



A Word From The Provincial

Ebb and Flow

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...” *Ecclesiastes 3:1*

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets, Little Gidding*

What I have recently noticed most about being provincial is that one is continually rushing from one event to another, from one meeting to the next. In between meetings and events, there is usually a pile of paperwork to finish up. Sometimes there are new and exciting developments, but equally often it seems all very similar.

This summer I was in the United States for just under four weeks. The first two weeks were spent with family, the first week at a family reunion for the Budenholzer side and the a few days with the families of my two brothers. The third week I was at the central house of the U.S. SVD just north of Chicago, Techny, and had a chance to visit with confreres from all of our districts – MCN, Hong Kong-Macao and Taiwan. We are an international congregation and the opportunity of our members to spend some time in a different cultural and educational milieu is important and valuable.



“We face challenges whether as part of the global community, members of the various entities of greater China or in our individual communities and apostolates. But we are thankful to the Lord and to the members of our province for the many very positive things that are going ahead, both within our communities and in our wide-ranging apostolates.”

The day I left Techny, I skipped lunch so I could visit with a very sick SVD in the infirmary, Fr. Fred Rudolph. Somehow in all the rush I had failed to visit him. He was very clear and in his characteristic way excited and proud to be an SVD. I left with a renewed sense of our common SVD vocation. A few days later, I was surprised, and also not surprised, when the Generalate sent out the notice that he had passed away.

From Chicago I went to Los Angeles for the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Fu Jen University Foundation. Our guest of honor was a Fu Jen Chemistry Department graduate, Dr. Wei-Ming Hao, who as part of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change received the Nobel Prize along with former U.S. vice-president Al Gore. As the SVD and SSpS working at VIVAT, an NGO accredited at the United Nations, keep reminding us, we as SVDs cannot remain aloof from these pressing international issues.

As I was flying back to Taiwan, Southern Taiwan experienced one of the most devastating typhoons in recent memory – typhoon Morakot. We were all saddened by the death of our worker Mr. Deng and his elderly Mother. At the same time, we are heartened that among the Catholics of Alishan there was no loss of life or serious injury. We are grateful to our SVD confreres in the mountains of Alishan Hsiang and in the city of Chiayi, especially Fu Jen High School, for their efforts to help in the typhoon relief

effort. Thoughts have already turned from immediate questions of dealing with the disaster to the long term questions of livelihood with greatly diminished agricultural and tourist industries.

After only a few days in Taiwan, I was off to Hong Kong and other regions of the province for more meetings and consultations. The Hong Kong and especially Macao SVD were very happy that the Superior General, Fr. Antonio Pernia, could make a short visit to Macao and Hong Kong. For him it was a chance to experience first hand the new developments, and challenges, in Macao.

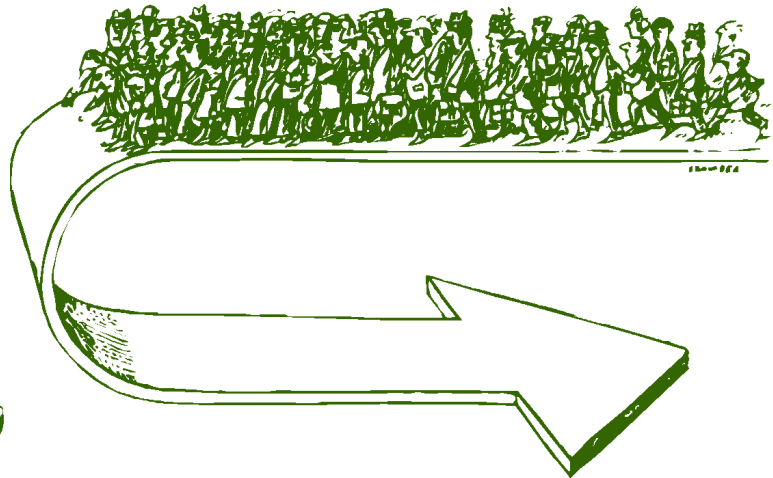
Back in Taiwan, on the evening of September 7 in Chiayi, two young men began their novitiate. We are grateful to former provincial Fr. Sergio Edwards, for accompanying the novices during this very special year. The following day at Fu Jen Lin Ruo-wang pronounced perpetual vows as an SVD and three others renewed their vows. We are all grateful to all those in the formation team who have worked with our young confreres during their time of formation. On Saturday, September 26, Lin Ruo-wang was ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop John Hung, SVD. For me personally, perhaps the high point was the wonderful singing of the choir made up of aborigine youths.

Of course, between all the ceremonies, there were plenty of discussions of the problems in our various districts. What is the role of a Catholic

University like Fu Jen in an increasingly secularized society? How will Fu Jen High School deal with the decreasing number of high-school age students in Chiayi? How can we continue to provide a real SVD presence at Sing Yin High School in Hong Kong? How can our parishes, where ever they are, provide a nourishing environment for the parish community and, at the same time, be real heralds of the word encouraging those outside the Church to join the Christian community? How do we as individual SVDs balance a life of prayer and meditation with the seeming ever-increasing demands on us for more work?

September 8 was the 134th birthday of the SVD. We face challenges whether as part of the global community, members of the various entities of greater China or in our individual communities and apostolates. But we are thankful to the Lord and to the members of our province for the many very positive things that are going ahead, both within our communities and in our wide-ranging apostolates. We ask the Lord to give us the serenity to move with the ebb and flow. We ask the Lord to help us know when we should work even harder, and when we should slow down, allow others to do their part, relax and spend time with the Lord.

Frank Budenholzer, SVD
October 1, 2009
Feast of Saint Thérèse de Lisieux



Typhoon Morakot – TRAGEDY CLOSE TO HOME

By: Brian Lawless SVD

Tomorrow it will be one week since Typhoon Morakot hit Taiwan bringing to the southern half of the country a deluge of rain the likes of which has not been seen since the time of Noah. Every year we have five or six typhoons and this one was not expected to be any different. Just how different it was to be is still not fully known. Each day brings fresh reports as rescuers slowly battle their way through landslides and across raging torrents to reach isolated villages in the mountain areas. For many places, the only possible access is by helicopter, but they cannot fly in rainstorms, clouds and fog. They have to wait for the weather to clear before beginning operations.

As the news unfolded during the next few days, stories of tragedy began to emerge. First there were cars swept away in swollen rivers as roads caved in and bridges collapsed. Then news of vast areas on the plains being flooded waist high with people moving to their rooftops or second floor level. Next came reports of entire villages being swept away in mudslides, but no one knew for sure. And then there was the awful silence from places that could not be contacted in any way.

People grew angry and frustrated as their pleas for help in contacting missing relatives went unanswered by emergency services. In many cases, the only answer to such a ferocious onslaught by the forces of nature was a helpless shrug of the shoulders.



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Here in the Divine Word Mission House in Chiayi Morakot also began as just another typhoon. The closest we were to a crisis was when the drains on the flat roof were blocked by leaves and the water began to leak through in two or three places. Apart from a few soggy ceiling tiles, we were unscathed. We had been in touch with the mission stations in the Alishan Mountain area. The priests and sisters were all safe, but without electricity. They expected to be marooned for a few days by landslides, but that is normal in a normal typhoon. On Monday morning the typhoon had finally moved on to wreak its havoc in China. The grounds surrounding the mission house were strewn with boughs and branches torn from the soft-timbered trees during the worst of the winds. I expected the gardener would be

in during the day to begin the cleanup but it was not to be. News came that there had been a landslide in the mountain area where he lived and that rescuers were digging for survivors. Bit by bit the news filtered through that both he and his elderly mother had been in the house when it was swept away and covered in a mudslide. By mid afternoon a body had been found and from then on we expected the worst.

On Tuesday morning we accompanied some family members to the mortuary where the body was identified as Mr. Deng. While we were there, news came that the body of the mother had been found and was being brought in. It was a harrowing experience for us who knew him as our gardener. For his brother and sisters it must have been unbelievably traumatic, first to watch during the search, and then to identify a brother and a mother, the life crushed out of them by the land to which they were so attached. They lived on the side of a mountain, quite a steep place and planted with betel nut palms which have very shallow roots that do not help to hold the soil together. It was a dangerous location at the best of times. According to his younger brother who also lived there, in the early hours of the morning they heard the sound of the landslide as it began. Both ran out of the house too see what was happening. The elder brother drove his van close to the house and went back in to bring out his mother while the younger brother stayed at a safer distance. Then, in one or two seconds, the hillside above the house began to slide and the house was swept down the



slope in a torrent of mud, stones and roots. When the movement stopped, only the top of roof was visible. Emergency services arrived at first light but the ground was still very unstable. Mr. Deng's dog stayed at one spot, reluctant to move and they began digging there. That was where they found the body some hours later.

We will miss Mr. Deng. He was one of nature's true gentlemen. Though not a baptized Catholic, he leaned so much towards the church that he was almost inside. His brothers and sisters, though Buddhist, suggested that a Catholic burial service would be most appropriate for him and his mother.

May they rest in Peace.

Typhoon Morakot

ONCE IN TWO HUNDRED YEARS

By: Brian Lawless SVD

Here in Chiayi we are only about 50km by road from the Alishan mountain villages of Xinmei, Fenchihu and Tefuyeh respectively, depending on which fork you take off the Alishan Highway, but we might as well be 5,000km away because there is no longer any road thanks to the ferocious rain brought to Southern Taiwan by Typhoon Morakot.

On average in Taiwan, we expect six or seven typhoons each year. They usually pass over in a day or two days at most, then life returns to normal after another day or two of cleanup. They say that the infrastructure - bridges, embankments, drains and so on - are built to withstand a once in fifty year storm. Nothing was built with the likes Morakot in mind. It was a deceitful typhoon. The tight doughnut circle of dense cloud around a well defined eye was missing in this case. In fact, it was hard to see where the eye actually was. There was no symmetry. The spirals of clouds were all to one side and covering an area much bigger than usually seen. It hardly looked like a typhoon at all. Many indeed were deceived.

In Chiayi, the streets were relatively quiet but not empty. Cars and motorcycles, even an occasional hardy cyclist were seen passing our front gate. The shops were open, hoping for a little business at least. Yet, just 50km away, in our mountain mission stations, the rain was coming down at an alarming

rate. But that is to be expected in a typhoon, as well as a few landslides at the usual blackspots. Fr. Wlad Madeja in Fenchihu, along with SSpS Sisters Clemens and Edmara were expecting 200 guests at the activity centre. The activity had been cancelled, but the freezers had been stocked with food for 200 mouths. If the electricity should fail, then all the food would quickly spoil. Of course the electricity failed, then the telephones. Next the mobile phones exhausted their batteries and the relay stations went off the air as their emergency batteries lost power. The last message from Fr. Wlad was that he would be down in Chiayi Tuesday. They did not know at that moment that all roads in and out of Fenchihu had been closed, and in many places, the road had disappeared completely.

In spite of the approaching typhoon and against all advice from wiser people, a Canadian tourist who had been staying in Fenchihu proceeded further up the mountain to our Alishan Mission Station and activity centre. The Director of the centre, Mr. Liu Wei-je had sent his wife and child down to Chiayi a few days earlier, but stayed on in case some guests still showed up. He planned to take the last bus down before the typhoon struck. Unfortunately, the Canadian tourist showed up and insisted on staying. There was the added worry that the new roof which was in the process of being installed would be blown away in the strong winds of the typhoon. The roof stayed put and so did

they, with no electricity, water and very little by way of food. By the end of the third day, Alishan had accumulated a total precipitation of 2,700mm and Fenchihu and the other stations were not too far behind. That is an incredible amount of water to hit the ground. Of course, from a height 2,300 meters up in the mountains, there is only one way for water to go and that is down. Down it went, gathering momentum, taking trees, boulders, clay, roads, bridges, electricity and telephone pylons and anything that stood in its path with it.

By the end of the third day news was being relayed out. Fr. Daisuke was marooned in Tefuyeh. No roads from that village were passable. The bridges had been swept away. When we eventually got in touch with him, the unflappable Fr. Daisuke reported that he was fine. No problem! Things were not so fine in his outstations. Churches in the villages of Lijia and Laichi were destroyed by rockfalls, though so far there are no reports of loss of life. However, one of the workers in Fenchihu heard that her village further south in Pingdong had been buried in a mudslide and there was no word of her father, sister and brother in law.

In the village of Xinmei, Fr. Piotr was likewise marooned with his flock. All were safe, but key bridges on the road out of the valley had been swept away and they were hemmed in on both sides by raging torrents of water pouring down from the higher reaches of the mountains. They would be staying put for a few more days by the looks of things.

Further south in Pingdong and Taidong in the east, the emerging news reports showed a much more terrifying picture. Much of the plain was under a metre or more of water. Villages further up the watercourses were unreachable, but as aerial photographs became possible when the weather cleared a bit, only mud and rubble could be seen when entire villages had once stood. In one case a river that had previously been only 10 metres wide swelled to 800 metres wide. Tree trunks and boulders, hurtled along at

high speed by the waters, crashed into bridge pillars and demolished them, swept around corners and gouged new channels where there were none before, in one case toppling a nine-story hotel into the torrent. Villagers came out as far as they could and rescuers went as far as they could, eventually facing each other on either side of a raging river coursing down from the higher slopes.

Communication was impossible because of the noise of the water. In some cases they wrote messages on sheets of cardboard giving the number of survivors and casualties. In one such encounter, villagers resorted to bows and arrows to shoot messages across the chasm. Rescue workers eventually were able to set up cable connections and badly needed supplies were sent across in baskets. Indeed, many of the rescuers were putting their own lives at risk as they shimmied across swollen rivers on tethered ropes. Sadly, one rescue helicopter crashed in the mountains with the loss of three lives.

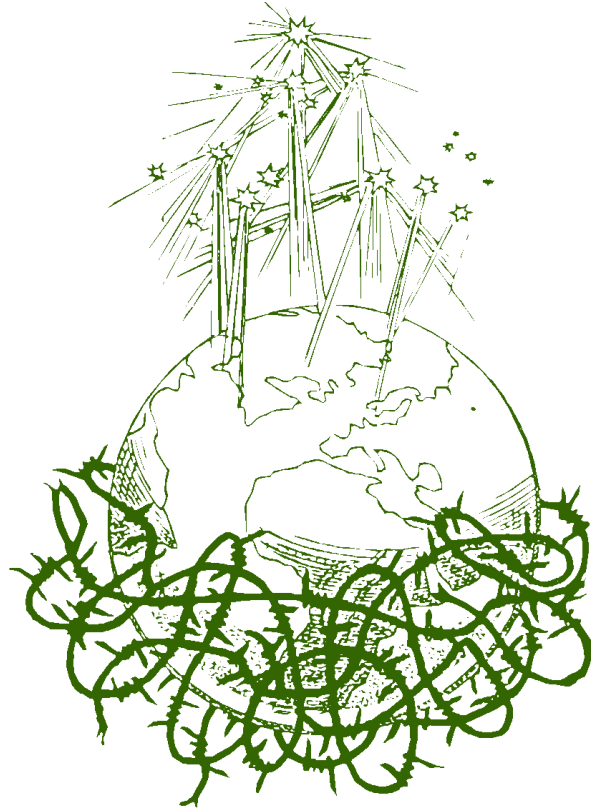
There is still no final count on the death toll from typhoon Morakot. Many people are missing or unaccounted for. It will take some time for the sad tally to be finalized.

Meanwhile, in the Alishan Mountain Mission, army helicopters have been ferrying supplies in and taking people out. Fr. John Lin has been busy today collecting the aborigine students from the airport and bringing them back to Fu Jen High School where they

will be housed in the Dormitories until the new school year begins in September. There is plenty of space in the school dormitories for any who have lost their homes and need somewhere to stay until replacements are found. The school staff and students have been accepting donations of relief goods. Some teachers, parents and students will attempt to trek in to Shanmei village next Saturday carrying food supplies for the families of students.

Fr. Anthony Pham has been helping the Chiayi Diocese Relief effort. Many people have contributed generously though in some cases, the goods donated are not what is really needed. According to Fr. Piotr, marooned in Xinmei, what they really need is food, gas for cooking and gasoline to power their generators.

Tomorrow it will be one week since the typhoon struck. The relief and rescue efforts are settling into a more organized and efficient pattern. The President and leading politicians have all visited the worst effected areas. Now we seem to be moving towards the blame stage. Many criticisms have been raised concerning the lack of warnings as to the seriousness of the typhoon. Police and emergency services were slow to respond. The North/South political divide had been exasperated. Shoddy workmanship and incompetent supervision have been blamed for the poor quality of the infrastructure. The West coast is connected from North to South by a high speed bullet train. The East coast below Taidong is now connected from North to South by a single cable with cage slung beneath it.



The reality is the Nature will not be tamed. Taiwan is still very much a landmass under-construction. For aeons, the mountains have been pushing upwards from the tectonic interface deep below, then eroding downwards to the ocean again by the action of wind, water and the occasional earthquake. That is not going to change for the foreseeable future. The yellow diggers at work clearing the mud and rubble from the Alishan highway are but a minuscule blip on this cosmic calendar. Already, one lane is open to traffic. The road should be back to full service in two months.

The sun will shine again. Houses and lives will be patched up and life will take up again where it left off. The next time a typhoon warning is given, we will all be sure to stock up with food and fuel. A few mild typhoons and we will all forget again. Once again, a time will come and we will be caught unprepared by another deceitful typhoon. That is how it is. That is the nature of things.

On September 7, 2009 two candidates formally entered the SVD in the ceremony of commencement of the Novitiate hold in Chiayi at our District House.

John Chen Yan Chih is originally from Beigang, a city in southern Taiwan famous for a temple dedicated to Matsu, the goddess who protects the fishermen. Yan Chih is 36 years old. His parents are both school teachers, and he has two elder brothers. Yan Chih is the only Catholic in his family. He knew the Catholic Church when he was high school in Chiayi City through a Singaporean teacher, who was coming to teach English. Yan Chih volunteered to show her the way to the church and out of curiosity, he entered the Church and ended up liking it and asking for instruction. He was baptized in 1992, before finishing high school at 18 years old. He received the Christian name John, the apostle. His godfather is Augustine Tsao, who is about to be ordained priest at Chiayi Diocese and is very close to the SVD because his father was a catechist in our mission station of Fenchihu. John received a BA in French at Fu Jen Catholic Church in 1996 and an MA in History of Art at National Central University in 2000. He was working for the Jesuits and was about to join their novitiate, but decided it was not for him. After few years he joined us. He was living already with our confreres in Taipei since September 2008, while working at National Palace Museum.

Damasus Yong Piew Tieng is the first Malaysian to enter the SVD, but he is racially Chinese. He was born in Bintanggor, a city in Sarawak (East Malaysia), not far from Brunei, in the big island of Borneo. His family is Catholic from several generations. He is the fourth of five siblings. He felt called to the priesthood and joined the Chinese Congregation called Disciples of the Lord, founded by Cardinal Celso Constantini, the first Papal delegate in China in

the 1920s. He studied and finished Theology at Fu Jen University, where he met our SVD confreres and felt called to the SVD because of our internationality. After a discernment of one year with the help of a Jesuit spiritual director he decided to join the SVD. He came to live with us during his last semester of Theology, March 2008. He is now 33 years old and has many talents, especially in art, computers and music.

The Novitiate is now located in a house at the same campus of the main SVD House in Taiwan, in Chiayi. The Campus includes a parish and a kindergarten. This house was before a dormitory for aborigine students from the mountains. When Sister Lisa Wang OP retired in 2006, after taking care of this dormitory for 30 years, the SVD relocated the aborigine students at the main dormitories of Fu Jen High School, where they were studying. The building was vacant for three years.

Our Taiwan Novitiate is separated from the main SVD community in Southern Taiwan, but at the same we have strong connections with them. Our retired confreres are great encouragement for those who are beginning their journey in the SVD. We have lunch with them on weekdays and all meals on weekends. Our prayer life is at the Novitiate, except the mass on Saturday, which is with our confreres in the Main House and on Sunday, which is at the Parish, located also at the same campus.

When I participated in the SVD course for Novice Masters in 1997 in Steyl and Nemi, one of the key points we discuss was the relation between the novitiate and the rest of the SVD communities. In some countries the Novitiate is part of a bigger house. In other the Novitiate is located hundreds of miles away from the next SVD house. In Taiwan we opted for being close to another community, but with some degree of autonomy in order to have a separated identity as the novitiate community. We hope this arrangement will work for a few novices. In Taiwan the Novitiate lasts only one year. Our candidates should profess first vows on September 8, 2010.

TOGETHER BUILDING A CHURCH IN TAIWAN

Rossi Attilio

When I accepted the appointment as parish priest of Shulin and Yingge parish, I had never been there before. I started my service in September 2004 and realized that there was not a real church either in Shulin or in Yingge. In Yingge up to now we use a place loaned by a parishioner on the forth floor, without a lift. In Shulin formerly there was a very simple church, but it was demolished 15 years ago because the roof had collapsed; then another small building was adapted to be used as a chapel, but people desired a real church. After a few months, the chapel became too small for the growing assembly, so I realized that we had to face the challenge of building a new church.

Imagine that a missionary from Asia goes to a new parish in Italy without a church and so wants to build one. He plans to do it in an inculturated way and so he decides to do it in baroque style, because it is very clear that it is

part of Italian culture. Doing that in our days wouldn't be strange? Would his parishioners be happy with that? To avoid a similar mistake in Taiwan, I first asked my parishioners which style of church they desired. They answered that they wanted a church which looks like a real church, like those they are used to see abroad or on the movies, and not like a Chinese pagoda. So that was our starting point and we started collecting money. Two years later, at Easter, we invited two architects to present their proposal project to the whole community: the first had designed a quite traditional church and the second a more modern one. The large majority of people chose the traditional one, and so we went ahead with that. Since in the parish half of the people are Chinese and half are aboriginals, we added stained glass window with some elements characteristics of Chinese and some of aboriginal culture.

The construction started at the beginning of this year. Unfortunately, that coincided with our time of serious economic recession, so this year it is more difficult for people to continue to donate money as previously. The majority of parishioners are working class people; furthermore 60% of them are aboriginal people, with modest salaries. Nevertheless I no-

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tice that they continue to offer money and from that I can feel how important it is for them to have a church. Many of us have been born in places where there was already a church. We are used to that and don't feel any more the importance of building one, but here people really feel the need and understand the importance of having a church.

The church compound consists of an underground parking lot, a church for 400 people and local activities and for the priests' residence. By the end of this year it will be covered with a roof, but by that time our money will also be gone and we will be still lacking half of the total amount of money needed to complete the construction. I am touched by the generosity of the Taiwan people, because we receive a considerable help also from many faithful from other parishes, even though they are donating for a project that is not their own; sometimes even non-catholics also donate money. All that makes us experience the providence of God and to believe that He will help us to achieve what we have started in his name. I hope also that the beauty of the new church will help to attract more people to come, to see and to know our Church and our faith.

To see pictures of construction, please go to our web site: <http://www.catholic.org.tw/shulin/> and click on the line matching the date: 2009/10/10 .





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