



SVD CHINA PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

天主教聖言會中華省通訊

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願天主聖三生活在我們和眾人心中

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A Word from the Provincial



**Happy
Year
of the
Dog**

2006

On January 29, 2006 we not only celebrated the memorial day of Saint Joseph Freinademetz, but also the first day of the Lunar New Year according to the millenary Chinese tradition. It was the second new moon after the solstice of winter in the northern hemisphere.

We had just finished the Provincial Chapter, which was held for the first time in Hong Kong. In the plane back to Taiwan we received a greetings card given to all passengers for the Chinese New year, with an interesting sentence. 'This is the year of the dog. In Chinese astrology dogs are loyal, faithful and honest -admirable qualities in anyone.'

In the name of all the confreres of the China Province I wish you all a Happy Year of the Dog. This will be a 'longer' year, because this time Lunar New Year fell quite early and next year it will fall quite late. It will last from January 29, 2006 until February 18, 2007. We will have more time to imitate these virtues that Chinese Wisdom finds in dogs: loyalty, faithfulness and honesty.

I also take advantage of this opportunity to share with you news of a few events that have recently happened in our province.

We are excited by great news for our community and for the whole Church in Taiwan. On Monday, January 17, 2006 it was announced that Pope Benedict XVI had appointed Fr. John Hung Shan Chuan SVD as Bishop of the Diocese of Chiayi. Fr. Hung until then was our Vice Provincial and also the Principal of Fu Jen High School. His consecration will be on February 28, 2006, Tuesday, at 10 AM at Fu Jen High School, Chiayi. That day is a holiday. In this issue of our newsletter we offer a bit of information about newly elected Bishop Hung. The whole community of the China Province congratulates Bishop Hung. We pray for him, that the Holy Spirit continue to guide him as a wise, prudent and energetic leader of the Catholic Community in Chiayi.

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Chiayi is in the south of Taiwan, 240 km south of Taipei. The Diocese includes three political entities: Chiayi City,

Chiayi County and Yunlin County. In its area there are 1.57 million people, but only ten thousand Catholics, which is 0.5 % of the population. The diocese has 37 diocesan priests - most of them very old - and 17 religious priests - 12 are members of the SVD. There are 4 religious brothers, 3 from the SVD. There are 40 religious sisters, among them 2 Servants of the Holy Spirit and 14 sisters of Our Lady of China, a congregation founded in Shandong, China, by Cardinal Thomas Tien SVD. There are 7 Catholic schools in Chiayi Diocese, one of which is Fu Jen High School, which belongs to the SVD. There are 2 Catholic Hospitals, one belonging to the OLC Sisters.

Besides the joy of having a Bishop, at this time we have also the joy of welcoming two new priests. Fr. Dennis Manzana was ordained priest in Manila on December 10, 2005 and soon will return to Taiwan to be the Assistant Parish Priest in Dapinglin and the JPIC Coordinator of the Province. On February 4, 2006 Fr. Charlton Plateros was ordained in Hong Kong. He will be Assistant Parish Priest in Choi Hung and will also work in Mission Animation. Both are Filipinos who did OTP and then finished Theology in our province. On March 25, in Tefuyeh, in the mountains of Taiwan, Bishop Hung will ordain deacon Frt. Sergius Ratu, an Indonesian confrere who also did his OTP and is finishing his Theology studies in our province.

During these days the Office of the Readings had a commentary of St. Hilarius of Poitiers on the Psalms. He commented on the words "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity." These words remind me of the Provincial Chapter

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that we had on January 23-27, 2006, that is, few days ago. It was a nice atmosphere. The new Zonal Coordinator, Fr. Bill Burt, who was invited as observer, expressed his admiration of the fact that we did not fight during the meeting. It was really a very fraternal gathering, with confreres from all over the province. Let us pray that our community will continue growing in fraternity, that we would be one in heart and spirit to be able to give witness to the Reign of God all of China.

Happy Year of the Dog.

Fr. Sergio Edwards SVD

Pope Benedict XVI Appoints Fr. John Hung Shan-Chuan as Bishop of Chiayi, Taiwan.



On Monday, January 16 at noon time in Rome, 7 PM in the China Province, it was announced that Pope Benedict XVI appointed Fr. John Hung Shan-Chuan SVD as Bishop of Chiayi, Taiwan.

Our new Bishop was born in Penghu on November 20, 1943. His Chinese full name is Hung Shan-Chuan. The Hung family comes from 'Penghu', the islands called by the westerners as 'Pescadores' located between China and Taiwan. His grandfather and most of his relatives worked in tombstone carving. Fr. Hung is the eldest in a family of five brothers and two sisters. In 1948 his parents moved to Taiwan, to live in the Southern city port of Kaohsiung. His father did not like the tombstone work so he moved to Chuchi, in Chiayi County - where the family had a relative - to do the hard work of transporting goods in a tricycle.

As a boy Shan Chuan studied in primary school at Chuchi. As a young man, instead of going for Secondary School leading to university, he went to a Vocational School to learn a profession. He went back to Kaohsiung to prepare himself for future work in the canned fish industry. Because of budget constraints he had to earn money after school. He worked with his relatives in tomb stone carving. During this time he was impressed by a student of his school who was a Catholic and decided to know about his religion.

After graduation he returned to Chuchi, and went to work as an intern in the Gaoliang Wine Factory in Chiayi. During evening and weekends he went to the Catholic Church of Chuchi, where he knew Fr. Theis SVD. He enrolled in catechism classes with Mr. Tu and Mr. Luo. He had to answer every day a test prepared by Fr. Theis. After a few months he was baptized with the Christian name of John, for John the Baptist.

Fr. Theis took notice of his abilities and sent him to Bo Ai Road Church in Chiayi to the school for catechists run by Fr. Tauch SVD. After finishing his course Fr. Theis hired him as a catechist.

During those days Fr. Theis gave John the idea of becoming a priest and he accepted it with great enthusiasm. Because he wanted his family to understand his option, he was very diligent in preaching to his own family and managed to persuade them. His father, Mr. Hung Sun Tian was baptized as Augustine and his mother Mrs. Hung Tsai Ying as Martha. All his brothers and sisters were baptized with his parents.

Then he had to do military service for 2 years. He was sent to Taichung and became a sergeant, having the task of training new soldiers. He declined the invitation to be an officer. During his free time he studied Latin with a Hungarian Jesuit priest.

In 1967 he went to the Philippines to do the novitiate in Tagaytay. He professed first vows in 1969. He was a classmate of Fr. Antonio Pernia, now the Superior General of the SVD, and of Fr. Greg Sebastian, missionary in Taiwan.

Then he finished his philosophy and studied four years of Theology. He attended summer classes at University Santo Tomas in Education. He professed final vows and was ordained priest in 1973, before finishing his studies, as was the custom those days. Fr. Thais and his mother, Mrs. Martha Hung, went for the ordination. After the ordination he did his fourth year of Theology and then in one more year he finished an MA in Philosophy.

In 1975 Fr. Hung was back in Taiwan. Fr. Theis felt like Simeon in the Gospel, that he could go in peace; he was sick with cancer so he went back to Germany and died very soon. Then Fr. Hung became parish priest in his home town of Chuchi. Through a friend familiar with census work John looked for all the university students from his village and formed a very successful youth group. Fr. Provincial Chu noticed his ability to work with youth and asked him in 1977 to leave Chuchi and work at Fu Jen High School. He was there for 2 years.

In 1979 he moved to Taipei to work in the Bishops' Conference under Archbishop Joseph Ti Kang, as secretary of 3 commissions: Propagation of Faith, Lay Council and Evangelization. Fr. Hung was also National Chaplain of Young Christian

workers. He knew at that time people as Ou Jinde, a political leader who later became vice-major of Taipei City.

Working with well educated people made him feel the need for being better trained, so he applied for a PhD Program. He was allowed to study Counseling at the Catholic University of America, in Washington DC, between 1981 and 1986. He had to do a practicum and he did it with juveniles. His dissertation was on the 'Consensus Between mutual expectations of Chinese Students and their moderator in USA universities'. During these years he helped Fr. Tu to form the Chinese Catholic Church in Rockville, Our Lady of China Parish.

In 1986 he came back to Taiwan and was sent to Fu Jen University to do campus ministry. He was in charge of the University Chapel. During those days he was asked by Archbishop Ti Kang to work in Prison Ministry. He still has this apostolate, and has recruited 600 members among them 300 volunteers who go weekly to 50 different jails in Taiwan.

In 1987 he was appointed Dean of Students at Fu Jen University.

In 1992 he was asked by the SVD to go back to Chiayi and be the principal of Fu Jen High School. He has served almost 14 years in this position.

Besides his main job as principal of the high school he gives religion classes to a group of ladies every week and also has a Bible Study Group with doctors and other professionals. He often helps in the parishes near Chiayi City.

In 1987 he has elected Admonitor of the China Province. He was Vice Provincial in the term 1993-1996, Provincial Councilor 2002-2005 and now again Vice Provincial since March 1, 2005.

Since 2003 he has been the Mission Secretary of the China Province.

On October 2005 he was appointed National Director for Taiwan of the Pontifical Mission Society.

A few weeks ago, he suffered the death of his mother, who died on December 21, 2005 and was buried on January 7, 2006. His father died in 1994.

The very day of his mother's burial the Nunciature received the news that Fr. Hung had been appointed Bishop of Chiayi, news that was made public 9 days later.

Fr. Hung has a good sense of humor. He likes sports and keeps in very good physical condition by playing tennis every week. He has a great sensitivity

for Chinese Art, especially carving, both in wood and stone.

He is one of the best speakers in the Church of Taiwan. He is often invited to give talks in both Mandarin and Taiwanese. Now his command of English is very good too. He likes to talk about the Catholic characteristics of Fu Jen High School and is often invited by non Church organizations to speak on this and other topics. He goes to the Rotary and Lions Club, to the Women's League, etc. He has a great missionary zeal and uses every opportunity to present our faith to those who don't know it.

The members of the China Province of the Divine Word Missionaries are happy and proud that one of their own has been appointed for such a high responsibility in the Church.

Personally I want to express my joy for this appointment, and give thanks to God for what He has done in our community through Fr. John Hung. I work with him at Fu Jen High School for eight years when I was teaching Ethics, and as Provincial we worked on the same team, first when he was Councillor and the past year as our Vice Provincial.

We pray to God the Father that through his Son Jesus Christ -- the Divine Word made flesh -- that he may send his Holy Spirit on our beloved confrere, Father John Hung Shan-Chuan SVD, so that he become a Bishop who can strengthen the faith of the priests, sisters, seminarians and faithful of the Diocese of Chiayi that they become enthusiastic witnesses of God's love. May the faithful make Chiayi a missionary diocese, able to attract many new people to Jesus Christ.

Praised be to the One and Triune God!

Sergio Edwards SVD

visit www.svdchina.org

On January 14, 2006 in the SVD residence, 4 sons and daughters of St. Arnold generously shared their experiences of the impact of St. Arnold or the influence his followers, the SVD/SSpS missionaries in their personal lives.

The gathering took place in the SVD Chapel at 3:30 PM in a spirit of recollection which lasted until 5:00 PM. The sharing portion was introduced by Fr. John Salvamani SVD, Rector of the SVD community.

The first to share was Fr. Paulino Suo SVD, who shared on the spirituality of St. Arnold Janssen, the legacy he left us in terms of his prayers and devotions, his foundations and his missionary endeavors as our father, founder and leader.

Then Sr. Cora Lorenzo SSpS shared how she had known St. Arnold through the SVD and SSpS missionaries she encountered during her student days in the SSpS High School and the SVD College in her home parish in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. What was outstanding for her about St. Arnold was his constancy in seeking God's will in day to day life and his faithfulness to do His will at all costs.

The third to share was Frater Sergie, our Indonesian OTP, who joyfully shared on the impact the SVD and SSpS has made in his home place. He thought that the SVDs helped him develop himself and gave him much encouragement to become a missionary himself.

And finally, we have the leader of the SSpS auxiliaries on the university campus, Magdalena Lu. The SSpS Auxiliaries are mostly women and men employees and teachers at Fu Jen. As a religious coordinator in the College of Foreign Languages she has many chances to interact with the SVDs and SSpS. In different ways and occasions she has been a partner with us in planning and executing many activities in the name of our missionary work in and outside the university. She said that she got to know of St. Arnold through his followers who carry on his mission. She confronted us with the challenge to help her, and the former SVD Section, to know deeper St. Arnold and his Spirituality and Mission as lived and shared by the SVD/SSpS.

These reflections hopefully helped the children of Saint Arnold to celebrate

St. Arnold's Feast Day Celebrated by His Sons and Daughters

by: Sr. Cora Lorenzo SSpS

with grateful hearts his feast and also to bring them to a greater spirit of collaboration and prophetic zeal to realize the motto of our saint: 'May the Holy Triune God Live in Our Hearts and in the Hearts of All People'.

As an act of thanksgiving, we ended the day with a Eucharistic celebration officiated by the SVD Provincial, Fr. Sergio Edwards SVD, and we then enjoyed a sumptuous dinner in the SVD dining room. A short program rendered by some members of the community made our day a sharing of joy and gratitude for all.

BROTHER FRANZ FREISINGER, SVD

Brother Franz Freisinger was born on April 5, 1935 in a small village near Graz in Austria. His father was a farmer, but also learned the craft of wagon-maker. Brother Franz had two brothers and sisters. Though interested in farming, he studied construction arts and worked as a builder. He earned enough money to build and own his own house.

By frequent reading of a religious magazine, Brother Franz gradually became interested in the work of missionaries who, often under difficult circumstances, spread the faith in distant lands. And slowly he felt in himself the call of God to become a missionary himself.

After much hesitation, he finally went to the Austrian mission house St. Gabriel to become a Brother of the Divine Word Missionaries (the Society of the Divine Word). There he found peace in his heart and was very happy. In Vienna and later architectural studies in Nemi, Rome, Brother Franz received ongoing training. Before going abroad, he was sent for a year to Ireland to study English and, in 1972, when he professed his perpetual vows, he received his appointment for Taiwan.

As soon as he arrived, and even before studying any Chinese, he had to supervise construction work at Fu Jen University. One of the hardest things for him at the beginning was that even on Sundays and feast days, he was responsible for close and demanding supervision of building projects on the Fu Jen campus. Slowly he was able to take some time out for studying Chinese, which helped very much to improve his communication skills.

Since the day of his arrival, Brother Franz gave his whole life for Taiwan, more concretely for Fu Jen University and the mission. He was always hard working, no matter if he was supervising a new building, repairing a roof, putting in a wall or replacing mosaic tiles that had fallen off walls due to Taiwan's humid and rapidly changing weather.

Brother Franz did his work silently and humbly, and spoke through his actions rather than words. He had people working under him but always was one of them, demanding that they work well, but always caring for them and loving them. He was a very generous person. Brother Franz helped many needy people, at the same time living the spirit of poverty, and never wasting anything.

Providing old bicycles to religious and others was one expression of this quality. Every one also noticed how he reached out and showed daily care for dogs and birds which, like himself, called Fu Jen their home.

Brother Franz had an artistic talent which not only expressed itself in his care and decoration of our chapel, but also in his love for flowers. He offered unflagging devotion for our large campus grounds. He was constantly busy cutting the grass and trimming bushes and trees. At home in his room, he appreciated fine classical music on recordings. He was an accomplished, if shy clarinet player, and an enthusiastic singer.

He was a pious man, and lived a life of very deep Catholic faith. In the face of agonizing health problems within, he offered his suffering quietly and humbly to the body of Christ, the church he so loved.

He had a life long love for his crucified Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary. At times he seemed to withdraw from his brothers in community, struggling to achieve greater spiritual growth.

So he fought his last battle, struggling alone, only facing God.

Brother Franz was a servant, but he drew many eyes and hearts to himself. All over the Fu Jen campus, student, workers, secretaries, employees and professors knew him and were moved by his good example. He was an important part of the living spirit of Fu Jen Catholic University.

May God be his reward!

Fr. Matthias Christian SVD

Brother Franz is missed by all, being remembered because of his work and example.

I was asked about the circumstances, how Brother Franz's passing.

Well, he passed away during the night of Saturday (Feb.4) to Sunday (Feb.5). He died in his own room of severe bleeding; recently he had cancer inside his mouth. Saturday afternoon Father James met him, and Brother Franz confided to Father James that he had some bleeding in his mouth. Father James wanted to bring him to the hospital, but Brother Franz (as usual) said: "Never mind. There is nothing to it." A little later I met him in the corridor with several Christmas decorations which he wanted to store. He seemed very fine, smiling, explaining to me that he wanted to clean up the rooms. During the evening meal he did not show up, but this was nothing special. For my Sunday mass he prepared everything needed in the sacristy. During that night the severe bleeding came.

On Sunday morning our cook found the main door locked at 6:30. Brother Franz had unlocked this door every morning at 5:30, but on this Sunday morning the door was closed. The cook called first Brother Franz and then the Rector by mobile phone. The Rector and Father James became worried. They opened the door to the room of Brother Franz and found him dead, sitting on a stool in the toilet, next to the basin, with much blood around him.

At Fu Jen there is mourning for Brother Franz

A doctor was called, and the police also. Around 9:00 the body of Brother Franz was brought to Cardinal Tien Hospital, where he could be visited every day for some prayers, until Wednesday, Feb.15. The funeral mass was planned for Wednesday at noon. At that time most of his friends from various groups at Fu Jen University will be free to attend.

These days, every afternoon at 4:15 pm, many friends, employees, workers and confreres gather in our SVD chapel to pray for Brother Franz and thank him. Every day the rosary was prayed, because Brother Franz liked the rosary. The Blessed Mother was his protection and hope.

Day by day the SVD community and whole university is recognizing more and more what a great man we have lost. Brother Franz is missed by all, being remembered because of his work and example. He already is compared with Father Josef Freinademetz. Now Brother Franz is there, where we all want and hope to be. May he rest in eternal peace. R.I.P.

While visiting Fu Jen for two weeks, I was so happy to have met Brother Franz, always my dear friend, in his last days.

Greetings,

Fr. Heinz SVD

The Blessed Mother was
his protection and hope.



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