

The Simple Life in Nabawan (Malaysia)



The Asrama Butitin is an innovated learning community of the De La Salle Brothers of Sabah and Sarawak. More than a hostel for students coming from villages beyond the 3 kilometer radius from the primary and secondary schools of the Nabawan town, it is also practical life skills formation centre.

Hostel boarders over the years is given the opportunity to grow in faith, to an enriched educational pursuit with the support programs of the Asrama and to experience basic life skills. A structured program is in place to ensure these opportunities are achieved and maximised each day.

The Brothers assigned in the Asrama had successfully initiated programs that has enabled them exposure in cooking, baking, catering, gardening and computer literacy. With the sustained interest of its generous partner-donors, the Asrama is complete with facilities that can allow the boarders significant hours of hands-on experience on the vocational programs like a computer laboratory, a multi-purpose hall that has a kitchen complete with all the cookery and baking machines and equipments.

The Brothers assigned in the Asrama had successfully initiated programs that has

Currently, it is offering to the boarders its newest program: Willingly I Speak English (WISE). The program hopes to train the boarders on basic conversational English.

These initiatives are apart from their formal education they are getting from the primary and secondary school of the town which is just a stone throw away.

With all these opportunities, Asrama Butitin is committed to build a youth complete with necessary life skills of the 21st century. **(Br. Butch Alcudia FSC)**

Philippine Lasallian Partners' Council Workshop

The newly appointed Lasallian Partners' Council (LPC) came together last 21 to 22 June 2015 for a planning workshop. Held at the Hotel Rafael in De La Salle University - Dasmariñas, the two days allowed the Council to look at the various areas of priority which they can focus on for the next seven years, anchored on the resolutions of the 2015 Philippine Lasallian Family Convocation (PLFC). I had the chance to join the LPC workshop to share a brief history on how the Council started in 2003 and to give them general directions with regards to LEAD.

Congratulations to the new LPC and be assured of my prayers and support!



The members of the LPC are as follows:

Jay Gervasio (Chair)
Mela Lazatin
Fritzie De Vera
Jim Tipay
Ritche Bongcaron
Nelca Villarin

Terai Barcoma
Bob Bergante
Flor Ejercito
Bev Widmaier
Keane Palatino (Ex-officio)

Live From La Salle Sangklaburi (Thailand)



We welcomed volunteers from St Bede's College, Australia. It is an on-going program that we have. This year, a group of boys from St. Bede's College, accompanied by their Brother Principal, Brother Garry Coyte FSC, together with teachers Mr Ben Wilson, Miss Laura came over to La Salle Sangklaburi. There are 10 boys including ex-student Mr Andrew Pulis. They have come along way from their homeland, Australia to be with the students to help the poor children at La Salle Sangklaburi. This year their project is to build a mini - multipurpose hall for kindergarteners. They are working very hard at their worksite with the rain pouring continuously more than 6 days. They spend their break time from work by playing with the students. it seems that they have a lot energy which can only come from God's love to play and to work.



On June 28, 2015 we celebrated the feast of St Peter and Paul. The Mass was presided over by our chaplain Fr Dominic Sarawin at the Brother's Community chapel. After the Mass we went to Pom Pii View Point for a picnic. We had a lot of fun at this riverside. The volunteers and the students of Blue Sky Home enjoyed themselves swimming, playing and eating. Let us keep them in our prayer as they continue working. They volunteers will leave La Salle Sangklaburi on July 3 for Bangkok and will fly home on July 6. **(Br. Benedict Chaiwat Panomwarochai FSC)**



Journeying With Hope (Japan)

On 29 June until 1 July the Sendai Diocese held the 5th National Assembly on the Reconstruction Assistance after the East Japan Earthquake & Tsunami. Out of the whole country, the effects of the 2011 triple disaster has been more felt in Sendai Diocese which comprises the three prefectures of Fukushima, Miyagi (Sendai) and Iwate, in the Tohoku area of Japan.

About 100 people from all over the country, with representation of almost every Diocese of Japan gathered for the event. The first two days, divided on a group of about 40 people to visit the Fukushima area, and 60 people for Iwate and Miyagi areas, were devoted to know in-situ the current situation of the disaster zones still attended by Caritas on those places. The third day was held in Sendai's Cathedral with the participation of three Bishops and about 20 priests with the 100 participants, devoting the whole morning to general reports and prospective plans for the near future.



Caritas Japan's relief and reconstruction activities, with the help of Caritas Internationalis, have focused on the Sendai Diocese which contains most of the disaster area. Currently the number of people living in temporary housing or facilities considered equivalent to temporary housing are still over 240,000 people. Construction of new housing for victims of the disaster is underway in line with reconstruction plans of the country, but because of the difficulty in finding suitable sites and shortages of labor and materials as well as soaring costs, reconstruction is behind schedule. The Fukushima area, which has continued to be affected by the nuclear accident that followed the tsunami, is facing yet more problems and complications.

Although already four years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake, in order that the people of Tohoku not feel forgotten, men and women from throughout Japan continue to give long term services to assist rebuild their lives. At their February 2014 regular meeting, the Catholic Bishops of Japan resolved to continue the Catholic Church's involvement in reconstruction efforts for a further three years period.

Caritas Japan's support is not limited to Church activities. Caritas supports local people whose needs may be overlooked by public agencies that focus on large scale projects. In the period between April 2013 to September 2014 Caritas Japan had allocated a total of 301,990,971 (JPY) to its different programs and projects. This amount of money had been collected both within Japan as well as from Caritas Internationalis.

During the closing Mass concelebrated by three Bishops and about 20 priests at Sendai's Cathedral, in his homily the Bishop remarks emphasized: "We at Caritas Japan want to thank you for the support you have given this effort in the past and we hope that we can continue to rely upon your understanding and cooperation in the future."

(Br. Rodrigo Trevino FSC)

La Salle Primary School, Hong Kong Visits La Salle Green Hills Grade School, Philippines



The La Salle Green Hills Grade School Department gave a warm welcome to the delegates of the Student Exchange Program from La Salle Primary School (Kowloon, Hong Kong) during the LC assembly held at the FMAC on 30 June 2015. The delegation, led by their adult leader, Mr. Simon Yu, is composed of eight pupils who have come to experience the Filipino Lasallian tradition during the week-long program. They are assigned to different foster families. This year's activities are a blend of classroom interaction, visit to a supervised school, an excursion, and focus group discussions about the highlights of their visit to our school.

Daniel Choi, Primary 6 Pupil from LSPS , Hong Kong:

Today, on the exposure trip, we went to Manila Ocean Park. What struck me the most was the shock of learning the cruelty of the fishermen towards the sharks when they hunted their fins. They simply cut off their fins and left them to die in the treacherous waters. Among all the activities, I liked the penguin talk show the most, because everyone was acting dumb and saying that the penguin was a hen! I liked Snow Village the least because I never got to take photos because we rushed. The most important lesson I learnt was that we must not eat babyfish because it will damage the wildlife and stop the population growing.

Luis Victoria, Grade 6 Pupil from La Salle Green Hills, Philippines:

Eight LSGH pupils took our guest brothers to our Manila Ocean Park. I was one of those who joined the group. Before we left, we were eager to see what was in store for us. When we arrived, we saw our native Filipino marine creatures. Then we went to a very cold place; my hands and mouth were freezing! It was -5 degrees celsius! Then I bought my stuffed manatee, Guff, at the souvenir shop. We then went to a custom toy store, where I also RKO'd a minion! After that, we saw Philippine Eagles, and one almost dumped on someone's head! Then we went to a "Penguin Talk Show" and experienced a delight of our marine life. We saw and touched a stingray and left. I have realized, during this excursion, the importance of preserving and caring for marine life, which is a value taught of us as Lasallians.

(Ms. Ace Lyn U. Miranda, LSGH)



Investiture of Br. Ray Suplido as the 23rd President of De La Salle University, Manila

I was able to attend the Investiture of Br. Ray Suplido FSC as the 23rd President of DLSU. As Brother Visitor, I administered his Oath of Office. Br. Ray was nominated by the DLSU Board of Trustees to take the place of Br. Ricky Laguda FSC who took on larger responsibilities when he accepted the assignment to be the General Councillor for our region.

Br. Ray finished double Bachelor degrees in Education and Arts at DLSU, magna cum laude. He also has a bachelor's degree and licentiate in Psychology from the Gregorian University, Rome. His doctorate, with high distinction, in Counselling Psychology is from DLSU. He was Visitor of the Philippine District, Novice Master, and General Councillor under Br. John Johnston FSC. Before taking on the helm of DLSU, he was President and Chancellor at University of St. La Salle in Bacolod.

Congratulations Br. Ray! Be assured of our prayers and support.

(Photograph taken from **Taga Litrato's** Facebook Album. For more pictures click: <https://goo.gl/GrPjMg>)

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The Official Newsletter of the St. Joseph's Institution, Singapore is available online. I must say that the newsletter is very well written with a very creative lay out. Thank you Br. Kelvin for the heads up soon this. Click this link to view this month's current issue and past issues: <http://goo.gl/zdW9UT>

A Gift from God

Bro Nicholas Seet, FSC By Gregory Tan

"I find great meaning in being a brother and being in the classroom with the students. This gives you a great sense of fulfilment and I thank God for this, each student is so unique and special in God's eyes."

A small, bright room furnished with comfy seats overlooks St. Patrick's School's parade square from the Brothers' residence. Over the gentle hum of air conditioning, I sat down to talk with Brother Nicholas Seet, a Lasallian brother for 28 years. He is also the only full-time brother-educator at St. Patrick's.

As Lasallians, we see the brothers in their white cassocks in S.I., sometimes even in our classrooms. How did they become religious brothers? When did they decide that this was the life for them? For Brother Nicholas, it was as early as his primary school days. "From a very young age, probably 8 or 10, when I was in St. Michael's Primary School, the thought had come to my mind about being a brother or a priest. So the thought has been there throughout my growing years. But at that time, I did not know if I wanted to be a brother or a priest, all I felt was a great attraction to this kind of life."

From St. Michael's Primary School (now St. Joseph's Institution Junior), Brother Nicholas proceeded to S.I. and subsequently Catholic Junior College. Throughout his education, he had encountered many brothers who made an impact on him. "These brothers and their presence in the school reminded me of warmth and kept religion in my mind. It also brought into my mind questions like: What is the meaning of God? What's life all about?"

Brother Nicholas, soon found out just what he was called to do. "As I grew older, and saw all the brothers who were there from when I was in

primary school to junior college, I thought I would like to be able to minister to young people. As a priest, you minister to people of all ages. As a brother, they are still young when you're with them. I think young people are very energetic, open, and they have all sorts of ideas and I think that's something wonderful, and I really thank God for this vocation."

But what is the role of a brother-educator in these young men's lives? Brother Nicholas likes to think of his role as akin to an older sibling. "Basically, we are called brothers. I see myself as an older brother to our students whether or not they are Christians. And if they can become good,



responsible human beings and good citizens, I would have fulfilled my role as this older brother."

When asked about what kind of person he hopes his students will become, the emphasis goes to good character as an important trait. "I certainly want them to do well in their studies because they need to get a good job so they can look after their families. But the character of a person is very important to me, the sense of honesty, integrity and resilience. Also, my wish is for every student who goes through our schools to be a man or woman who looks after others. It would be great to see our Lasallian giving back to the needy in society when you're in life. I think that would be a good test for our Lasallian formation that we give them."

In Singapore and across the world, the number of Lasallian brothers is dwindling. This, however, does not deter Brother Nicholas as much as one might expect it to. "There are two things I need to take into. Firstly, we have many good teachers in our schools, we call them Lasallian educators, and they carry on the mission of our founders. Because there are so few brothers, really the work of Lasalle continues in the work of our educators and they are very important. At the same time, we need to have more brothers, we ought to try harder to invite more young men to join us as brothers. And I want to repeat that this vocation as a brother is very fulfilling. It is a gift that God has given us and you'll never regret it. For our partners, it's also a vocation for them to carry on the work of Lasalle as lay teachers. So while it's true that the number of brothers in world has fallen, the work in schools and education centres around the world has increased so God is doing something. But, yes, we do need more brothers, and you should consider it, Gregory."

I uttered a nervous chuckle and quickly changed the subject. Many students, especially young ones who

are considering religious life, would be curious to know what a day in the life of a Lasallian brother is like. Brother Nicholas was happy to take us through his usual routine. "In our community here, we have morning prayer at 5:30am, followed by meditation. Then we attend the morning worship mass of Holy Family Church at 6:15 am. We come back by about 7:50 am, then I join the boys here at 7:56 am for a short prayer. Then the school days run until about 6:00 pm when we have our evening prayer and meal, we discuss about the day's events. I sleep at about 10:30 pm and the next day comes along."

Despite this seemingly routine routine, Brother was quick to assure me that his days never feel as dull as they sound. "I find great meaning in being a brother and being in the classroom with the students. Especially when the old boys come back and you see how they've grown and matured so much as you would say, 'Did I really have a role in their growing up?' We've done just a small part for them and they run out to be such fine young men. This gives you a great sense of fulfilment and I thank God for this, each student is so unique and special in God's eyes. Of course some days I can be feeling when there is a difficult day in class, students being difficult or things not going according to plan, there are ups and downs. But having brothers in the community to help and support in



something I really appreciate. In the evening when we share our day's events, it really helps and I always feel supported by the brothers in the community."

Sitting next to Brother Nicholas, one cannot doubt that there is truth in what he says. He makes a sense of calmness and fullness that you would not expect from someone who leads their life surrounded by secondary school boys. And yet, Brother Nicholas Seet exists as a testament to the strength of God he so often references.

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Portrait by Bro Nicholas Seet. The group photo: Brothers John Farnham, Nicholas Seet, Galleo Hino, Andrew Tan, Thomas Loo, Andrew Thomas, Anthony Pua, Mr. Giovanni Fernandez, Lawrence Kumpung and Jason Goh.

Birthdays

Warm birthday greetings to our Celebrants in July!

Domingo Villamil	02 July	Dominic Chamlong	16 July
Angelo Paragas	09 July	Roberto Casingal	22 July
Butch Alcudia	10 July	Jeffrey Chan	22 July
Thomas Gaw Lu	12 July	Oliver Rogers	22 July
Egbertus Joikul	14 July	Mark Maheu	24 July
Jaime Dalumpines	15 July		

Visitor's Schedule

1st Week of July Hong Kong, Provincialate Philippines, JHIS Bagac	4th Week of July Philippines, District Council Strategic Planning
2nd Week of July Myanmar, Maymyo	5th Week of July Thailand, Sampran
3rd Week of July Singapore Hong Kong, Provincialate	

Health and Wellness

Real men don't hold it in. Brothers I'm sure we've all experienced the urge to urinate whether we're in the classroom in the middle of a lecture, in the middle of a school meeting, or in the plane travelling. *Ignoring a brimming bladder could do some serious damage*, according to Judd W. Moul, M.D., F.A.C.S., Director of the Duke Prostate Center Division of Urologic Surgery. *If you hold it in to avoid public restrooms, for example, you could be more likely to develop long-term urinary tract symptoms like frequent and painful urination.* Read the entire article at: <http://goo.gl/jB4xKV>

Fraternally,

Br. Edmundo Fernandez
Myanmar