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OSHOGATSU: New Year Customs in Japan. “In Japan, as in other Asian countries, the New Year’s holidays have always had a special significance. They are by far the most important and probably the longest holidays in the Japanese calendar. For almost a week the bustling Japanese economy practically comes to a standstill. Schools, companies, and stores close down; and trains, planes and highways are packed as millions make their way to their hometowns or to ski resorts and onsen (thermal baths) for the festivities. From December 30, when the holiday actually begins for most people, huge cities like Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya take on an eerie quietness until the great rush back home and a return to the office starts on January 4 or 5.

“This holiday is especially a time for family and friends. It is also a time for parties, reunions, formal visits and a host of New Year’s celebrations and games that give the season its special flavor. Just like holidays in other parts of the world, one of the special activities is lots of hearty eating and drinking along with good fellowship and cheer. Traditional New Year’s



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food is prepared well in advance to minimize cooking and household chores. For example, mocha, a thick, gooey cake of pounded, cooked rice is prepared so that it can be served at breakfast, lunch or any other time of the day. And osechi ryori, a seemingly endless array of cold tidbits served from stacked lacquerware boxes, is prominently featured at all New Year's meals from simple snacks to elegant banquets.

“Traditionally, New Year's preparations have included ritual housecleaning, the clearing up of all debts, new kimono for each child in the family, and the hanging of special decorations. Many Japanese families still carefully preserve those ancient customs. A walk down a quiet street during the holidays reveals a fascinating blend of the old and the new: kadomatsu decorations, made of bamboo stalks and pine boughs, standing beside the shuttered entrance or skyscrapers; Shinto shimekazari, straw ropes strung with little angular strips of white paper, hanging across the front of parking lots, supermarkets and electronic game centers. Even though the symbolism of the some these customs may be lost to many people, to Japanese the holidays would never seem the same without them.

“In these and many other ways, New Year's in Japan is really quite similar to the Holiday season Western countries. Where other countries send Christmas greetings to their friends, Japanese exchange New Year's cards. Because of the special extra crews hired by the post office just for this purpose, Japanese people receive their greeting cards all at once on New Year's Day itself. And the custom that Christian countries observe by attending church on Christmas Eve finds its counterpart in Japan, where a visit to a Shinto shrine or a Buddhist temple is a traditional during the early hours of New Year's Day. Many people, especially women and children, dress in kimono for these hatsumode visits, a beautiful custom that makes the season even more festive.

“Hope you, Brothers, can celebrate the Oshogatsu or New Year's Fest once with us in Japan in the future to taste the spirit of Samurais, Geishas, and the ancient Japan. Blessings and peace from Kagoshima to all of you! (Br. Domingo Villamil)





APLYC 10. Young Lasallians all over Asia and the Pacific convened at the La Salle Centre in Ipoh, Malaysia last 14 - 19 December 2014 for the 10th Asia Pacific Lasallian Youth Congress. The APLYC theme, “Revive the Spirit, Refresh the World” is call to personal reflection on what is instinctively good within all of us and to stand up to the daunting task of a rebuilding a broken world. Aside from sessions and workshops that encouraged participants to become advocates in building a better world that is based on human dignity and rights, the organisers prepared creative and engaging activities that reinforced experiences of faith, community and service. APLYC 10 culminated with a Cultural Night of games and celebration.

PARC General Councillor, Br. Ricky Laguda FSC and other Brothers from the District were also present to animate and accompany the young Lasallians: Br. Inigo Riola (Philippines), Br. Arian Lopez and Br. Kelvin Tan (Singapore), Br. Luke Chaiporn Kitmongol (Thailand) and the Brothers of Malaysia: Br. Anthony Rogers (Sector Leader), Br. Matthew Bay, Br. Vincent Corkery, Br. John D’Cruz, Br. Justin Mobilik, Br. Matthew Liew, Br. Ambrose Loke and Br. Michael Kum. Congratulations to all the organisers of APLYC 10 and thank you for your gracious hospitality!





MLEC 2014. “The Malaysian Lasallian Educational Council (MLEC) 2014 was held in Ipoh on December 14, 2014 at the Ibis Styles Hotel. The meeting was attended by the La Salle Brothers, Brother Conveners, two members from each MLEC affiliate organisations and key personnels from the Regional Lasallian Education Councils.

“Areas covered included our quest to be service oriented as we go head-on and be ready to meet the needs of the last, the least and the lost. We are moved by the spirit of altruism and volunteerism that show service to others is a Lasallian way of life.

“Lasallian Education moves towards our involvement in civil society for transformation, advocacy and dialogue with policy makers and MOE, based on strategic plans. Compared to the National Transformation Plan which focusses on the role of administrators and teachers to ensure success, the Lasallian Paradigm Shift looks into how the educative community in association can contribute to education and formation of our youth.

“We also discussed in depth how we can bring about the dignity of students and provide quality of education. Some very interesting ideas were brought up by Mr Michael Simon, Mr Megat and Dr Francis Loh. Brother Anthony Rogers chaired the meeting. Brother Visitor Edmundo Fernandez also outlined a few points about the future of La Salle schools in Malaysia and how we can help revitalise these schools.” (Mr. Peter Khiew | <http://peterkhiew.blogspot.hk/>)

New Cardinals in LEAD. The Lasallian Family of LEAD congratulates two new Cardinals to be elevated by Pope Francis on 14 February 2015:



Archbishop Charles Maung Bo, S.D.B., of Yangon (Myanmar). Archbishop Bo (66) is the first local Cardinal in Myanmar to be appointed by a Pope. A member of the Salesians of Don Bosco, he was appointed Bishop of Lashio in 1990, then in Patheingyi in 1996, before he was installed as Archbishop of Yangon in 2003.

“Archbishop Bo was a participant in Sangre de Cristo’s 75th Session in Fall 1999.” (<http://www.lasallian.info/2015/01/09/two-cardinals-have-lasallian-connections/>)

Archbishop Francis Xavier Kriengsak Kovithavanij of Bangkok (Thailand). Archbishop Kovithavanij (65) is the second to be appointed Cardinal in Thailand. He was appointed Bishop of Nakhon Sawan in 2007 and then Archbishop of Bangkok in 2009. The Archbishop has been present in important occasions for the Lasallian Family in Thailand including presiding special Eucharists such as the 60th Anniversary of Lasallian Presence in Thailand last 19 December 2011.



New Visitor for the District of Colombo. The Superior General has appointed **Br. Christy Croos FSC** as the new Visitor for the District of Colombo effective 15 May 2015. Br. Christy is currently the Novice Master of the PARC Noviciate in Lipa City and will finish the remaining months of the current batch of Novices before taking on his new ministry. We congratulate Br. Christy on his new assignment and we pray for his success and for all the Brothers in Sri Lanka!



Delegation President of India. Br. Joseph Fernando FSC has been appointed by the Brother Superior to be the President of the Delegation of India starting April 1, 2015 until March 30, 2018. Br. Joseph was President of the Delegation prior to his appointment as Sub - Director of the PARC Noviciate in 2001. He was eventually assigned as the Institute's Secretary for Formation and later returned to India to become the Administrator of St. Pius X Boys Town and Delegation Bursar. Our warmest congratulations to Br. Joseph for his new ministry and to the Delegation of India for their successful 9th Delegation Chapter!



Br. Ray Suplido is New President of De La Salle University. Following a process in the search of a new President and with the participation of the multi - sectoral representatives from De La Salle University, the DLSU Board of Trustees has elected **Br. Raymundo B. Suplido FSC** as President beginning May 16, 2015. Br. Ray is currently President and Chancellor of the University of Saint La Salle in Bacolod City. Our warmest congratulations to Br. Ray and be assured of our prayers as you take on your new leadership ministry in our first educational institution in the Philippines!

Birthdays. Let us remember in our prayers our dear Brothers and an affiliated member who are celebrating their birthdays this January:

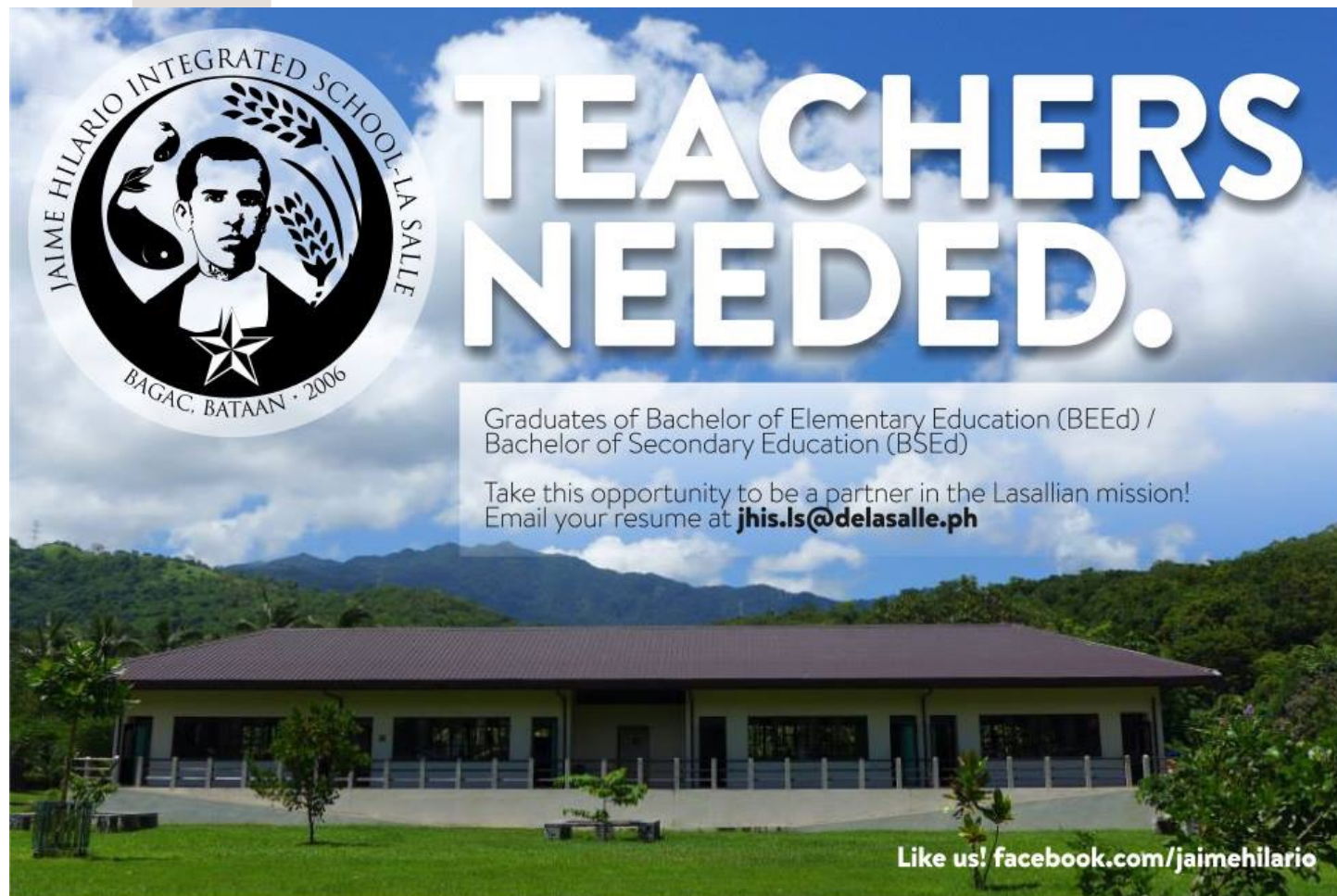
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|---|------------------------|----|------------------------------|----|----------------------|
| 1 | Br. John David Ong | 11 | Br. Dennis Magbanua | 19 | Br. Mario Dacanay |
| 2 | Br. Michael Valenzuela | 13 | Br. Matthew Liew | 21 | Br. Arian Lopez |
| 5 | Br. Christy Croos | 13 | Br. Daniel Fenton | 21 | Br. Victor Gutierrez |
| 7 | Br. Felipe Belleza | 13 | Mr. A de O Sales AFSC | 22 | Br. Mandy Dujunco |
| 8 | Br. Manny Hilado | 16 | Br. Jose Mari Jimenez | 26 | Br. Hilary Hun Kyi |
| 8 | Br. Kenneth Martinez | 18 | Br. Sebastian Charoen Sripuk | 31 | Br. Antonio Servando |
| 9 | Br. Alphonsus Breen | | | | |

Visitor's Calendar. Below is my schedule for January to February:

12 - 16 Jan	India 9th Delegation Chapter
19 - 23 Jan	Auckland PARC 39
26 - 28 Jan	Manila DLSP Corporation and National Mission Council Meeting
29 - 31 Jan	Japan Visit
1 Feb	Hong Kong 140th Anniversary of St. Joseph's College
8 - 19 Feb	Philippines Canonical Visits (Novitiate, Lasallian Formation Center, and Bacolod)
22 Feb - 2 Mar	Singapore Canonical Visits

Fraternally,

Br. Edmundo L. Fernandez FSC
Hong Kong



TEACHERS NEEDED.

Graduates of Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) / Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd)

Take this opportunity to be a partner in the Lasallian mission!
Email your resume at jhis.ls@delasalle.ph

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