



E-BULLETIN #99

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

item 185

adorare e servire

Two special occasions prompt me to write a short message for the Asia Oceania E-Bulletin:

- Firstly, we are approaching the 100th issue of this bulletin and I wish to share with you, readers, something of its birth and growth during the last two years.
- Secondly, I wish to reflect with you on the significance of Christmas for our Pallottine Family today.

About two years ago, during our Asia Oceania Intercontinental Meeting, the desire was expressed to start an electronic bulletin in order to share information and views on the lives and apostolic activities of members of the Society working in that geographic area. Experience suggests that in many such meetings proposals are often made but, once members go back to their respective places, quickly forgotten. However this story has been different. Fr Ray Hevern from the Australian Region and myself took it up as a challenge. Ever since that time, every Sunday you have been greeted with an email from Fr Ray. He hasn't missed even one Sunday! This is amazing! How do we get the materials for publication? Those who have experienced such ventures will know that it is not an easy task to get articles for publication. Occasionally we get an article from somebody without being asked. But the truth is, most often, I ask individual members personally to write on some relevant topic. Very few have refused my request – partially also respecting my office, I believe. So on behalf of Fr Ray and myself, thanks to all those who have contributed articles to this bulletin. Thanks also to all those who are reading it! If there were not people to read it and even appreciate it, it would have died out a long time ago.

As you have seen, we do not publish very scientifically researched papers or articles. We focus on simple reflections and information from the Pallottine world. Probably this is also the strength of this bulletin. We never lack high quality materials to read. What is even more significant is that we are managing to connect Pallottines from all over the world to each other. Some young Pallottines have even discovered they have a talent for writing! So we are convinced that this humble venture is worth it. There were times when we wondered if it should be sent only once a month, or stopped during holidays, but we have persisted so far. The only problem is that Fr Ray cannot go anywhere without his laptop, and at least two issues up his sleeve. His recent break involved having enough material for three Sundays. As long as Fr Ray has such a passion he will continue to greet you every Sunday. As cricket lovers are familiar with centuries, our bulletin too is heading for a century. Now we look forward to the double century!

As far as a message for Christmas is concerned, I remember two words that Pope Francis used: "***adorare e servire***" (adore and serve). We adore and worship the Babe of Bethlehem. We make Him the centre of our lives. We encounter Him everywhere, but more specially in the Bread broken for us, that is in the Holy

Eucharist and in the most poor and needy ones. We find Him for sure in the poor with whom He chose to be identified.

In line with this invitation of our Holy Father – to adore and serve – we have recently taken two initiatives here in Rome:

We have commenced the “Night of Nicodemus” in our church of SS. Salvatore in Onda – two hours of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, every Friday from 20.00 to 22.00 hrs. Our church is situated in the most ideal location in Rome and hence numerous tourists and pilgrims accept the invitation to enter the church and spend a few minutes in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and kindle a candle before the Lord. So far it has been a wonderful experience.

As part of our effort to serve the needy, we have begun to collaborate with the Sant’Egidio community and with some other persons engaged in the work of charity. On 8th December 2013, I had an opportunity to celebrate Holy Mass for prisoners in the famous Regina Coeli prison in Rome.



These are very small efforts. As Pope Francis shows through his life testimony, if we continue adoring the Lord and serving His people, our Pallottine Family will be greatly blessed and we will experience the joy of the Gospel especially during this Christmas and in the New Year 2014. To all well wishers of our bulletin, merry Christmas and a grace-filled New Year 2014.

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item 186

experiencing a ‘super’ typhoon

Super typhoon Haiyan caused devastating destruction in some provinces of the Philippines like Leyte, Samar City, Iloilo, etc. but thanks be to God we were spared from its fury.

typhoon Haiyan in Bacolod City



Some parts of this island were affected more, some less. Especially the northern part suffered much damage. Many houses were destroyed and many people displaced, but its effect was not as severe as in Leyte etc.

In Bacolod it was the electricity department which suffered the heaviest losses. Many power poles were brought down, damaged by fallen trees. One fell onto the church roof, and is still there. We have complained but I

think they don't have sufficient poles to replace it.

Prior to the event the mayor had declared the coming typhoon would be very damaging to Bacolod. He had announced a holiday, asking everyone to remain at home. People living beside the seashore and rivers were asked to go to safe places. On Nov. 8 most of the churches had cancelled morning Mass and the city was quiet, no vehicles were moving. Even in this village most people remained at home. But as usual not all heeded the request of the mayor. It is difficult of live without work (salary a day for some poor people) as you see in the photo a man working in the sugarcane field. It is only when rain and heavy wind increase and only when it was very difficult for him to stay in the field he left working and went home.



In another example, Mr Gerardo Deogracias and his wife Gloria own a small eatery store in Bacolod City. They have a house in a village named Sitio Takas, close to Silay City. That village is very near to the sea and beside a river. They closed their shop on Nov. 7 and went to protect their house from destruction. Their children requested they remain in Bacolod but they told their children they would prefer to protect their house whatever may be. They also added that they would like to die in their village. On Nov. 8, by 3 pm, their ground floor was filled with water but they could go up to a second floor. In spite of the water level rising every hour they remained in the same house, praying and hoping for the rain to stop. By God's grace by 8pm it did and they and their house were safe.



Here in our village all of us are safe, though a few trees fell down and the roofs of some houses were blown away. We sheltered two families. One group live beside the river and they came here as a precaution. The others spent a day and night with us as their kitchen had collapsed and the roof of their building was blown away when typhoon Haiyan hit.

some beautiful experiences of typhoon Haiyan

What I witnessed was the caring and compassion of the people here towards those affected. Neighbours gave shelter to those who had lost the roof of their houses. They also provided them with food and other necessary things. One family, who came to know that we had given shelter to two families, brought dinner for them. The Legion of Mary took the initiative to collect donations for those affected by Haiyan in Leyte and other parts of Philippines. I was quite impressed by the contribution of our villagers. This kind of generosity was seen in whole of Bacolod City and in other neighbouring places.

persisting fear

Even though the typhoon was not severe here people are still quite cautious, especially government officials. Two days afterwards the local government declared that there would be another typhoon on Nov. 10. Many people did not go to work and some institutions were closed.

So fear still exists.

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sac asia oceania e-bulletin

you commented...

on #98

Timely reflections that get to the heart of Advent in the one article, and the insights of St Vincent Pallotti (therefore, of Pallottines) in the other. Thank you for putting them before us.

CF 16.12.13