

Without Borders

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When we were informed about our Thailand exposure, I was initially surprised, since I was accustomed to the idea that exposure programs are generally domestic exposures. One of its main objectives was to foster a culture of “Brothers without Borders”; in this spirit, the Postulants went to Thailand to experience the Lasallian mission and community life in a context different than our own. For our month-long exposure, we got to experience what it meant to create a culture of brotherhood without borders: it meant being able to speak in the language of brotherhood, the language of service, and the language of love. In all of the communities we visited, we speak and act these languages that go beyond our culture and language.



Inculturation, the image of St. John Baptist de la Salle in a Thai spirit house

We arrived on 2 October and stayed at La Salle Sampran, the Thai sector’s formation house where the pre-postulants of the sector study and undergo formation. For the three of us, staying in Sampran was the closest we have to a formation house experience (since our Postulancy program is conducted in active communities). Our encounters with the pre-postulants and the Thai brothers were filled with stories and activities which opened us to one another: we exchanged stories about the Philippines, learned about Thai culture, and the experiences of the pre-postulants. In Sampran, we

experienced the language of brotherhood; it is a language of association that goes beyond our difference in language and culture. The pre-postulants of the Thai sector are in a different context from us, but we share the same experience of discernment. This common bond allows us to share our presence to one another and create lasting friendships.



Singing with the Pre-Postulants at the Carmelite Monastery's Anniversary

We left Sampran for Sangkhlaburi on 10 October. Sangkhlaburi is a six-hour drive from Sampran to the West of Thailand, near the Thai-Burmese border. The Thai sector operates two schools in Sangkhlaburi: a primary school (grades 1 to 6) called La Salle Sangkhlaburi and the La Salle Bamboo school close to the Burmese border. Furthermore, La Salle Sangkhlaburi houses Blue Sky Home, a dormitory for stateless Burmese girls studying in Thailand. In our more than a weeklong stay in

Sangkhlaburi, we had the opportunity to teach the girls English both inside and outside the classroom and bonded with them through games and music. In our encounters with the girls, it was an experience of the language of love: the Lasallian mission is an expression of the language of love for the young. It is a mission which aims to form them into better persons who can create better opportunities for their families.

Finally, we experienced the language of service. Regardless of country, the brothers serve the wider community as a community. The second half of our exposure took us to Nakhonsawan and Bang Na, where the brothers operate primary and secondary schools. In these two schools, we got to see the



brothers in their daily work in the schools and the typical day of a Thai student. Accompanying the brothers in some of their activities, the language of service requires a community that lives in one accord of mind and heart intent on the performance of the work of God in the education of the young. This is the language of service that we experienced in all communities in Thailand.

I am truly thankful for this experience. This month-long exposure strengthened my desire to discern deeply my vocation to the

At the Wat Wang Wiwekaram in Sangkhlaburi

brothers. Moreover, It served a reminder of the reason why I joined the postulancy: to serve God in the educational apostolate of the church.

