



WISHING YOU A VERY,
MERRY CHRISTMAS

← St Peter's Church, Staten Island, NY
This stained glass window is in memory of John Kenney MAHONEY's great-grandparents, Mary & Patrick Kenney.

Dear Brother Oblates,

October 29th I was sitting on an airplane flying to Rome for a meeting of new Major Superiors in Rome. Some used to refer to this meeting in a joking way as a "Charm School for new provincials". Putting jokes aside, the purpose of this meeting was very clear: we were to have a serious study of the work done on the Immense Hope Project, the Mission Statement and strategies drawn up by all the Oblates in each Unit over a three year period. Immense Hope was a good beginning and it is an ongoing project. The Immense Hope Project is a time to refocus.

It was inspiring to hear Oblates like Andre Boyer, the new provincial of Lacombe in Canada. Despite the diminishment of the numbers in this province the Oblates have drawn up new strategies for growth and new apostolates to answer the needs of the church.

Father General Wilhelm Steckling and the General Treasurer Rufus Whitley presented a global picture of the demographic changes in the Oblate world. The Oblates are growing in Africa, South America and Asia. However the main sources of finances have been in Europe and America where the numbers are diminishing. How will the Oblates face this new situation?

Personnel/vocations is a question of life and death. There is only a limited supply of Oblates from the outside.



We here in Japan have been blessed with Oblates from Sri Lanka and India. Soon we will be joined by a seminarian from the Philippines and Brazil. But we must ask the question "Are we ready to welcome youth into our mission and communities?"



Orvieto

After hearing the different reports from the Units in the Oblate World I do think there is a turnaround in some areas of the congregation and reason for Immense Hope.

It wasn't all work. One Sunday, we went to Orvieto. Orvieto is a mediaeval town on a hilltop. It has a very beautiful church. It also produces some very fine wine. It was very cold and I took Miguel Pipolo for a glass of wine. It was there he agreed to come to Japan to direct our annual retreat.

I wish you all a happy Christmas and grace-filled New Year.

Ange, OMI

General Delegation of Japan Superior

New Assignments ; January 2006

Jude Peirispulle to Koga, Pastor and Director of the House

Bradly Rozairo to Kochi, Pastor and Director of the House

Francis Hahn to Itami, Pastor and Director of the House

Edward Williams to Zendana, Assistant

Bro. Nobuhiko Yagi to Kochi (December 2005)

Bro. Kenichi Furukawa to Koga for ministry as a deacon (December 2005)

Directors for our annual Retreats

2006 Miguel Pipolo, Provincial of Brazil

2007 Phil Estrella, Director of the de Mazenod Experience in Aix

2008 Andre Boyer, Provincial of Lacombe Canada



Merry Christmas to all

Ken-ichi FURUKAWA

I had good perpetual vows on October. I am happy for this. I have almost finished my thesis at Nanzan University. So I have to move to Koga from Nagoya. Now I am preparing for my ordination of Deacon. I am going to have this ordination on 26th Feb 2006 in Koga. Please pray for me. I wish you have a happy new year.



BECOMING FATHER AND MOTHER

Giovanni ZEVOLA

The man is waiting in the long corridor of the hospital where his wife is going to deliver their first baby; the first encounter, the dates on week-ends, the timid proposal for a marriage, the honeymoon, the small apartment, big enough to accommodate their dreams and hopes, and now finally the long awaited first child! The long and anxious silence is broken by the cry of the baby and there in the same room husband and wife embrace each other with tears of joy; they are now father and mother. The birth of a child is a fundamental event in the lives of the parents, they are now bound by a love that brings new life in the world.

How similar is the life of anyone of us who is moved by the desire to bring new life in the Church by starting a new ministry or activity. I can see myself back when I had no other means but to greet foreign workers at the bus terminal, and then a rented office in a busy city, the meeting with the bishop to accept such new apostolate and finally the birth of Emmaus office. That moment was like the birth of a firstborn to me, I felt that I was becoming a father.

Let's go back to the new parents at the hospital and from there move forward following the first steps of

their child. From kindergarten, to primary school, and university and then the time when the parents have to let him go his way, to have his own life and that means leaving home. Ask your own parents and they will tell their mixed feelings, but for sure that is the moment when they really and completely are becoming father and mother, their love is now a generative one, a new life has been entrusted to the world. This is the experience of all of us as missionaries, falling in love with the Church we try to serve, trying to create new apostolate, let them grow and...go!

All of this is a parable of my experience here in Korea while ministering to the migrants, the time has come to entrust this ministry to others, with confidence and a deep sense of gratitude.

May the Lord "from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named" (Ephesians 3, 15) grant us hearts of fathers and mothers.



Time to Change.....

Jude PEIRISPULLE

Merry Christmas to everybody....

When Christmas comes closer people who are engaged in Churches, Kindergartens, other places where people prepare for Christmas, they get busy. Programs, shopping, arrangements, sermons, talks... what not...

Adding to that some are busy moving things to a new place, as I'm also trying to do. I have no problem of moving things, hoping they will fit into my car. But the experience I have had, people I have met and memories I have will not be easy to be parted with and to say let it go. But I'm sure those experiences I had here and the people I met here in Kochi will be an asset to start my new assignment in Koga.

As I know for sure new people, new experiences, new challenges will make a person grow. I don't know how much I'm ready for it, but this is what I'm going to

face in the new year 2006, and there will be a meaning to saying

Happy New Year.....



教皇謁見

John IWO

今年2005年4月3日、ヨハネ・パウロ2世教皇が亡くなり、新教皇ベネディクト16世が、選出された。この選挙には、白柳枢機卿と浜尾枢機卿が参加されたことは、歴史的な記録すべき事柄であった。歴史を見てみると、1585年3月23日、420年前、織田信長の時代に、当時の教皇グレゴリオ13世に謁見した4人のサムライ少年がいた。1582年(天正10年)2月20日、イエズス会巡察使バリニャーノ神父に連れられて、長崎から伊東マンショ(13歳)、千々石(ちぢわ)ミゲル(13歳)、中浦ジュリアン(14歳)、原マルチノ(12歳)が出港。当時は帆船で、風に頼る航海であった。長崎からマカオ、マラッカ、コロンボ、ゴア、マダガスカル島沖、アフリカ喜望峯沖を通過して大西洋のセントヘレナ島に寄港し、それよりポルトガルのリスボンに着き上陸した。長崎を出てから2年6ヶ月という大航海であった。1584年8月10日、リスボンから5ヶ月ほどの旅で、スペインのイベリア半島を横断し、アリカンテの港から船でローマに向かった。スペインでは至る所で大歓迎にあった。長崎を出てから3年になるので、伊東、千々石は16歳、原は15歳、中浦は17歳になっていた。フィレンツェに上陸した後、シエナを経てローマに向かった。1583年3月22日、ローマに着いた。長崎を出てから3年1ヶ月であった。翌日3月23日土曜日、84歳の教皇グレゴリオ13世に謁見した。教皇は病気のジュリアンを抱擁された。300発の祝砲がとどろき、教皇は涙を流して少年たちを迎えた。4月3日再び謁見した。そして一週間後4月10日、教皇は急に亡くなった。4人は教皇グレゴリオ13世の盛大な葬儀に参列した。4月25日から行われた教皇選挙によって、教皇シウスト5世が選ばれた。5月1日は新教皇の戴冠式に参列した。新教皇は4人に、「平和で強く、神に身を捧げる忠実な戦死でありなさい。」と言われ、騎士の称号を与えた。マンショは「自らの鮮血、生命をもって、神の教えを保護することを切に誓います」とお礼を力強く述べた。6月3日、70日間滞在したローマを後に、ナポリ、ベネチア、ミラノを経てジェノバから出港し、1585年8月8日、スペインのバルセロナに着き、9月4日、バルセロナを出発し、11月末にリスボンに着いた。1587年4月12日、リスボンを発ち、1587年5月29日ゴア着、1588年4月22日ゴア出港、1590年7月28日、8年半の旅を終えて長崎に帰ってきた。4人とも20歳を過ぎた青年になっていた。現在は15時間もあればローマまで行くことができ、毎年たくさんの日本人がバチカンを訪れ、教皇の一般謁見に参列している。

クリスマスおめでとうございます。

新年おめでとうございます。

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

2006年1月22日(日)、午前10時から吉塚教会創立50周年記念行います。皆様の御来場をお待ちしています。

We invite you all for the 50 years' anniversary of the Foundation of Yoshizuka - parish.



25 anniversary of Oyagyo-groupwork (groupwork for Parents)

Leonard SIMONS



On November 23 we celebrated 25 years of oyagyo-groupwork. When I was asked 25 years ago by a group of parents to start a course to improve their relation with the children I thought it to be only for a few times. But 72 groups over 25 years was beyond my expectation. Mrs. Takei Yuu a non-fiction writer from Tokyo was one of our guest and in her speech she mentioned it to be exceptional. An other guest was Fr. Ray Bourgoine. A Kochi Newspaper - journalist joined us for the whole event and wrote an article in the Kochi Newspaper (Dec. 3 Page 16).

Giving talks about Volunteer work, Inochi no Denwa (Life-Line) and Domestic violence I have come to the conclusion that childhood is important because the formation during childhood is the basis for Life, and most problems can be traced back to childhood, which is called "reactive attachment disorder." A reason the more why I think oyagyo-group-work is vital.

Someone who wants to know more about that can consult the book "Ningen ni narenai kodomotachi" (Kids who aren't able to become a human being) by Kyokawa Terumoto, who is very detailed about the environment wherein the children have to grow up.

I wish you all a blessed and joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Blessed Christmas! Happy New Year!

Jan VAN HOYDONCK

It looks and feels as if I sent these greetings only yesterday, and here we are again, a year older, hopefully somewhat wiser, and I hope for everyone in good health. For myself there has not been much change in what I wrote a year ago. I am still going to Ikeda twice a month for as long as my health and age permit, until a final date has been set on the further destination of the place.

The closing year has been a turbulent one, over almost the whole world. Natural calamities have taken many lives, and man-made ones continue to do the same.

May Our Lord hear our prayers and grant peace

and tranquility everywhere.

I am looking forward to meeting you all in Kochi on December 27.

May God bless you, and our Heavenly Mother protect you..



A MOST BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR

Ray BOURGOIN

Hope this finds you all able to cope with whatever comes by you. None of us are devoid of aches and pains and more aches and more pains, sometimes more than we can seem to bear. Christmas is an opportunity to let everyone know that whatever you face, good or bad, I'm praying for you that the Savior, in some way, help you through your journey. It might be the smile of a friend or the warm conversation of a brother or any other sign, but the Savior is there to support you.

It has been an eventful year. In mid-January Jude announced that he didn't feel fit for taking over the treasury, nor did Brad. I turned to Fran and he accepted, with the condition that I would be available to help him make the transition. After Rome said OK, he came to Kochi twice a month till November for 'indoctrination'! Now, he feels he can handle the duties, with an occasional phone call or e-mail.

As you know, as one chapter was closed, another opened up with my assignment to cover a second kindergarten. Of course, each kindergarten has its own traditions, so a lot of my work is respecting each one's traditions on the one hand, but making things more Montessorian on the other. In conjunction with the new job, I had to attend, in late June, a 2 day course in order to become the one responsible for keeping the kindergarten safe from fires. I received my license as a fire expert! I'm due to go stateside sometime in 2006, but I can't finalize the dates. Usually I try to go in August but this coming year the Aki kindergarten is a central player in the annual private kindergartens' association meeting and I must be here for that. That takes place August 24 to August 26! However, I want to avoid the winter months for more reasons than one.

One other note, I thought I was rid of finances altogether, but in the Spring the Bishop of the diocese asked me to serve on the Diocesan Financial Affairs Committee. We are 9, including 2 lay people, and I'm the only foreigner! It makes for "interesting" meetings!

Please note my change of FAX number, which was tied to the treasurer's office. Fran took the one I used till now with him to his new assignment. The one I give you now is the parish FAX number at Nakajimacho. Fax 088-872-3653. Aki remains the same.

Have a wonderful holiday season. See you all at the Christmas Gathering, December 27.



Merry Christmas and a Happy 2006

Bill MAHER

Every year I start writing this letter in November which lacks the spirit but to get it out on time it's necessary. Yesterday I was singing Christmas songs at the prison since I won't be seeing those fellows again till after Christmas. But when the real day arrives I want

you to be assured that you'll be in my prayers in a very special way. Looking back at everything that has happened in the last year I can only thank the Lord since, compared with so many others, He's showered His blessings upon me and I hope He's done the same for you. With all the hurt and hate in the world today we certainly need a Savior. And I haven't found anyone better than Jesus Christ. Let's stick close to him in the coming year and ask him for the gift of His Peace for our planet.

I have a theory about the Chicago White Sox winning the World Series. I think that Msgr. Ignatius McDermott who passed away on the last day of last year, used his clout in heaven to bring this great event about. Now let's pray that he does the same for the Cubs. I've received a lot of articles about him and I thank the Lord for having given me such a good influence in my life even from first grade grammar school.

Another big event in my life is the fact that I'm going to France for three months for the De Mazenod Experience. It's a renewal course and retreat based on the Oblate Founder. It takes place in Aix en Provence, his birth place and the place where he founded the Oblates. It goes from Jan. 10th till Apr. 3rd. Everything just seemed to fall into place even getting a priest to fill in for me here. This might become my celebration for my 40th year of ordination instead of a trip to the States, but we'll have to see.

Here at the parish we are preparing to celebrate our 100th anniversary next year. But one of the things we were planning was to rebuild the parish hall. Since we did not reach our goal in the contributions, we are now in the process of deciding to wait and celebrate both the building of the hall and the 100th later, or to go ahead with the 100th celebration and build later, or once we get some estimates decide how much debt we would have to go into to build and celebrate the two together next year. Anyway right now things are not clear for the future and it's a bit stressful. I hope this gets straightened out by the time I leave for France.

As usual things are busy at the end of the year. The Christmas program for the City, which is put on by all the Christian Churches together, will have a doctor who is 94 yrs. old and very famous here in Japan, Dr. Hinohara. He still practices medicine and uses the stairs instead of the elevator for health purposes. They expect over 1000 people for the event and the choir has been practicing for some time now. I'm looking forward to hearing him myself. They say he has written 60 books. Again you are in my prayers and will be in a special way on Christmas.

New Years in Tokushima

We are going to gather for a New Years dinner at Tokushima on the 6th of Jan. at 5:00 pm. Anyone who can make it is more than welcome. If you can come early you can take in the Otsuka Museum of Art or the other great attractions we have in the area. Please let me know by the 27th of Dec. at Kochi if you can make it and if you need a room we can make some arrangements.



The pilgrimage goes on

Xavier Yoshikazu TOSA

Indeed the year 2005 wasn't the end of the road.

2006 seems to be another hill.

It is not easy to write every year "new" and "happy" wishes to the fellow Oblates in Japan. It's easy to repeat stereotype or platitudes like "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year", but at least one should try to say or explain what the meaning is of these words for the coming year.

I am writing this letter on December 3d, feast of S. Xavier. He is my baptismal patron. In Japan what does a baptismal name mean? It is used only in the funeral ceremony and engraved on the tombstone. Xavier was a missionary, just as St Paul. He never became a parish pastor. I chose the Oblate congregation to become a missionary. To say it clearly, I have the impression that the Oblates in Japan have become an institution to educate "pastors", preferably in "Oblate parishes". I hope that we don't change into a kind of "Opus Dei", independent from the bishops.

Lately, I read about Charles de Foucauld. His life as witness in the Sahara, not preaching, not teaching, just living together with the Toearegs, qualified him to a beatification ceremony.

Make of 2006 a good year!.



"Danshu Shido" A Way to Sobriety (AA)

Tom MAHER

Besides the prison chaplains, who assist the prison authorities as volunteers approved by law to meet those prisoners who freely want to see them. There is another group of volunteer teachers who go to prisons (again approved by law) to direct various club activities for the prisoners who freely wish to join them on their day off. Among these clubs are English, Chinese, Japanese, poetry, etc., and meetings for those with the disease of alcoholism, which many people don't know is a disease.

As with all organizations in Japan, a yearly study is a must. These meetings can be local or on a national level. This year it was on a national level and held in Tokyo in the Ministry of Justice Building and one of the speakers was me. I am enclosing a copy of my Report, based almost entirely on the "Big Book": Alcoholics Anonymous. Sorry, it is only in Japanese. But if Brother Yagi wishes to include it with the News Letter, it may be useful. According to a recent survey, one out of every four people are trying to cope with an alcohol problem in someone they love.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,



"HOYA" (Tokyo) News

Jack DEELY

I'm sure that the change in the weather was more gradual where you all are, but here --- we went from Indian Summer to mid-winter weather in the matter of a couple of days. That may explain why a lot of the students and staff are down with colds. Maybe the persimmons from the garden have saved me from the cold bug. I hear they're packed with Vitamin C!

Anyway, there isn't much news to report from here. Things are pretty much the same. However, there has been one drastic change. I've been exercising more than ever (I can hear you all chuckling at that, especially after looking at the above picture!) Till now, I've tried to stay in shape for health reasons. But now I have a

specific goal in mind.



one of mine if the time comes.

Please say some prayers for my sister -- and -- for me (that I don't give up on my exercise program). When you see me, don't say "I can't see where you've lost even an ounce!" Remember: it's what's inside that counts!

Blessings of Christmas on you & the people you serve,

保谷ニュース

急に寒さが厳しくなってきましたが、お元気ですか？東京では、「小春日和」から「急に寒くなった」のですが、皆さんがお住まいのところでは例年通り「徐々に寒くなってきた」のかもしれませんが、それで大学の教職員や学生に風邪が流行っています。私は庭で取れた柿のおかげで風邪を引かずにすんでいます。柿はビタミンCの塊ですからね！

私の毎日はいつも通りなので、あまりニュースがありません。けれど、一つ大きな変化があります。笑わないで聞いてください。以前にも増してトレーニングに励んでいることです。今まで頑張ってきた理由は、ただ一つ、健康のためでした。今回別の目標が生まれたから、さらに一生懸命になっています。

私のすぐ下の妹が今年1月に腎臓癌と診断され、透析を始めました。現在、腎臓癌の特効薬といわれているサリドマイドの投与を受けています。この薬で癌が消えれば、腎臓移植を受けたいと妹は望んでいます。詳しい検査をしたわけではありませんが、移植の場合には私の腎臓を提供することになるかもしれません。それで俄然トレーニングに力が入っているのです。

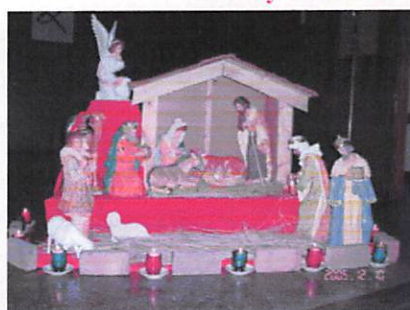
では、妹のため、私のために（トレーニングが三日坊主にならないように！）お祈りください。今度会うときに私の体型を見て、「ぜんぜんトレーニングの効果が出てないじゃないか！」と叫ばないで下さいよ。外見は変わらなくても、中身は変わっているはずですから・・・



Baby Jesus

Bradly ROZAIRO

A girl of ten years went with a group of family and friends to see the Christmas light displays at various locations throughout the city. At one church, they stopped and got



out to look more closely at a beautifully done nativity scene.

"Isn't that beautiful?" said the little girl's grandmother. "Look at all the animals, Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus".

"Yes, Grandma," replied the granddaughter. "It is really nice. But there is only one thing that bothers me. Isn't baby Jesus ever going to grow up he's the same size he was last year".

Let us make Jesus grow during this Christmas and in the coming year.



Christmas Greetings from Anan

Bertram Nathan SILVER



すばらしいプレゼント

Irudayaraj ANTONYSAMY

クリスマスは神様の一人子イエスキリストが世界のために生まれた日、キリストのお誕生日です。このクリスマスの意味は、信じているかどうかはべつにしてすべての人が神様の子供と言うことです。この日にたくさんプレゼントをあげたり、もらったりします。そして、みんなで食事をしたり、歌を歌ったり、踊ったりします。でも、私たちにとって最もすばらしいプレゼントはイエスキリストです。

子供が生まれる時、みんな楽しみに待っています。初めて赤ちゃんの泣き声を聞くとほっとしてうれしくなりますが、お母さんにとっては大変な日でもあります。でも、赤ちゃんを見るとそんな苦しさは全部忘れてしまいます。私たちはお父さん、お母さんに心からおめでとと言います。子供が生まれるとき部屋に電気がついています。

でも部屋だけじゃなくてみんなの心も明るくなります。

最近、名古屋だけじゃなくていろいろなところ、いろいろな場所でイルミネーションがきれいです。それは世界を明るくする人が生まれたと言うことです。

皆さん、私たち一人ひとりの家に大切な友達やお客さんが来る時、何を準備しますか。部屋を掃除したり、必要な物がそろっているかどうかチェックします。そして、飲み物を買ったり、おいしい料理を作ったりするのはいいでしょう。

私たちは一人じゃありません。私たちの生活は丸い円です。その中で、いろいろな人と関わって生活しています。

勉強のためとか、仕事のため、旅行などで外国へ行って、久しぶりに帰って来る人を空港へ迎えに行きます。どうしてそんなことをするのですか。それは、家族だから、親戚だから、友達だからでしょう。たとえば、家族の誰かがいないと丸い円ができないからです。

私たちの誕生日のお祝いは家族や友達などの知っている人たちだけとします。町の誕生日はその町でだけします。国の誕生日も同じです。

でも、クリスマスは世界いろいろな国でお祝いします。

毎年、私たちはクリスマスを楽しみにしています。クリスマスの日だけじゃなくていつもいつも平和で楽しい毎日を過ごして下さい。

クリスマスおめでとうございます。



Intent on "Listening"

Nobuhiko YAGI

Next year I will replace Fr. Jude as the youth ministry director for the diocese of Takamatsu. I will give myself wholeheartedly to this. Intent on "Listening" I wish to serve and love all whom I meet at Nakajima-cho parish, especially young people in the diocese of Takamatsu.

Merry Christmas!



感謝と賛美の主

Len Morio INUI

ことしはもっと感謝

感謝と賛美の主、幼な児イエスのご降誕を謹んでお慶び申し上げます。

私たちが、一日一日が感謝と賛美のいのちで過ごせるように、私たちと同じように子どもから成長されました。いま、十字架と祭壇の前に置かれ、誕生のお慶びを受けられています。その祭壇では、Eucharistia の捧げものそのものとなっていて、私たちと一緒に御父に奉献してくださっています。

わたくしには、つい先日暁の星幼稚園の50周年を記念して、この光景で園児が祝ったのを、目の当たりにしましたので、すべてが感謝ひとつになって今も感激しています。まさに『共に』導かれているという感激です。教皇ヨハネ・パウロ二世が、子どもたちへの手紙で「子どものようにならなければ、天の国に入れない」とはどういう意味でしょうか。と話されているような暖かい切迫感に囚われているのです。この子どもたちとみんなで世界平和を、神の国と重ねて祈ります。

新年がよりよい年になりますように、福音宣教の働きを奉献しましょう。

Peace from the Born Jesus be with You !

This Christmas is an abundant thanksgiving celebration for me. This year is the 50th anniversary of Koga Parish and Akenohoshi Kindergarten ; on December 8th, the school had a celebration of this at the Parish Church before the Cross and Altar, around which about 100 children of the kindergarten enacted, by themselves, the first Christmas story before the guests and us. It was totally acts of thanksgiving : the Cross, altar and the Infant Jesus. The atmosphere was a kind of catechetical movements. I has been impressed deeply and has joined myself in their thanksgiving spirit. That is my joy to see such a catechetical formation work of children in preschool age. I prayed that real Eucharistia should be accepted by the heavenly Father of Jesus.

May the New Year be a Year of Peace making, especially among our missions for the poor.

Journey for Life into the Heart of Asia

Jerry NOVOTNY

Thailand, the Land of Smiles, is really located in the heart of Asia: flying time - seven and a half hours from Kansai. It is surrounded by Burma, Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia. Last December's tsunami struck the Southern part of the country, wiping out the beautiful tourist seacoast and carrying police border patrol boats two kilometers inland.

Even though it was winter when I arrived, the weather was hot and humid in Bangkok and Rayong. In the North around Chiang Mai, it was much cooler. The people are very proud of the fact that Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country never to have been taken over by a European power. The population is estimated around 65 million, taking into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS and the many illegal immigrants crossing the borders looking for work or fleeing suppressive governments. One example: the ordination of an OMI to the priesthood by the only OMI Bishop in Laos was cancelled by the communists authorities on Dec. 9th, the day before the ordination. A number of OMI had flown in from Australia, France, Thailand, etc. I also met Fr. Maher from Australia and Fr. Gerry Thailand who were planning a trip to Jaffna for an important meeting on the 15th and had to cancel at the last minute due to the explosive situation.



42-yr-old man.
Only right hand moveable.

I arrived at the Bangkok International Airport on Nov. 20th and was met by Fr. Siranon Sanpetch, a Camillian, whom I had met last August at the HLI Asian Family/Pro Life Conference in Indonesia. He is the project coordinator at the Relief Center for HIV/AIDS People at Rayong, a 2-hour drive south from the airport. Upon arrival I met Fr. John Giovanni Contarin, the director, who set up a two-day lecture, highlighting the insights and depth not only of HIV/AIDS but also the sufferings and side-effects of the medicines once a person contacts the HIV virus. Each person is different; each mixture and dosage of medications vary.

At the center are 40 HIV children and 30

HIV/AIDS adults. Watching the children take medicine in the morning and evening was heart-rending, realizing that in their entire life if they should stop taking medicine, the HIV virus will turn into HIV/AIDS. If they ever have sexual relations with another



Both HIV/AIDS.
Wife/husband holding hands.

person and do not use a condom, they will pass on the HIV virus. Most are orphan children, meaning that the mother has died from AIDS and passed on the virus to her child. The sad part is that many of these mothers are innocent victims, having received the virus from their partners. The side-effects affecting each one differently is another story for another day.



Healthier AIDS people
take care of bedridden inside.

One important thing I learned in Thailand was that you cannot contact HIV/AIDS by being in the same room with palliative care patients, breathing the same air, touching the spots on their arms, holding hands, or even hugging them with feeling. A portion of my time was spent playing with the children, holding and hugging them. They need so much personal attention, so much love.

Through a translator, I interviewed a number of HIV/AIDS patients there and three more HIV women when I visited Chiang Mai in the Northern part of Thailand two weeks later. Their feelings and experiences were moving, their determination and hope in some cases outstanding.

From the Center I went to St Clare's Hospice. Here the Franciscans work only with HIV/AIDS patients. As Bro. Paulo from Brazil told me, "we work with the dying, trying to give them a meaning of life and death, a death with dignity." On a certain day, one patient was screaming over and over the same sentence. I asked a nurse what it meant. She said, "He's saying that he wants to go home to his family." But his own family wants nothing to do with him. He died several days later.



HIV 5-yr-old Ton
determined to teach me Thai.



28-yr-old young lady.
Virus also affects some mentally.

After four days at the Hospice Center, I went to a large temple, met the Buddhist priest in charge and was allowed to tag along the entire day with a group of Buddhist young people. The temple's approach is to bring food, clothing and medicine directly to the poor people houses. Among those we visited was a lady who had contacted leprosy and had no money for

medication. Finally when she did take the proper medicine, it stopped the disease but left her crippled for life. Others were poor homes who took care of their HIV/AIDS family members. Many of these were Grandma and Grandpa raising their grandchildren and at the same time caring for their daughter who had contact HIV/AIDS. The grandparents taking care of their grandchildren is turning into a major problem. The older people are supposed to be taken care off by their children after retiring; however, they must now continue farming to support themselves and raise their grandchildren.

Next on the agenda was a one-hour meeting with Dr. Kumnuan Ungchusak, a government official, who is the Director of the Bureau of Epidemiology, Department of Disease Control in the Ministry of Public Health. One of the questions I asked him was whether the country's condom approach toward young people was not destroying the future of Thailand, since in the USA alone, this approach has produced over 13 million STD (STI) cases among high school students. He replied that it was cheaper to hand out a condom with a ten-minute explanation then to set up a course in sex education which would allow the students to choose between abstinence, natural family planning and condoms. But he added, this is a very important step the government has to face and discuss.



Franciscan Brother at Hospice Center, for people with AIDS only. The dying generation.

From here, I joined Mrs. Mrs. Usanee Nanasilp, Secretary of Catholic Commission for Healthcare. We flew from Bangkok to Chiang Mai in the northern part on a one-hour Thai flight. The next four days were spent learning about the Interfaith Network setup, meeting the various leaders, and visiting a number of their centers and temples. In the Bangkok area and Rayong, I was able to learn about the Catholic approach. In Chiang Mai, Phayao and San Pa Tong, I was able to observe more of the Buddhist approach to HIV/AIDS in the rural villages. I received the opportunity to spend half a day with a group of 40 grandparents who visited a temple and discussed with the head Buddhist monk on how to raise their grandchildren: such problems as drugs coming in from Burma, kids won't listen, stay out to all hours of the night, having casual sex, etc. The main cause in this area of HIV/AIDS is sharing or using dirty needles when taking drugs.

There's much more to share about my exposure to HIV/AIDS in Thailand but Brother Yagi has given me a deadline - the 17th, so I bring this Christmas message to a close.



Rejected by family. Died alone several days later.

May we ask this Christmas for guidance and enlightenment to overcome the burden of ignorance. May we gain a deeper understanding and respect for the obstacles facing women.

We can all, as I learned from the many dedicated people working in Thailand, start by taking the first individual step towards accepting, cherishing and championing the rights of the women making a choice to protect themselves.

A Blessed Christmas and a meaningful New Year. God Bless

p.s. I was able to spend a couple of days with the OMIs in the Bangkok area. A group of very dedicated men. I felt at home. Their Provincial will be coming to Japan next February and also attend the ordination of Bro. Furukawa.

Anniversaries

■ Birthday:

January		
02 1930	Ed WILLIAMS	
22 1938	Ray BOURGOIN	
29 1926	Dick HARR	
February		
13 1963	Maurizio GIORGIANNI	
15 1935	Len INUI	
21 1957	Vincenzo BORDO	
March		
01 1940	Jerry NOVOTNY	
23 1938	Bill MAHER	

■ Ordination / Final Vows:

January		
15 1994	James JEYACHANDRAN	
February		
22 1953	Xave TOSA	
March		
19 1966	Ray BOURGOIN	
27 1976	Wency LAGUIDAO	
29 1993	Leo KAWAGUCHI	

■ Death:

February		
02 1978	Charles MC BENNETT	
March		
12 1979	Len ROBITAILLE	

The next issue is scheduled for March 15. Please send in your contributions and photos (if you have any) by March 10. Whenever you send an article for the newsletter, always include a title to the manuscript.