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**Catechism in the East.** “One of the challenges we are confronted with in Japan, as well as in many other places within LEAD, is to teach Religion to students without any religious background. In the case of Japan, it is easy to say that they (the Japanese) are atheists. They are not. Actually, I think that they have a deeper –although different – spiritual understanding of the realities that surround us. Nevertheless, one of the main differences I could notice is that this spirituality is not always connected with morals in the way we are used to in what we call “Christian societies”. We tend to put together religious faith and moral behavior. They, instead, are generally very strict on moral issues, especially if they have a direct social implication; but, not necessarily connect moral with religion, much less with God.

“One of the stories I often tell is what happened to me when I was teaching religion class to 12 and 13 year olds in Kagoshima. I knew that among the students there was only one Catholic, and the rest had no religious training; so, I used a very general plan. The objective of the one-year 1st course, I decided, would be to sensitize the children to human values. The school year was well underway and there was good understanding between the kids and myself, so I decided that, to illustrate the virtue of compassion, it was time to give them a “little taste” of

the Gospel. I thought that the parable of the Good Samaritan would be ideal as a kind of universal story that would awaken awareness and provoke discussion. And did it ever! But not in the way I expected. In fact, there were reactions that I never would have imagined even coming from adults, much less from children.

“Beginning with the title, one of the kids said to me: Why do they call that irresponsible person good? The entire parable, for many of them, revolved around the Samaritan's poor decision.

Their reasoning stemmed from the supposition that if this man was traveling from one city to another, it was surely because he had a commitment and was not just taking a walk. Stopping along the road, helping the dying man, bringing him to the inn and doing everything he could for his recuperation surely made him late for his appointment and put him in a bad position with those who were waiting for him. I began to be concerned about the mistake I made in choosing this example.

“Worse still, some considered the "good" Samaritan to be not only irresponsible, but stupid: In spite of the obviousness of the situation, why did he expose himself also to a possible robbery? Perhaps the thieves were still around.



“And there's more: This man did one stupid thing after another: without knowing anything about the injured man or about the owner of the inn, this idiot practically threw his money away in not assuring himself of the honesty of both of them. Now, I really began to be alarmed about the way the discussion was going.

“According to these novel interpretations, the final straw was when the priest and the Levite who did absolutely nothing came out as heroes. Although the parable does not even suggest it, my students concluded that these two were to report to the police to take action on the matter, as do all good citizens ... and would most likely do the same

things themselves, I concluded very disheartened. But... what about compassion?

“This experience opened my eyes to the realization that, in spite of what is often said, it is not so easy to speak of universal values. In LEAD we have the privilege of working with students from very different religious backgrounds. In passing on the Gospel message to them we can easily get “lost in translation”. In the story of my lesson about the Good Samaritan, I believe that it is clear that it was not just the case of a deficient translation of gospel values: it is culture, religion, age, formation and many other issues which come together. Oftentimes our responses to compassionate issues miss the point.

“I am more convinced now, that it is not enough to tell a story or a parable to touch the hearts of our students. We need to look for concrete experiences of compassionate service; and from these experiences take a look to the word of god to illuminate and re-interpret them. May this anecdote serve as an invitation to accompany our Religion lessons and programs with the promotion of volunteer experiences where our students can have direct contact with the vulnerable ones.” *(Br. Jorge Gallardo de Alba FSC)*



**LEAD Student Brothers.** We have two Brothers studying in Sydney: Br. Kelvin Tan and Br. Jason Blaikie. Kelvin is in his last year and is finishing with a Bachelor's degree in psychology and linguistics at the University of Sydney. Jason is also finishing at the end of the year with a Master's degree in Educational Leadership at the University of New South Wales. Both are members of the Kensington community at Roma Avenue. My deep gratitude to Br. Mark Mckeon and Br. Chris Gorrige for allowing them to be part of the District. To Br. Joe Buffalo and the lovely members of the Kensington community for looking after them.

**Prayers Requested.** It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Mrs. Teresita "Tess" Magbanua, mother of Br. Dennis Magbanua FSC. She passed away, at the age of 77, due to lingering illness. Please pray for the repose of her soul and for Brother Dennis' family during this time of grief. Wake will be held at the University of St. La Salle Main Chapel in Bacolod City. The Funeral Mass will be at 10:00 AM on Saturday, August 2, in USLS.





## Relics of Pope - Saints Visit La Salle Bangkok.

Lasallians in La Salle College Bangna welcomed and venerated the relics of St. John XXIII and St. John Paul II last 28 - 29 July. The relics, a vial of blood from St John Paul II and a small piece of skin from St John XXIII, arrived in Thailand last 15 May. It was presented to his majesty, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, by members of the Thai bishops' conference and will remain in the kingdom and rotate among parishes throughout the country.

**Violence Affects Bethlehem University.** “Recent violence and attacks in the Gaza Strip have increased the number of roadblocks and checkpoints in the occupied Palestinian Territory, making travel to and from the Bethlehem University campus in Palestine more difficult and time consuming for some students and faculty.

“A significant percentage of students and faculty live in Jerusalem and travel to Bethlehem on a regular basis, which is a few miles away. University administration has requested that faculty be understanding of those students who aren’t able to attend classes during this time. Lasallians are urged to keep Bethlehem University and those affected in their prayers during this difficult time.” ([www.lasalle.org](http://www.lasalle.org))



**August Birthdays.** Let us remember in our prayers our dear Brothers who are celebrating their birthdays this month:

3	Mrs. Ophelia Fugoso AFSC	20	Br. Cliff Ferdinand Sy
8	Br. Ambrose Loke	25	Br. Joseph Scheiter
10	Br. Justin Mobilik	28	Br. Anselm Balthazar
10	Sr. Corazon Manalo DC AFSC	29	Br. Martin Sellner
12	Br. Benilde Preecha Trikaew	30	Br. Francisco Teerayut Chadang
13	Br. Dindo Maralit		

Fraternally,

**Br. Edmundo L. Fernandez FSC**  
Hong Kong

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