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Holy Week Retreats. During the Holy Week, three organised retreats were held in different parts of the District. The Sectors of the Philippines and Thailand usually hold their annual retreats at this time of the year. A new initiative, however, was the Mindanao (Philippines) - Malaysia Retreat, where communities from the southern island of the Philippines and Malaysia gathered in Sabah for the first time for a common Holy Week retreat.

Philippines. “Br. Robert Schieler FSC, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools facilitated the Philippine Sector Holy Week Retreat with the theme “Challenges of the New Evangelization in the Revised Rule” held at the PHINMA Training Center, Tagaytay City on April 1 – 4. Br. Bob, as the Filipino Brothers fondly call him, served in the Philippines in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s for 11 years – 8 years in Iligan and 3 years in Bacolod. A total of 71 Brothers (FSC), four Postulants, six La Salle Sisters of Guadalupe (HGS) and 2 La Salle Sisters (LS.S.) from Vietnam attended the retreat.

“The first day began with a reflection on the Purpose, Spirit and Mission of the Institute. Using spray paint art, the Brothers in Initial Formation formed a star, the icon of the spirit of the Institute - spirit of faith. Brother Superior presented Fra Angelico’s Annunciation as an image to contemplate on Mary as a perfect model of the spirit of faith – teaching the value of wondering and waiting, inviting to listen to the Word of God, and challenging to give birth to Jesus in the world today. On Day 2, The icon, earthen jar, served as a reminder to everyone that fragile or broken as they are, they are carrying a treasure – Jesus, the model of consecrated life, who invites them to join Him in His mission of foot washing, table fellowship and boundary breaking. During the Mass of the Lord’s Supper,

Br. Jose Mari Jimenez FSC, Sector Leader of the Philippines, led the foot washing. Brothers and Sisters took turns during the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament that evening while some participated in the traditional “Visita Iglesia”, which is a pilgrimage to seven local churches practiced on Holy Thursdays.



“On the third day, Brothers and Sisters prayed for their communities to be “home and school of communion.” The heart icon was used as an invitation to love one another as Jesus loved them. Brother Superior presented the Paschal mystery as a process of transformation – death, birth, 40 days of grieving for what is lost, letting go with a blessing, and accepting the spirit of the life they are already living.

In the afternoon, novices of the Pacific Asia Regional Conference (PARC) and Scholastics of the House of Studies led the Station of the Cross before the Good Friday Rites. The final day’s reflection used the “hands in formation” icon as a reminder that the Paschal mystery makes itself known in the flesh as suggested by Rembrandt’s masterpiece, the Prophetess Anna. As shown in the painting, our hands can be instruments of new evangelization witness – by our praying hands, service – by our working hands and communion – by our journeying hand in hand. During the Easter Vigil, 16 young brothers and 1 La Salle Sister of Guadalupe renewed their vows. The retreat culminated with a festive Easter celebration where Jubilarians were honored.” *(Br. John David Ong FSC)*

Mindanao - Malaysia. “The Brothers of Mindanao and Malaysia communities had the first ever Holy Week Retreat at Pace Bene Retreat Center, Papar, Sabah, Malaysia from April 1 - 5, 2015. Br. Lawrence Humphrey FSC was the master of the retreat with the theme: “Transformation and Resurrection in Our Lives.” The sessions invited the



Brothers to look into their own lives and link it with the Holy Week themes: Life, Passion, Death, Resurrection. LEAD Visitor Br. Edmundo Fernandez FSC was present in the retreat until Good Friday morning as he had to go to Bangkok, Thailand. Br. Inigo Riola FSC coordinated the retreat with the Young Brothers. Serving as retreat

chaplain is Fr. Leonido Dolor of the Archdiocese of Lipa, Philippines.

“Br. Patrick Tierney FSC and Br. John D’Cruz FSC also facilitated a session on the Revised Rule. During the Easter Vigil, six young Brothers renewed their vows while Brothers Felipe Belleza Jr FSC (30 years) and Allan Buenavista FSC (20 years) of the Philippines; and Br. Egbertus Joikol Sevelinus Tating FSC (25 years) of Malaysia were also honored for their unwavering commitment and love for the Brothers life. During the Easter Celebration, the young brothers and the honorees led the brothers in doing the traditional Sumasau dance of Sabah.

“After the retreat, the Brothers took time off to tour around Kota Kinabalu City, the Mount Kinabalu Park, St. Martin school in Tambunan and up North Borneo, the famous Poring Hot Springs. All the Brothers present in the retreat are all looking forward for next year’s retreat whether it will still be in Malaysia or perhaps in Mindanao.” (Br. Butch Alcudia FSC)

Thailand. The Sector of Thailand held their annual Holy Week retreat at the Redemptorists’ Provincialate in Minburi, Bangkok. Br. Michael Broughton FSC was their resource person on the themes of change and transition. Br. Patrick Tierney FSC also made a presentation on the Revised Rule.



Brother Visitor flew in by Good Friday to join the Brothers in Thailand and

accepted the renewal of vows of seven (7) young Brothers. This is the biggest number of young Brothers renewing their vows in the Sector and the Thai Brothers have all reasons to celebrate this milestone in their history. In keeping with tradition, Thailand Sector Leader, Br. Stephen Kan Wongchiree FSC, handed the Obedience to each Brother during Easter.

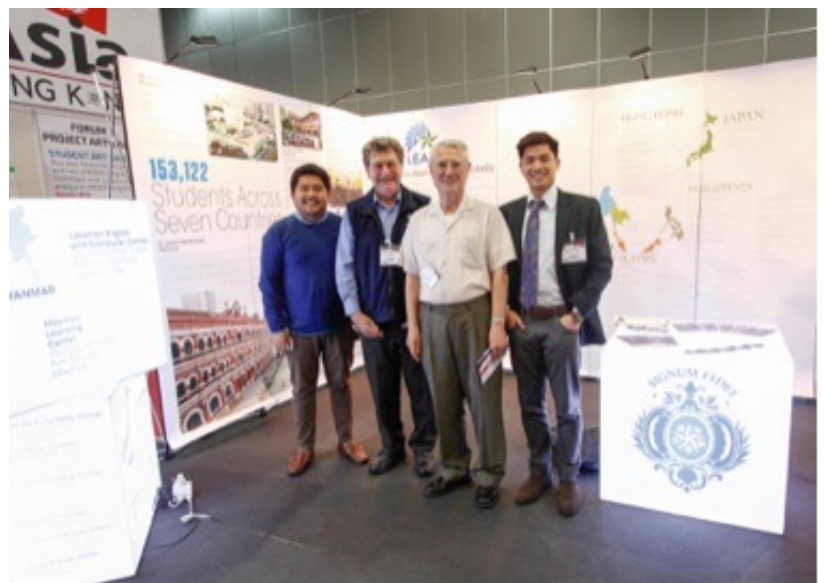
I wish to thank all the organisers of the retreats, their chaplains, Fr. Dennis Meim SVD and Fr. Nonie Dolor, and especially to the resource persons, Br. Robert Schieler, Br. Lawrence Humphrey and Br. Michael Broughton. Special thanks to Br. Patrick Tierney of Hong Kong for traveling all the way to Thailand and Malaysia in order to provide sessions on the Revised Rule. A total of 29 young Brothers renewed their vows this Easter. Let us thank the good Lord for the blessing of new vocations!



Br. Harry's 91st Birthday. "March 15 was a special day in Dasmariñas because Br Harold "Harry" Reynolds FSC celebrated his 91st Birthday in advance. (His actual birthday is on March 16). After a Eucharistic Celebration presided by the Chaplains of the Lasallian Family in Dasmariñas, a scrumptious lunch was served at the Villarosa Hall/Ballroom at De La Salle Health Sciences Institute. There were piano performances by Br Vince Fernandez FSC, Postulancy Director and Dra. Toledo - Br Harry's own Dermatologist.

"The highlight of the affair was the launching of Br Harry's book: "Youthful Hearts, Sunshine and Shattered Dreams". His book, enriched by his many years of experience, is an anthology of short stories and anecdotes that are filled with humor and lessons that lift the spirit and warm the heart. The proceeds from the sale of his book will be used to fund the treatment of indigent patients of the De La Salle University Medical Center. This event was graced by the presence of the Brothers from Dasmariñas and other Communities and special guests - close friends and former students of Br Harry - all the way from Malaysia." (Br. Sockie de la Rosa VI FSC)

LEAD in WORLDDIDAC. Last 18 - 20 March, the District participated in the WORLDDIDAC Asia 2015 at the Asia World Expo in Hong Kong. "Worlddidac brings together Ministers of Government, Universities, international speakers (Rock Stars of the speaking circuit), school leaders and teachers, and educational product and service providers. La Salle College (Hong Kong) and the Lasallian East Asia District was represented at Forum level with Br. Steve Hogan and alumni Erwin Huang chairing seasons and/or as presenters. The Lasallian East Asia District also had a booth promoting the Lasallian mission of formal and non-formal education across Asia. The Worlddidac Expo is held annually at Basel, Switzerland, but has come to Asia for the first





time. For details please go to www.worldiddacasia.com (www.lasalle.edu.hk)

Aside from the Lasallian schools in Hong Kong, teachers and students from St. Xavier's Institution (Malaysia), De La Salle Lipa and La Salle Green Hills (Philippines) also attended the exhibits and fora. Former Prime Minister of Australia, Ms. Julia Gillard, gave the keynote presentation on the final day. This was followed by a forum on Partnerships as a Driver of Student Achievement, where our very own, Dr. Carmelita Quebengco AFSC, shared her insights on the benefits of partnership and how our schools in the District are engaged in partnerships with our different stakeholders. The LEAD exhibit also inaugurated the new LEAD website: www.lasalle-east.asia

Japan Student Volunteers. “During winter vacation some of our students took part in an exposure program held in the southern part of the Philippines. Their initial motivations were not so different from those who decide to explore a new country, make new friends or run away from familiar duties. However, this experience which started three months before their departure, changed them little by little and culminated in this being a wonderful adventure. They become a part of the Sapporo dioscesis youth group who are in charge of preparing for this experience every year. This program is coordinated by Fr. Sukegawa who lived as a missionary in the Philippines.

“Easter Village is an orphanage located in Kidapawan City in the southeastern part of Cotabato Province, belonging to the islands of Mindanao. Here many indigenous peoples, migrants from Luzon and Visayas, and many Muslims live together. Central Mindanao is known for its unique situation where Christians, Muslims and indigenous people are living together. The area has witnessed many conflicts, and efforts for justice and peace.



Accordingly there are now many martyrs and victims of the conflicts and the struggle. The people really hope for peace and order. They endeavor to create a peace, order and reconciliation in spite of the repeated conflicts occurring because of hatred and misunderstandings. Who has suffered the most? Primarily, it is the children. They are the innocent victims of the conflicts in society.

“Fr. Fumio Sukegawa, a missionary priest from the Diocese of Sapporo, Japan, who pioneered the Easter Village, felt the need to respond to this cause. When he was transferred from Davao Oriental to Kidapawan

he began to think about this mission. He just wants to help those orphans who have lost their parents. He began to dream and imagine about building an orphanage. Fr. Fumio Sukegawa is the founder and the current Secretary & Treasurer of Easter Village. The people from the Diocese of Sapporo, are in solidarity with the mission of Easter Village. With a little seed of faith planted in their hearts, God makes his work flourish in these young people. Whether they are someone with an active spiritual life or someone seeking to deepen their relationship with God, this kind of experience is a way to be challenged spiritually.



“Poverty and injustice do not exist in a vacuum. Serving the poor and marginalized is a means of raising our own awareness about the institutions and structures that contribute to economic and social inequalities. During this program the volunteers were able to give their time and talents to help those in need. Chances are, they will find that they receive far more from those they have tried to serve than they can ever give. These are some of the feelings expressed by the participants after this exposure program when they came back to Japan and met their classmates:

Moku Fujito: *We Japanese people are living in a very conformable world. We have technology everywhere and we spend a lot of time interacting on our smartphones, video games and many useful gadgets. Yet, we have forgotten to enjoy nature and a simple life. For me it was very significant to learn how easy is to be happy with only few things. They prepared chicken and lechon for us, and also harvested coconuts from a tree and shared it with us. Their generosity really surprised me. Definitely these two weeks in the Philippines was a great experience and I am pretty sure it will be an unforgettable experience in my life.*

Egashira Shotaro: *I had the opportunity to participate in the Philippines exposure for almost ten days. Before leaving Japan, I was concerned about whether if I would be able to adapt to my new reality but the rugby ball which I took with me solved the situation. It was possible to experience happiness and warmth from the people. During my experience in the Philippines I realized that people in our modern society are occupied with many responsibilities as well entertaining ourselves using the internet, video games, and complicated systems, but the children in Easter Village living a simple life, enjoy what they have and who they are. Their heart is prepared to enjoy everyday's happiness.*

Nakahata Kazuk: *Before I visited the Philippines, I was worried because I was not sure if I would be able to talk in English, but once in Easter Village I become more confident because the members of the orphanage*

were so kind and gentle. We talked about our dreams, and concerns, and I figured out how we can become close to each other. I am sure I will never forget my memories of this Philippines exposure. I am very thankful for this experience and would like to go back to the Philippines again in the near future.

“The students were really energized after this experience. Some reasons for this may be they were able to experience the happiness and joy of building something together with others, they were able to learn about what they can push themselves to do. Also, they had the chance to meet people they would never otherwise met.” (Br. Victor Gutierrez FSC)

New General Councilor. “Our Rule (120c) permits the Superior to add one or two new members to the General Council. At the conclusion of the 45th General Chapter I said I would do so only after the General Council had time to reflect on the needs of the Institute for the next seven years. At its plenary session last month, the Council prepared Circular 470, Toward the Year 2021, outlining the plans and direction we have set for the Institute based on the mandate given us by the 45th General Chapter. In doing so, we concluded there is a need for an additional General Councilor. The areas of need include the promotion of Lasallian vocations, particularly to the life of the Brothers, the accompaniment of the various groups within the Lasallian Family and an additional voice and presence on the Council of a Brother from the Region with the largest concentration of Brothers, many of them in their senior years: RELEM. Based on these areas of need...



“I am happy to announce the appointment of **Brother Rafael Matas** to the General Council. A member of the District of ARLEP, Brother Rafael was a delegate to the 45th General Chapter. Currently he is engaged in ministry in Haiti. As is the case with all General Councilors, he will assist the Superior General in the government and animation of the Institute. I sincerely thank the Brothers and Partners of ARLEP for making Brother Rafael available for service to the Institute. We welcome Brother Rafael to the General Council.” (Br. Robert Schieler, FSC, Superior General | www.lasalle.org)

Birthdays. Let us remember in our prayers our dear Brothers and affiliated members who are celebrating their birthdays this April:

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| 1 Br. Benildo Feliciano | 14 Br. Peter Booncherd Ketrat | 22 ABp. Soter Fernandez AFSC |
| 3 Br. Patrick Bradley | 17 Br. Joseph Dat Hoang | 24 Mr. Jose T. Pardo AFSC |
| 5 Mrs. Monserrat Masbad AFSC | 18 Br. Mark Sixtus | 28 Br. Robert Schieler |
| 7 Br. Augustine Julian | 21 Br. Dante Amisola | 29 Br. Crisanto Moreno |
| 8 Br. Leonilo Estrellas Jr. | | |

Fraternally,

Br. Edmundo L. Fernandez FSC
Japan