



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

Since the last issue of the Province Newsletter, the main event for the China Mission is the Pastoral Letter of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Catholics in China. I want to make some remarks about it, not only regarding what the Pope says, but also what he does not mention.

First, it is interesting to notice that the Pope does not write about the "Chinese Church", but the "Church which is in China" or "The Catholic Church in China" or simply "The Church in China." probably a way to stress that it is part of the Universal Church.

He never says that the Church in China had a schism, or is divided. The Pope avoids speaking of the underground and the patriotic Church. His Holiness never mentions the Patriotic Association, but only writes in general about "some entities." It's a clever way to say difficult things. He speaks of divisions within the Church but in a soft way. But he also says that these entities are incompatible with Catholic doctrine. His words that "bishops and priests have become de facto persons without office and without power" are very true consequences of the existence of the Patriotic Association.

The Pope mentions that all Bishops are Chinese and the apostolic succession is intact. Instead of saying that the Church is divided, the Pope explains that there are three kinds of Bishops: those appointed by Rome; those appointed by the government and who had asked for confirmation from Rome and those who are not in communion with Rome.

The Pope says the faithful should look for those recognized by Rome, but it is possible to go to those who are not in communion with Rome when the Catholics can't find the others.

The Pope is clear in saying that the College of Catholic Bishops in China cannot be recognized by the Holy See as an Episcopal Conference.

Although he reaffirms that the Bishops have to be appointed by him, he also understands the interest of the government and is open to negotiations, that an "accord can be reached with the government" regarding the choice of candidates, the publication of the appointments of Bishops and the recognition of them by the civil authorities.



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His pastoral guidelines show the Pope is well informed. He speaks of the problem of "clericus vagus,"

priests not incardinated in any diocese; of the creation of new dioceses though combinations of others, etc.

These words are extremely important: "I am sure the Spirit of Christ, just as he helped the communities to keep the faith alive in time of persecution, will today help all Catholic to grow in unity." We can see they are addressed to the members of the underground Church who are not open to receive in their midst those of the government recognized Church. The Pope invited those who suffered to discern that God now is calling them to a different sacrifice: to receive those who yielded to the government pressure. Brilliant way to invite the underground Catholics to receive their "Patriotic" brothers and sisters!"

The Pope speaks about religious life, or consecrated life. I miss a clearer pointing out to the fact that male religious life is still illegal in China, and that international religious institutes - both male and female - are also illegal.

When the Pope speaks of the missionary vocation of every catholic, he does not say that Chinese Missionaries should go to work abroad. I feel he is hinting that the mission is still primary at home, in China.

It is crucial that the Pope revokes all faculties previously granted. I heard of an underground bishop who appointed his own successor, a practice that is not accepted, but there was a privilege to do that only in China at the time of the Cultural Revolution. The Pope now says that times have changed, that all these exceptions can not be used anymore.

One of the most interesting events happened on the day for prayer for China every May 24th. He mentioned about Our Lady as Queen of China and the controversial Holy

Martyrs of China, whose canonization caused so much anger in the Chinese Government in the year 2000! I heard that some Catholic websites in China published the Pope's letter, but after a few hours, these websites were blocked.

According to the newspapers here in

Taiwan the first reaction of the Chinese Government was not positive, but very soon, Mr. Liu Bai-Nian, vice chairman of the Patriotic Catholic Association, is quoted praising the document.

I encourage everyone to read carefully this crucial document.

The Church in China has many vacant dioceses, there is a great need for many new Bishops. We pray that the new Bishops will all be appointed by the Holy See and accepted by the Chinese Authorities.

Sergio Edwards SVD
Taipei, August 23, 2007

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MISSIONARY FORMATION

Inna Reddy Edara SVD

About 32 formators from the various Provinces of the ASPAC zone came together at St. Paul Major Seminary of Ledalero, Indonesia in August 2007 for zonal workshop on "Missionary Formation." It was the most appropriate occasion to have held the workshop at Ledalero when St. Paul Major Seminary celebrated its 70th anniversary on August 15, 2007; and where the most number of formandi in the SVD are on training.

In his key note address, Fr. Antonio Pernia SVD, the Superior General, recognized the significance of formation work in the zone by saying that "when the formation in ASPAC sneezes, the whole Society catches cold." Elaborating the theme of the workshop, Fr. Pernia said that the formation of persons of dialogue should be one of the important goals of our formation, which entails fostering a love that casts out fear and helps to see the other in the best possible light. Fr. Yosef Suban SVD, speaking on "Missionary Formation for Prophetic Dialogue" in the context of Ledalero, enunciated that the four qualities of solidarity, respect, love and openness should be formed in our formandi. Dr. Belen shared about the involvement of laity in our missionary formation. He said there has to be a transition from IQ/EQ to SQ (Spiritual Quotient), from studying to being and from conventional teaching to active learning.



Dr. Belen compared the religious community to a family. He said that "affairs" take place in a family when there is lack of openness and happiness. "Affairs" occur in the religious community due to lack of transparency and maintenance of secrets. The workshop was also enriched by the presence and sharing of few Indonesian missionaries working abroad.

The formators from various provinces of the ASPAC zone also reported the current situation of formation in their respective provinces and countries, reviewed the implementation of the recommendations of the last workshop in 2004 and reflected on

the missionary formation in the light of the zonal context and the documents of the XIV General Chapter. The weeklong speeches, presentations, sharing of experiences, group discussions, interactions and liturgical celebrations with the formandi of Ledalero resulted in the following Action Plan:

1. *In light of prophetic dialogue, formators need training and practical experience in our Asia Pacific context. While recognizing the importance of the International Formators' Workshop, we support the establishment of an integrated program for formators also making use of already available services within the zone.*

**“When the formation in ASPAC zone sneezes,
the whole Society catches cold.**

Fr. Pernia

2. *Prophetic Dialogue in all its dimensions is facing particular challenges in the modern world, such as the growth of radical fundamentalism and fanaticism. It is important for the personal growth and development of our formandi as missionaries of the Divine Word to be adequately prepared to face and respond to these realities.*
3. *The subzone (SIN-JPN-KOR-VIE) should discuss and research the possibilities for a common formation program. In addition, the exchange of confreres in temporary vows within the entire zone needs to be further promoted for the internationalization of our formation programs.*
4. *We support the establishment of a house of formation in Timor Leste.*
5. *Recognizing the decreasing number of Brother candidates within the zone, we give priority to the active recruitment and excellent formation of Brothers.*
6. *The English language is the medium of communication within our zone and a main language within the SVD. Proficiency in this language is a definite priority and resources must be allotted for the training of both formandi and formators. The exchange of professors and experts in the language must be actively pursued.*
7. *We are grateful to the many dedicated missionaries who remain faithful to their commitment. Still, those who quickly abandon their mission appointment or leave the Society due to various problems should be given special attention in the zone. Research is needed to identify the root causes and the means to improve the situation; its practical results should be presented at the next workshop. Furthermore, additional effort is needed on the part of the sending and receiving provinces/regions to ensure that new missionaries are given adequate preparation and orientation for their mission.*
8. *All members of the SVD should involve themselves in the promotion of vocations and assist the vocation director. In addition, we should seek the involvement of the laity in this task.*
9. *All baptized faithful are called to share the gift of God's love, and as such all are missionaries. As our partners in mission lay persons too have an important role in the missionary formation of SVD formandi. We should, therefore, take the initiative to reach out to them and seek their help in accomplishing the mission entrusted to all of us.*



132 Years

Celebration, Profession, Mission

September 8, 2007 was the 132nd anniversary of the foundation of the Society of the Divine Word. Five young men made their profession of vows in the presence of Fr. Sergio Edwards, provincial superior of the SVD China Province and the confreres from the North and South Taiwan Districts.

Genesis Velez SVD

Fr. Pham Quang Trong promised to live forever a life of chastity, poverty and obedience, while Frts John Lin and Dominic Chen renewed their commitment for another year. It was also the first profession of vows of Fr. Peter Chen and Br. Bobby Ye, who have just completed their canonical year under the guidance of Fr. Matthias Christian. In addition, Postulant Peter Liu was accepted into the novitiate on the same occasion.

The four-in-one event was indeed an occasion to celebrate for the SVD China Province, because of the six men, four are native born of Taiwan. It manifested the efforts of the Province in recruiting local vocations in Taiwan. Moreover, unlike the previous years, when the profession of vows was held privately, this year was attended by a good number of the faithful from the SVD parishes in Linkou, Dapinglin and Shulin. Indeed their presence shows, on the one hand, the strong support of the people towards the SVD and, on the other hand, the good contact our younger confreres have with them. This 'big event' was held in St. Joseph Freinademetz Church in Linkou.



**Fr. Provincial Sergio Edwards
with SVD China Province
confreres celebrating
132nd years of mission.**

Youtube Experience

Lito Salvador SVD



The SVD Provincial Communications Coordinators of the ASPAC met at Maryknoll House, Hong Kong in November 2004. The theme was put as this: ASPAC ZONE: MEDIA CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES. One of the challenges that was reflected upon was the idea of the "Cyber Space" as a frontier mission territory. Reports on the use of internet and cyber technology showed the uneven growth in the usage of cyber space. The use of webpages is still in its infancy. Active websites were used mainly to provide information regarding the Society and its mission. Thus, websites cannot be considered as tools for evangelization or ministry as such. That was last November, 2004!

In 2006, Time magazine, responding to the fashion shaped by cyber technology saw a different way of nominating and electing Man/Woman of the year. Time magazine did not choose a particular great man or woman, who can be blamed or honored for the year 2006 world's events of joys and sorrows, but rather picked up the "story about communion and collaboration on a scale that never seen before." They picked up 'people's network Youtube' and 'online metropolis MySpace.' It was a way that makes the world wide communications, exchange of ideas, information, and etc., easy and accessible to the common people. Youtube is different. It is a tool for bringing together people from different continents and bringing together the small productions of millions of people and it makes them feel great.

Who are these people? They are the ones who switch on their computer after a tiring whole day work and convince themselves to spend a little more effort to put together their files and do something differently. They imagine how to put bits and pieces of their own personal energy and bring that passion inside the tube. Who are these people? YOU! You are the person of the year 2006.

Time magazine gave us the answer that was not possible last 2004. We don't need a large crew to make a 5-minute film. We don't need full time secretary to put all things together and upload it into the cyber space. Only one touch was needed to enter into people's lives out there in space called cyber.

They can approach you; you can form a group and anybody can make this tube a way and tool to reach-out other people for free!

I posted some of my works and you can see them at www.youtube.com search sulide.

Mid-Autumn Festival

The custom of celebrating the moon (called Xi yue in Chinese) for both the Han Chinese and minority nationalities, can be traced as far back as the ancient Xia Dynasty and Shang Dynasty of China (20th century BC-1060s BC). In the Zhou Dynasty (1066 BCE-221 BCE), the people celebrated the Mid-Autumn Festival to worship the moon.

The practice became very prevalent in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) that people enjoyed and worshipped the full moon. In the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), however, people started making round moon cakes, as gifts to their relatives in expression of their best wishes of family reunion. At night, they came out to watch the full moon to celebrate the festival. Since the Ming (1368-1644), and Qing Dynasties (1644-1911), the custom of Mid-Autumn Festival celebration has become unprecedentedly popular.



Traditional Mooncake

Houyi and Chang'e

While Westerners may talk about the "man in the moon," the Chinese talk about the "woman on the moon." The story of Chang'e, and her flight to the moon, is familiar to every Chinese, and a favourite subject of poets. Unlike many lunar deities in other cultures who personify the moon, Chang'e only lives on the moon. Tradition places Houyi and Chang'e around 2170 BC, in the reign of the legendary Emperor Yao, shortly after that of Huang Di.

There are so many variations and adaptations of the Chang'e legend that one can become overwhelmed and utterly confused. However, most legends about Chang'e in Chinese mythology involve some variation of the following elements: Houyi, the Archer; Chang'e, the mythical Moon Goddess of Immortality; an emperor, either benevolent or malevolent; an elixir of life; and the Moon. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mooncake>)

Traditional : 月饼

Hanyu Pinyin:
yuebing

Literal meaning:
Mooncake

The SVD northern district of Taiwan also celebrates Mooncake festival on the roof top of SVD Fujen community building while having barbecue and listening to the lambastic sounds of Brother Norbert SVD. The tradition is to bring your own CD and choose your songs and he will play them while gazing at the full moon.

*Dedicated to all the SVD confreres,
who professed their vows on the
birthday of the Divine Word Society*

Celestial Traveling on the Ocean

*Oh thought, proud ship, tighten your winged sail,
Pull up high your anchor and get on your long trip
Leaving the sluggish water behind for a glorious
Aim! Get on, fly like a dragon or a light aircraft
Watching the loudly audible clatter of the sails,
Turning the wheel towards the targeted direction,
Paying attention to the compass correctly codified.
Do you feel the weight of the Ocean's light waves?
How the crushing reality of the existence is left
Behind! Don't regret that you left the ship's anchor
In the sand and untied the chain. You must go on.
In the Ocean you do not need any anchorage to come
To a halt, there is no numb calm here. Heavenly laws
Are different when the wind blows under your sail!
Freedom here is regulated by the howling storms and
Hurricanes! They push you toward your destination,
But can make you disappear in the depth of the sea
If you are not brave, careful enough and decisive.
The true light up in the sky can only be seen by the
Hardworking captain! Oh God! This task is terrible.
Life, Destiny, Death- all this is at stake in here,
In the Ocean! Oh man, oh world, oh Ocean, is there
A final destination which can be reached after all
The trouble, doubts, seeming aimlessness, tribulation?
Oh thought! Chase away my doubts, calm down my fear!*

*Xinzhuang, Sep 8, 2007
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