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Pastoral Visit to Japan. From Manila we flew to Tokyo via Narita. We stayed overnight and flew the next day to Kagoshima where we spent a day and a half with the Brothers of La Salle Kagoshima. On the afternoon of the 12th we flew to Hakodate in Hokkaido and spent two nights with the Brothers of Hakodate La Salle. On the 14th we took the Shinkansen to Sendai where we spent the rest of our time until we flew out. Tom had to return to Hong Kong on the 16th as he had a commitment to attend to. I returned to Hong Kong on the 17th. The following are notes of the visit:

- La Salle Kagoshima has four Brothers namely, Jose del Coss, Br. Fujita, Br. Fujikami and Br. Suzuki. However Br. Fujikami and Br. Suzuki are in retirement homes and regularly visited by Jose and Br. Fujita. Jose is Principal of the school and Director of the house while Fujita keeps himself busy by continuing to help in the finances of the sector and doing some parish work. He also helps other religious learn Japanese. He lives a very active life and uses the bicycle a lot. We attended an intimate birthday dinner for him while we were there. Together with Jose, we were also able to spend some time with Br. Fujikami in the nursing home. We did not have enough time to visit Br. Suzuki.
- Hakodate La Salle has three Brothers namely: Andre Labelle, Fermin Martinez and Mark Maheu. Andre is the Director of the community and the chair of the board of Hakodate La Salle. Mark has a ministry of presence to the students and meets them daily as they enter the school in the morning. Fermin is Principal and is kept busy with the day to day running of the high school. I was able to interview three key Lasallian partners who help out the Brothers in the running of the school: Mr. Inoue who is the Vice Principal and a long time collaborator of the Brothers, Mr. Otokayama, the "Head Teacher" and Mr. Shimizu, in charge of the boarders. On our last evening we also met and interacted with a group of students who are members of the "Mission Club".
- The 35th Community. There are 35 communities and we visited the 35th community, Sendai, on the 14th of September. Sendai is where La Salle Welfare Home is but it is also where the Provinciate traditionally is. The Director of the community is Antonio Cubillas, a full time staff at the welfare home. Rodrigo is the Director of the welfare home and the Sector Leader so he makes an effort to divide his time and energy between his two responsibilities. Br. Ohtomo, 88 years old, is still active and is involved with the parish. He often does translations for the religious in the area. Br. Ishi is in a retirement home in Sendai and we were able to visit him and attend a function wherein he represented the residents. Domingo Villamil and Victor Gutierrez are preparing for their ministry after four years of language studies --- two years of English and two years of Japanese. In their 30s, they are the youngest in the sector of Japan.
- I had a relatively free day on the 16th and Antonio drove Ohtomo, Mark Maheu and myself to some of the tsunami – damaged areas in the Miyagi Prefecture. While about 90% of the affected areas have been cleaned and debris sorted out, there were still some cars and boats scattered about and some heavily – damaged houses still not taken down. We could not get near the coastline as it was cordoned off by police. The La Salle Welfare Home was not affected as it is located inland and is situated on high ground. Let us continue to pray for the recovery of Japan.

I wish to thank Sector Leader, Rodrigo Trevino for organizing the visit and to all the Brothers for a meaningful and fruitful pastoral visit.

Fraternally,



LEAD Provinciate
Hong Kong