

E-BULLETIN #46

"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5,16)

item 90

Val d'Oise Church HONG KONG



Having initiated a new mission in the unknown – to me – land of Hong Kong, almost three months are now complete. What an adventure! My world, the scenery, the climate and lifestyle, everything has changed. And I have made many discoveries.

I live in a diocesan centre which is just behind the cathedral. My apartment is located on the 15th floor, in a section reserved to priests. Together we form an international community composed of men from different backgrounds.

As well there are Chinese diocesan workers, and people on retreat. And I can add Italians, Germans, Irish and many other tourists. I am the only Pallottine to live here, but I am deeply immersed in the community's life and am able to share with others my own life and culture. I have gained more than I could ever have expected in Val d'Oise!

As for my timetable, my day is divided between service to the Francophone community and my personal goals for my sabbatical year. I can now at last take time to prepare my homilies and to pray, to prepare conferences on various themes [such as Vatican II], to provide retreats for catechists and for young couples. I have time to accompany the youth in their weekend outings into the countryside. I have made many discoveries, some that could even be considered exotic by European standards. For instance, in one parish we had a Sunday Mass at the beach, with a picnic, and even shared a discussion held in the water!

Another learning has been to cope with climate change. Before I came I was warned it would be very hot, but the hot time has passed and we are currently experiencing very cold temperatures.

I am also discovering the Hong Kong Catholic Church. It is a very dynamic church with magnificent celebrations and beautiful choirs. Its strength is in its involvement in social work, mainly through Caritas and private schools. However it too is in need of priests as local vocations are insufficient, and also the intake for missions is declining. Thus I have been asked to celebrate Mass on some Sundays in English in a hostel where the presence of Philippino women and their choir adds to the varied settings in which I find myself.

At its heart this has been a discovery of the universality of the Church! Now three months of such discoveries have passed - and I am ready to go on.

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item 91

Thank you GOD for what has been...

The Khristsevikas community celebrated the **Golden Jubilee** of their beginnings last year, in December 2011. A PEEP into what happened during that year, and since the event – now almost another year - is what is attempted here.

Even though a time like this deserves to be celebrated, to recall the blessings the Lord has bestowed on our small Institute, our intention was primarily to thank the Almighty for the way He has been guiding and keeping us going on our journey. Hence the theme of the Jubilee:

“Thank you GOD for what has been, we trust You for what will be on our journey”



Our preparation included a Seminar, Study, a Retreat and get-togethers to rethink and take steps ahead as a group. This meant much travel and planning. Our members - nine of us - work in five States and seven Dioceses of India, and we try to live the Secular Institute lifestyle of consecration in the world, conscious of belonging to the larger UAC family.

The day of the celebration was the 28th of December 2011 when we, along with our friends and well-wishers particularly those from the UAC family, came together at Pune for the solemn Thanksgiving Eucharist in our parish Sacred Heart church. The 'Hand of God' guiding us and leading us was once again confirmed by the way our friends and UAC family members responded. We had the reassuring presence of Fr Jacob Nampudakam, Rector General, and of several Pallottine priests from the Provinces in India including the Provincials. Both the Missionary Sisters and the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate were represented. Our lay friends in large numbers shared our joy. The Bishop of Pune, Rt Rev Thomas Dabre and the Bishop Emeritus Valarian D'Souza were present at the Eucharist and other celebrations. The joy was shared by Fr Bryan Tiernan sac and UAC member Ms Ann Dowling, both from Australia. To mark the occasion the Khristsevikas prepared a CD which was a reflection across the years since the origins of the group – October 1960. This helped everyone to recall what the Lord had done, and the presentation was rightly titled "**God got involved**"! After felicitations and 'AGAPE' that bound everyone together, the Khristsevikas now march ahead to fulfil God's plan for them in this time and situation.

What is the significance of this milestone? It was a *Refounding* that the group became very conscious of, reminded by Fr Jacob who met the group and shared with them on the evening of our Jubilee day. He took time off to reflect with and for the group. This gave new impetus, new life to move on. Some of the decisions taken from this are like, that the members meet more often in small groups, more communication between us, the members visit Pallottine communities whenever we can, we search for vocations in Pallottine parishes, collaborate with other Pallottine entities for vocations, every 22nd of the month to be kept as Pallotti Day with a night vigil, UAC meeting at Pune every month with lay people. We also resolved to celebrate Epiphany in the spirit of St Vincent Pallotti by including our friends from other faiths.



Each member committed to work on vocations with the "*Each one - bring one*" target! Thank God we have one new candidate, a teacher by profession, currently in formation. Members are actively involved in UAC activities wherever they are present.

We continue to trust in the Lord and His plans, thus moving ahead.

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