish and English. Organized by the Econome General, Br Victor Preciado, and his team, it brought together 54 participants (31 Brothers and 23 Lay people) – bursars and heads of accounting from most of the administrative units of the Institute. The objectives of the meeting were

- To get to know one another
- To promote a vision of our international Institute and experience being a part of it
- To dialogue about topics of common interest

Among others, the meeting included

- Reflection and dialogue about *Administration and Spirituality, a door half-opened*, a presentation by Br Alfonso Murad, author of the book *Management and Spirituality*
- *New models of animation, governance and management*, a presentation by Br João do Prado
- A brief presentation of internal and external scenarios of each administrative unit based on a common scheme
- A presentation and analysis of the financial reports sent by each administrative unit to the General Government by means of the website created for it
- The General Administration's 2012 Report and a draft of its Budgets for 2013 and 2014
- The General Administration's model of financing: presentation, clarifications, comments and proposed collaborations for 2014
- Dialogues on various topics and group work on several themes

Br Emili Turú also presented the work and reflection of the General Conference held at the Hermitage the previous month.

Most of the participants expressed satisfaction with the meeting.



Beatification of the martyrs in Tarragona, Spain (Image courtesy of Marist Brothers - www.champagnat.org)

Witnesses of the Faith

By Neiva Hoffelder

On Sunday the 13th of October 2013, we celebrated the beatification of 522 martyrs in Spain. They included 66, 20th century Marist Brothers and two Lay people. The largest beatification ceremony held in Spain, the ceremony took place on the grounds of the Catholic Education Complex in Tarragona.

Who are these martyrs? They are Christians won by Christ, disciples who learned well the meaning of “loving to

the end” that took Jesus to the Cross. There is no such thing as love in parts, in portions. Love is total and when one loves, one loves to the end. On the cross, Jesus felt the weight of death, the weight of sin, but he entrusted himself wholly to the Father and he forgave. He hardly spoke but gave his life. Christ goes before us in love and the martyrs have imitated him to the end.

During the ceremony, the holy Father said: “Let us imitate the martyrs!” We always have to die a bit to come out of ourselves, of our

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egoism, our wellbeing, our sloth, our sadness and open ourselves to God, to others, especially the most needy.

Let us implore the intercession of the martyrs so that we may be true Christians, Christians of action and not only of words so as not to be mediocre Christians, Christians varnished with Christianity but without substance. The martyrs were not varnished, they were true Christians to the end. Let us ask them for their help to strengthen our faith, especially in difficult times and thus be a sign of hope and architects of brotherhood and solidarity. The beatification of our Marist martyrs in Spain is a great honour to the Institute. Let us turn to them for help.

Br Luis J. F. Aceves, prays that Jesus, Mary and Marcellin will build in us a solid and sound devotion towards those who have preceded us in following the footsteps of Jesus, those whom the Church now presents to us as models of faith, those who lost their lives in order to gain it in Christ.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



"Yes, I know what plans I have in mind for you, Yahweh declares, plans for peace, not for disaster, to give you a future and hope."

Jeremiah 29: 11

Maximiliano Meier
3 December

Doroteo Roman
6 February

Michael Potter
20 December

Canisio Willrich
17 February

Miguel Santos
23 December

George Valle
22 February

Diego Zawadzky
4 January

Alex Arockiasamy
26 February

Roberto Mendez
14 January

Dominador Santiago
3 March

Francis Amoako Attah
26 January

Jose Grande
12 March

Antonio Sanchez
1 February

Pietro Codato
15 March

Malangmei Bartholomew
30 March

From My Diary By Luis Sobrado

25 and 26 August 2013: Depart for Spain for ongoing formation

Pleasant flights: During my stopover at the Cairo International Airport, I didn't see any signs of the social turmoil that Cairo and the main towns in Egypt have been experiencing. As I waited for my flight to Madrid, I subconsciously reconnected with different Spanish languages and accents: Andaluz, Catalán, Gallego. I had a quick exchange with two Vascos from San Sebastián: "Youth unemployment in Spain is becoming ugly!" Many Spaniards meet in Cairo on their way to Spain. They arrive from varied holiday destinations such as South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Seychelles and Mauritius. A couple of them came all the way from Moscow.

I had time to read Matthew 23: Some of us are busy with many things. One may easily forget the "weightier matters of life: discernment, mercy and faith!" A prayer arose from the heart of things: "Good Mother, teach me the wisdom of life!"

27 August: Reconnecting With Family

Ryanair is the most popular low cost airline in Europe but it requires an exercise in *self-divesting*. You are allowed a bag that has to fit into a 55 x 40 x 20 measuring rack. Take it or leave it. 10 kilos, that's all you are allowed to carry. Five passengers had excess baggage and had to pay an additional \$82. Anyway, the return airfare of \$53 was too tempting to resist. It was also an exercise of reckoning: what do you need to survive the couple of weeks you spend at home?

I visited Santiago and Coruña where my seven brothers and three sisters are, all of them grandfathers and grandmothers.

Three of my nephews are going through the painful experience of unemployment. I met two new grandnephews for the first time, bringing the total number of grandnephews to 20. They range from two months to 20 years old. I visited eight out of the 10 families of my brothers and sisters. It feels like I'm celebrating new life everywhere I go.

Often, at prayer time, I thank the good Lord for this gift of life. I am filled with admiration for these families where the parents toil day



My nephews and I

And now, it is only in loving service that I spend my entire existence!

and night, dream and plan only for the best possible service of these new lives. Verse 95 of the Spiritual Canticle of John of the Cross comes to mind: "And now, it is only in loving service that I spend my entire existence!"

10 September: Joining the Segovia Community

Segovia is a beautiful Spanish town in Castile, filled with some of the finest works of art, architecture and sculpture in Spain: aqueduct, cathedral, alcazar (medieval fortress). It is a little town surrounded by wide extents of the Castilian plateau.

I spent a weekend in the Carmelite monastery of St John of the Cross. It was founded and developed by the Carmelite saint himself. It is in this convent which this mystic is buried. Here, he wrote the famous *Dark Night of the Soul* that is still considered one of the finest pieces of Castilian poetry today. The surroundings of this convent show several caves, excavated in the sides of the hills where John spent days and nights in prayer, learning the art of Christian contemplation. I remember the third stanza of the *Dark Night of the Soul*:

"In the delight of a dark night, when nobody sees anyone, neither I could see a spark, but the one that burned in my heart!"



The Marist community in Segovia



Views of the aqueduct, alcazar and cathedral from our Marist school



The fast train that runs between Segovia and Madrid



Veteran and new missionaries in Madrid

The community has seven Brothers including me, with five of us past the retirement age. We are all involved in the activities of the Marist school next door. I am particularly in touch with the apostolic groups called *Marcha* and look forward to becoming a companion to these young boys and girls in their search for the meaning of life and happiness.

I found an old bicycle in the house and proceeded to repair, clean and oil it. On Sundays, I cycle for about three hours along one of the many roads that cross the Castillian plateau around Segovia. The brisk weather of the Castilian autumn and the pervasive presence of John of the Cross, bring to this exercise of physical fitness a touch of mysticism.

14 September: Beginning a Missiology Course in Madrid

I am attending a course in missiology at the School for Formation for Missionaries in Madrid. I commute from Monday to Friday between Segovia and Madrid. The train I

take covers a distance of 86 km in just 28 minutes. Everyday, I leave Segovia at 7.52 a.m. and return at 3.15 p.m. The course begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 2 p.m. The course ends on the 14th of December.

13 October: One Month at the School of Formation for Missionaries

We have been attending this intensive course for a month now. Out of 17 participants, nine are lay, three priests and seven religious. It's a sign of times – we were told that the numbers used to be considerably higher and almost everyone was either priest or religious. Laity is taking more and more responsibility for the missionary work of the Spanish church. The youngest in the group are Maria Palau and Roger Marco.

They are in their late 20s and were married only two months ago. They both decided to give three years of their lives to Mission Ad Gentes and gave up their jobs in Tarragona (Catalogne) to take up missionary work in Santo Domingo (Carib). Maria Victoria (67) and I (68) are among the oldest in this course. Four of us have had years of missionary experience prior to this course. It makes the mix enriching and interesting and we learn from past missionary experience as well as new ways and insights about being on Mission Ad Gentes.



We have covered by now very interesting subjects such as *Analysis of present day reality and Phenomenology, History and Theology of Religion* with excellent professors. We, the students, continuously interact with the professors and with one another and nobody falls asleep in class. Well chosen bibliographies keep me busy in the afternoons and sometimes at night. With my new e-reader, I find the daily travel good spaces and time to catch up with interesting reading materials.

I have to make sure this course does not become a pure intellectual exercise. I find one of Ignatius' annotations to the Exercises very instructive: "It is not much learning that satisfies our souls, but the inner feeling and tasting of what we learn and perceive" (Spiritual Exercises, 2nd annotation).



The Apostolic Community Experience Programme

By Anphongso Quy

Dear Brothers and Lay Marists of the MDA,

Greeting of peace from the novitiate.

When Br Juan asked me to write something about my Apostolic Community Experience Programme (ACEP), he gave me a good opportunity to express my gratitude to you, my dear brothers and sisters. Thank you for widening my mind, helping me to know and love Jesus even more. Through your presentations and sharings in Hua Hin, I witnessed the fruits of your labour in Asia,



Anphongso Quy

particularly in Samut Sakhon, Talit, Pailin, Quoc Oai, and they were beyond my imagination.

Quoc Oai, Hanoi, was where I had the ACEP. It was here that I discovered the meaning of being a future member of MDA and was challenged to build a community in difficult situations – for instance, when some of the students here called me *chu lao*, which means Laotian.

The Champagnats of Quoc Oai have been working very hard to build the kingdom of God by educating the young and helping them to become good citizens. Their work fosters and deepens my baptismal consecration, making my calling clearer. As Br Luis shared in the novitiate last year, “It is her work that we do.” I feel that it was really our loving Father and good Mother who have been planning everything for me.

Your little one,

Anphongso Quy.

Our Backpacking Trip

By Abel and Christina Eom

As we made a plan to go back to our community in CN through Laos, Vietnam and Southern Tibet, we kicked off our vacation as soon as the assembly in Thailand ended. Going on adventures in foreign countries and experiencing their cultures gives us opportunities to discover new horizons and helps us to discover who we are – companions of those who are also living at the same time in different parts of the world. Regardless of cultural and geographical divisions, it is the people who shape the era we live in.

This backpacking trip also offered us an opportunity



Young Buddhist monks taking photos at a temple in Laos

to see two different faces of the world. One of them is the extraordinary beauty of nature and humanity, while the other is capitalism's tremendous influence on the local way of life, even in rural districts of undeveloped countries. We felt so sorry to see the destruction of precious cultural and spiritual values as well as human dignity by crude materialism.

In Laos, we could not forget our encounters with Buddhist monks. The first two young monks were taking photos with a modern camera whereas the other Tibetan monk who aged about 70, asked us to buy Buddhist rosaries. Looking at him, we wondered why he had to sell

rosaries to earn money in his old age. As the world becomes more commercialized, people lose sight of cultural and spiritual values. In fact, spiritual values in particular are increasingly being dominated by material benefits.

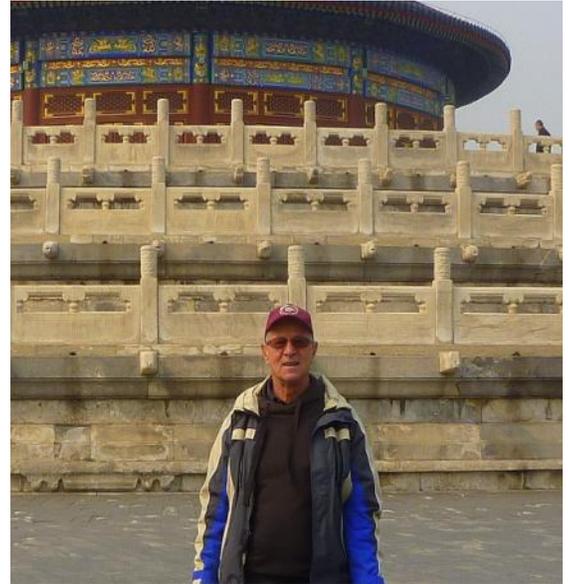
Such phenomenon reminds us that keeping Christian values in our mind and living it out in our daily life are essential in our mission to evangelize to those who want to know Jesus or God. We believe that the deep awareness of the importance of these values and of being disciples of Jesus as a Marist, helps us to spread Christian values in this contemporary world of commercialization.



Christina and Abel Eom

Let Us Go to New Lands

By George Palandres



George Palandres

On the 15th of October, I left my community in Paris and travelled to this continent where everyone was already at work. It was unlike the journeys that I had embarked on in the past, reaching lands and countries where I returned to after my home leave. This one came after a long time of maturation. My decision to embark on this adventure was my response to the invitation from our last chapter: let us go to new lands.

At the beginning 2013, I was invited to join the members of the 9th AMAG group for a 2-month orientation. While I returned to Paris, my heart remained in Asia with my group members who had begun their language courses. After a few weeks, it was official: I would join them. Before the departure date, I spent several days in the holy places of Paris where our founders and other saints conceived their projects. Among these places was the memorial of the Paris Foreign Missions Society (MEP) where all the martyrs of Asia are remembered in a significant and holy place.

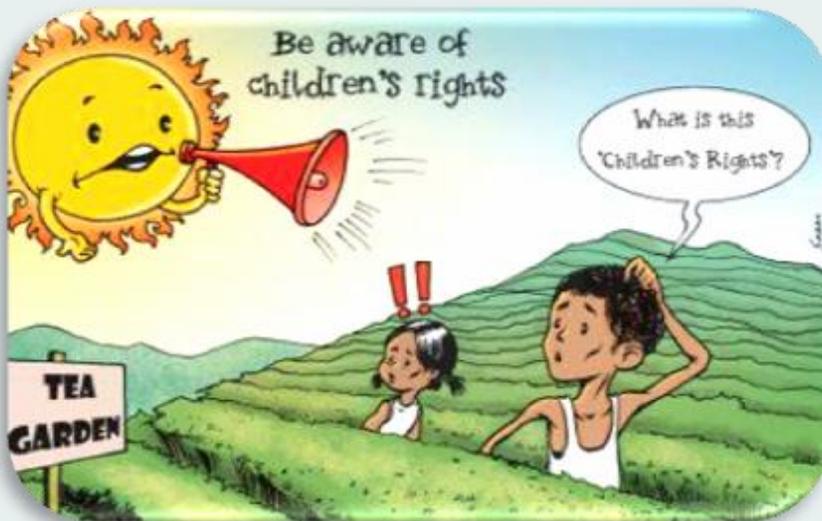
I am currently in the field, like you and with you – it is a new beginning. After living in CN for a while, I can say that the contrast with what I was used to is terribly huge! So huge, that I feel even more useless, humble and powerless. It echoes the words of some of the speakers we had during our orientation course in Phnom Penh. I feel that this continent, this land is

overwhelming and I am quite sure that most of you share my feelings.

At the beginning of my new life here, I would like to share with all MDA members the Word of God, which inspired me on the 29th Sunday in ordinary time. Living on the 6th floor, looking at the streets around and reflecting on the communities spread

around this continent, I would like to be like Moses who kept his hand raised up towards heaven. The struggle to build the kingdom of God where we are is hard but let us not lose hope, *ne baissons pas les bras*. Like Aaron and Hur, our district and community members will always be there to support us.

The struggle to build the kingdom of God where we are is hard but let us not lose hope, ne baissons pas les bras. Like Aaron and Hur, our district and our community members will always be there to support us.



Having the Cause of Children's Rights at Heart (2)

By César Henriquez

How do we promote children's rights? I am sure that none of us will say that we don't support the idea of children's rights promotion, but we must recognize that this is a subject that we have heard about, but do not know very well. *Children's*

rights, advocacy, human rights, are concepts that we have to know and they include actions that we have to take if we want to be coherent with the new circumstances and situations that we are facing in our globalized world.

As members of a Marist district, we are in the process of developing and implementing a Child Protection policy, which is similar to what the other provinces and districts are doing. This is in accordance with the General Council's request to all administrative units to take concrete steps in relation to children's rights promotion and protecting children against any kind of exploitation and abuse. This strategy will require not only our enthusiasm, but also a concrete knowledge of certain documents, like the

Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted by the General Assembly of United Nations in 1989. Furthermore, there will be a need to establish standards in the places where we work with children and young people and, develop strategies for capacity building among ourselves, Lay and Brothers, as well as the people collaborating in mission with us.

It sounds like there is *a lot more of work to do*, doesn't it? I don't think it will be *a lot more*, because there are many things that we are already doing, thanks to our Marist style of work. We have to remind ourselves that children deserve to be cared for and protected, and any effort we make in this regard is worth it.

St Marcellin used to say that the Brothers are *guardian angels* of the children in our schools. By taking concrete actions in relation to child protection, we are demonstrating our conviction (and commitment) that children must be treated with love as well as respect and that their dignity must be preserved. They should have the opportunity to grow in society, that much too often, neglects them.

Marist Vocation Programme in Talit

By Jose Maria Sierra

During the Durga Puja celebration, which was held on the 19th and 20th of October, we organised a Marist vocation programme in our hostel for 12 Santali boys from class 11 and 12 as well as those in their 1st and 2nd year Bachelor of Arts studies. They come from different villages in the Murshidabad region and study in Azimganch while staying in the Don Bosco hostel. The three main aims of this programme were

- To experience the Marist lifestyle of joy, happiness, simplicity, community life, work life, prayer as well as our relationship with Mary and solidarity with the poor youth
- To learn about St Marcellin Champagnat's life and the Marist Brothers
- To pray and to share personal vocation experiences and how to discover the God's calling

On the first day, we shared about our lives, why we came to Talit and what we



A photo of me and the programme participants

hope to achieve. The next day, the boys reflected on their personal vocation and tried to discover it the Jesuit way: to feel, discern and confirm. We also taught them other skills to discern God's calling. Besides that, we shared with them about the life of our founder and the Marist charism. The programme ended on Sunday evening with mass, which was followed by a festive celebration of songs and dances.

As some boys were attracted for our life and our charism, we invited them as well as other Santali boys from the villages around us to take part in future Marist programmes. Hopefully, our constant prayer and good work will help us to find good Marist candidates next year.

News from Samut Sakhon

By Andrew Chan

Through the contact of Fr Paolo Salamone, PIME, a group of university students from Italy came to the St Anne, St Joachim and Marist Centre for Migrants to gain some experience in volunteer work.

From 19 - 23 August, they worked in pairs or groups of three in the three centres and taught English, art and dance. Out the classrooms, they were sisters or brothers to children. From 20 - 21 August, after school hours, the two volunteers, Pietro and Laura, visited the families of the children with us. The whole group went to Pala-U from 19 - 23 August and stayed for two nights in one of the village houses. They were pleased to have spent time with the Myanmar children in Samut Sakhon and the Karen children in Pala-U.



Pietro and Laura giving a singing lesson



Pietro and Laura giving a dance lesson



Pietro playing outdoor games with the students



Angela with our students



Volunteers and teachers at the home of some of our students



Laura with our students



Australian volunteers teaching the youth of Pailin



Free supply of rice for the poor



One of the toilets in the process of construction



Our library

Hello from the Brothers, Children and Youth of Pailin

By Francis Amoako Attah

Special greetings to all friends and supporters of the Marist Pailin Mission! First of all, we would like to say a big thank you for your interest in our life. We appreciate your support, which has helped us maintain our work for the young people of Pailin.

This year, our activities have not been too different from what we had done in the past. However, we have intensified our focus on the needs of the poor and needy children and youth. Besides our support in the areas of food, school fee and uniform as well as the teaching of English and computer skills, we also provide personal hygiene and health education. Additionally, we take time to listen to their personal problems and offer our support in various ways.

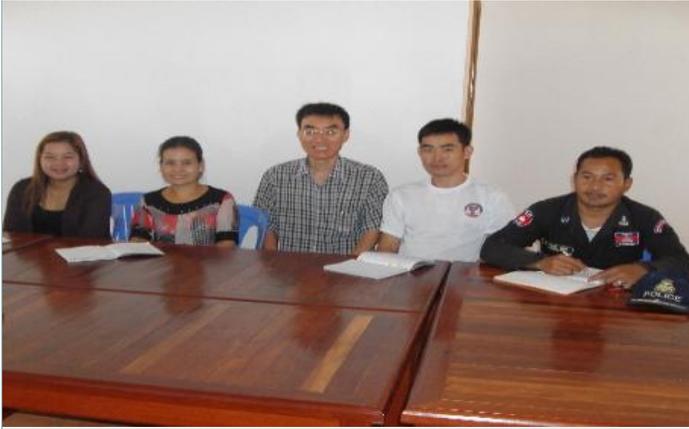
Food for Poor Families

From the beginning of the year until the end of June, 10 families in Pailin received their monthly supply of rice from us. We thank Alan, Alison and their friends who initiated and supported this programme. It was helpful and the beneficiaries are grateful.

New Initiaves

With the help of the students and staff of two Marist schools in Australia, namely Marcellin College Bulleen and Marist College Ashgrove, we built three toilets at the cost of \$350 each for some families in our vicinity. This project has been very beneficial for the families and is very much appreciated.

Our library is popular among the children and youth of Pailin who borrow our books during their free time. We also allow poor university students to borrow our laptop computers for their studies.



Br Ignatius with his students

English Lessons for Police and Hospital staff

Our commitment to the English lessons for police and hospital staff is ongoing and they come for lessons from Monday to Friday. We are happy for Ms Pet Syneth, the wife of

a police officer, who attended our English lessons and managed to secure a good job due to her English proficiency.

Br Gilbert has started a new English class made up of hospital staff and medical students in Pailin. Besides providing English



Chai Praya or lice of God/Buddha

lessons, we also facilitated interaction between them and medical students from Singapore and United Kingdom (East Anglia) who collaborated with us briefly.



Location of the proposed LaValla hostel

MEC House

For almost five months, the Marist Educational Centre (MEC) was invaded by insects. The locals call them “Chai Praya”, which means Lice of God or Lice of Buddha. Our many efforts to get rid of these pests were futile, making it difficult for our students to study



Monks attending our computer lessons

comfortably in the house. Therefore, we have decided to relocate and are searching for a better venue.

Hostel Project

With regards to the construction of the proposed hostel project, we have received permission from both the

government a the General Council. We are now raising funds for the first phase, which will comprise a building that can accommodate 30 students in five rooms as well as common showers and toilets.

The second stage of the first phase will include the construction of a

- Dining room (temporary)
- Kitchen (temporary)
- Laundry room
- Study room
- Recreation room
- Outdoor recreation space

The Marist Brothers have already purchased a 52m x 72m land close to the only high school in Pailin and the Enfants de Asie orphanage. Below is the location of the proposed LaValla Hostel.

The total cost of the project is \$468,446.31 with local contribution amounting to \$133,290.00 (28.45%). Funding requested is \$335,156.31 (71.55%). Support is needed for this project, which will improve the lives of many children and ensure a better future for them.

Interreligious Dialogue

As our two learning centres in Pailin are open to the public, our group of students also comprise Buddhist monks who have been attending our English and computer lessons. This has made it possible to establish a good relationship with the monks and their leaders.

Clinics

Occasionally, the Pailin community organises free clinics in collaboration with visiting medical groups from Spain, Singapore and South Korea. The most recent clinic took place from 29 August to 2 September and was organised with the Peacemaker Medical Team, which is affiliated to the Catholic Educational Foundation in Seoul, Korea. The 30-member team was made up of doctors, nurses, pharmacists and technicians. They were assisted by Dr Estela Rodriguez, a Lay Marist, and 10 translators from a Korean language school in Phnom Penh.

Medical problems ranging from hypertension, diabetes to gynaecological problems were detected among the 1881 adult and child patients who visited the clinic. The locals are very grateful for the free clinics and look forward to attending them every year.



Monks attending our English lesson



Every year, the community organizes free clinics in collaboration with visiting medical groups

Hanoi Scenes

By Barry Lamb



Clockwise from top left:

1. The Brothers' house. When finding a suitable residence, one must keep in mind the number of single rooms, its location relative to the teaching centre and the cost of rental and availability. Not many fit the criteria.
2. The bright green in the foreground are seedlings of rice that are planted out in the fields. All by hand. Photo from the roof of the Brothers' house.
3. A pond of water lilies about a four minutes' walk from the Brothers' house.

4. A sign painted onto the wall close to the Brothers' house telling the dates for rice planting.

5. Photo taken from my balcony. Try to see a loud speaker on a long pole between the buildings up high where the dark green of the trees meets the light green of the distant fields. Well this loud speaker starts with music and talking at 10 to five in the morning and one morning it went on for about an hour. It is believed to be propaganda of some sort, as well as music and counting for physical exercises!



Clockwise from top left:

1. The main street of Quoc Oai.
2. A boy holding a certificate certifying that he has completed a course of English

studies at the New Horizon project, Quoc Oai.

3. View from the back seat of the bus from Quoc Oai to a Hanoi terminus. Note the blue stool in the lower centre of the photo. When all the seats are taken you could be given a stool to sit on in the passageway.

4. Waiting at the lights, Hanoi city.



From top:

1. Note the blue awning. This is a wedding marquee.

2. Just some of the wedding guests. Geoff has his back to the camera and is just above the woman in red.

3. A wedding dinner table set for six.



Clockwise from top:

- Just one corner of the Quoc Oai Market. Almost all the greens would have been cut that morning!
- A woman doing beautiful embroidery while selling cooked dog.
- In the market - sea/ water creatures of different types. Live small crabs, eels, frogs jumping in a restraining mesh bag, live fish in basins. They are Quoc Oai's "Fresh Food People!"
- Ladies selling chooks and ducks.
- Sweets. The glass mug in front is my serving. It contains something from each bowl plus shaved ice. Very nice.
- I bought some large toothpicks from this seller. She made quite a number of items from bamboo.
- Ladies making many tiny boxes. From gestures and smiles I believe they have something to do with prayers for the deceased.

Clockwise from top:

1. A farmer making good use of the *long paddock*. (Seen on a bike ride). Note the bike in the photo. ALL bikes in Quoc Oai are *girls' bikes* and ALL have a basket attached to the handlebars.

2. A study in tranquillity at a nearby village.

3. Fishing in a small canal using the *Chinese fishing net* technique. Two small fish were caught.

4. These are grave stones and tombs in the middle of the fields (This is a common practice).





From left:

1. A sample of DIY masonry that I thought made a most pleasant pattern.
2. I saw this gate/door on a ride and thought it was quaint and rustic.
3. A power pole in the middle of Quoc Oai.
4. This is an example of a Vietnamese mansion. Though they have several balconies, you NEVER see folk sitting out on the balconies. The top one is used for drying clothes. Nearly all living is done in the large GROUND LEVEL room that has an enormous low table with enormous carved (uncomfortable) chairs and the television. Meals are often taken on the floor in that main - just off the street - room.

**MARIST
DISTRICT OF ASIA**

News Brief 29
September - December 2013

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