



MARIST MISSION NEWSLETTER
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MARIST MISSION CENTRE (MMC)

Managing both:

The Marist Fathers International Mission (MFIM)

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A REMARKABLE STORY THE SON OF GOD BECAME MAN AND DWELT AMONG US

This is the remarkable story of Christmas. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in a humble stable to Mary and Joseph. He was welcomed by the angels and the shepherds with news of great joy for the whole world. He was visited by the Magi from the East, while King Herod plotted and schemed in the background.

This story is a source of great joy for us all, as we celebrate with family and friends and pray for peace on earth and good will to all. We are also very familiar with the challenges facing our families and the on-going plotting and scheming in our world.

God continues to work through people. We are called to be instruments of God's peace and justice and each day we pray - 'your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven'.

Recently I visited Bougainville and Port Moresby. This year the Marist Fathers are celebrating 125 years of mission in Bougainville. Despite the underlying tensions and conflicts, the people are full of energy and hope for the future.

The Sisters of Nazareth (CSN) are an indigenous Congregation of Religious Sisters in Bougainville. The Sisters played a key role in conducting Trauma Counselling programs following the Bougainville Crisis and are now conducting Domestic Violence and Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV) Training programs.

The Marist Fathers in the Philippines conduct a Centre called Balay Pasilungan meaning - 'shelter home'. It is a safe place for street boys in Davao City, where boys at risk can run to when in distress. It is a refuge from living and begging on the street; a safe place during family breakdown or violence; and a hideaway from exploitation by adults who take advantage of vulnerable children.

These programs are continuing the story of Bethlehem – of God's Spirit working through us. The love of God transforms our lives and communities into a new creation.

Thanks to your kind-hearted and on-going generosity, MMC is able to support our programs in these challenging times.

With our Christmas blessings and prayers to you and your family.

Fr Paul Sullivan sm



Fr Paul Sullivan sm
MMC Executive Officer

To Donate visit MMC Website:
www.maristmissions.com



PHILIPPINES — TRANSFORMING LIVES

BALAY PASILUNGAN

Balay Pasilungun is like home for these young street boys. This year the Centre celebrates 35 years of care and transformation of young lives. A total of 48 students have been supported by these programs at the Centre this year.

The Centre conducts Residential, Transitional and After Care programs. There is a growing need to support and welcome boys at risk.



Above: Welcoming new boys

STORIES FROM RONIN AND YUHAN BOYS AT THE CENTRE



Ronin is a 17-year-old boy currently under the Transitional Care Program. Ronin is one of seven siblings who lost his mother to a kidney-related illness when he was just five years old. His father moved to Davao City in search of work, leaving Ronin in the care of an aunt.

Unfortunately, Ronin suffered maltreatment under her care, often being beaten, especially when his uncle was intoxicated. These years left him feeling unwanted and confused about his place in the family.

Left: Ronin—with hopes for his future

Yuhan's early years were fraught with abandonment and abuse. After being left in the care of his grandfather and uncle while his mother worked abroad, he suffered from physical abuse and lack of access to basic needs.

He never attended school and was exposed to street life at an early age. By the time he was ten, Yuhan was stealing food to survive and had already encountered drug use, including marijuana.

He now enjoys living with friends and going to school.



Above: Yuhan - the gift of friends and education

CAMBODIA - TRANSFORMING LIVES

MARIST SOLIDARITY CAMBODIA

Lavalla School is a Primary School for children and young people with disabilities who come from the remotest and poorest parts of the country. These children experience further disadvantage, discrimination and alienation because of their disability. MSC provides education, health and rehabilitation programmes with access to a wide range of medical facilities and physiotherapy.



Above: A safe place to live and learn

STORIES FROM SREYMEAN AND SOKHA AT THE CENTRE

My name is Sreymean and I am 14 years old. I am physically disabled—my right leg was amputated due to a traffic accident. I have five siblings, and I am the eldest child in my family. My family is very poor and I didn't attend school like other children because of my family's financial hardship.

When I first arrived at LaValla I was very scared because I didn't know anyone. After about a week, I became familiar with the place, and many students befriended me. Everyone here has taken great.



Above: Sreymean



Above: Sokha

My name is Sokha and I am 13 years old. I am now in grade 6. Sadly my father separated from my mother. I became physically disabled due to a bone disease and had to go for treatment in Kampong Chhnang province. I decided to come here because back home, it was very difficult for me to travel to school as the school was far from my house. And when I reached high school level, the school was even farther. On top of that, my family was facing financial hardship. The staff here are kind, cheerful, and friendly.

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

BOUGAINVILLE BUIN: ST JOSEPH THE HUSBAND OF MARY

The parishioners are playing a key role in the support and development of their community, church and country. Fr. Wesley Manus and the Parish community are planning a Faith & Education Centre in Buin to further the capacity of the local community, schools, health centres and villages to heal the wounds of the past and to set hearts free.

When I attended two Sunday Masses at Buin, there was a Congregation of over 350 adults plus children at one and over 250 adults plus children at the other.



Right: Fr Paul with Parish Priest Fr Wesley and Parish Council members

CHIBAI: SISTERS OF NAZARETH - CSN

The Sisters conduct a CSN Centre located in a rural setting where they have several ministries including Leadership, Formation, Domestic Violence Residential and Support Programs and a village church. A unique program is the residential and community based program designed to address Sorcery Related Violence.

Addressing violence is a major challenge for the future of this country. In one Marist Parish I visited the priest conducted seven funerals due to sorcery related killings last year. A priority for the Sisters is to upgrade the education and training of their own young Sisters to enable them to effectively engage in this challenging ministry.



Above: CSN Leadership Team



Above: Fr Paul and Sr Lorraine

THAILAND - RANONG: MARIST AISA FOUNDATION: FROM REFUGEES TO TEACHERS

From refugees in Myanmar to graduation with honours for a Bachelor of Education at Asia Pacific International University (APIU) Bangkok.

Father Frank Bird SM writes: 'We are delighted that May Thazin Oo and Yoon Thiri have both recently graduated and are now enjoying being back teaching and supporting the primary and second education programs. Along with the other teachers they will help grow brighter futures for over 300 migrant children in Ranong.'



Above: The Graduates



**A Christmas Gift
Supporting the
Mission Centre**

Postal: Locked Bag 5002, GLADESVILLE NSW 1675

Office: 3 Mary St, Hunters Hill NSW 2110, Australia

P: +61 2 9844 2275 **F:** 02 9816 1737

E: admin@maristmissions.com

Visit MMC website for more information: www.maristmissions.com