



## Words from the Provincial Superior

Bro. Dominic Yeo Koh



Dear Brothers,

This will be the last issue of the news bulletin that I am writing to you as the Provincial Superior. Soon, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013, Brother Francis Chua will be the new Provincial Superior for the next three years. I take this opportunity to wish him the guidance and graces of God's Spirit during this term of office. I pray that he continue in his missionary spirit to lead the Province as true disciples of God in the service of the least among us.

We are now in a period of transition wherein a number of us will be assigned to new duties, as some will relinquish their current portfolios and all of us will move on to our respective assignments. It is in a spirit of faith that each of us is to take up our new assignments. For us as religious it is more than a mere change of job but rather we are being send on a new mission, and even if we are remain in the same assignment we are invited to do so with a renewed spirit during this new term of office.

In this year of faith, we are called to walk through the "door of faith" (Acts 14:27) which is always open for us. It is here that we can experience a transformation of heart. We are in a time of transition and thus we are to make this journey of faith at such a time. Our attitude towards the assignment (or obedience given to us) is not merely to say "I obey" as though it is merely a commandment given in the rule but rather, in the words of Pope Francis, "It is about letting Christ take possession of our lives and transform them."

Recently Pope Francis in addressing young confirmands in Rome (28 April 2013) reminded the young people and which is also relevant for us, "Remain steadfast in the journey of faith, with firm hope in the Lord." As we embark on the journey of faith in this new term of office, we are to remain steadfast. Montfort expressed this similar thought in the True Devotion (TD 214) that "It is a firm faith, unshakable as a rock, prompting you to remain firm and steadfast in the midst of storms and tempest." Thus in accepting our various assignments we are not to seek out for an easy path to take. Some of us may say to the Provincial Superior – "send me there only when the other person has cleaned up all the mess." This is indeed not the spirit of a true disciple of the Lord.

When we take on our new assignment we will likely be filled with fear and trembling, and this will indeed be so. Our only assurance is that it is not by our own strength but by the grace of God that we can be sufficient (2 Cor 12:9). In the face of difficulties and trials we can be assured, as Pope Francis told to young confirmands, that "Jesus gives us this courage! There are no difficulties, trials or misunderstandings to fear, provided we remain united to God as branches to the vine, provided we do not lose our friendship with him, provided we make ever more room for him in our lives."

When we look at the tasks ahead of us we may be overwhelmed with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). This is quite normal but we also know that the work assigned to us is not of our own choosing but it is given to us from God through our Provincial Superior. It is God's work indeed. Once again Pope Francis reminded us as he did the young confirmands, "Let us trust in God's work! With him we can do great things, he will give us the joy of being his disciples, his witnesses. *(and I would add) his brothers!*" This echoed Montfort who also invited us to have "a courageous faith which inspires you to undertake and carry out without hesitation great things for God and the salvation of souls." (TD 214)

At this time when we begin our new assignment, we remind ourselves that we are called to do great things for God and not to merely base our work on “some human thinking” (1 Thess 2:13). Montfort to Blessed Marie-Louise (Letter 27) reminds us to do great things for God too when he wrote: “If you do not take risks for God, you would not do anything great for Him!”

We are challenged to the unknown future that awaits us. Whenever we look to the future we are filled with anxiety of what is to come. This is much like what the people around Elizabeth and Zechariah would exclaim concerning the birth of John the Baptist, “What will this child turn out to be?” (Luke 1: 66).

“What will become of us?” will be a nagging question that we will carry with us in this time of change. We will be confronted with new things for sure. It is not us wanting new things for the sake of new things, but it is the Holy Spirit that makes all things new. Pope Francis reflecting on the vision of the Evangelist John on the new heaven and new earth, states: “This is the work of the Holy Spirit: he brings us the new things of God. He comes to us and makes all things new, he changes us. The Spirit changes us! ...The Holy Spirit is truly transforming us, and through us he also wants to transform the world in which we live. Let us open the doors to the Spirit; let ourselves be guided by him, and allow God’s constant help to make us new men...”

As Brothers we are invited at this time to commit ourselves to the new and renewed assignments as authentic leaders to “open wide the door of our lives to the new things of God.” (Pope Francis) We need to be true to ourselves in this journey of faith. Michael Paul Gallagher noted that without arriving at the freedom of the true self, no real journey towards faith can start. According to Montfort (TD 214) we need to pray for a faith that will be a pillar of fire (or a flaming torch) to enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to inflame those who are lukewarm. Let us be filled with the burning love of God in our lives. May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!



### **Editor’s Note**

There is a beginning and end to everything. Three years ago, I was assigned to head this bulletin and the tenure of my office is now at sun set. I could only look back and sing the ‘magnificat’. I am truly grateful for the experiences I went through for the three years. It is not only had made me to be aware what was happening in the province but also had improved my writing skills. With the new Provincial Leadership team for the next three years, we could only guess and plan of what to happen. The reality is to be revealed as the day unfolds. I close my tenure with this issue 25 with lots of happy memories. I wish the best of my successor, whoever the person may be. I thank the many contributors who had made my work so much easy over the past three years. I do hope similar support and assistance to be rendered to my successor. –Thomas Paul



## News in Brief



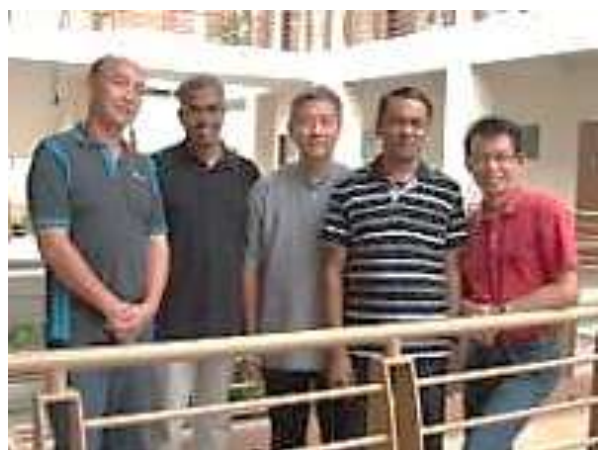
**Malang, Indonesia:** Bro. James Anting renewed his vows on the 7 April 2013. He pronounced his vows in front of forty strong Company of Mary seminarians. The Mass was presided by Fr. Avellino (SMM), the superior of the Seminary. Currently, Bro. James is undertaking a Catechetical Course at Malang.



**Singapore:** The Marine Parade Family Service Centre (MPFSC) on the 26 April 2013 launched their *Research for Reflective Practice Book*. Mr. Chan Chun Seng, the Acting Minister of the Ministry of Social and Family Development, officiated at the ceremony that was held at the National Library of Singapore



**Shah Alam:** The Brothers welcome Bro. James Bellarmin to the Province of Malaysia-Singapore. Bro. James, who hails from Tamil Nadu India, responded to the challenge to be a missionary in Malaysia. The Brothers thanked the Provincial Superior and all the Brothers of Trichy Province, India for granting Bro. James to serve in this Province as an English teacher at Montfort Boys' Town, Shah Alam. Welcome Brother!



**Singapore:** The Brothers of Malaysia-Singapore had elected the new Provincial Councilors to assist the new Provincial Superior. Their mandate is for three years (2013-2016). They were officially installed on the 23 June 2013. They are (from left to right of the above picture) Bro. Stephen Tee, Bro. Robin Devasagayam, Bro. Francis Chua (the new Provincial Superior), Bro. Peter Issac and Bro. Thomas Paul.

**The visit of the new Archbishop of Singapore at the Quarterly Recollection and the Installation of the new Provincial Leadership**

The Archbishop of Singapore, Msgr William Goh paid a visit to the Brothers of St. Gabriel and had a dialogue session with them on Sunday, 23 June 2013. He also presided over the installation ceremony of the new Provincial Leadership team of the Brothers in Malaysia-Singapore. It was a pleasant and familial encounter, with words of encouragement from the Archbishop for the Brothers to be more empowered and Christ-centered in their ministry. He emphasized the need to be deeply rooted in prayer and to bring the goodnews of God’s kingdom to all people.



The Brothers had their quarterly recollection weekend on 21 – 22 June 2013 at the Montfort Centre in Singapore, with the theme “Being Brothers!” It was animated by Bro. Nicholas Seet, a De La Salle Brother from St. Parick School, Singapore. Bro. Nicholas attend the International conference of Teaching Brothers in September 2012 in Rome. He shared his experiences from the conference with the Brothers.



The members of the new Provincial Council with the Provincial Superior, Bro. Francis Chua at the installation.



Archbishop William Goh presiding over the installation ceremony for the New Provincial Leadership team.



A group photo of the Brothers together with Archbishop William Goh after the Eucharistic Celebration



**Kinarut:** Montfort Youth Training Centre's Welding Department had installed the fume extraction machine for more conducive training environment. This is part and parcel of continuous improvement for the training facilities of the students.



**Kinarut:** The Brothers were thankful for the visit of Mr. Gerard Lee (standing, second from left), the Chairman of the Board of Governors of Boys' Town Singapore on the 14 June 2013. The visit was short but very beneficial for the Brothers in Sabah. Mr. Lee was accompanied by his wife and son for the visit.

## ***Congratulations!***



Bro. Joseph Philip had graduated from his study in Applied Psychology from Coventry University. He was conferred BSc. (Hons) in Applied Psychology. He undertook the study four years ago after he had completed his Diploma in Counseling. When interviewed he expressed his happiness and joy for completing the course. He hoped that his knowledge would enhance his ability and his service to the institution and the mission entrusted to him. He is hoping to take up Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology in the near future. Currently, Bro. Joseph is the Manager of Residential Care at Montfort Youth Training Centre, Sabah and as the person in-charge of the Pastoral Care Unit. Once again, Congratulations to Bro. Joseph!

“If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. ... We need not wait to see what others do.” – Mahatma Gandhi

## Pastoral Visit to Buayan by MYTC



The slippery earth road



The walk



The host (Cosmas' parents)



Cosmas' family



Refreshing in the River

**Kinarut:** Buayan is one of the villages at the border of Penampang and Papar district, Sabah. Years ago, there was no road to the village. The villagers used to walk through the jungle and mountain to go to the city and nearby town of Donggongon, Penampang. The walk was about six hours depending how strong the person was. Currently, there is an earth road serving the village, which only powerful 4x4 vehicle could tread the muddy and slippery road especially during the wet season. On the 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2013, the Director of Montfort Youth Training Centre (MYTC), Bro. Francis Chua with Bro. Thomas Paul and Dr. Francis Paul went to the village to visit one of their students by the name of Cosmas Sukor. They were accompanied by two other students, Fenson and Fidelis. The journey took them about five hours, part by vehicle and part by foot. They encountered few difficulties due to the road condition. Bro. Dominic Yeo Koh, the Provincial Superior was supposed to be with the entourage but had to turn back with Mr. John Liew, an MYTC's staff due to the road condition. They left the campus at eight in the morning and only arrived at Buayan Village at one o'clock in the afternoon.

The parents of Cosmas were very warm in welcoming them. They were housed in Cosmas' aunt's house for the night. Fresh water fish were caught by Cosmas' father to treat the visitors to their stomach delight after the hard journey. To the visitors' surprise, there is electricity in the village and they have satellite TV (Astro) for their entertainment. The visitors were told that Partners of Community Organization in Sabah (PACOS Trust) had constructed the mini Hydro Dam to generate electricity for the village.

On the following morning, before the visitors left, they were served a heavy breakfast that they needed in order to walk the two hour journey to reach their vehicle. And not only that but they were given fragrant mountain rice to bring back, another additional load, yet the visitors were happy to receive the generosity of Cosmas's parents.

Just before they reached the vehicle, they took time to refresh themselves in the clean river. The journey was indeed beneficial for the visitors, especially the Brothers. The visit was meant to understand better the students' background.



The remote village of Kiulu, Sabah, Malaysia



The Students of San Damiano's Hostel



After the football game with the students



The climb to Mt. Kinabalu

## My Experience in San Damiano Boys

**Hostel** by John Haswell, Project Trust Volunteer

The first few months passed at an alarming rate as I settled in with my new surroundings and way of life. As I'm from London, a big city, Kiulu is a far cry from the lifestyle I was used to! But I felt that after the first couple of months I had just about got into the swing of things, slowly but surely picking up more Bahasa Malaysia and even some Dusun! A lot of bonding was done with the boys through the beautiful game of football on a jungle pitch that I thought only existed in my dreams. We also took part in the widely anticipated Montfort Open House fundraiser; we had our very own "orang puteh" (Whiteman) corner where we sold pancakes and flap-jacks, UK style! I was delighted when we managed to sell out, raising a total of RM750. It was a great opportunity for us to experience something new and to challenge ourselves in an area where we perhaps lack expertise. There was the camping trip in Kuala Penyu- a fantastic weekend with Montfort and San Damiano combined, playing very enjoyable team building games on the beach, as well as going through all the usual ups and downs of life in a tent as we weathered a heavy storm in the first night. We were given the chance to organize a rugby tournament which the boys really seemed to enjoy despite them only learning the game a week or so before the camp. They were even better than me!

There were many activities through one year of my stay and experience in Sabah. So all in all, life in San Damiano has really been something special. I'm part of an amazing family, and we've had many incredible challenges along the way, but I know the hardest thing I'll have to do is leave. My sincere thanks to all of the Brothers and the staff for making this year possible for me, and of course the boys, who have made this year one I'll never forget.



With the students of San Damiano



Resting after a game



The Words of Wisdom



With the graduating students of MYTC 2013

## My life in Kiulu, Sabah by Hugo Drummond,

Project Trust Volunteer

Having spent almost a year in this beautifully secluded part of Sabah I feel that I have come to take for granted the quality of life I have here at the hostel. I must refrain from doing so because, honestly, I can't think of a time in my life when I have been as happy as I am now, here in Kiulu. The hostel offers so much to the youth that stay here as well as to the staff members; with a conducive studying environment as well as ample extra-curricular activities which integrate all members of San Damiano. When I arrived in Early September 2012 I immediately felt at home here, with a warm welcome from Bro. Francis Chua and Mr. Remy Martin Gunsalam, not to forget the crowd of boys who were at first shy but intrigued at the sight of two "orang puteh" (Whiteman) wandering around the hostel. Over the course of our year spent volunteering at San Damiano Boys' Hostel, John and I have enjoyed helping with the many different aspects of hostel life as well as contributing to it ourselves by setting up and undertaking a variety of different projects and activities. One of my favourite activities was the Sunday Cooking/Camping. We took part in this many times throughout the year; enjoyed helping the boys gathered the building materials for the shelters such as bamboo. Experiencing the camping with the boys was a great way to socialize with them and to be surrounded by the students, staff and the beautiful surroundings was absolutely majestic. Other ways we have helped contribute to the hostel include *The Words of Wisdom and Library Projects*. The 'words of wisdom' project was started because we felt that the hostel needed brightening up. We, along with the boys, came up with inspirational quotes and helped them to paint them and some pictures around the hostel every weekend. It had been great fun to spend time doing something very creative with the boys and this activity really allows them to use their imaginations. The library had been an ongoing project throughout our year and I felt it would greatly benefit the hostel in years to come. We have helped stock and monitored the books that had been installed in the library as well as helping to plan out the interior of it. If we could encourage the boys to read in English more; then every aspect of their language knowledge would improve. Our work with those two projects along with our extra tuition and teaching classes would hopefully instill a sound knowledge of the English language in the boys and thus would mature as they do. If this is the legacy that we leave behind when we leave in July then I can rest easy knowing that what we have helped them achieve this year and will stand them in good stead for the future. I have been so lucky to have had this opportunity and I would especially like to thank MYTC for allowing me to come here and share this beautiful location with a group of truly inspirational staff and students.