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Senior Brothers Assembly. Thirty-eight Brothers aged 60 and above gathered last 13 to 15 February for the first LEAD Senior Brothers Assembly hosted by De La Salle University - Dasmariñas and De La Salle Health Sciences Institute in Dasmariñas City, Philippines. Br. Michael Meister of the District of San Francisco was the resource speaker during the three-day Assembly. During the first day, the Brothers visited the newly built retirement community attached to the medical school hospital. The Residencia de La Salle Community is composed of Brothers ministering in the above mentioned institutions and four retired Brothers needing special assistance. The facility has over 20 bedrooms available for the retired Brothers and a separate wing for those in active ministry. On the second day, the Brothers went to De La Salle Lipa for lunch and the groundbreaking of their retreat centre. Afterwards they went to the PARC Novitiate and visited the Memorial Cloister where they prayed for the Brothers buried there. They also spent time with the Novices before heading to a mountain resort in Tagaytay City for a supper hosted by a former student, Mr. Jose Pardo. The final day saw a number of Young Brothers engaging the Senior Brothers in a dialogue and sharing of stories. The assembly culminated with a Mass and a special program and dinner. On the 16th, the 12th LEAD Council Meeting was convened at the University's hotel.



I wish to thank Br. Tom Lavin and the Senior Brothers Committee for spearheading the planning and organisation of the Assembly, Br. Michael Meister for his presentations and much appreciated insights on the realities of Senior Brothers, Br. Gus Boquer for hosting the assembly and Council meeting, Br. Sockie dela Rosa and the Dasmariñas Aspirants for the prayers, liturgy and assistance to the Senior Brothers, the staff of De La Salle Philippines led by Ms. Aimee Patiño for all the logistical support, Mr. Ritche Bongcaron and all the staff of De La Salle University - Dasmariñas and De La Salle Health Sciences Institute for their warm hospitality. Finally, I would like to thank all the Brothers who participated in this Assembly!

Visit to Two Communities in Thailand. I flew into Bangkok on the 29th of January to visit two communities: Sankhlaburi and Nakhonsawan. Upon arriving I got into Bangna had a quick supper and then proceeded to the wake for the mother of Sr. Sunantha which just outside of Bangkok. Our 6-hour trip to Sanhklaburi commenced at 7am of the 30th and after doing a few pit stops which included breakfast we arrived at the community around 1:30pm.

There are three Brothers working in the two campuses of the Bamboo school. The original campus, near the Myanmar border, is referred to as "Site 1" and the new campus as "Site 2". The latter is also known as Pran Manee.

On Site 1 are Preparatory and Kindergarden students and also older students who cannot yet be mainstreamed. On Site 2 are grades 1 – 3 most of whom have come from





the original site. However, Site 2 also has Preparatory and Kindergarten students who live nearer the area. Br. Joseph Klong is Director of the school and the community but Br. Victor Gil spends a lot of his time in Site 2 and Br. Stephen Pitchit spends all of his time in Site 1. They also now have an orphanage. I am attaching a report made by Br. Victor Gil.

On the morning of the 31st the students and teachers welcomed us in the original Bamboo School with songs and dances. After an early lunch we drove down to Bangna. The morning of February 1 all the Brothers and Sisters went to the funeral of the mother of Sr. Mary Ann Sunantha. On this day we also received the sad news of the passing away of the mother of Br. Francis Chaochaiyapat.

I spent Chinese New Year on February 1, 2 and 3 with the Brothers of Nakhonsawan. I was able to interview all four Brothers, namely: Br. Peter Boonchert, Br. Frank Suriya, Br. Francisco Teerayut and Br. Benilde Preecha. Both Francisco and Benilde teach and have administrative functions in the school. Br. Frank is the Director of the Juniorate however, he also teaches in the school. Br. Peter is Director of the community and the school.

I wish to thank Br. Stephen Kan and Br. Simon Phanom for the organization; Br. Joseph Klong and Br. Peter Boonchert, Directors of the two communities I visited. To all the Brothers and Sisters for their warmth and hospitality. Finally, let us continue to pray for the repose of the soul of the mother of Sr. Mary Ann Sunanta and the mother of Br. Francis Chaochaiyapat.

Visits to the Philippines. I visited two communities in the Philippines, attended the LEAD Senior Brothers Assembly and had the 12th LEAD Council Meeting in February. I visited University of St. La Salle Brothers'



Community in Bacolod from February 9 – 12. USLS have eight Brothers, four of whom are second year scholastics doing their practice teaching. The Director of the community is Br. Bong Servando and he is also Vice Chancellor for Administration in the University. He provides generous support to Br. Ray Suplido, the University President. Br. Dindo Maralit is the

Director for St. Joseph High School and Br. Mario Dacanay teaches full time in the Management Department.

The scholastic sub community is also headed by Br. Bong and he accompanies the following student Brothers: Br. Butch Alcudia, Br. Joseph Daluz, Br. Toby De La Cruz and Br. Dan Sanding. They teach part time at St. Joseph's and do Vocation promotions work at USLS in the afternoon. On school exposure during my visit was Scholastic, Br. Mark Salvan. He teaches at St. Joseph High School.

On February 13, 14 and 15 I attended the successful LEAD Senior Brothers' Assembly.

On February 18 and 19 I visited De La Salle Lipa. The community has five Brothers all working at the College. It is one of the few communities in the sector of the Philippines where all their members work for one institution. Br. Kenneth Martinez is the President. Br. Raffy Reyes, Br. Hans Moran both teach in the college. Br. Raffy belongs to the education department, while Br. Hans enjoys his assignment with the Psychology department. On the other hand, Br. Ruben Caluyong and Br. Joseph Lian Thang are with the Integrated School. Br. Ruben teaches Christian Living to Grade 9 students while Br. Joseph handles two computer classes in Grade 10 and also helps out in the computer laboratory. Like the USLS community, there are scholastics on exposure. Currently teaching Christian Living at DLSL are Br. Edgar Esparagoza and Br. John Win Kyaw. Because of lack of time I was able to observe only Br. Edgar.

Br. Hans Moran, Contributing Writer to Front Page. I am attaching a PDF file of Br. Hans Moran's article in a small newspaper owned and operated by an alumna in Lipa City, Batangas called FRONT PAGE. Br. Hans writes about food and restaurants. He will also be helping out in a new blog to promote Lipa City called BISITA (Visit) to promote places in the city. Congratulations, Br. Hans!

TV4 Sweden Comes to Film Mathematics at La Salle College. "Ms Sara Recabarren from TV4, the largest television channel in Sweden, came to La Salle College to film a current affairs programme called 'Cold Facts' about the teaching and learning of Mathematics in Hong Kong, the second highest ranked country for mathematics achievement for 14/15 year olds in the world according to the PISA International Assessment Agency. La Salle College was identified to them by PISA as one of the strongest performing schools in the assessment, internationally. Also the College has an excellent reputation in Mathematics education evidenced by public examination results and competition results such as CMO and IMO.

"The documentary involved the filming of a class at work (1E), an in-depth interview with the Principal, Vice-Principal, Math's Panel Head, a math's teacher (Mr Mak), the filming of a Math's Panel meeting. They also followed several boys home to film the home learning environment and interview their families." (<http://web.lasalle.edu.hk>)





President Aquino Commends Br. Armin. In his speech, given in the ceremonial turnover in Carmona, Cavite, President Aquino III praised Education Secretary Brother Armin Luistro FSC for addressing the educational backlog facing the country. “Brother Armin knows me for being meticulous. I won’t be surprised if he’s already annoyed by my persistence. But the one thing I can say about him and the members of DepEd: Thank you very much for a job well done.” Through Brother Armin and DepEd, the administration provided 66,813 classrooms. The President also cited other achievements, such as providing 62 million books in 2012, and providing 2.5 million chairs that were made using logs seized from illegal loggers. Aquino also mentioned that from 2010 to 2013, almost 103,000 teaching positions were filled. The President even took time to joke about the La Salle-Ateneo rivalry. “Of course, Brother Armin is not only a product of La Salle but headed the institution. Secretary Singson is also from La Salle.

Secretary Purisima is also from De La Salle. Today, I think my fellow Ateneans will forgive me if I say, ‘Animo La Salle!’ Looks like I won’t be invited to speak in Ateneo (Jesuit University). Maybe in La Salle.” Aquino also thanked Brother Armin for choosing to serve, “He has a successful yet quiet life in his vocation. In the government, only problems lie await, along with criticisms. Brother Armin was not daunted: He chose to serve. He did not surrender to limitations, and went beyond the hard work already associated with his name. Again, thank you, Secretary Armin.” (*De La Salle Philippines Central House Bulletin 1314-18*) Congratulations Br. Armin!

SJI January Inaugural Assembly. “The inaugural Mass, a tradition of SJI, marks the beginning of another new year for the students, teachers and staff. The celebrations began with the blessings for the New Year and a reflection by school chaplain Friar Michael D’Cruz about having faith, service and community at the heart of all things we do at SJI.

“As this is also our first year at our new holding campus in Bishan, the priests blessed the sacraments – the Crucifixes, and portraits of SJI Founder St. John Baptist de LaSalle, before these were placed in the classrooms. The priests – Rev Fr Simon Tan, Fr Peter Wee and Fr Clement Lee (Novena Church), Fr Andrew Wong, Fr Paul Goh, Fr Benedict Chng and Fr Jude David (Church of Holy Spirit), Fr Edward Seah (St Anne’s Church), and Friar John Derrick Yap (Church of St Mary of the Angels) also toured the new campus to bless the classrooms, labs and every corner of the school.

“The school community then congregated at the Amphitheatre to welcome the new members into the SJI family – the Secondary Ones and the new staff. With the prayers and blessings, this Inaugural Assembly reminded us that it is not the building or place that matters but rather the people in it.” (*Jonathan Soong Wei LE304* | www.sji.edu.sg)

Kindly note that the mailing address of the SJI Brothers Community is the same as the holding site of SJI:
St. Joseph’s Institution (Holding School)
21 Bishan Street 14, Singapore 579781

Fraternally,

Br. Edmundo L. Fernandez FSC
Myanmar

