



SVD CHINA PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

天主教聖言會中華省通訊

December 2010

願天主聖三生活在我們和眾人心中

Issue No. 61

SIN Provincialate: P.O. Box 4-13, Dapinglin, Xindian 231, Taipei County, TAIWAN, ROC

A Word From The Provincial

*“They shall name him Emmanuel,
which means ‘God is with us.’ (Mt. 1:23)”*

“**T**hey shall name him Emmanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’” (Mt. 1:23) Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent (December 19) and this sentence occurs twice in today’s liturgy: first in the reading from the Prophet Isaiah and secondly in the Gospel of Matthew.

Of course the main reference of the prophecy is to the coming of Christ on Christmas day – the Divine Word becomes a human person, one among us. God is with us in the mystery of the incarnation. However, it occurred to me when preparing my homily for the fourth Sunday of Advent, that we also experience “God with us” in many different ways, particularly when an individual’s or group’s actions make God visibly present here and now.

On Saturday, December 18, there were two clear examples of



“ I believe we can see God’s presence particularly in the cooperation and solidarity among the faithful.” God is with

God’s presence among us. In the morning, Archbishop Ti-kang, former Archbishop of Taipei and former chair of the board of trustees of Fu Jen Catholic University, led the congregation in the Fu Jen University Chapel in paying our last respects to our fellow SVD, Fr. Heinz Hesselgeld. Tributes from former students and colleagues at Fu Jen and letters from officials in Nanchang and in the villages of Southern Jiangxi eloquently spoke of his spirit of service. What several made clear was that this spirit of service was based on a deep Christian faith and a commitment as a Divine Word Missionary. Heinz was, of course, a very



human person. Maybe that is the point; we see evidence of God presence in our very human situation. “God is with us.”

In the afternoon, Archbishop John Hung, SVD and the pastor of the suburban Taipei parish in Shulin, Fr. Attilio Rossi, SVD, dedicated and blessed the new Church building. It was a truly grand project. But perhaps more important was the fact that Fr. Attilio had rallied the parishioners of the parish as well as sought the help of many of the other parishes. I believe we can see God’s presence particularly in the cooperation and solidarity among the faithful. “God is with us.”

All of us are very human – we have good days and bad days. Perhaps our most important contributions as Divine Word Missionaries is that within this very human condition, others can see that God is at work in us as individuals and in our communities. Merry Christmas to you, your communities and your loved ones!

Frank Budenholzer
Fourth Sunday of Advent, 2010

2010 Retreat and Workshop on Arnold Janssen Spirituality for the SSpS and SVD in Taiwan and Hongkong

Sr. Leonora SSpS

The invitation for the retreat and the workshop had been extended to all the members of the Arnoldus Family already in May this year by the local AJ-SAT (Arnold Janssen Spiritual Animation Team). For the retreat all SVD and SSpS were expected to attend. The workshop was especially meant for present and potential members of the local and the Hongkong SAT, and for those in administration and formation.

Since the timing of these two events coincided with the beginning of the new school year, a number of SVD and SSpS were unable to come to the Manresa Center of Spirituality in Changhua run by the Jesuits, a retreat house up on a hill and surrounded by trees. Still there were 55 priests, brothers and sisters able to join the retreat while seventeen priests and sisters attended the workshop.

Perhaps a number of them had come dutifully for the retreat, not really knowing what to expect. Others were not so happy because the time given for the retreat was less than six days. But as the retreat unfolded, gently guided by Fr. Mike Somers from the Arnold Janssen Spirituality Center in Steyl, the participants were in for some wonderful surprises.

This was not a retreat where one would listen to the retreat master speak of the religious and missionary life in terms of concepts and ideals. No, we were confronted with the personality and life of our Founder, St. Arnold, the life and transformation of Fr. Joseph Freinademetz, and the long journey till the fulfillment of their dreams of our first Mothers and learned to know them in a way we had not known them before. In the sharing on the last day, a participant admitted, that he had known very little about our Founder, another that they had never heard that he also had weaknesses and limitations. We learned that he was really like one of us, an ordinary man. But while for most of us such limitations become an obstacle in attempting greater things, “Arnold allowed himself to be vulnerable, rid himself of all defenses and opened himself to the possibility of ridicule and failure, of being dismantled of personal pride, being hurt, rejected and misunderstood. His cup is emptied.”

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Father Arnold was a man of prayer and trusted that the power of God would work through his weaknesses. "He discovers that only in unshakable trust and total surrender into the hands of God can his impossible dream become a reality."

A powerpoint presented during the workshop made us also realize what an untiring worker the Founder was. Founding three international Congregations, building so many houses and starting so many missions with such great attention to the details involved was simply amazing and overwhelming.

The transformation Fr. Joseph Freinademetz had to undergo was also an eye opener for the group. His bishop called him the pearl of Brixen, but even he had to learn that living in another culture requires humility and self denial and learning to see with the eyes of love. Fr. Freinademetz lived up to the challenge and became a Chinese for the Chinese.

The lives of our first Mothers, Mother Maria and Mother Josepha, are certainly well known to the sisters, but surely was less familiar to our brothers.

Sharing of lives was not restricted to our founding generation. Fr. Mike shared with us his struggles as a young missionary in Ecuador, and in the small group sharing during the workshop priests and sisters shared their personal vocation story.

The retreat was about life, the life of our founding generation and about life among us, here and now. Our last general chapters had called for promoting solidarity and fostering life-giving relationships. So here we were, the members of two international Congregations, men and women of many different nationalities and backgrounds living together in a spirit of mutual respect, love and acceptance. In the discussions during the workshop each

one was heard, every contribution was valued and considered. The liturgy was no routine but expressed the creativity of the group and encouraged personal contribution and sharing. The experience of the retreat and the workshop led to a greater understanding and a deeper appreciation of the Founder and Fr. Freinademetz, though perhaps for the sisters Mother Maria and Mother Josepha had been close to them already before. It also made us cherish more deeply our spiritual heritage and our life in international and intercultural communities. Aren't they a prophetic sign in this day and age when the mobility of people has increased greatly and members of different nations and cultures, greatly diverse in background and education must learn to live together in peace and unfortunately often fail to do so?

The retreat was a so-called spiritual exercise, but it was more than that. It was an intense experience of the heritage received from our founding generation and an exercise in living our life in international and intercultural communities. The way the SVD and the SSps lived and prayed and worked together like a big family, the Arnoldus Family as we call it, is something few if any other religious congregations can enjoy.

It just keeps us marvel at the depth and breadth of vision St. Arnold had in founding our Congregations more than a hundred years ago, a vision that seems to increase in significance as time goes on and the challenge to respect the dignity of every human being becomes the greater the more we realize that we are all inhabitants of the one global village. The experience of these two weeks made us grateful for and truly proud of our founding generation and our spiritual heritage.

“**E**arth’s creator, every-day God; loving maker, O Jesus; you who shaped us, o Spirit; recreate us, come, be with us.....” It has been days since the Arnoldus Jassen Spirituality Team’s retreat was held in Taiwan, yet these simple, inspiring words, together with its calming melody still linger on in my mind, reminding me of the unforgettable days spent with more than 50-plus brothers and sisters from the Arnoldus family.

For me, this experience has been truly a long awaited homecoming.

Since my entrance into the Arnoldus family, I have always seen myself as a son of the China province. Yet, the visit to Taiwan is my first ever visit to the center of my own province, after 4 years in the priesthood, 5 years in perpetual vows, and 13 years in the Arnoldus family. Truly, I have been surrounded by warm welcome wherever I have been, be it in a community or parish, in communal celebrations or in heartfelt personal sharing. Everywhere people took me in as one of their own. I felt truly at home in Taiwan, especially so during the AJST retreat and workshop held at the Jesuit retreat house in Jingshan, Zhanghua.

Needless to say, real homecoming is not just paying a visit to a physical place, but rather to a people. The AJST retreat is precisely in this sense a homecoming for me. I remember that one of the most daring dreams of my novice master was for the Arnoldus daughters and sons to not only work together, but also live together as one community. When I was still a college student and an SVD aspirant in China, my first impression was exactly so: there, the SVDs and the SSps seemed to have formed a real family, though physically they were not in one community, they shared many eventful moments together: from common decision making, to celebrations of Sunday and feast liturgies, from enjoying cheerful parties to enduring heart-wrenching and nerve-breaking periods of great losses. Even to an “outsider” like me, they clearly lived as a family.

I just assumed that the SSps and the SVDs lived in the same way everywhere else in the world. Yet, after I became an insider, I gradually realized that this was not the case at all. I came to appreciate the value of my initial experiences with the Arnoldus family. But in the retreat, at least for two weeks, I was granted the opportunity to revisit this spiritual home long forgotten. I was able to relive those precious memories treasured deeply in my heart.



We were praying, singing, worshipping as one, planning liturgy and prayers together, sharing meals and washing dishes while being beleaguered by special Jingshan-mosquitos of various sizes throughout the day, etc... What else could you call it but “family?” If I try to be a little poetic (I am usually not), it is Arnold Jassen’s two daughters and one son playing gracefully in the field of the Lord!

But this had been a homecoming not just for me alone. As I have seen, heard and experienced from many others present at the retreat as well as the workshop, it had also been for them a homecoming to our founder, to our founding generations, to our genesis, our pristine calling. As it has been echoed by many during the retreat, an adequate understanding and appreciation of the founder is wanting. Arnold is more commonly known as a hard-working northern German with an iron will (or better stubbornness?) shielded behind a stern face. We knew that he was a holy man, an ambitious achiever, a saint, but we did not know how. Put in another way, we did not know how to love and value this man—our common father who gathered us we came together from four corners of the earth to form one family, whereas we could easily do so with Freinademetz, Maria Helena and Josefa.

But under the guidance of Mike Somers as the retreat master, it seemed like that we have relived the novitiate, or better, relived Arnold’s life story. Indeed we came to discover or rediscover many shining traits of this man: his love for the Triune God, in particular for the Divine Word, his commitment to a prayerful life, his ability to discern the signs of his time and his numerous innovative projects that have eventually succeeded. Personally, I have been deeply touched by the transformation that took place in him throughout his entire life, so much so that even his face had changed from

the stern (perhaps also fear-inspiring) face of a mathematician to that of a gently smiling grandfather. “Human weakness in the saints makes them better understood and more accessible to people.” When Arnold said the above words regarding other saints, he must have never imagined that one day his words would be so perfectly applicable to himself and so well appreciated by many who proudly call him our founder, leader and father.

In the end, to come home to the spirituality of the founding generations is actually to return to the root of faith in each and everyone of us; to come home to the holy ground where we had encountered God for the first time, where we have heard God’s calling a long time ago. Each retreat ought to be such a homecoming that brings the prodigal child back to the Father, to feel touched, hugged, caressed and loved. But this time, this journey is specially so for it has been made together with so many other sisters and brothers, in the company of our saints and our founding fathers and mothers. The joy in heaven and on earth would be so great that slaughtering just one cow is certainly far from being enough..... a cow? Yes how about the cow? Have you heard about Arnold Jassen’s last testament regarding the fate of a Steyl-ish cow? What? Not yet? Hurry and enroll yourself for an AJST retreat or workshop! These words of his last will would certainly tell you a lot about the inner transformation he had gone through.

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Father Heinz Hesselfeld, SVD

Fundraiser



On December 6, 2010, Father Heinrich Josef Hesselfeld, SVD, passed away. He was just a few days short of his 80th birthday. There will be many tributes to Father Heinz or Hank as Americans are wont to say. I want to mention an area which you probably will not hear others speak of: Heinz Hesselfeld as a fundraiser.

After ordination and completing his Ph.D. in physics at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, Father Heinz came to Taiwan in 1966. One year later he was appointed as the chair of the physics department. From 1974 to 84 he was dean of the College of Science (later College of Science and Engineering) at Fu Jen University. Already during his time as dean, his talents at fund raising were evident. He had an especially good relationship with the Dutch-German-Swiss foundation founded by the owners of a European chain of clothing stores, the Brenninkmeyer family. Through Heinz efforts and the generosity of the Brenninkmeyer foundation and others, Heinz was able to find extra funds to develop the instrumentation in the college and as well as funds to encourage Ph.D. graduates to come to Fu Jen as full time faculty members. The word was that young administrators should learn from Fr. Heinz about how to apply for grants and especially how to make reports and thank the donors.

After leaving Fu Jen, Fr. Heinz was the key person in the German government and private financing of the “Nanchang-project,” the Institute for Food-Science in Nanchang University, Jiangxi Province, China. This was a huge project and required considerable skill to balance the interests of all the different stakeholders. The next big project was a food science pilot plant, also financed primarily with German funds. For his efforts, Fr. Heinz was named a lifelong honorary Dean of Nanchang University and was granted permanent residency in the PRC.

After retiring from his positions at Nanchang University, Fr. Heinz became aware of another opportunity to put his fund raising skills to good use. The Province of Jiangxi had decided to improve the level of primary education. This meant consolidating smaller rural primary schools. But the unfortunate result was that many young pupils had to walk tens of kilometers to go to school each day. Through Fr. Heinz efforts funds were raised to build dormitories for students in 20 rural primary schools. For his efforts, Fr. Heinz received a special “Letter of Commendation” from the Jiangxi Provincial Education Department.

Heinz was clever. He carefully reviewed potential sites, distinguishing between local officials who really wanted to help the children and those who seemed more interested in the funds than in the help provided. But he also knew his limits – he scrupulously avoided involvement in the routine administration of the dormitories.

There are some lessons those of us involved in fund raising can learn from Fr. Heinz. For Fr. Heinz fundraising was not an end in itself but a way to provide resources for a good purpose. Heinz knew the art of cultivating donors. He was very careful to write thank-you letters and, when possible, to thank them personally. But his basic purpose was to allow them to participate in providing funds to meet an important need. I never once heard Fr. Heinz boast about how much money he had collected. He was a physicist and, and of course knew his arithmetic. But the amount collected and his role in fundraising were not the important things. The purpose of raising funds was to be of service.

Those of us involved in Church and social work rely on those who raise funds. But sometimes we seem to relegate fund raising to the periphery. During his last years, Heinz often mentioned that he wanted to be viewed as being at the center of the SVD missionary endeavor. He was at the center and we are most grateful.

Frank Budenholzer, SVD
December 15, 2010

