

jesuits

in East Asia and Oceania

November 2009



Indonesia and the Philippines celebrate anniversaries ...



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Ricci Anniversary

2010 marks the 400th Anniversary of the death of Matteo Ricci, the great Jesuit scholar and priest in China. The occasion will be marked by an exhibition on Ricci's life in work that will travel to Nanjing and other mainland cities. The Ricci Institutes in Taiwan, Paris and Macao will organise symposia to mark the occasion. There will also be many editions of his writing and a website.



Beijing centre

Fr Roberto Ribeira is the new director of The Beijing Centre. Originally from Brazil, he is a member of the Chinese Province. Under Fr Ron Anton, the Beijing Centre has developed many programs and connections with Chinese teachers which Roberto will build upon. The centre also has built up a splendid library.



Travelling to school

The Driyarkara School of Philosophy in Yogyakarta welcomed six scholastics from Myanmar and four from Thailand in August. They will begin their philosophical studies there. After taking vows, three East Timorese scholastics have travelled from Singapore to Arrupe Residence in Manila to begin their studies.

Catholic Asian News

Australian Jesuit Michael Kelly is the new director of UCA News (Union of Catholic Asian News), the Asian Catholic News Agency centred in Bangkok. The Maryknoll Agency, founded and run by Maryknoll missionary Fr Robert Astorino, is one of the most important Catholic news agencies in the world. You can subscribe to its daily news service, CathNews Asia at www.cathnewsasia.com



Fr General's travels

Fr Adolfo Nicolás tracked the footsteps of the early Jesuits, and also visited old friends earlier in the year. He came to help celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Philippines and Indonesian Provinces. His journey included a home-coming to the East Asian Pastoral Institute. The major superiors of the Assistency, who came to Indonesia for their half-yearly meeting, joined the celebrations.



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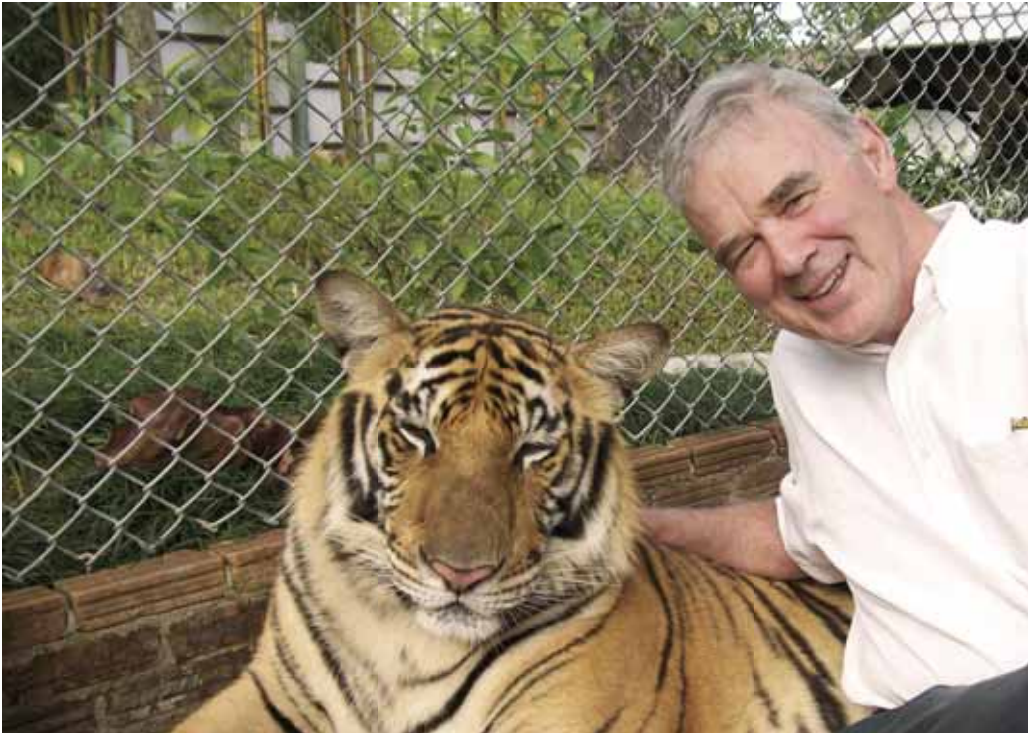
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Paths to compassion

I recently celebrated a mass at Bilibid, the maximum security prison south of Manila. On the wall of the Jesuit community I was struck by a quotation from the 1550 *Formula of the Institute*. In that document Ignatius visualises Jesuits as men drawn from different parts of the world, who are engaged both in spiritual ministries and ministries of compassion.

Ignatius gave priority to the spiritual ministries of preaching the Word, teaching Christian doctrine, giving the Spiritual Exercises, hearing confessions, and administering the other sacraments. But he also said that a Jesuit 'should show himself ready to reconcile the estranged, compassionately assist and serve those in prisons or hospitals and indeed to perform any other works of charity'. So Jesuits are asked to perform both kinds of ministry wherever possible, rather than to choose between them. The Jesuits in Bilibid boast that they engage in all the ministries on Ignatius' list.

Christians involved in ministries of compassion have always been dragged before lions and tigers. This year we

recall the tenth anniversary of the death of Fr Tarcissus Dewanto and of Fr Karl Albrecht who died in East Timor in the violence that followed the 1999 referendum.

As they remember this anniversary, the Jesuits at Arrupe International Residence will also recall their own martyrs. Richie Fernando from the Philippines died violently during his regency in Cambodia in 1196. Fr A T Thomas was killed in Hazaribag in 1997. Arrupe Residence, which is approaching its 20th anniversary, forms Jesuits from around the Assistency to bring together in their lives spiritual and compassionate commitments.

The work of Arrupe would be dear to St Ignatius because it

brings together young Jesuits of different nations. He would be reminded of his early companions, a feisty and articulate group drawn from many nations, who committed themselves to a prayerful search for God's will in order to achieve agreement. We still experience the fruits of their deliberations and sharing of their hearts.

The Arrupe community is drawn from over a dozen nationalities, and many more mother tongues. It gives the lie to the claim that our diversity thwarts cooperation. Such differences are revealed as superficial. Foundations are laid here for fruitful apostolic international cooperation in the future.

During his recent visits to Asia, Fr Nicolás was asked

... a Jesuit 'should show himself ready to reconcile the estranged, compassionately assist and serve those in prisons or hospitals and indeed to perform any other works of charity.'

what languages our scholastics and brothers should learn in addition to English, now our common language. He replied that we should first learn another language of our Asia Pacific region, and then a language of the international Society, such as Spanish. A tall order! But it is when we are familiar with the languages of other Jesuits that we will be able to communicate and work together as an international body.

The Cambodian ordination earlier this year of Jub Phoktavi displayed the international scope of the Society. Jub's family and friends, who supported him in his long service with Jesuit Refugee Service in Thailand, Cambodia, East Timor and Angola, joined him at Battambang. Now he settles to the life of parish priest to the east of the huge Tonle Sap Lake in central Cambodia.

The link between local Jesuit works and the Assistency can also be seen in East Timor. The Jesuits there are planning a new school. They need to decide whether it will continue to serve only senior secondary students, whether it will include teacher training, and how it will serve the broader educational needs of East Timor. In answering these large questions they will draw on the resources of the whole Assistency.

It is clear that any major decision in one Province or Region involves the whole Assistency.

Mark Raper sj

Death and resurrection in Suai

It is ten years since Fr Tarcissius Dewanto died in Suai, East Timor. Many people gathered for the anniversary on 6 December, but Fr Dewanto's mother was not among them. She was not well enough to travel.



But she is rarely left alone. Apart from visits of Jesuit friends, and the sisters in the nearby convent, Ibu Dewanto's neighbours, Christian and Muslim, often came to pray with her. 'Muslims have special reverence for a martyr', she explained. 'They want to touch something of his, a shirt or a piece of cloth. As a martyr, they know that he is close to God. Their devotion and their kindness help me.' She draws comfort from their visits.

Fr Dewanto, a 34 year old Jesuit ordained in July 1999 and immediately missioned to East Timor, was one of over 200 people killed in the massacre in the parish church of Suai. Suai is a coastal town, a tortuous 140 kilometres from Dili.

He was among thousands of victims of the terror which gripped East Timor following its population's vote for independence in the referendum on 30 August. An untold number perished at the hands of anti-independence Indonesian military and their local militia allies. Hundreds of thousands also had to flee from their homes.

Two other priests, Fr Hilario Madeira, the pastor of Suai



parish, and Fr Francisco Soares, died with Fr Dewanto. Two Canossian sisters were killed in Lospalos over those weeks – Sr Erminia Casaniga, an Italian, and Sr Celeste Carvalho, an East Timorese – and a deacon Hernando.

Five days after the Suai massacre, Fr Karl Albrecht, a German born priest who had come to Indonesia in 1959 and to East Timor in the early 1990s, was shot dead by an intruder in the grounds of the Jesuit house in Dili. Karl, who was the representative of Jesuit Refugee Service in East Timor at the time, was due to celebrate his Golden Jubilee as a Jesuit in just three days.

Fr Dewanto's body, and those of the two priests who died with him, were

taken across the border to West Timor and buried in a shallow grave. Fr Ageng, a Jesuit from Dili, managed to discover the place, and brought his body back to Dili. He buried him alongside Fr Albrecht in the small garden of the Jesuit residence. People constantly place fresh flowers at these graves to remember their sacrifice.

Their silent ongoing witness is a constant encouragement to the small Jesuit community, which continues the service in which their two brothers gave their lives. The reverence given to Fr Dewanto and the prayers offered by Indonesian Muslims show how in death he has brought together people of different nations and religions.



If a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it bears much fruit.



HERE IT'S OK TO STEAL...

Among many people who gathered at Suai in September to remember Fr Dewanto and the many other victims of the massacre was Br Thaddeus Tha.

Br Tha is in charge of a small farming project near the town of Suai. He lives in the Jesuit house which is surrounded by a small model farm. It raises ducks, goats and pigs, and contains a vegetable plot and orchard. Many people come to the chapel and simple reflection centre.

The Jesuit community also offers pastoral care to the local people. A nearby hostel will soon enable 80 boys from the outlying areas to attend high school in the town.

After long experience among Montagnard people in rural Vietnam, Tha has a knack for making things grow. 'We planted many fruit trees on our two hectares of land', he explains with a wide grin. 'The villagers told me that was foolish, because people will come and steal the fruit. But I tell them that's exactly the reason we planted the trees. The fruit is for the people. They are hungry. Here stealing is not a sin.'



He is a handyman too and can fix almost anything. He loves to cook for the community. His favourite specialty is barbecued goat and Vietnamese noodles.

On coming to East Timor Tha had to learn English and the local language, Tetum, and he now communicates well in both languages. He also took a special course at Searsolin, the Southeast Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute attached to Xavier University in the Philippines.

The land around Suai is rich, he explains, but the people lack the methods, the tools and the energy to work it properly. Indeed agricultural underdevelopment and hunger among rural people are a common feature in East Timor.

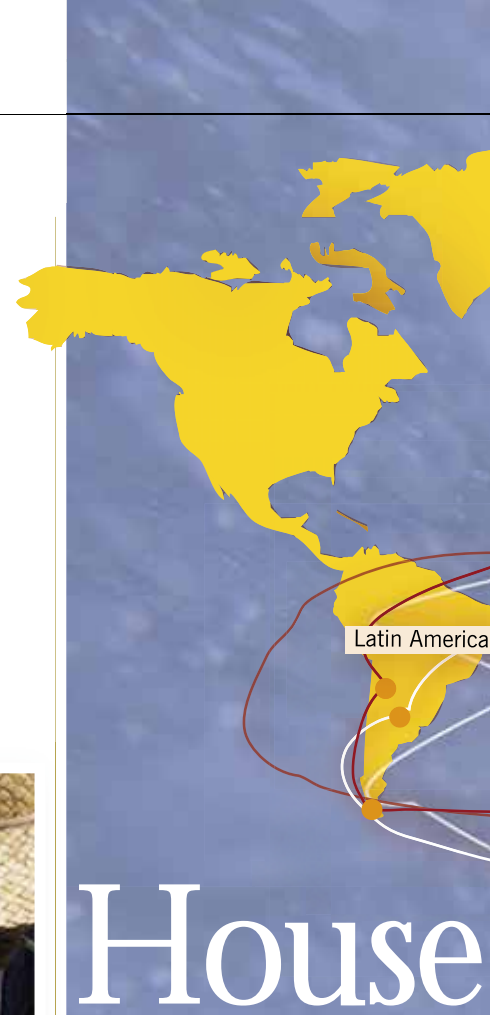
Tha also helps the people to work a common rice field. Land is cleared and ploughed with the Jesuits' tractor, while harvesting is done by the people in the traditional way. All who work share in what they harvest. This year the harvest was plentiful and the people are happy.

After a full day in the fields, Br Tha spends the evenings in the villages with Bible sharing groups. Not many of the villagers can read the Bible easily, but there is always someone who can read for the others. The people enjoy these meetings and love to share their insights into the stories of the Gospel.

Fr Jorge Anzorena lives and breathes houses. For 35 years he has travelled through Asia, Africa and Latin America, engaging with people who are homeless. He brings with him his ears: he listens to the people he visits and passes on the good things that other groups are doing.

Born in Argentina and working as a Jesuit in the Japanese Province, Jorge began his life's path in the Tertianship. He had gained a doctorate in architecture in order to teach. As he travelled through India, he saw what Mother Theresa was doing in Calcutta.

'Seeing so many people dying in the streets', he explains, 'I understood that my doctorate would not help them. So I began to look for a way to be involved with so many homeless, even if I continued to be a full time professor at Sophia University.'



House

Communities began to meet and develop common strategies. In this way, the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, which now has hundreds of communities as members, was born.

Linked communities could organise and push governments to respect their basic human rights. But this was not easy. In the 1970s, the poor were often evicted from their dwellings. Jorge recalls, 'In Tondo, Manila after a long struggle thousands of families could remain in their sites. But in Indonesia and Malaysia the movement was crushed.'

At that time the regional office for the Jesuits in East Asia (then the Bureau of Asian Affairs) wanted to promote housing for the poor in Asia. Jorge asked if he could help, and was invited to Manila where he visited slums and projects. After a number of meetings, the Office for Human Development of the Asian Bishops asked the Provincial of Japan to release him for this work in Asia.

Jorge continues, 'The Provincial and the university agreed to release me, initially for two years, and I began



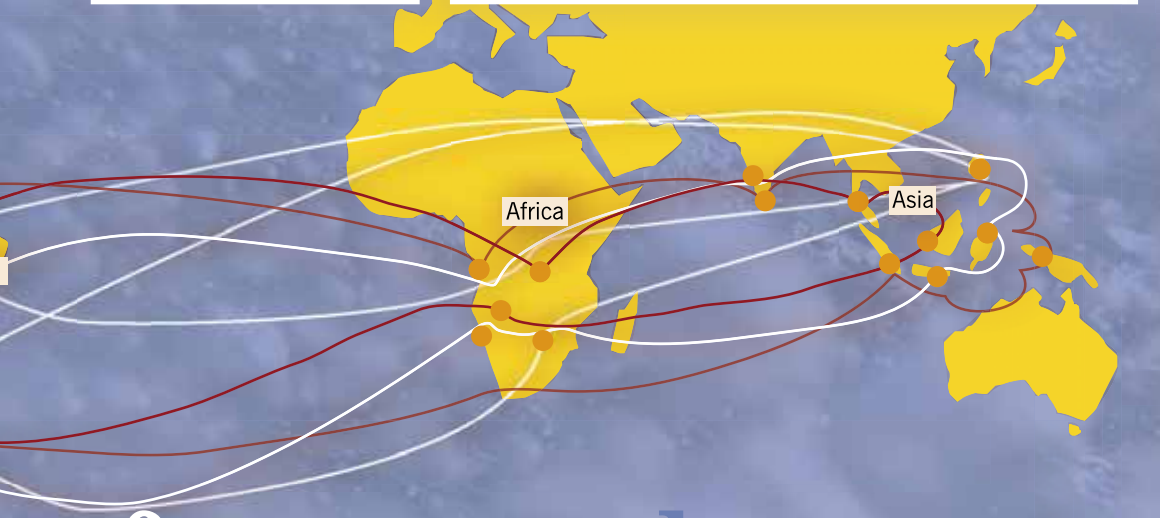
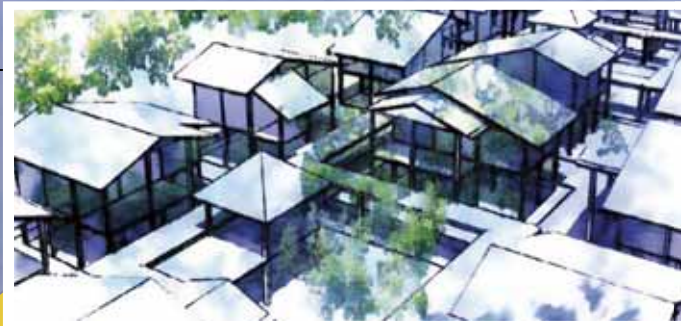
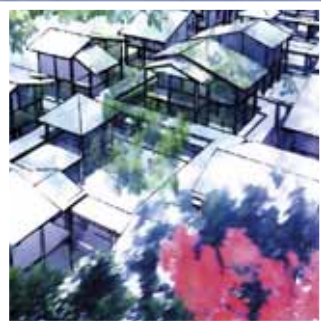
going to different places looking for people who were doing something interesting for shelter for the poor. The two years stretched to over 30 years. For a long time I would travel for half of the year, and teach in Japan for the other half of the year.'

JORGE'S WAY

He soon found his own way of working. He describes it like this: 'Each time I visited a project and found an interesting approach or idea, I would write up what I observed and send that information on to the other groups I had visited. It is such a simple method. Checking the best initiatives that I found, and people's desires, I would let others share both the information and the inspiration I had received.'

As he visited people, he linked them together.





s for people

‘Defending the rights of the urban poor was a subversive activity and suppressed violently. In Thailand the military declared contact with squatters illegal. In South Korea, many were persecuted for organising the poor. At the time Fr J V Daly and his companion Paul Jeong Ku Je were living in the slums. They too were evicted. Fr Daly stayed fasting and praying with the people who resisted eviction.’

LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER

Even so, ideas and projects multiplied, and those that worked were brought from one continent to another. From El Salvador, for example, came projects for large scale housing projects to which the poor could contribute their labour. The project was so successful in Thailand that the government authorities supported it.



Community groups in the Philippines identified a problem facing the poor: the high price of land. One third of the population in large cities were squatters, but they could not buy land. A solution was to organise credit for people to buy

cheaper land beyond the hills, where they could build houses. The government later funded the project.

Groups in Karachi pioneered ways of allowing communities to provide sewerage for themselves. In Africa groups cooperated to form Federations. These eventually grew into the umbrella organization Slum Dwellers International, which spread quickly through Africa.

These are just some projects in which Jorge has had a modest part through meeting, listening to, and sharing with people. He has also worked with many effective Jesuit organisations. He sees the way of the future to lie in cooperating, and says, ‘Today the world wide problems are too big for us and for our institutions. We need to collaborate and support the work of the people of good will. The basic approach of this housing project has been to find these creative and

committed people, to support and network them.’

A LIFE’S WORK

In 1995, Jorge received the 1994 Ramon Magsaysay Award for international understanding, and for devoting himself to the wrenching human dilemma of the millions of people in the cities of Asia today who lack a decent home.

As he looks back over his life, he concludes, ‘Over the past 35 years I have rejoiced to witness the creation of powerful grass roots movements from the bottom up. The urban poor, whose problems seem too complex to touch, have been willing to change their approach, ready to incorporate the people with ideas, and little by little big things have been done.’

The past flows into the future

The major festival in Phnom Penh is celebrated when the waters of the Tonle Sap reverse their flow. In the Battambang Cathedral on 24 May the ordination of Phongphand Phoktavi, universally known as Jub, also marked a point when a stream flowing from the past was seen to flow into the future.

Many of those who took part in the ceremony had been friends of Jub when he worked in the Cambodian refugee camps 25 years ago. The Jesuit Mission in Cambodia was later born out of the Jesuit Refugee Service presence there. A time for memory. But the many children present at his ordination were the future of the Church in which he will serve.

In the 1980s, Jub worked in a JRS program for landmine victims. The program was at Site 2, a huge Cambodian refugee camp in Thailand. The director of the program was Bishop Kike Figaredo, then a Jesuit student. Kike and Jub learned how important it was for people, isolated by their injuries, to experience community and to gain skills that would help them support themselves.

When Sr Denise Coghlan led a team into Cambodia, Jub was part of it. At first the Government was suspicious of foreigners and restricted their movement. But they made Cambodian friends who helped them establish works, including Banteay Prieb, a school for the handicapped. There Jub again joined Kike.

Jub also served JRS on the task force that went into East Timor after the 1999 referendum and its violent aftermath. He went into the mountain country and made easy friendships with the East Timorese.

After some time working with Northern Thailand with refugees and migrant workers from Myanmar, Jub entered the Jesuit noviceship in Singapore in 2002. He studied in the Philippines and completed



his theological studies in Australia.

The ordination Mass was celebrated by Bishop Emile Destombes. Kike Figaredo, now Apostolic Prefect of the Battambang area, was among the Bishops present. One of 11 children, Jub was joined at his ordination by his mother and surviving siblings. His mother, aged 93, was at the centre of the celebrations, helping to vest Jub. She had made hundreds of rosary beads,

and gave them to all those who joined his first Mass. His brother Vichai, a Jesuit in Thailand, concelebrated at the Mass.

One of the most moving moments of Jub's First Mass was the blessing dance. The dancers included many young disabled people who took part in their wheel chairs. The dance came from the traditional past, and the dancers' joy and vitality pointed to the future of which Jub will be part.





A year of Anniversaries

From 11–14 July Father General visited the Philippine Province to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the return of the Jesuits to the country and the founding of what is today the Ateneo de Manila University. It is also 50 years since the erection of the Philippines Province.

A history with so many anniversaries is very rich. Spanish Jesuits first came to the Philippines in 1581. They soon began the Colegio de Manila and many other works which endured until 1768 when all 154 Jesuits were expelled.

After restoration of the Society, Spanish Jesuits returned to Mindanao and Jolo, and established mission stations. In 1859 they took responsibility for a school in Manila, later known as the Ateneo Municipal. Jose Rizal, the architect of Philippines independence from Spain, studied there. But only in 1900 were Filipino candidates accepted as Jesuit novices. And they had to travel at their own expense to Spain to enter the novitiate.

North American Jesuits came to the Philippines in the early 1900s. They took responsibility for the Ateneo de Manila in 1912. By the 1920s, they had gradually replaced the Spanish missionaries. By this time native born Filipinos were encouraged to become Jesuits. A local noviceship was established.

In a changing society, Jesuits saw education as a high priority. It was necessary to form leaders for a country that would one day become independent. So they established colleges in many centres, and handed back mission stations to the local churches.

Jesuits also became involved in the social apostolate,

communicating Catholic social teaching through courses and workshops. Generals and Congregations had emphasised the importance of this ministry. Fr Hogan shaped the ministry along more practical lines. This led to some conflict with local church authorities.

The mission became a vice province in 1952, and a province in 1959. Fr Horatio de la Costa became the first Filipino born Provincial. The province benefited from the many Jesuits who settled there after missionaries were expelled from China.

Establishment of the Loyola School of Theology in 1965 marked the beginnings of theology in a Filipino key. Jesuits also encouraged development of Christian faith in Filipino style, particularly through music. The work of Fr Hontiveros and its continuation through Jesuit music ministry was described in the previous edition of *Jesuits in East Asia and Oceania*.

Identification of Jesuits with the local culture, too, was developed through the political crises of the last 40 years, particularly those at the end of the Marcos government.

The Ateneo de Manila has grown to a student population of over 18,000. Fr Nicolás celebrated the Eucharist to mark its 150 years on 12 July in the company of about 200 Jesuits and a congregation of some 4000. The following day he spoke on issues and challenges in Jesuit education



today to a group of Jesuits and their lay collaborators from the five universities, one college and other schools of the Philippines Province.

During the anniversary of the province Fr Arrupe

also visited the Arrupe community, many Jesuits working in different pastoral ministries, and the East Asian Pastoral Institute where he had happily been director for six years.

Go, set the world alight



Go, set the world alight has been the Indonesian Jesuit slogan for 2009. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the most recent Jesuit presence in Indonesia. The phrase, which comes from Decree 2 of the 35th Jesuit General Congregation, provided the theme for the retreat in daily life made by all Indonesian Jesuits in preparation for the anniversary.

The words themselves go back to St Francis Xavier. When St Ignatius sent him to the East in 1541, he is said to have told him, 'Go, set the world alight'.

Francis Xavier certainly began to set alight our region. He arrived in Molluca in 1546. Jesuits continued to work in the region from then until 1664. By then the Dutch East India Company had driven

out the Portuguese from present-day Indonesia.

After the Restoration of the Society, the Bishop responsible for the East Indies asked for Jesuits to be sent to his territories. The Dutch province, re-established ten years earlier, accepted the mission.

On 9 July 1859 two young priests, Marinus van den Elzen and Joannes Baptist Palinckx,

arrived in Batavia, now Jakarta. Over the coming years, the Dutch province sent almost one quarter of its members to work on the mission.

The early Jesuits spread widely through the islands, caring for the Christian communities there. The cost was often high. For example, Fr Joannes Meijer, an agronomist, arrived in Flores in 1864, but died of fever in the following year.





1859 – 2009



CELEBRATING THE ANNIVERSARY

As part of the celebration of the anniversary, Fr Nicolás and Danny Huang, the Regional Assistant, met the scholastics, brothers and Jesuits who worked in parishes. The principal celebration was held at Sanata Dharma University, where the major superiors of the Assistancy were guests of the Indonesian Jesuits. Friends and benefactors of the Jesuits were also invited, including relatives of Dutch Jesuits who had worked in Indonesia.

The principal celebrant of the Mass was Julius Cardinal Darmaatmadja SJ, the Archbishop of Jakarta. During the mass, Father General received the final vows of 14 Jesuits. The liturgy featured the orchestra conducted by Paulus Suryanto and by Indonesian traditional dances.

In his homily, Fr Nico reminded the people of Jesus' words to Peter, 'Go out into the deep water'. These words spoke deeply to a province composed of many islands. He said, 'Ignatius asked us to help people find the meaning of life and the way to God in the middle of the world. This takes us into deep water. That is our challenge.'

If we are to go into the deep, Fr Nico said, we must let ourselves be burned by the fire of love. As he thanked the Jesuits in Indonesia for the way in which they had served the Church and the nation, he prayed they might continue to set the world alight.

Thomas Surya Awangga SJ

In the early decades of the 20th century the Society gave to other religious congregations responsibility for Flores and other islands. It consolidated its work in Java, in the present dioceses of Jakarta and Semarang.

The Jesuit commitment produced the greatest fruit in central Java. Javanese Catholics hold in especially high respect Fr van Driessche, Fr Strater and Fr Prenthaler.

Fr General Pedro Arrupe's visit to Indonesia in 1971 was a turning point for Indonesian Jesuits. That year the region became an independent province. Fr Soenarja, a native-born Indonesian who had been vice-provincial since 1967, was the first Provincial. In April 1991, the Indonesian province was given responsibility for the Thailand and Malaysia-Singapore regions.

The Indonesian province now comprises some 350 Jesuits, not including Jesuits who belong to Thailand and Malaysia-Singapore regions. It is the biggest province in the Assistancy of East Asia and Oceania. Its ministries range from social programs to academic institutions, and from pastoral care in parishes, to chaplaincy among labourers.

Greg Soetomo SJ



