



Irish Jesuit Mission Office Newsletter

In all things to love and to serve
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Issue 7 - Easter 2012

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Vision

Our Vision is a just and humane world based on Gospel values and Ignatian Spirituality.

Core Values

Inspired by the Gospel and sent on mission to the new frontiers of our time, Irish Jesuits and their collaborators are called to:

- ⑥ Become instruments of reconciliation in a divided world.
- ⑥ Build a new world of right relationships with God, with other human beings and with all creation.
- ⑥ See the world from the perspective of the poor and marginalised.
- ⑥ Make the lives of people better in the poorest parts of the world.

To learn more about our missions or to make a donation, please contact:

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Some Jottings from the Jesuit Mission in Cambodia

Ashley Evans SJ



Cambodia is evolving, so too is our mission. Twenty years ago, Cambodia was still devastated from the effects of the Khmer Rouge regime 1975-79 and the Vietnamese occupation (1979-89). Now the economy is growing at a rate of about 7% per year resulting in new upheavals, challenges and opportunities. Over those twenty years, the population has almost doubled to 14 million people. The vast majority are Buddhists but often

for reform against corruption in the education system but the leader Mr. Rong Chhum lives in danger of his life as there are powerful forces that do not want light shone into dark places.

Between 2004 and 2006, three trade union leaders were assassinated, Mr. Chea Vichea, Mr. Ros Sovannareth and Mr. Hy Vuthy. They were from the Free Trade Union of Cambodia. The owners of the garment factories which employ over 300,000 Khmer workers, mostly women, do not like this union as it is independent of the Government and not amenable to



Boats Road Cambodia

with strong beliefs in local spirits. I have been teaching students at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Most of them go on to be high school teachers, many in remote areas. The life of a teacher in Cambodia is very hard as they earn low salaries that must be supplemented by other income. An independent teachers' union in Cambodia tries to advocate

bribery and corruption. With rapid economic development, land prices have soared. Many rich and powerful people connected to the Cambodia People's Party, the Army or the Police have been grabbing land along the major roads and pushing poor people off. Any appeal to the courts based on land titles cannot be won by poor people due to corruption of judges.

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A Word from the Editor



Easter is a time of hearing again the Good News of Jesus Christ who has died and risen for you and me. It brings new hope and joy to our world. The stories in our newsletter from our Irish Jesuit Missionaries speak of joy, service, commitment and friendship with the people they

serve abroad. In so many ways our missionaries bring the world to Ireland and Ireland to the world.

Our former President Mary McAleese when visiting Africa some years ago spoke to missionaries saying they were the first ambassadors of Ireland. They bring Africa and the East into Irish homes and bring the stories of Ireland into African, Chinese, Japanese and Cambodian homes. They were also the first development practitioners in many parts of the world building schools, hospitals, agricultural projects, and accompanying the most distressed and abandoned. Spreading the faith and doing justice in dialogue with other religions and cultures is their motto. They provide people with the ways and means to live with dignity and respect. Missionaries inspire the thousands of Irish volunteers who go out each year to serve in long or short term projects, or go on immersion experiences from our schools. Past pupils of missionary schools are leaders in the world of Church, politics and business in the various countries where they work.

The Jesuit Provincial of Eastern Africa Fr. Orobator visited Ireland recently, and spoke about how the friendships and commitment of missionaries abroad is the bedrock of our continual relationship with countries, cultures and Jesuit Provinces in Africa and the rest of the world. We continue to build on these friendships by continuing to support our brothers and sisters abroad through prayer, visits and financial support of much needed projects like Churches, schools and water and food projects. Friends of the Irish Jesuit mission office have been outstanding in continuing this missionary tradition.

I thank all of you for your support and wish each one of you the joy and peace of Easter.

Happy Easter

Another issue to emerge over the last few years has been the extent of domestic violence, in particular against women. One fearless female politician from the opposition Sam Rainsy party, Ms. Mu Sochua, uncovered a scheme to send poor Cambodian women to work as maids in Malaysia in conditions little better than slavery. Her parliamentary immunity has been removed and now she is being charged with aiding prisoners to escape from a penal institution. These were simply poor people gathered by police and sent into a detention centre. She told them that they were being held illegally so they crossed the fence and went home.

This marks progress of a sort. Now legal proceedings and jail terms are being used to silence opposition whereas before assassinations were the preferred method.

The trial of the Khmer Rouge leaders is grinding to a halt with only one conviction, that of Comrade Duch, who used to run the notorious Tuol Slaeng, S 21 prison and execution center in Phnom Penh. It is estimated that 20,000 people, mostly young Khmers, were executed after their confessions were extracted by torture at that institution. The trials of Mr. Noun Chea and Mr. Khieu Samphan, the principal leaders after Pol Pot, are taking forever. The Government is trying to close down the trial as it will eventually lead to their door.

Fortunately young people do not allow themselves to be overburdened by these problems. All over Cambodia, there is a surge of interest in learning English as all sense that the future of Cambodia will be one of relationships with other nationalities both at home and abroad. The skills base of the young people is very low but if the quality of education improves over the next few years, then these young Cambodians can hope for a more fulfilling quality of life than that enjoyed by their parents.

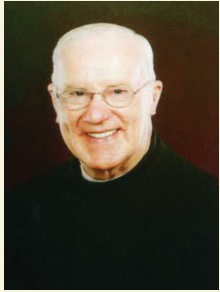
In 1996, a young Jesuit scholastic from the Philippines, Richie Fernando was killed at the vocational school for the war-disabled run by Jesuit Service outside Phnom Penh. Now the Jesuits would like to start a high school in his honor. It is an area where many factory workers live. We hope that this school can become a teaching model for other schools in the provinces and in the city.

Ashley Evans SJ was born in Dublin and has worked all his life in Cambodia. He has worked with Jesuit Refugee Service and is a teacher of Maths, English and Philosophy in Phnom Penh University as well as being a student chaplain.

You can help to promote the work of the Mission Office by passing on your copy of this Newsletter; or we will send out extra copies if you wish.

What it means to be a missionary in Hong Kong today

Alfred Deignan SJ



One day when talking to a layman friend, he spoke with real appreciation saying, "Father, we admire you missionaries, who have left your country, families, relatives and friends to come to Hong Kong and work among us, learning our difficult language." This kind of appreciation and gratitude is part of our consolation and encouragement, which we receive from people we meet and work with.

Jesus said "I came not to be served but to serve". Yes, to serve – this is what it means to me as a missionary in Hong Kong - whether that service is in teaching, preaching, counseling, directing retreats, giving instruction, chaplaincy or parish work, helping the poor or sick.



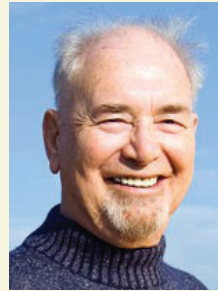
I am happy that in God's providence I was assigned to Hong Kong. There is so much service to be given. Even though I am involved in the very important apostolate of education, I always had opportunities of being involved in marriage counselling, in working for Aids patients and the formation of youth and teachers.

The majority of Hong Kong people are Buddhist or Taoists, but the Church is growing in numbers. Imagine 3,000 adult baptisms last year! The Church is a young Church and a Church of the young. The growth is partly due to the number of good Catholic schools in which there is a mixture of Catholic and non-Catholic students, and the vibrant life of the parishes.

Christ's call "Go and teach all nations" is a call to missionaries and of course to all Catholics. Our answer is "Here I am Lord, send me." The Irish Jesuits have played an important role in the evangelization of the Chinese people for which they are very grateful. Let us continue to pray for the millions of Chinese people who have yet to know Christ.

Mission integrating Church and Society in Hong Kong

Ciaran Keane SJ



Being a missionary anywhere today is very different from what it was 50 years ago, when I first arrived in Hong Kong. Both the world and the church have changed so much in the meantime. For the church, a richer understanding of what 'mission' means, and that the idea of 'mission' is a call to all Christians. For the world, the onset of globalisation bringing peoples and cultures into closer contact facilitating mutual influence and interdependence.

In the past, more than today, being a missionary implied coming from a faraway place bringing a set of beliefs, practices and values that were 'foreign' to the people you came to serve. Whether admired or reviled, the missionary had a distinctive status with his/her people. But global communications, international travel, studying and service abroad, and the shrinking of our world have now levelled the ground, and, I think, integrated the missionary more into the local church and society.

So, for me being a missionary today is a consciousness of serving the universal church, the international body of Christ, people of many races and places. As a Jesuit my specific mission is a ministry that involves me with Catholics and other Christians, local Chinese and foreign residents, working with men and women, young and old, religious and lay, married and single – in short a microcosm of the universal church. But it's also important for me as a citizen of this city to be concerned about society as a whole, about the social milieu in which I live and work, and to give witness to a Christian presence in civic and cultural life. I hope I can be a useful instrument in the Lord's vineyard.

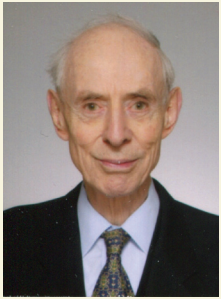
PLEASE REMEMBER OUR MISSIONS IN YOUR WILL.

If you would like to make a BEQUEST, please make it payable to The Director of the Irish Jesuit Mission Office at 28 Upper Sherrard Street, Dublin 1

For more information contact us at:
Telephone (+353) 01-836 6509
email: mission@jesuit.ie

Mission in the wake of the Japanese Earthquake Disaster

Patrick Brangan SJ



At 2:46 pm on March 11, 2011, an earthquake, one of the five strongest in recorded history, occurred about 190 km off the Pacific coast of Japan. It triggered a 10-15 metre-high tsunami that crashed through the coastal breakwaters sweeping everything before it. A recent report of Feb. 2012 lists the following: dead 15,848 people, missing 3,305, injured 5,894. Also, the combined force of the earthquake and tsunami wiped out the external power supply and the emergency back-up generator of Fukushima 1 Nuclear Power Plant.

The ability to cool the reactor was lost resulting in partial meltdown of the reactor core and the release of radioactive material. The area within a 20 km radius of the plant has been declared off-limits and the people living there, about 60,000, have been evacuated. However, if we add the number of evacuees from other areas beyond the off-limits zone, the total comes to about 300,000 people in temporary housing.



The response to these horrific events was rapid and gigantic. Both from within Japan and abroad help poured in. A large contingent of soldiers from the defence Forces of Japan began sifting through the huge expanse of debris. The work was harrowing, so their officers saw to it that from time to time, the men were relieved and replaced by a new group of soldiers. Young people from all over the country turned up to help. It was the first sign of light amid darkness, hope amid despair. They brought their own food and slept in tents. Buddhist monks, Protestant pastors, Catholic priests, and seminarians were also involved.

What does it mean to be a missionary today?

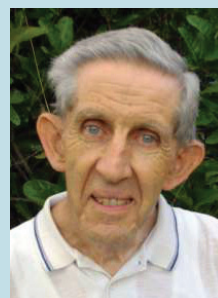
Having spent most of my Jesuit life in Japan, it is the only context from which I can write. The nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima is a daily news item. An enormous amount of work has been done but this is only a beginning. It will be years before contaminated areas will be fit for human habitation or work.

What is there to say? It began to dawn on me that a disaster can be a catalyst that draws all kinds of people together so that, at least for a while, they forget their own needs and use their time, energy and talents to help others. A group of earthquake experts from one of the universities claims that studies indicate a seventy percent possibility of another major earthquake along the Pacific coast within the next four years.

People have to learn to live with that (including today's missionary) whose main task will be to pray, to listen and to stand by the people.

A Missionary in Zambia - Serving the Community

Jerry O'Connell SJ



I begin by saying that I don't like that word 'missionary'. I am afraid that it may bring wrong images to your mind. I have spent all my priestly life working in Zambia but not even one day in a parish. Roughly I have spent 30 years between two secondary schools (approx. 15 years in each), one

an ordinary secondary school and the other a Minor Seminary. Presently I am in my tenth year doing hospital chaplaincy at the University Teaching Hospital, Lusaka. In this present job I look upon myself as a Church minister or a 'pastoral care person' available to everybody and it is precisely in fulfilling that role that I am able to meet and serve the Catholics. I do not begin by looking for the Catholics. They must find me or send me a message. My ambition is to serve anybody who needs my help.

The Church is very vibrant in Zambia. The Zambians know how to celebrate in Church. There are ten dioceses with seven Zambian Bishops, one expatriate Bishop (due to retire this year) and two dioceses are vacant at present. In the stronger dioceses there

are ordinations almost every year. It is the same now in the Society of Jesus. In the Zambia-Malawi Province of the Jesuits we have had a Malawian Jesuit for six years as Provincial and now we have a Zambian Provincial. Those in charge of formation are Zambians. We are opening new apostolates in the Province. We came here to make the Zambia-Malawi Province sustainable through local vocations and that is happening before our very eyes. Our job now is clearly to help the Zambian Church to become more and more independent but I think that there will be room for me to work here as long as I have the strength to do so. Two remarkable qualities of the Zambian people are their friendliness and their forgiveness. And they offer you a beautiful climate.

Just last month I met a Zambian friend at a funeral and we spoke about the old days. With no trace of any insult given or received, he said to me: "... *but you're a 'walking history'.*" It's not that I have done anything notable nor that I have a terrific memory. It's just that he has known me for a few years.

What does it mean for me to be a missionary in Zambia today?

John Moore SJ



I came to Zambia as a missionary when I was 56, after a very fulfilling time working in the Botany Department at UCD. My "spare-time" activities during that time involved me with married couples, giving retreats and spiritual direction as well as helping in parishes at the weekends.

When I left Ireland some of my colleagues at the University as well as the more senior students were very surprised at my decision to move to Zambia and some told me bluntly that it was a wrong decision. I was not convinced by their arguments. It seemed to me that I had done sufficient work for Ireland during my 23 years at UCD. Besides, after I had spent a few days the previous year as external examiner at the Biology Dept. of the University of Zambia (UNZA), I became very aware of the needs of Zambia, especially in University education.

Having spent 7 years at UNZA, I moved to the Major Seminary in Zomba, Malawi where for 12 years I taught scripture and theology. After that I moved to Arrupe College in Harare where, for 6 years, I was involved in the training of young Jesuits, teaching

Scripture and Philosophy of Science. Now for the past two years I have been living in the Jesuit novitiate, the first stage of a Jesuit's training, doing a little teaching. They were good times!

Since I am now 85 years old, I could hardly be called an active missionary, but I am still convinced that I am in the right place. During my 29 years "on the missions" I have seen a huge change in the Church and among the Jesuits in Zambia. When I came here all the active Jesuits were white – now almost all the Jesuits running the various Jesuit works are native Zambians or Malawians. This gives me enormous satisfaction. Is this not why we came out here? To help in the development of an indigenous church? So, without falling into the temptation of sitting back in my old-man's rocking chair in a self-satisfied way, I must admit that I do feel a sense of having cooperated with the Lord in doing my little bit to bring about this change.

Mission News

- ④ We remember with gratitude the Jesuits:
Fr. John McAuley who died on 2nd January 2012,
Fr. John Fitzgerald who died on 13th January 2012
and **Fr. Richard Cremins** who died on 21st February 2012. To read more about our deceased missionaries please visit our website www.jesuitmissions.ie
- ④ **Fr. Orobator SJ**, the Provincial for the Eastern Africa Province visited Ireland recently where he gave a very interesting talk in Milltown Institute on the importance of strengthening the relationship between Africa and Europe.
- ④ **Fr. Emmanuel Mumba SJ**, Provincial of Zambia-Malawi will visit Ireland from the 2nd to the 6th of April 2012.
- ④ The Irish Jesuit Mission Office invites all our friends and families in Northern Ireland to join us for a thanksgiving Mass in the **Servite Priory, Benburb Centre, East Tyrone on Wednesday 25th April at 7pm.** All welcome.

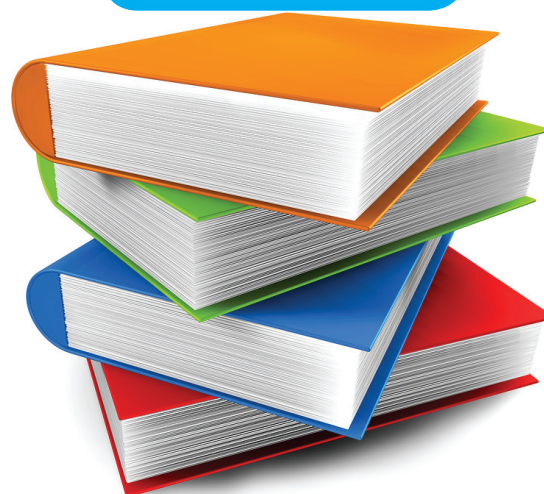
For more information on the above please visit our website www.jesuitmissions.ie or contact us our office 01 836 6509.

Buy 1 LESS easter egg this year and help us ADD 1 MORE book for a Jesuit School in Eastern Africa

The Irish Jesuit Mission Office has set up an **Education Basket** where all funds donated will be used to assist disadvantaged students in five Jesuit Schools in Eastern Africa.



Your contribution
of even €5 will make
a big difference.



By making a donation to the Education Basket,
you can purchase **school materials and school fees**

and bring positive change to the lives of many students in Jesuit Schools in Africa

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to be added to the **Education Basket**.