



**AQUA
TAIWAN
2011**

WELCOME TO AQUA - TAIWAN: 2011

NOTICE TO OUR READERS:

Welcome to *A Quarterly for Ursulines in Asia* (AQUA) Taiwan, 2011, a little later than the deadline of the end of July which we regret. We also regret that this issue of AQUA is plainer and less “fat” than usual. We have to put it down to lack of nourishment, input having been scarce this year. While sincerely thanking those who have made a contribution, we hope our edition will, at least, be informative about our domestic affairs even though it may leave you somewhat under-nourished too. Times are hard!

CAMBODIA

We welcomed Huaying home from Cambodia in July after a year’s interrupted service in the experimental Asia-Pacific Interprovincial Community in Battambang. Her absence had affected our community age range quite a lot. For a year we had averaged 81.3 years but soldiered on as always. Here Huaying describes some of her many experiences in Cambodia which we hope will be of interest to Asia-Pacific readers:

CATHOLIC IN A BUDDHIST COUNTRY – CAMBODIA

Alphonsa Hsu, O.S.U.

Cambodia is a Buddhist country with Hindu traditions. Around 92% of the Cambodian population practices Theravada Buddhism. Since the late 13th century, Theravada Buddhism has been a way of life among the Khmer; there are temples everywhere. Buddhism is rooted in Cambodian society.

Missionaries constantly entered Cambodia from 1555 until 1785 when Cambodia was destroyed by war and Catholic communities all but disappeared. In 1850 the Holy See established the Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh and Battambang. From 1881, during the French protectorate, many Catholics from Vietnam came and settled in Cambodia. In 1968 the Holy See divided the Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh into three Ecclesiastical districts; namely Phnom Penh, Battambang and Kompong Cham. Mgr. Paul Tep Im Sotha became the Apostolic Prefect of Battambang. Sadly, he was killed in May 1975 at Bat Trang.

In 1975, the Catholic Church once again fell, this time under the Pol Pot Khmer Rouge regime. The Westerners began to face deportation and harm. Churches were completely destroyed and all Cambodian priests and religious were killed. A great number of Cambodian Catholics lost their lives during the years of the genocide. In 1990, the Catholic communities were given permission to worship freely in Cambodia. Battambang province in 2000 began a new Church.

From then on, the Church faced the problem of a majority of people who were suffering after civil war; Rampant spread of disease, lack of food and education required the

Church to dedicate itself to the local people's needs. It built roads and bridges in the villages , helped people develop their agriculture, established hospitals, women's health services, student boarding centers, skills training schools, disabled children's centers; it supported economic and spiritual needs, especially by implementing centers with Programs of Education . Each center has a group which regularly goes to the villages to visit people every day. According to the people's needs it provides help for them. So far all these centers of services are free.

Up to now, the Church is mostly staffed by missionaries. Local vocations are rare. Working with poor people needs many volunteers. Most of them come from abroad and offer service for a year. The Church carries out liturgical localization, constructing Church buildings in the Cambodian architectural style, honoring ancestors, using incense to worship and so on. These signs help poor people in the Church to get in touch with catholic life. Sometimes they join the Sunday mass or other celebrations. In Battambang diocese, there are hundreds of people baptized each year, mostly young. They need to go through two years of preparation. Before Sunday Mass several Bible study groups take place. A great need for this growing Church is trained catechists. For this reason, the Church, at present, finds it necessary to set up catechist training schools.

Service to the poor and personally visiting families to help them in their needs is a very strong sign in Khmer society of building the Kingdom of God.

Also CAMBODIA via the Mandarin Center in Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

Jantana Wong of the Province of Thailand spent a year in the Mandarin Center here absorbing, very successfully, the intricacies of the Chinese language. In these times of globalization and “going beyond the borders” she added an international dimension to our community as well as a vibrant and youthful one. She is now in Cambodia introducing those most deprived of education in south-east Asia to both English and Thai languages. The fields are white to harvest there.

The Mandarin Center keeps busy all the year round without a break. An international group will complete Chinese language and cultural studies at the end of July while two groups of Vietnamese teachers will also profit from Chinese language formation in the Center. One advantage is that the process is two-way and teachers from the Center will visit Vietnam to maintain tuition and expertise. Further good news is that scholarships can be offered to three Vietnamese students in the near future. The administrative process for Vietnam is somewhat more complex than for Indonesia but arrangements are on-going and positive. This will indeed be an opportunity to help develop sound education as well as evangelization.

The Center has also made contacts in Mozambique, east Africa. Through Wenzao's relationship with the group of Universities of St. Thomas we enjoyed the visit of Dr. Joseph M. Wamala, President of the University of St. Thomas in Mozambique. He spent a week in Taiwan getting to know the educational ethos and researching ways and means to introduce Chinese language learning into his institution. One good result was the

Memorandum of Understanding between our two colleges; Wenzao will do what is possible to spend time in Mozambique teaching Mandarin Chinese there. Dr. Wamala's interesting lecture: *The Emerging (private) University – the Case Study of the University of St. Thomas of Mozambique* did much to open our eyes to his vision of the educational progress being made in Africa and was especially interesting after the reports we had heard from Ursuline immersions and the EGC in South Africa.

OTHER INTERNATIONAL NEWS:

Sisters Iwona and Maria Theresa from the Generalate visited us in March bringing news and views and a breath of fresh air from the Eternal City. Cultural exchange is always an offshoot of such visits. We were glad that the Night Market in Kaohsiung City made such a pleasant impression. If any of our readers would like to share the experience, please know how welcome you will be if you visit too.

We have all shared in the joy of the Final Profession Ceremony of four Chinese Sisters in St. Louis, U.S.A. in July. How wonderful that more than 130 Ursulines could be present. The Sisters' years of study in Chicago are an international blessing for our Institute made possible by the generosity and welcome of the then Central Province of the U.S.A. We pray that the ripple effects may spread throughout Taiwan and Continental China in the years to come.

CHINA:

Most of us will have learned through international news in the press or on the Internet of the illicit consecration of Fr. Joseph Huang as Bishop of Shantou, China on 14th July. We know him and his parish where Sr. Marie du Sacre Coeur Lee has worked tirelessly for many years. There was no Vatican approval for the consecration given that Shantou already has a bishop recognized by the Vatican but not by the Chinese government. We pray much that rectification and healing may come about in such a painful situation.

OUR EDUCATIONAL APOSTOLATES

Ministry of Education Evaluations seem to be our lot this year. Stella Maris Angela kindergarten in Hualien will have one in the near future while Wenzao College of Languages underwent the same ordeal last December. We hope with all our hearts that Angela kindergarten will do as well as Wenzao did. The college results were good enough to enable it to make application for formal university status. This is important for its future since private schools are under considerable pressure to be efficient and attractive enough to garner the requisite number of students to ensure continued existence. In Taiwan, even if a "college" is excellent it does not have the same cachet as a "university" does. There is a strong possibility that the application will be favorably considered. We just wait in hope.

TAIWAN YOUTH DAY, 2011

This is an annual event run by the Taiwan dioceses in turn. This year it fell to Kaohsiung. Our college opened up the campus to the young people, giving them dormitory space and premises for activities, many of which also took place in the Dominican High School. It was encouraging to see groups sitting around for shared prayer and discussion and to learn how satisfied they were with the program. The only drawback was the torrential rain that fell all too frequently. However, to judge by the yells and shouts, they coped with it pretty well.

STELLA MARIS HIGH SCHOOL, HUALIEN

Teresa Ku, our provincial, runs the St. Angela Center in the High School. Below, she describes one of its new activities.

STARS and DREAMS: Going Toward God

Teresa Ku O.S.U.

I am glad to share with you.....These years I have learned how to develop my prayer life. I am learning all the time and am very interested in this learning process.

This year, in the St. Angela Center in Stella Maris High School, Hualien, I have started to build up a prayer group. We agreed to call the group a “prayer community” I like this name. I feel it gives us our identity. We meet together in the name of prayer; our deep desire to grow closer to God. I feel the members yearn to develop their spiritual life through the Gospel with Jesus.

The prayer group consists of three couples. They are quite young and take advantage of their evening time to come to the St. Angela Center. We meet once a week; it is just a new group, I am very surprised and touched by their attending so faithfully! We know we will learn how to pray through practicing prayer day by day. We feel we can support one another to create our ideal into reality. We have agreed to follow the Ignatian spiritual exercises, so every week we have the same prayer purpose. Even though our daily work takes up our time we all pray the same words of the Gospel, Then, when we meet, we share and practice different methods of prayer.

I feel it is a profound experience to encounter God through a group. We meet and share with one another. During these encounters I know God is among us and I feel we are changed.

It is a new and touching experience to realize we are willing to continue this prayer community. We meet together for spiritual reasons which, we know, this world cannot satisfy. We are changed and offer newness to a longing and waiting world,

Up to now, I am the sole religious in the group. This is also a learning experience for me as I listen to their life stories which help me to meet God in their world. It is indeed a prayerful and spiritually enriching encounter.

GLOBALIZATION

This is a buzz word these days as we endeavor to make it a reality on our campuses. In Wenzao College toward the middle of June the second group of Indonesian students graduated from different language departments. The new group will arrive in late August. They are all from our Ursuline schools in Indonesia and are endowed with scholarships from the college here. This year, as last year, they will number 22 or 23 and certainly add a valuable dimension to school life as well by their diligence as by their cultural input in dance, song, drama and enthusiasm.

A PhD STUDENT IN THE UK. SENSE OF SECURITY?

Elizabeth Lin, O.S.U.

Once again finding myself a postgraduate student after having left academia for nearly 20 years, I have encountered quite a few difficulties. Certainly, it is not easy for an old dog to learn new tricks! Thanks to the providence of God, I have managed to survive the first year of study in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Newcastle University, north-west England.

To answer the most frequently asked question, “When can you get the degree?” my reply is that it takes four years at least. Unlike the traditional research doctorate programs, I’m doing an IPHD, which means I have to obtain 200 credits before embarking on the actual research. There are no examinations but numerous written assignments. In order to turn in the assignments on time, I have to do a great deal of related research and reading, stay up late or even, on occasion, the whole night. Lack of computer skills is my worst nightmare. You can picture me sitting in front of the computer crying helplessly. Luckily, with help from senior students in our Graduate Study Center, I am more familiar now at finding resources online, and have succeeded in earning 120 credits. I still have difficulties with technology; however, I’m able to detect the problem and learn how to get help. Hopefully, the remaining credits will be acquired and then the definite doctoral proposal can be submitted by the end of April, 2012.

Thank you, Lord.

LIFE IN THE SMALL COMMUNITY IN TAIPEI

Marian Gao, O.S.U.

When Sister Claire and I, Sister Marian, moved from No. 57, a rented apartment, to our own place on the 9th floor of No. 17, we thought that we should have a small chapel, being a house of the Lord. Sister Fidelis was still the Provincial then. She requested permission from Archbishop John Hong to have the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel. The permission was granted and Sister Claire was given the charge of renewing the hosts periodically. As usual, we have Masses celebrated for the Feasts of St. Ursula and St. Angela. When the time was due to have new hosts in July, we thought that we would try to invite Archbishop John Hong to say Mass for us this time. He has casually expressed on several occasions his desire to be invited by the Sisters in the diocese so as to know

them better. As he was recently ill we thought it was an occasion to show our concern. We tried our luck and Sister Marian got in touch with him. He accepted our invitation. On July 12, at 11:00, he came as a good shepherd to his fold with only three little sheep. We offered our Mass for his intentions. After Holy Mass, we invited him to a buffet lunch in the Grand Hotel. During the meal he shared with us some of his concerns and plans. He told us that the diocese has decided to sell the church and hostel next door to where we live. There is too much reparation and renovation to be done. So much money would have to be invested for so few parishioners the diocese thinks that it is not feasible. A few days later, we saw a television van with reporters going in next door. Evidently the property had already been up for option and perhaps even sold.

The month of July is exceedingly hot in Taipei. The temperature rises to an average of 36 C. However, the Sisters go their way to their different posts under the burning sun. Sister Siao traveled back and forth from Taipei to China and back to Taipei. Sister Clare made her way to the children's summer camp taking place in the parish Church of St. John Bosco in the heat of the afternoon to get the youngsters singing. Sister Marian began her intensive summer program of Mediaeval Culture in Fu Jen University. This year, it is centered on the study of St. Augustine's *Confessions*. She has 15 students. Some of them are already teaching, but most of them are PhD. students, 5 from Mainland China, the others from Taiwan. It is one of Sister Marian's intentions to plant Thomas Aquinas' moral teaching in China. Imagine her surprise when she received an invitation from the Angelicum in Rome, to cooperate in a research project in this area. When she received that invitation, she was laughing to herself and spoke to the Lord, just as Sarah did. "Is it a joke from the Lord? I am not young". Anyhow the Lord can do what is impossible. We are grateful for his considering us worthy to cooperate with Him.

EXPERIENCING WITH YOU

Several countries in our Asia-Pacific region have been stricken with massive natural disasters this year. We think of flooding in Australia, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions in Indonesia and the mighty tsunami that destroyed such a large part of north-eastern Japan. The typhoon that struck the southern area of Taiwan last September was small in comparison and yet it had its repercussions on Wenzao college campus. During the first weekend of September 2010 typhoon Morakot struck Taiwan. A large part of the south was flooded; landslides cut off access to villages, especially in the mountains. We did not think that it would make history for us since the "eye" did not even pass over us. However, driving winds blew and torrential rain fell unceasingly from Saturday morning until Monday morning sending up the level of the so-called Love River that borders the campus until it burst its banks and poured over us. Basement car parks, the bookshop, restaurant, printing centre, Family Mart convenience store, extra-curricular activities centre, exercise room, sports equipment store, children's classroom and general discussion and study space among other spots were totally destroyed. The generator was put out of action so no light, no air-conditioning and no computers could function. We appeared twice on national television and had to announce closure for at least one week. Then, something heartwarming and uplifting happened. With no prompting or appeal, our

students organized themselves on Facebook. By Monday afternoon a watery sun showed up the extent of what needed to be drained, dragged out and cleaned up. More than 300 of our students appeared and set to work. Together with faculty members and help from the City government which sent in heavy machinery to get the water out, our students cleaned out the very great amount of destroyed materials from the bookstore where all the books, mostly imported because of language studies, for the academic year had been lying and from all the places where equipment had been saturated. They worked so hard and so cheerfully and willingly alongside young men from the Navy College with whom one of our faculty members had connections that we could reopen the college, reasonably clean and disinfected, after just one week. A temporary generator restored electricity and computer services. Air-conditioning had to wait. Compared with other disasters suffered in the region, we know that ours was not so great. It served a good purpose however. Now we know from small experience what other Asia-Pacific Sisters, their families and compatriots have undergone. Having received great help ourselves, we have increased in understanding and will try to help others more.

URSULINE EDUCATION PROJECT - ROOTS!

The first section: ROOTS, of the Ursuline Education project is nearing completion and will appear on-line for 25th November this year. The input from the Asia-Pacific region has been impressive. Thank you. The TRUNK of this symbolic educational tree will see the light of day for 25th March, 2012 and the BRANCHES for 21st October, 2012. The committee members hope the publication will inspire and help you and our lay collaborators in the work of Ursuline education.

Here ends Taiwan AQUA, 2011. Any comments, queries, suggestions and ??? will be accepted with thanks. Email is always most useful. What did we do before we had email? You might like to try ellem@mail.wtuc.edu.tw or mylodosu@yahoo.com.tw.

With prayer for every blessing on each one and on what is done for the Church and our Institute in the Asia-Pacific region,

Ellen Mary Mylod, O.S.U.