

jesuits

in East Asia and Oceania

December 2008



MAGiS: Manila, Sydney, World



**After
NARGIS**

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Assistancy snapshots

New Provincials

Since the General Congregation we have four new Provincials in the Assistancy. In the Philippines Fr Jojo Magadia replaces Danny Huang. Fr Steve Curtin replaces Mark Raper as Provincial of the Australian Province. In Indonesia Fr Riyo Mursanto is the new Provincial, replacing Priyono Marwan. Fr John Sin Won-sik, replaces Matthias Chae Joon-ho as Provincial of Korea.



First Cambodian Jesuit takes vows

The first Cambodian Jesuit, Ham Toeun made his First Vows at the Loyola Jesuit Novitiate in Singapore on 19 May. Fr Gabriel Je, Delegate of the Korea Provincial in Cambodia, came to Singapore to receive his Vows.



Our home is the journey

The scholastics from Arrupe House have been engaged in pastoral experiences in unfamiliar places. Eight Jesuit juniors sailed to Mindanao where they lived among the local people. Later, other scholastics saw the reality of the Jesuit call to go to any part of the world. They spent the summer vacation in Thailand, Macao, Cambodia and Japan.



Jesuit pilgrims at World Youth Day

MAGiS08 was a mini-gathering for Jesuits in the Assistancy and beyond. Local Jesuits accompanied pilgrims from Micronesia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Philippines, Australia, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar. Their conversations and reflections will give energy to future cooperative ventures.



Our Lady on the Way

This year students in Xavier High School in Chuuk celebrated their graduation Mass in a new chapel. It is 55 years since the first students came to the Jesuit school. Maria de la Strada stands on the edge of the Chuuk lagoon. It is modelled on the huts traditional to the region.

Tenth birthday of Burmese Mission

The Burmese Mission celebrated its tenth birthday with a dinner attended by the Archbishop, priests, religious and lay people. A concert followed the dinner, at which Frs Lorenzo Yom and Ipong Purwantoro, from the Korean and Indonesian Provinces respectively, were farewelled. They will now enter tertianship.



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Jesuits in East Asia and Oceania is published two times a year by:

Jesuit Communications Australia, 326 Church Street, Richmond, VIC 3121 Australia. ACN 004 238 948

in association with: **Jesuit Conference of East Asia, PO Box 1264, Quezon City, Philippines** © Jesuit Communications Australia 2008.

To order copies of *Jesuits in East Asia and Oceania* contact: **Jesuit Communications Australia, PO Box 553, Richmond, VIC 3121 Australia.**

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Printed on Impress Satin using wood fibre from sustainable forests. Elementally chlorine free.

The promise of the future

'I have seen the future, and it is now', said Nam June Paik, the Korean who invented video art. The future is an exciting place to be. It promises instant information, rapid mobility, and ready opportunity.

In Asia, as elsewhere, the promise of the future is marked by familiar tensions between the powerful global forces driving economies, communications and politics, and the local cultures, nations, languages or even persons that these forces put at risk.

Although communication tools have improved, many people experience isolation and exclusion. Scientific knowledge touches the deep mysteries of life, but the dignity of life is threatened. Our world itself is threatened.

Jesuits also live this tension between the global and the local. *Jesuits in East Asia and Oceania* describes the small things that Jesuits do in their local Provinces. It also puts them into the larger world of Christ's call to us in Asia. We need to recognise the global forces that shape the future of Asia. We need also to discern our response to them.

The vision of St Ignatius was both local and without horizons. 'Our vocation is to travel through the world and to live in any part of it whatsoever', wrote Ignatius in the *Constitutions*. For Jesuits, this is part of the mortification of which Budi Gomulia speaks in this issue.

Because our mission is Christ's mission, it reaches to the whole world. We have a mission to the frontiers, while we live at the heart of the Church. Sometimes the frontiers are geographic.



Sometimes they are fault lines within the human heart.

When, like Ignatius, Jesuits desire to respond to the greatest needs, it becomes normal for them to live and work away from home. This does not mean that all Jesuits will constantly travel, quite the opposite.

Some of us have received a mission to plunge ourselves deeply into local languages and cultures. But all of us are called to learn to cooperate with Jesuits of other cultures and languages so that we can serve together more effectively. The young people and Jesuits on pilgrimage with MAGiS08 learned much about this.

The Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania was formed about 40 years ago to develop the Society's 'extraordinary potential as an international and multicultural body'. Its aim is not to make all the Jesuit regions uniform. It aims to build on what local Jesuits do, and so to develop shared initiatives that will flower in union, mutual communication and a common vision.

In this edition you will read a little about how at present we communicate in our Provinces.

In Asian spiritual traditions, life is a way, a journey, a continuity between past, present and future.

'Our vocation is to travel through the world and to live in any part of it whatsoever'

Christians in Asia learn too that Christianity is a way, that Jesus is a way. We need a way if we are to live, to grow, to search, to love, and so to build union, harmony and peace.

So we live the tensions between the global and the local, the universal good and particular good, the past and the future, in ways that will be for the good of everyone. We seek to live today the future that we dream.

Mark Raper

A modest service

Bernard Arputhasamy hopes that one day he will go out of business because there is no need for his services. He is Coordinator of Jesuit Refugee Service Asia/Pacific.



Unfortunately the needs of refugees multiply. This year Bernard has been preoccupied, first by East Timor, and then by the vast number of people affected by Cyclone Nargis in Burma. Early on he heard from witnesses the scale of the disaster and the heroism of ordinary people. They also spoke of their gratitude. One wrote,

‘After two months, a sense of gratitude and fulfilment fills all of us. We were there to rescue them, feed them in the first weeks and console them in their moments of darkness. We are moved to tears when we see people back again in their fields. We walked with them in their moment of brokenness. We broke bread with them in their villages without homes and churches.

With the support of all of you (friends and partners), we are resolute to make their lives more dignified through greater livelihood options, decent living quarters while charting a hopeful future for their children. The deluge brought daring challenges but our people’s resilience is the greatest asset and reward. As each one of you contributed towards making this happen, a sweet debt we owe to all of you.’

In the aftermath of the cyclone international agencies had little scope to help build the more hopeful future. JRS supported Burmese who worked with the survivors of the hurricane. It helped them with technical advice, encouragement and some financial support.



Typical of these local groups is the Myanmar Rehabilitation Initiative (MRI). It works in villages near the sea in the delta region of Myanmar. It has been helping people in small ways to meet their needs for emergency assistance, shelter and education, and to support them in again finding ways to earn their livelihood.

‘Homelessness has emerged as one of the major problems after Nargis’, Bernard says.

‘People without title to land have been forced to live in areas vulnerable to floods and other natural disasters. The poor, who were officially ‘squatters’ for generations, were the worst victims in the disaster.’

The Myanmar Rehabilitation Initiative was able to help 150 poor families rebuild their simple houses. This is a little thing in so enormous a need. But for Bernard, it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

Living MAGiS

What Jesuits learned from the pilgrims



Jesuits who joined MAGiS08 in Sydney were amazed by the power the young pilgrims found in the everyday insights of Ignatius. They were blown away by the experiments that took them into unfamiliar worlds with new people. They were deeply moved by the MAGiS circle where they spoke together of their experience and their dreams. They treasured being briefly part of an apostolic community.

They also taught Jesuits there to see freshly their Ignatian inheritance. Jesuits saw clearly how community can be formed and nurtured. They saw the international reach of the Society. They saw how important it is to experience deeply and to reflect on what they experienced.

The pilgrims did many things together, ranging from rice planting in Cambodia, to visiting villages in Indonesia, tree planting in coastal Victoria, and meeting Indigenous Australians in Sydney. Jesuits from many Provinces helped the pilgrims to savour their experience.

For some Jesuits it was a return to their noviceship experiments. They had to keep the pilgrims fed. Early in the morning they prepared breakfast for the 1200 pilgrims. Into

each pilgrim’s breakfast bag they put two sugar sachets, a coffee sachet, two tea bags, a packet of breakfast cereal, a bottle of milk, two muesli bars, two bread rolls, butter, jam and pieces of fruit. In the afternoon they returned to prepare the dinner.

As World Youth Day followed MAGiS, the pilgrims’ enthusiasm at being with Pope Benedict was striking. They saw him as the symbol of faith shared with their brothers and sisters from around the world. For Jesuits this echoed the way General Congregation 35 spoke of the close bond between Pope and Society.

Jesuits who came to MAGiS to help young people enter the Ignatian spirit of discernment and service found themselves helped by their young companions to enter it more deeply.



'The Vigil at Randwick before the Final WYD Mass was great. Everyone looked after each other so well through the night.'



'At the end, every time we do the MAGiS Circle and everyone shares their joy and their struggle, it's the answer. Everyone feels the same and the bonding is there.'



'Going to hear the Pope was really cool. When I saw the huge crowd, I realised what such different people had in common.'

Photos by Jesuit photographers and Beth Doherty



MAGiS— beyond 08

The gathering at MAGiS08 allowed Jesuits from many lands to speak with one another about their work with young adults. They found new perspectives.



The event showed freshly what was possible in youth ministry. Pilgrims enjoyed one another's company and found support in each other's faith. They were also enriched by their differences of language and culture.

The Jesuits working with them were also enriched by being able to enter practices that they might have thought had nothing to say



to their own young adults.

The immediate task after World Youth Day will be to build on the energy and deepening of spirit with which the pilgrims will return to their homes. In our Assistancy, many Jesuits have prepared for that in university chaplaincies, parish groups for young adults, and in other organisations. Reunions

have been organised, and review of the programs offered.

It is hoped that the Jesuits can continue to meet, too. The experiments, so central in the formation that MAGiS offers to young adults, will continue to involve Jesuits of different Provinces. And MAGiS is now organising internationally, with a meeting in Kenya next year.



Photo supplied by St Ignatius College Riverview



Why not look at Ignatius?

Fr Budi Gomulia became interested in St Ignatius in the noviceship. Not so much his own time as a novice, but his years assisting the Indonesian Novice Master.

'The novices challenged me, because I had a strong desire to help them to grow. And of course that made me ask how I could be helped to grow. So I decided to look at spirituality, not so much for others as for myself, to see how to grow', he says.

Budi came to Australia to study Ignatian spirituality and had to write a thesis as part of his degree. So an idea came to him.

'If I want to know how to grow, why not look at Ignatius? After all, he was transformed from a self-centred person to one totally given to God and to other people in a relatively short time. How did this happen? How can we help one another effectively to grow?'

So Budi looked at Ignatius' autobiography, at the *Spiritual Exercises* and at his letters.

He found there a secret that surprised him a little.

'Throughout his life Ignatius practised a proper mortification. He is always speaking of it, always recommending it', Budi says.

People ask him, 'Isn't that a very negative way of looking at Ignatius? Don't harsh penances and an emphasis on correcting faults make you self-centred?' Budi smiles and

says that is why he insisted on 'proper mortification'.

'At first Ignatius practised dangerous mortification. But then he came to know himself better. He constantly reflected prayerfully on his life and saw exactly where he needed to conquer himself. 'Conquering yourself' is Ignatius' favourite phrase. Francis Xavier used it too. When asked why, he said he had learned it from Ignatius. It's about finding activities that will help us to grow where we need to grow.'

Budi says that our culture is one of self-fulfilment. So we don't easily speak of self-denial or mortification. But he says it is important in helping those we guide to grow. If someone has a difficult relationship with their father, for example, we can simply listen to them. But it will be more effective if we help them reflect on themselves and help them find something they can do to conquer their resentment. Perhaps, to make something nice for their father each night and bring it to him.

'That is proper mortification', says Budi. 'It comes out of reflecting on ourselves and it takes us out of ourselves to look at others. Ignatius would say it is about mission.'

Budi waits to see what he will be asked to do when he returns to Indonesia. But he would be very happy to work with novices in the Assistancy where there are so many needs. 'Novitiates are about growing, and making Ignatius' spirit part of ourselves', he says.



Illustration by Tibor

Sharing our Good News

In Ignatius' day it was the printing press. Afterwards, telephone, camera, radio, film, television, tape, fax, video, internet, iPods and versatile mobile phones have been the latest thing in communication.



Technologies may change but Jesuits still need to communicate the Good News to the world and to share their lives with one another. These two things go together. General Congregation 35 insisted that Jesuits must reach beyond province boundaries in our mission to spread God's word. We can only do that if we learn to communicate easily and effectively with one another. Here are some examples of how we communicate in the Assistancy.

The best ways of communicating are often the smallest: conversation, emails, blogs and parish newsletters, for example. In our region we often learn what our fellow Jesuits are doing through newsletters, like the *Philippine Clipper*, *Inter Nos* and *China News*.

Some Provinces also produce magazines for friends and benefactors and to promote vocations. *Jesuits of East Asia and Oceania* and the Australian Province's *Companions* are examples.

Websites now present the public face of Provinces and our works. The Assistancy websites offer a rich picture of Jesuit life in our region and the different ways in which we share the Gospel. They publicise news and coming events, and provide material for spiritual reflection. Most websites are works in progress. They have space for people to respond to what is on the website, for example, and can present audio or visual items. But the development of these resources remains a challenge.

Some websites are supported by regular email

newsletters. The *EAO News* from the Jesuit Conference goes mainly to Jesuits, for example. In Australia, *Province of East Asia and Oceania* and the Australian Province's *Companions* are examples.

Communicating the Gospel

In communicating the Gospel, the printed word remains important within the Assistancy. Taiwan, Indonesia and the Philippines publish many books. Indonesia, is also typical of the Assistancy in the variety of magazines for which Jesuits have responsibility. *Hidup*, the Catholic magazine distributed throughout Indonesia, has a Jesuit director. The Jesuit publishing house in Yogyakarta also publishes *Basis*, a cultural and philosophical magazine that appeals to an educated



audience, *Upusan* for a lay audience, and *Rohani*, a magazine for religious.

Today websites and electronic news services complement magazines in encouraging reflection on faith. The success of *Sacred Space* shows how people hunger for good spiritual help. In our Assistancy, the Singapore website offers Sunday homilies. The Singapore and Philippines websites also contain much spiritual material. *Eureka Street* and



E Renlai also offer cultural and social comment from a Catholic moral perspective.

When evangelising people who do not read easily, audio and visual media have always been important. Jesuits in Indonesia, the Philippines and Taiwan developed these resources early on. The Kuangchi Cultural Press was founded in 1957 as a publishing house. It now also produces radio and television programs on faith and Christian values. Jerry Martinson, known in China as Uncle Jerry through his popular programs, is director.

Like Kuangchi, the Puskat Audio Visual Studio in Indonesia trains people in communications. In its programs it has recently focused on the relations between religions. The Jesuit Communications Foundation

in the Philippines produces printed material and DVDs. Those featuring Jesuit church musicians have been very popular.

Building good communications

As Provinces increasingly share their resources more in projects that extend beyond their boundaries, good communications will become more important. Jesuits in Communications in East Asia and Oceania (JESCOMEA) has been responsible for encouraging more effective ways of communicating. It has been particularly effective in educating scholastics to know and use media.

The challenges to share Jesuit experience and resources within our Assistancy are posed first by the different languages

we speak. A gift, but also a challenge to communicate.

Changes in technology provide us with constantly changing opportunities and challenges to communicate God's word. Throughout Asia, many people rely heavily on mobile phones. Communication through text messages provides great opportunities, as the Philippines Province has shown. Audio and visual material suitable for phones will also become increasingly important.

Ignatius would blink when he saw today's technology. But his eyes would have lit up at the possibilities it provided.



IT BEGAN IN CONVERSATION

In the beginning was conversation. Ignatius' great gift was to invite people to speak about their lives. His early companions learned from him. From face-to-face-spiritual conversation it was a short step to preach and to teach. It was a natural step then to use the technology of the day to communicate.

The new technology was the printing press. Jesuits used it to spread God's word to scholars and to the general public. They also used it to tell people about their missions. Francis Xavier and others wrote back to Europe long letters to describe the new worlds to which they were bringing the Gospel. They told people about the missions, attracted many young men to become Jesuits, and gathered prayers and donations for the work.

The Jesuits who built our Assistancy were also people of the book and of the magazine. Devotional magazines dedicated to the Sacred Heart and to Our Lady had large circulations. They helped readers relate their faith to their everyday world. In Australia *Madonna* has been published for more than one hundred years. All Asian Provinces began as foreign missions. Many magazines and reports spread information about these missions to the home provinces.



'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to proclaim the Lord's year of favour'