



## WORD FROM THE PROVINCIAL

### Four Months of Important News

Our Province Newsletter is published only four times a year: Christmas, Easter, Chinese New year and in summer. Since Christmas we have had so much news that we had to postpone this issue of the Newsletter for a few weeks.

Right after Christmas we witnessed one of the most terrible natural disasters in recent history, with the great earthquake in Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia and subsequent tsunami that caused death and devastation in eleven countries around the Indian Ocean basin. In our province we could see the generosity of the Chinese People. In our parishes people approached our confreres with high amounts of money for the relief of victims. Hong Kong was the place in the world with the highest donation per inhabitant. We all experienced on one side how fragile our human existence is, but also witnessed how great is the human heart. We saw the solidarity of the whole world in care for the victims of this disaster.

Then in our Church we could experience also the fragility of our members. We saw Pope John Paul II falling sick, going to the hospital,

but getting gradually worse until last Easter when he was unable to utter the words of his blessing. The whole world saw his effort and the frustration on his aging face. A few days later he was sick again, and this time he decided not to go to the hospital anymore.

*Thanks to the media we could experience that the Pope was really the father of our family of Catholics believers and feel his passing over to the Father as the death of our own father.*

He knew his end was coming soon, and during the week after Easter he was called by God to his heavenly mansion.

These days were very moving. Thanks to the technology of instant news in our globalized world, we all followed his last days, the mourning days, and his funeral as it were those of a close relative. Thanks to the media we could experience that the Pope was really the father of our family of Catholic believers and feel his passing over to the Father as the death of our own father.

A few days later we had a new Pope, Benedict XVI, the great Theologian Joseph Ratzinger. As members of a religious institute founded by Saint Arnold Janssen, also a German, we feel close to our new Pope. Many of our leaders are or have been German. We

hope we will easily adjust to the leadership of this new Holy Father, who will probably be strong, in spite of his age.

We remember that the new Pope, when he was a young and promising theologian, a disciple of Karl Rahner - according to some the greatest theologian of the 20th century, was helping Cardinal Frings at the Vatican Council II. Father Joseph Ratzinger was elected to be one of the five members of the sub commission on Mission who gathered, under the leadership of our then Superior General, Father Johannes Shutte (former China missionary), for two weeks in our house in Nemi preparing the draft of the document Ad Gentes Divinitus.

Although some question the age of Benedict XVI, we have to remember that one of the greatest Popes of last century, Blessed John XXIII, was also 78 years old when he assumed the Holy See. Another extraordinary world leader of the 20th Century was Conrad Adenauer, who led Germany after the Second World War with unparalleled wisdom. He also began his service in his late 70s.

We say every week that `we believe in the Catholic Church`, and we believe that the Holy Spirit knows which kind of leader the Church needs at this particular time in history.

We are glad to have an experienced Pope and we pray for him with all our energy.

Sergio Edwards  
Taipei, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005

# China: the unfulfilled dream of a missionary

Sergio Edwards

I am writing these words as Pope John Paul II is being buried. His death moved people all around the world. Although many did not agree with his opinions, everybody felt that John Paul II a man of deep faith, was valiant to speak what he thought, and fight for freedom and peace. He was committed to his mission until the very end of his life.

Some people called him `John Paul the Great` as his predecessors Leo I and Gregory I. Cartoons in secular newspapers recently

showed him arriving to Heaven and receiving from Saint Peter the halo of the saints. At his burial there were some people with a placard `Santo Subito`. They wanted John Paul II to be declared saint by popular acclamation as in the old days of the Church. Undoubtedly his long reign was a visit of God to our world. His death was like a retreat for all Catholics around the world.

It is amazing to see the press coverage of his last hours until his death and his burial. We can only think that he was the most respected and so the most important man of the world. But he was not looking for applause. He was doing just what he thought was right. He was not trying to please people and he end up attracting millions. In that sense John Paul II was very much Christ like. He was really the Vicar of Christ on earth.

We can say many things about John Paul II, but as a member of a missionary congregation. I want to point out that he was a missionary. We can say that John Paul II was the first missionary of our Church during these last 26 years. He not only preached the Gospel and pointed to Jesus, but also went almost everywhere to stress the importance of the personal touch in the proclamation of the Gospel. He was also a man of dialogue, not only with world political leaders, but also with leaders of other religions. He was even the first Pope to visit a mosque and a synagogue.

The only sad thing as we look backwards to his long reign is that the only big country he wanted very much to visit and could not, was China. That was his dream, and he could

not fulfill it. The Hong Kong Bishop, Joseph Zen said in an interview on CNN that when he and Bishop John Tong visited the Pope a few years ago, the Pope repeated, almost like a child: 'I want to go to China, I want to go to China'.

It is sad that for political reasons this missionary Pope could not visit the most populous country in the world. In China his death was reported briefly. What a contrast with CNN and Fox which covered it 24 hours a day for several days!

We hope that after the apparent absence of China in the Pope's funeral, the Chinese government will review its policy towards religions and consider the point of view of the Vatican in allowing the Pope to appoint Bishops, which is the main obstacle to reestablish diplomatic relationships.

( He not only preached the Gospel and pointed to Jesus, but also went almost everywhere to stress the importance of the personal touch in the proclamation of the Gospel.)

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*We welcome Fr. Miguel Angel Gonzalez to our Province. Fr. Miguel just finished his Ph.D. at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Faculty of Theology. And here is a summary of his dissertation.*

## **Hong Xiuquan Vision of the Heavenly Kingdom in China: An Enquiry Into Christian Religious Roots of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Taiping Rebellion**

**I**t is our intention with this thesis, to investigate some of the most relevant theological and religious elements present in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Taiping rebellion ideology. In the first place, Hong Xiuquan (1814-1864) stands out prominently as both the force and figure behind the theological development of this movement. In the second place we are interested in how to connect the thought and religious experience of Hong Xiuquan with the essential points of his theological project. In

this regard, we consider some fundamental questions such as: What was the nature of the religious influences upon Hong and the Taiping leaders? To what extent were Hong and Taiping ideology influenced by exposure to the work of foreign missionaries? Furthermore, to what extent, keeping these considerations in mind, did this lead to the formation of a theocratic society in Nanjing? Finally, we also considered the importance that Hong's prophetic leadership played upon the historical course of political and social life in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

...from far away, you heard God's voice calling,  
from far away you came and brought His love!

# St. Joseph Freinademetz Parish in Taiwan

Lito Salvador

**F**or the first time in the history of the SVD in Taiwan, a great monument of our beloved China missionary St. Joseph Friedenemetz has been inaugurated. In the morning of January 29, the feast of our Saint, the Archbishop of Taipei blessed the newly built Church in Linkou (an emerging international city of Taiwan) and unveiled the new parish in the name of (Shang Fu Ruo She), St. J. Freindemetz.

The church is composed of a three-story building. The first floor is the church itself which is exceptionally outlined in contemporary style. The altar is blended with gray and white fusion of red center lining that gives the feeling of stillness in the midst of a modern and busy city, and the statue of St. Freinademetz was crafted in the midst of hundred followers looking towards Jesus and leading the crowd towards the main tabernacle in the center of the wall, covered by a rounded figure of a lamb. The main idea of the artist (our own Fr. Martin Welling, SVD) is that the saint is not looking to us as all the saints do in the churches all over the world, somewhat 'expecting to be venerated'. One must come and see to feel the splendor. On the second floor is the activity center, which is highly furnished with modern facilities. The third floor is the dwelling place of the parish priest.

During the thanksgiving ceremony, the Parish Priest, Fr. Paulino Shue a native of Shandong and the catalyst for naming the new church in the name of J. Freinademetz, thanked especially the parishioners for their effort to create this great institution, and of course the Archdiocese of Taipei, which covered most of the expenses. Around 300 people attended the ceremony, including a vast number of SVDs and SSPS under the leadership of the provincial of the China province Fr. Sergio Edwards SVD who commented, 'During the performances I could see the image of Saint Joseph Freinademetz among the people performing and I somehow felt his presence among us.'

In the course of the program, the choir sung a song entitled *From far away* (Yaun fang de Ai) composed by Fr. Lito Salvador SVD, with the Chinese lyrics rendered by the parish priest himself. The song describes the life of St. J. Freinademetz and his ardent devotion to the China mission. The song ended with these words, 'from far away, you heard God's voice calling, from far away you came and brought His love'.

The celebration in itself is indeed a good opportunity to impart to the people of Taiwan that somewhere, from far away, a simple person our Saint Joseph can bring God's love.

# Father Vic Rayco transferred to the Philippines

Sergio Edwards

A few months ago Fr. Vicente Rayco went for home leave. The confreres working in St. Jude's school and parish encouraged him to come back home to help them in that field. Then the acting Provincial Superior of PHC, Fr. Dionisio Miranda, wrote a letter to Fr. Edwards saying they were very interested in a possible transfer of Fr. Rayco for work in the Chinese Apostolate. Vic wrote a letter of willingness for that transfer.

Fr. Provincial Edwards mentioned this issue in the meeting of the Provincial Council in December 18, 2004. The two Chinese confreres of the Council at that time had studied in the Philippines, so they knew well the needs of St. Jude's. So the transfer was approved.

Vic Rayco came to Taiwan as an OTP student in the 1980s. After ordination he was appointed to the China Province but he had to wait several years to come back to Taiwan, because he did not get a Visa. Eventually he got it and arrived in 1993. After refreshing his Chinese for a few months, he was sent to the mountains. He has a special interest in the work among aborigines since he did his thesis on tribal people. He worked for several years with the Tsou tribe in Alishan District, Chiayi County, staying in the village of Shanmei. He worked very hard, which was not easy because at that time he got diabetes.

In the late 90's he was asked to move to Taipei as a full time provincial coordinator of the JPIC, stationed in Fu Jen University, working with the migrants. During this time he worked very hard among the workers from the Philippines in northern Taiwan. He tried also to raise consciousness among us by

publishing a bulletin on JPIC issues. Fr. Rayco is a very good writer and has deep insights.

There was a need so he was transferred back to the mountains, this time to Fenchihu Parish, with its very busy Arnold Janssen Activity Center. There he made many renovations, especially in the parish Church which needed an update. The result was a very beautiful design that showed another quality of Fr. Vic: his artistic creativity and his energy for building.

We thank Vic for his hard work during these more than ten years in Taiwan, and wish him all the best for his new assignment in the Philippines. We are sad that we no longer have him in the Province, but we know the Chinese Apostolate overseas is part of the mission of the China Province.

# GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Jiji Alakalam

**F**rs. Paulino Shue and Joseph Liu celebrated the golden jubilee of their priestly ordination on April 17, 2005 in the newly blessed church at Linkou. Almost 300 people gathered there, including priests and religious, a clear sign of the fact of how much they appreciated the life and works of the jubilarians. Provincial Fr. Sergio Edwards, the homilist of the day, said it is a moment of glory for him to recount the contributions of the jubilarians. He elaborated the contributions of Fr. Shue as a provincial, professor and as a pastor while he dared not to mention the contributions of Fr. Liu for the fear of repetition since there will be another celebration in November this year in Tingliu, where Fr. Liu resides.

The Provincial admired their enthusiasm even at this age saying, 'The best wine is served always at the end, just as it was during the wedding at Cana', to which the young priests gathered there responded with pale smiles. After communion Fr. Liu thanked the crowd. Pointing to the gathering he said, 'You are my parents, brothers, sisters and relatives', because for a long time he has not seen his family members in China. In his thanksgiving speech Fr. Shue did not forget to admire people who helped him especially for the building of the new church.

The devotional singing and arranging of the entire celebration was proof of the active participation of the parishioners. Finally when the celebrations ended with a fellowship meal and a few entertainment programs, the jubilarians thanked God, their Shepherd, while others desired for their turn to have a golden jubilee. Congratulations Fathers Liu and Shue.

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# Father Steve Budianto is also going back home

Sergio Edwards

**F** Fr. Stefanus Budianto Atmadja is an overseas Chinese from Surabaya, Java, Indonesia. At home he is called Budi, and here we call him Steve. He came to Taiwan in 1998 as a newly ordained priest.

Steve began studying Chinese at Fu Jen University, but was asked to help with the migrants. During these years there were many Overseas Chinese Indonesians in Taipei, studying Chinese. Steve has a very nice personality, so he was caught up by the pastoral work, and too many people were always looking for him. He himself noticed that his command of Chinese was not improving as it should so he asked to leave Taipei and study with private teachers in Chiayi. Then he helped in the parish near Chiayi, so his command of Chinese improved quite fast. In 2000 he was appointed Assistant Parish Priest of Fr. Sergio Edwards, in charge of four small parishes in the Chiayi area: Bo Ai Rd, Dingliu, Chungpu and Tapu. Fr. Edwards was staying in Bo Ai Rd. and Steve in Chungpu. They worked very well as a team. Steve saw the need of Taiwanese, so he studied this language for a few months.

In January 2002 Fr. Edwards was appointed Provincial. Soon Fr. Steve became the Parish Priest of Dingliu, Chungpu and Dapu. He was very much liked by the people, especially in Chungpu, where old ladies considered him as a grandson. He is a good

builder too. He was in charge of renovations of the roof at the parish and the rectory in Chungpu and the sacristy and the illumination system in Dingliu.

When Fr. Maniyatt applied for higher studies there was a need of parish priest for Fengshan, Kaohsiung, and Steve was asked to leave the Chiayi area and go further south at the end of 2002. Fengshan is a parish with important people, like the brother of Archbishop Ye, and the Nuntius of the Holy See in Argelia. With his personality both strong and joyful, as a natural leader, Steve was able to unite the parish community without offending the strong people of the parish. He is also a good fund raiser. He reduced the debt of the parish, which was just renovated, to less than half.

Steve is a very good administrator, and his financial reports were always on time and clear. He is very fast in handing his income to the community. Fr. Provincial wanted him to work in administration of temporal goods, but he wanted to have first some years of pastoral experience. But before he could finish his first term in his new parish the Indonesian Province of Java (IDJ) was already asking for him, in order to work just in that: finances. We need him in Taiwan, and they need him in Indonesia, so we let Steve decide. He asked to be allowed to go back home, at least for three years. He is moving to Jakarta very soon. We will miss him, for he did a lot for the province in a very few years and he made many friends in Taiwan.

# Letter for you

Dear Confreres,

Through this letter I would like to thank all of you for your hospitality and the togetherness we have shared during my seven years of stay in Taiwan.

As you know the Java Province needs my help working in the provincial treasurer's office. It is hard to say NO if the province where you once belonged needs your help. Actually they say they need me for three years, but since they are asking me to help them set up a new financial system as well as do fund raising, I think I will need more time. Perhaps in the future, if everything is working well in Java Province, I can return to the China Province.

It's been a blessing for me to know all of you and also to work in Taiwan. God bless you all and all the works you are doing now.

Fraternally in the Divine Word,

Fr. Steve Budianto Atmadja, SVD