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Sector of Malaysia Retreat and Assembly. I attended the Sector of Malaysia retreat and assembly at Stella Maris Center in Penang from 10 – 16 December. The retreat started in the afternoon of the 10th until the morning of the 12th. The retreat master was Fr. Sebastian SJ from India who made excellent presentations on Interiority and Inter Religious Dialogue. Prayer time, meditations and the Eucharist were seamlessly integrated into his presentations.

On the morning of the 13th we had the Sector Council meeting. The Sector Assembly, from the afternoon of the 13th and the whole day of the 14th, approved the Lines of Action that the council put together after a year of consultation and reflection with the Brothers and the Lasallian Family. The vision for the revitalization of the sector of Malaysia is a two-part document entitled “Being Brothers (Part 1) and Lasallians (Part 2) in Malaysia Today”. Though wide in scope and ambitious in its plans, it is nonetheless a document of hope as the Brothers and Lasallian partners try to bring new life and energy to the mission in Malaysia.



The retreat and assembly were capped by St. Xavier's Institution's Homecoming on the 15th on the occasion of the school's 160th year. One of the highlights of the program was the brothers "re enacting" the first Brothers' trip from the pier to the school via trishaw.

I wish to thank the Brothers of the sector of Malaysia especially Br. Anthony Rogers, Sector Leader, for the organizing the retreat and the assembly.



Retreat on Inter - Faith Spirituality. I am sharing the reflections of Br. Vincent Corkery on the Malaysian Sector retreat facilitated by Fr. Sebastian Painadath S.J. last 10 – 12 December 2012 in Penang:

“Fr. Sebastian Painadath S.J. is a well-known master of Asian Spirituality from Kerala in India where he runs an Ashram. Some twenty Brothers, including Brothers Dodo and Tom, attended his retreat on Inter-Faith Spirituality in Penang. It was much appreciated.

“Fr. Sebastian began by tracing the inner journey from head to heart, the head representing all that is rational while the heart is seen as the divine space within us. At head level we experience duality, and diverse claims to fact and truth. At heart level all is one, a total harmony with a sense of communion with all traditions, the whole community of life and material creation.



“He spoke of the tree as a symbol of this communion which is experienced at heart level. The root represents the Father, Jesus is the stem and the Holy Spirit is the sap which nourishes the branches.

“He spoke of John’s Gospel, where using the language of poetry, John traces Jesus’ own inner journey to the heart. “I and the Father are one.” The deeper we go the closer we are to the Father, to all humanity, all life, all creation. We find all are ONE. No duality. At head level we promote respect for diversity, at heart level we experience all - embracing unity.”

The Lasallians have landed. The following article is written by Andrea Filmer and Arnold Loh from the “The Star Online” of Malaysia:

“Like they did 160 years ago, the Lasallian Brothers arrived on the shores of Penang. Twenty of the religious order, who have dedicated their lives to teaching and education, touched down at the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal in George Town on Saturday to conclude the grand anniversary celebration of St Xavier’s Institution (SXI).



“SXI, which was founded in 1852, was the first Lasallian school established in Asia. So the anniversary also marked the 160th year of the arrival of the Brothers in the region.

“Dressed in their customary white cassocks, the Brothers arrived not by boat this time, but by bus from Stella Maris in Tanjung Tokong where they were attending their annual retreat. They made a symbolic walk to the Queen Victoria Memorial Clock Tower before they were whisked away in trishaws heading for SXI.

“Their procession was heralded by flag bearers and the SXI Marching Band members, with their traditional bagpipes blowing. Despite rain falling persistently, the 1km parade went off



without a hitch with the school prefects and representatives from uniform bodies trailing behind the Brothers.

“When the parade reached the school in Farquhar Street, the country, state and school flags were raised before the Brothers and their Catholic counterparts attended sunset Mass in the school chapel.

“At 7pm, the party started with the opening of the SXI 160th Anniversary Homecoming Dinner. Old Xaverians from all over the country, dating back to graduating classes from the early 1950s, were seen pouring through the school gates.



“They thronged the old school corridors and visited three large colour co-ordinated tents that offered a variety of local and Western delights.

“During dinner, De La Salle Brothers brother director Anthony Rogers said SXI would introduce vocational and technology syllabus into the school’s education. He said this would provide students with useful skills to enhance their abilities.

“‘We have already started baking and automotive classes here, and we are planning to increase the number of vocational subjects soon,’ he said.

“Rogers said the expansion was in line with the National Education Review 2012-2035 developed by the Education Ministry. ‘We are working closely with the Government to conduct vocational and technology training in all La Salle schools,’ he added.

“He said the De La Salle Brothers had also successfully started automotive classes in SK La Salle, Petaling Jaya, with the help of Tan Chong Motors and they aimed to provide certificate, diploma and higher diploma qualifications in the schools for such subjects. Special focus, he added, would be paid to the English Language as well.

“‘Without a strong command of English, our students will not be able to read manuals or use the Internet effectively,’ he said, adding that they would build English Language labs to support the vocational and technology syllabus.” <http://thestar.com.my/metro/story.asp?file=/2012/12/17/north/12468092&sec=north>



SXI's 160th anniversary bash ends with a bang. This is another article written by Andrea Filmer from the "The Star Online" of Malaysia:

"St Xavier's Institution (SXI) welcomed her sons home in style for the 160th Anniversary Homecoming Dinner which marked the finale of the school's grand anniversary celebrations. While scores of Old Boys made their way to SXI, 20 LaSallian Brothers arrived 1km away at the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal, rekindling memories of their Brothers' arrival by sea a century and a half ago.



"The Brothers walked from the pier to the Queen Victoria Memorial Clocktower where trishaws were waiting to transport them. They came from Stella Maris in Tanjung Tokong where they were attending their annual retreat. The Brothers headed to SXI led by the school's marching band while prefects and representatives of uniformed bodies followed.

"Arriving at the school just before sunset, the Brothers and other Christians proceeded to the SXI chapel for Mass.

"As dusk fell, the celebration peaked as scores of Old Xaverians, some who left school in the 1950s, greeted each other during the homecoming dinner. SXI, which was founded in 1852, was the first LaSallian school established in Asia.

"The grand 160th celebration, which has been commemorated in several events this year, also marked the arrival of the LaSallian Brothers in the country and region." <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/12/16/nation/12467810&sec=nation>

Ahoy, St. Xavier's! A news video on the 160th year of the arrival of the Brothers in Asia and the celebration of St. Xavier's Institution can be viewed at this Malaysia "The Star Online" website: <http://videos.thestar.com.my/View.aspx?vid=9545&cid=1>



LEAD Directors' Workshop 2013. Preparations for the LEAD Directors' Workshop are well underway. To be held on 01 - 03 February 2013 at the Shah Village Hotel, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, all the current and prospective Community Directors will assemble for a three (3) day workshop on "Leadership in a Religious Community." The keynote speaker will be Sr. Miriam D. Ukeritis, CSJ. Sister Miriam is a member of the Albany Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and has served two terms on the Province Leadership Team. She is perhaps best known as co-researcher for the FORUS (*Future of Religious Orders in the United States*) study, which is the result of the Religious Life Futures Project. She currently leads the Southdown Institute, a residential treatment center for clergy and religious near Toronto, Canada.



The last day will be dedicated to practical matters in the District such as "Community Annual Programme," "Health Profile," "Guidelines on Ethical Behavior with Minors," and "Web Safety Guidelines." A Commissioning Service which includes the "Handing of Obedience" to the Community Directors will culminate the workshop. The "General Information" on the workshop was already sent to the Sector Leaders and participants. Other details such as the daily schedule will follow. The LEAD Council 8 will convene on 04 February. Other District meetings such as the Formation Committee will also be arranged during these dates. I enjoin all Sector Leaders and participants to coordinate regularly with Br. Anthony Rogers and Br. Richie Yap. Thank you, Br. Jose del Coss and Br. Andre Labelle for being the first two Brothers to confirm their attendance by promptly sending their Personal Information Sheet!

Fraternally,

Br. Edmundo L. Fernandez FSC
Philippines



12 for Christmas 2012. The following websites offer interesting information as we enter into the season of Christmas:

- 12 Questions of Christmas: <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCB285AAAA8ACAB1A>
- 12 Random Acts of Kindness for Christmas: <http://pinterest.com/pin/33354853461609413/>
- 12 Days of Christmas Devotionals: <http://christianity.about.com/od/christmasdevotionals/qt/12dayschristmas.htm>
- 12 Ways to Stay Fit for Christmas: <http://www.sooperarticles.com/health-fitness-articles/12-ways-stay-fit-christmas-1128063.html>