

Vol. n° 55 — Summer 2020

F S S P X 

District of Asia

THE APOSTOLATE IN VIRAL TIMES

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Dear friends and benefactors



THIS MOST recent issue of the Apostle Magazine comes to you during (perhaps) the most unpredictable and the strangest times in our lives. Certainly, if you had said one year ago that chaos, confusion, fear and disorder would happen across the world, we would have laughed at your prediction!

Let us put to one side the enormous questions and theories surrounding the ongoing origins of the virus, the confusion, and all the consequences of it. This bizarre turn of events requires a calm and careful deliberation of the facts, facts which may never be fully known until the General Judgement. However, that is a subject for another time and place.

What we cannot put aside for another time is the response of the clergy and faithful to this current “crisis.” This is the big question that demands an answer; “What are we to do?” We all woke up one random morning and the churches were closed, the Mass was forbidden, and the sacraments were not available to souls in need. Then, the horrific principle was promulgated in almost every country, “**Public prayer and Worship is now considered a non-essential activity.**” What a terrible situation to face! How could the life-saving truths and graces given by Our Lord Jesus Christ simply be relegated to a category of “non-essential” activity, as if the worship of God and the salvation of souls is the same type of activity as pubs, restaurants and entertainment venues?!? Here lies the essence of the problem – religious worship is seen by nearly all governments as an optional and individualistic activity. The answer to this error can only be found in the promotion of the Social Kingship of Christ.

Another lesson that we can learn from these “lock-downs” is the inherent weakness in our apostolates. We simply do not have sufficient vocations from our chapels across Asia. We operate priories and chapels in more than 10 countries in Asia. However, we rely on many foreign priests and religious to work in these lands...

and these foreigners happily do so and will continue to do so for as long as God wills. Nevertheless, this recent lockdown has shone a spotlight on this weak link in the chain of our apostolate. It simply takes an irrational outbreak of fear and panic to shut down borders and send all foreigners packing... thereby depriving the local faithful of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the life-saving Sacraments and the nourishing Catechism of the truths of the faith. This most recent debacle has made clear one important priority, i.e., if vocations are not fostered and promoted, our entire apostolate for the salvation of souls withers and dies. *Oremus!*

Therefore, my dear readers, please continue your generous prayers and support of the District of Asia. Pray that God and His Holy Mother raise up generous souls in the young men and young women to dedicate their lives to the service of God and His Church in whatever manner He chooses. Generosity creates generosity...this is certainly true on the side of God.

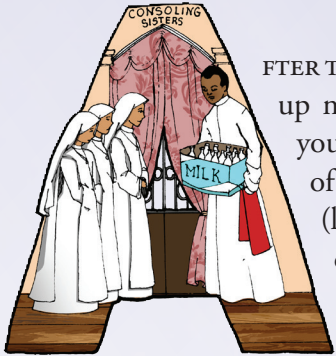
Fr. Patrick Summers, FSSPX
District Superior of Asia



Ash Wednesday in Our Lady of Victories Catholic School, Manila, Philippines



NEWS FROM SOUTHERN INDIA



AFTER THIS LONG confinement I now take up my pen to scribble these lines to you, Dear Father Editor. The secret of being boring is to say everything (l'art d'être ennuyeux, c'est de tout dire). Considering this French saying, I'll try to be as brief as possible. It is day who-knows nationwide curfew and we have another who-knows-how-many more days to go.

Will the curfew be lifted as scheduled? Hardly. India is perhaps not the one of the worst hit by this pandemic. Deo Gratias. Will it stay the same? Only time will tell. At the moment, we are riding in the dark and no light at the end of the tunnel is in sight. With the departure of all our non-local priests, I am left alone at the mission. At the same time, the world's biggest lockdown sent 1.4 billion people into isolation. As expected, chaos erupted. Panic spread everywhere and it is disturbing to see how panic feeds itself and grows with great momentum.

It is easy to discern that we are in for a long haul. We who have become accustomed to have everything 'Prime-delivered' have to wait. It could be months before our world returns to normal, if it ever does, or if it even should. We are all experiencing something unprecedented.

In this coronavirus blitz, what are we doing here at the mission? We planned ahead and stacked essential items for the next few weeks. We also helped our poor starving neighbours with rice bags and other things. God has been very good to us. He kept us safe. Though in the beginning, I was able to organize liturgy for our faithful while, of course, respecting the so called 'social distancing'. But as time went on and as the rules became more draconian, we had no other option than closing our doors. But then they allowed from 6 AM to 1 PM the movement of essential items.

Taking this ruling as a God-send, I was able to visit our sisters under the pretext of bringing 'essential items'. But I am bringing them the most important requisites for daily life – Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is truly a 'meat' for our soul, 'food' for our spiritual life and 'Sacramental Confession' – 'medicine' for our soul. Besi-

des the supernatural food, I was also their 'meat-man' and some other days 'milkman' and also their 'pharmacist'. I know very well I am not cheating anybody as these are 'analogous' terms. The cops could see my milk vessel, rice bag and stack of medicines... but could not notice the supernatural intention behind those things. The Sisters were happy and so were the kids.

As for the faithful, we organized like many other districts regular talks and sermons in Tamil. I would preach it in my office and send them electronically. I was never a fan of 'WhatsApp' and I'm still not. But I must admit it can be used well. Spiritual connectedness is a known protector against loneliness. After all, St. Thomas wouldn't have demanded those horrible proofs from the risen Christ, had he stayed with the rest of the Apostles. When medical professionals began to insist on 'social distancing' as a way to curb the spread of coronavirus, people reacted with alarm. But to me, it is an unique opportunity which we should not pass up. Very many times, I have asked them to come to a retreat. But now, in the moment of a long pause, they have a chance to do it. Many discovered the beauty of silence, prayer and the joys of family life perhaps for the first time. God draws good out of evil and only He can do it. This we see in our lives. Our faithful are discovering, or are at least 'forced' to discover the 'principle and foundation of our spiritual life.' If they pursue along this path, they will most likely fare well during and after the pandemic.

Last, but not least, I was able to spend more time with the kids. From extra catechism to working in the garden and even playing cards with them. I have ample time with them and for them. It is the worst of times, but it is also the best of times. Age of wisdom and at the same time age of craziness. It is our wish that this coronavirus blitz bring sanity back to our world and bring people back to the true God whom we have offended by our sins.

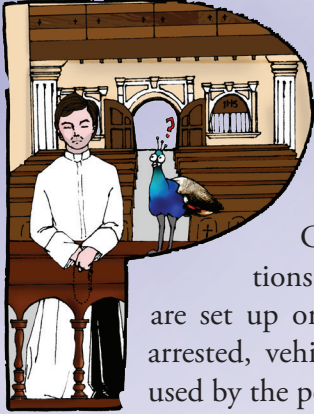
Dear Father, perhaps this is not exactly *l'art d'être ennuyeux!* And so, time to sign off.

Humbly commending myself to your prayers and those of your readers.

Fr. Therasian Xavier, FSSPX
Mission - India



NEWS FROM SRI LANKA



ENED ARTICLE during the curfew on 13 April 2020.

The measures taken in Sri Lanka regarding the COVID-19 are extremely strict. Containment is total and sanctions are severe. Police checkpoints are set up on roads and many people are arrested, vehicles seized, requisitioned and used by the police for health operations.

Overall though most Sri Lankans are respectful of the rules that have been put into place, afraid as they are not to be able to afford access to suitable health care in case they get the dreaded virus.

As of 11 April, the country had 210 confirmed cases (for 22.5 million people) and 7 deaths. After 3 months, there are now 2,730 cases and 4 more deaths. Many areas of the country are completely unaffected by the virus. The government publish daily reports and adapts its policy daily too. People returning from abroad have been quarantined and are being closely monitored, which has helped to contain the spread of the virus. The country took strong measures very quickly, blocking its port and airport. The situation appears to be under control.

Due to total containment with a 24/7 curfew, everything is closed. No one is allowed to leave their house unless they have written permission from the police for a serious reason. Fortunately, supermarkets and small shops have set up delivery services. Street vendors drive around neighbourhoods with their tuk-tuks or small lorries making available fruits, vegetables, eggs and bread for people to buy.

As far as religion is concerned, all public religious gatherings have been forbidden since the curfew came into place. From 20 March 2020 onwards nobody could attend our ceremonies so that we had to say Mass without the presence of the faithful. Brother Isidore, from Iloilo, Philippines, is still with us until he flies back, initially, last 25 May. He will eventually be able to leave the country by mid-August. Fr Cornel Eisenring who was due to come on 25 March from Davao, Philippines, had his flights cancelled as no foreigner has been allowed in the country since 20 March.

On 10 March, Fr Tyler Nelson arrived at the Colombo Airport from India. He came to Sri Lanka in transit as his final destination was Singapore. Unfortunately, on 18 March, when he went to the airport, he was denied access to the plane, the reason being that he was flying to Singapore via Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Singapore Government had just forbidden passengers from Malaysia to enter the country. Father Nelson had to stay with us in Negombo then. His tourist visa was automatically extended to 12 May and after two weeks in the priory, the police issued a Quarantine certificate allowing him to leave the country without trouble once the situation is unblocked.

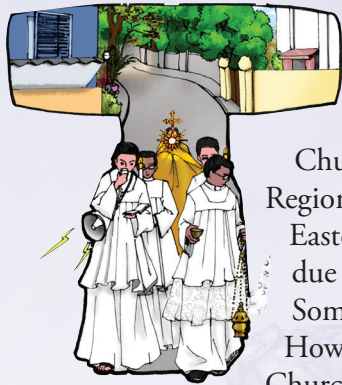
During the curfew, we had two Masses a day. We had Benediction on Thursday as usual and we organized a procession with the Blessed Sacrament around our property praying for the end of the pandemic. During the Holy Week, on Palm Sunday, we blessed enough Palms to give to the faithful, and later in the week, the three of us celebrated all the Triduum ceremonies. The Easter Vigil was performed without any attendance, but all the liturgical blessings were carried out as prescribed and we kept all our faithful in our prayers.

Being like in a house arrest for weeks is an unusual experience. Thank God, we are well looked after by our parishioners and were provided with food in abundance through their generosity. In return, we had plenty of time to pray more and appreciate the great privilege to live under the same roof with Our Lord Jesus Christ present in the tabernacle. It makes the curfew easy to bear.

Father Fabrice Loschi, FSSPX



NEWS FROM MANILA, PHILIPPINES



THE CATHOLIC Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has ordered the closure of all Churches in the National Capital Region (Metro Manila) at first until Easter week (and then until July) due to the pandemic Covid-19. Something quite unprecedented. However, it is not a time for the Church to recoil but to a call to action with an opportunity to urge the faithful to do penance, to pray, to make a good Lent and to inspire others to have a spirit of conversion. All these things are not possible without Our Lord or His priests.

What was performed in the past was usually processions were organized and the Holy Rosary and Litanies sung or recited. We can cite examples from Pope St. Gregory the Great and St. Charles Borromeo. Despite the restrictions of the quarantine imposed on the National Capital Region (Metro Manila) Our Lady of Victories in Quezon City was able to secure permission from the local Barangay Captain (community leader) who granted our request to have Eucharistic Procession in the surrounding area to implore Our Lord's mercy for the people of the community. A very kind and longtime faithful was able to secure the permission for us to have a procession every evening as long as there were only five participants with proper "social distancing". The only request was that the processional route pass by the Barangay for the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

A strange sense of awe to behold the usually busy streets that are filled with all sorts of vehicles and pedestrians, now completely empty save for the occasional passersby. The streets completely deserted with some barricades to prevent "outsiders" from entering the Barangay the small procession was lead by our priests and brothers and our prior Fr. Wailliez carried the Blessed through Barangay Mariana, or nicknamed *Little Rome* for the high concentration of religious houses in the area. All quiet except for the distant whine of karaoke being overpowered by the priest singing the Litany of Saints on the loud speaker. The Blessed Sacrament

was greeted in proper fashion by some of our faithful who welcomed Our Lord by coming to the street and sinking to their knees.

Our Lord was greeted by about twelve of our faithful who were able to come for the evenings Mass. No where else in the Philippines was this made possible save for our other priory in Davao. We give thanks to Our Lord on this feast of the Annunciation for granting this privilege for our priory.

The daily processions of the Blessed Sacrament have continued after a short hiatus from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday until the middle of July, that is for nearly 4 months. The checkpoints and patrols have increased, but still the procession of 3 kms. continues passing by some of the homes of our faithful. It is a touching site to see our faithful with lighted candles at their gates kneeling to receive the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Many passersby including those driving cars, scooters, motorcycles, trucks as well as those jogging, strolling or going for groceries have stopped when they see Our Lord passing by. The usual practice for the drivers that they would slow down and cross themselves to acknowledge the Divine Presence. One driver saw the procession in the distance and parked her car and alighted her vehicle to greet Our Lord. Another was a boxer who was out training for his next bout, perhaps.

What we usually practice in our daily procession is for someone to be a lookout in the street for the procession and then to alert the household to bring their lighted candles. It's beautiful to behold the little ones with such devotion taught by their parents.

The numbers of greeters of the Our Lord has grown to about seventy-five including several communities of Novus Ordo religious sisters and several neighbors who are not faithful but who nevertheless have a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. It is interesting to note that contact

was established with several of the households by block rosaries. We see our Lady's guiding hand in preparing for the way of Her Divine Son! We pray that through Our Lady many more will continue to see the riches of the Blessed Sacrament through Tradition. Ω



NEWS IN PICTURES

— SINGAPORE —



Normal times, viral times, the sick are attended to.



To ensure social distancing norms are kept, the Government has deployed robot dogs in parks.

SRI LANKA



Even footsteps get disinfected... under the strict supervision of the army!

— CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES —



The Government found the perfect penalty for quarantine norm violators: to pray the Holy Rosary in the local government hall! The more you disobey quarantine norms, the more Our Blessed Mother wins!



LEYTE, PHILIPPINES

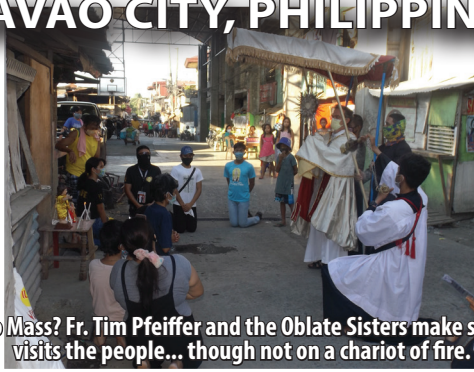


"How many times I've crossed the sea in my car on board a ferry? Now on land, a fresh pineapple is perfect against sea sickness"

— DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES —



People cannot go to Mass? Fr. Tim Pfeiffer and the Oblate Sisters make sure Our Lord Himself visits the people... though not on a chariot of fire.



— MANILA, PHILIPPINES —



If the faithful cannot come to Our Lord, then Our Lord will go to them. Chanting the Litany of the Saints in times of pestilence and the recitation of the Holy Rosary aided by a megaphone, the faithful hear when Our Lord is near and open their doors to reverently receive His blessing.



— MANILA, PHILIPPINES —



Whether I go to the heights... of my terrace, whether I descend to the depths... of the sidewalk, the Lord is there for me!



God abandons no one... not even those abandoned by their N.O.M. pastors!



Whew! Back to home base at last... Let's do it again tomorrow!

WUHAN SAINTS

By Dr. Anthony Clark

IN THE MIDST of this planetary pandemic, everybody is truly panicking. Instead of filling our minds with frightening news, let us learn about two saints: Saint Francis-Regis Clet, CM, (1748-1820) and Saint Jean-Gabriel Perboyre, CM, (1802-1840), who were martyred in a district of Wuhan, China. We are all aware of the Covid-19 virus that is sweeping across the globe, and there is much about how these two Catholic martyrs suffered and died that will sound familiar to those who know how this particular illness afflicts those who have it. Saints Clet and Perboyre are among the few Catholic saints who died because they could not breathe., having died from strangulation.

BRIEF BACKGROUND

Francis-Regis Clet was the tenth child of a family of fifteen children, and when he was twenty-one years old, he entered the Vincentians because of his admiration for Saint Vincent de Paul's love for the poor and afflicted. He was in Paris when the violent persecution of Catholics began during the French Revolution (1789-1799), and when priests were being exiled from their native France he volunteered to go to China where he was certain to confront more of the same persecution. Francis-Regis Clet knew that human soul is from and for God, and so he was determined to leave a place that seemed to be turning away from God in order to serve the poor in a place that did not yet know God. Before boarding his ship to China, the unpretentious son of Saint Vincent wrote a letter to his sister, Marie-Thérèse: *"Providence has destined me to leave here and work for the salvation of souls [in China]."* He began his life as a missionary in China in 1789, and three decades later he was tied onto a wooden pole in Wuhan; a rope was wrapped around his throat and he was slowly deprived of the air his body required to remain alive.

Jean-Gabriel Perboyre, like Father Clet, was born into a large French Catholic family, and four of his siblings became Vincentians because of their desire to serve others as Jesus had, and to follow in the footsteps of Saint

Vincent. Jean-Gabriel joined the Vincentians when he was only sixteen years old, and while he was in the seminary he was known to have had such a passionate devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament that he spent long hours in front of the tabernacle in prayer and kneeling in thanksgiving after receiving Holy Communion. We can imagine his inner anguish when he was prevented from celebrating Holy Mass while held within several Chinese prisons. Jean-Gabriel's brother, Louis, was also a Vincentian, and Louis was sent to China before Jean-Gabriel. The two brothers—in both blood and in religion—were very close, and thus when the news reached Jean-Gabriel back in France that Louis had died of illness on his way to China it was a painful shock. While on his deathbed, Father Louis Perboyre, CM, (d. 1831) wrote a letter to his brother, Jean-Gabriel: *"I am dying before I can accomplish my goal. I hope that my priest brother can come and take my place."* Jean-Gabriel did take his brother's place; he left France five years after Louis' death, and in 1835 he took his first steps as a missionary on Chinese soil. For Perboyre, his time in China was short. He was tied to a pole and strangled, just as Clet was, only five years after his arrival.

DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

While Clet and Perboyre served as missionaries in China, the empire was fraught with turbulence. While Clet lived in China, there was a rebellion led by a millenarian sect called the *White Lotus Society*, and local officials lumped Christians into the same group. The result was terrifying for both the missionaries and Chinese faithful; Christians were hated and attacked both by the White Lotus and the government. In one letter, Francis-Regis Clet wrote that, *"they destroy everything in their path, burning houses and taking everything, they can carry, and then they kill everyone who cannot escape in time."* For Perboyre, the turbulence he experienced was both external and internal. Not all saints face fear with a sense of peace and resignation. When the landscape around him grew more violent and



St. Francis-Regis Clet, pray for us.



alarming, Jean-Gabriel, as one source puts it, “*experienced an intense anguish of the soul*” and “*was harassed by a violent temptation to despair.*” It was reflecting upon the Apostle Thomas’ disbelief that removed doubt and fear from Perboyre: “*Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe*” (John 20:27). But even more than fear, it was the isolation that most afflicted Clet and Perboyre before they were finally executed in the Wuchang district of Wuhan.

FORCED ISOLATION AND MARTYRDOM

An anti-Christian intrigue in 1818 forced Francis-Regis Clet into hiding. On May 25, the imperial palace in Beijing was suddenly enveloped in “*strong winds and torrential rains, while the sky turned red as thunder pealed above the city.*” The emperor’s advisors suggested that the strange occurrence was caused by the spiritual interference of the Christian missionaries, and thus constables were sent to arrest Father Clet. He was forced to remain in seclusion, hiding in small caves and remote places in the woods. He eventually sought refuge in the home of a Catholic family, where he “*sheltered in place*” for six lonely months. In 1818, Clet’s location was revealed by an apostate and he was locked in chains. He was delivered to a local court, where he was forced to kneel on chains while his face was beaten with a leather strap because he refused to denounce his Christian faith. When he was later transferred to the prison at Wuhan, his clothes were, as one witness described them, “*stained with blood from cuts and wounds caused by the blows... he endured from his journey there.*” He was condemned to death by slow suffocation on February 17, 1820, and he was taken to the execution ground where he “*calmly endured strangulation when a chord was tightened around his neck in three stages.*” His remains were affectionately collected by devout Chinese Catholics, and they were eventually sent to Paris where they are today kept in the Vincentian motherhouse.

Perboyre’s suffering and death, some say, was even more cruel. An anti-Christian movement emerged in 1839 that forced Jean-Gabriel to live in a state of isolation, and through this time he was hidden and protected by Chinese Christians who sheltered him despite the danger of losing their own lives. After offering Holy Mass on September 16, 1839, a local Christian arrived to inform Father Perboyre that two officials and a large band of troops were quickly approaching the church. Perboyre refused to escape the danger until he had consumed the



St. Jean-Gabriel Perboyre, pray for us.

Blessed Sacrament and gathered the sacred vessels to protect them from being profaned. He fled only a few moments before the church was besieged, and he survived by hiding in forests and the hidden rooms of Chinese Christian homes. He was eventually discovered and seized by patrolmen, who dragged him away by his hair to be interrogated in tribunals. He was tortured, forced to kneel on chains and hung from beams by his thumbs, before being taken to Wuhan along with several Chinese Christians who refused to abandon their pastor. In his Wuhan prison cell, Jean-Gabriel Perboyre was chained to the wall: the chains were so tight that he lost part of a foot and a hand. One of the Chinese Christians with Perboyre, who had taken the bap-

tismal name of Stanislaus, was tortured along with Jean-Gabriel. Stanislaus was taken to a dung hill where he was ordered to trample on a crucifix and deny his Christian faith, and he was condemned to die for refusing to follow that command. Father Perboyre heard Stanislaus’ final confession before he crawled to his execution, for his limbs had been too badly beaten. What Perboyre endured was as cruel as what his friends around him had suffered; he was made to kneel on broken glass, his face was branded with the accusation, “*teacher of false religion,*” and he was forced to wear his vestments while being paraded about and humiliated.

On September 11, 1840, he was martyred. His martyrdom was thus: The executioner then placed a cord around his neck and slipped a piece of bamboo into the knot. With a strong twist, he tightened the cord around the convict’s neck, and then he loosened the cord to give the poor sufferer a moment to catch his breath. Then he tightened the cord a second time and relaxed it again. Only after the third twist did he keep the cord tightened until death followed.

Official records of Perboyre’s execution coincidentally note that his death occurred on a Friday afternoon at 3:00 pm, the traditional day and time that Christ breathed his last breath on the cross. Local Christians acquired the rope and clothes that remained on Perboyre’s body after his strangulation, and his body was tenderly interred beside the grave of Francis-Regis Clet at a place called Hong Mountain near Wuhan. Among the things that most moved those who watched Perboyre’s punishing interrogations was that when the magistrate commanded him to step on the crucifix, he would simply pick it up and kiss it, as he would if he were receiving the Last Rites. G.



K. Chesterton (1874-1936) describes Christian courage thus: “*Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means a strong desire to live taking the form of a readiness to die.*” Both Clet and Perboyre hoped to live and continue their service to the Church in China, but they were ready for death when Providence called.

The Wuhan Catholics still commemorate the examples of Clet and Perboyre. The stone monuments are often seen surrounded by fresh flowers and seminarians praying for their intercession. These gravestones were concealed in the home of a local Catholic during the destructive years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The bishop of Wuhan, Bernadine Dong Guangqing, OFM, (1917- 2007) had them restored and installed at the Huayuanshan Catholic Seminary. In recent months, the

holy sites of Wuhan have been places of fervent prayer as many members of the Christian community have suffered and died from Covid-19. Many have tasted the suffering of Saints Clet and Perboyre as they, too, have struggled to breath. The assurance that the martyr saints of Wuhan await them in heaven has offered much consolation to the Chinese Catholics of that area. Perhaps some who have died are now breathing freely with them in the light of the Beatific Vision, where sickness is unknown.



GIVE US MARTYRDOM OF SOUL OR BODY

I'll end here with the words of Saint Perboyre that were written on Saint Thérèse of Lisieux's holy card that bore his image: “*Just as God wanted to die for us, we should never fear dying for Him.*” Ω

THE NEW PRIESTS FOR THE DISTRICT OF ASIA

INTERVIEW WITH REV. FR. LAWRENCE NOVAK

Apostle [AP] Fr. Lawrence Novak, welcome to the Asian District. Would you please give us a few words about your history as a priest of the SSPX?

Fr. Lawrence Novak [LN] I was ordained in 1994 by Mgr. Fellay just before he became the superior general. My assignments have generally been between five and six years long. I have enjoyed living in places that are not so close to home –Chicago– and have had a missionary character. My first assignment was El Paso, Texas right on the border with Mexico, so it was a bicultural apostolate. Then I had six years on the West Coast of the U.S., then I had three different stints in Latin America, starting with the north of Mexico, then the southeast of Mexico, and finally the country of Guatemala.

AP Could you describe your new responsibilities?

LN When the superior general called me in September to say that I would be going to Singapore – which totally floored me – he said that this would be a wonderful opportunity for me to work with very appreciative souls, that I would get to work with the parish of Singapore which has been starving for their own regular pastor for many years, and that this assignment really fitted me. I am happy to fulfill this role since it is obviously the will of God. That being said, there will still be some trips to Indonesia and Malaysia for me, but as more of an exception than a rule.

AP Do you like to travel?

LN I love it. But probably too much. For me traveling is always satisfying because I can help souls for the



here and now, which is good for the initial stages. But sooner or later apostolate has to become more profound, more formative, more serious, more retreats, more conversion of life.

AP Are there some ways in which you think your experience as Superior in Central America will be useful to you here in Singapore?

LN Oh absolutely! Nothing ever happens to us which does not get stored in the central memory bank to be utilized at a later date. Without meaning to brag, the past has given me experience to not be too surprised by things I don't understand at the outset, and nevertheless help souls by bringing them closer to the truth, which is Our Lord Jesus Christ.



Fr. Patrick Summers (L) and Fr. Lawrence Novak

AP Have you already noticed some differences of life here in Asia?

LN Yes. Singapore is a very safe/fine country. I am used to living in an atmosphere where everyone expects to be robbed. I don't think we could keep a hood ornament on a car for more than a couple weeks. It's quite a welcome change. Singapore has a minority of Christians. I am used to living amongst Catholics, not even Protestants, which by the way are becoming more numerous in Latin America, unfortunately. But hopefully the good that I learned before coming here will be useful to employ with the souls which God has put in my path at this time of life.

INTERVIEW WITH REV. FR. REINER BECHER

Apostle [AP] First, can you tell us a bit about yourself? Where are you from?

Fr. Reiner Becher [RB] In 1962 I was born in Germany as the second child of three to devout Catholic parents, who had married late in their lives, because my father had been a war prisoner for some years in Russia. My father had been in the Seminary for some years before WW2 himself, and I seem to have sort of inherited his vocation.

I had the grace to grow up in a large farmer village at the foot of the Bavarian Alps, where at that time the Catholic Church with her manifold traditions still dominated the whole of everyday life. Nevertheless, my family, alas, followed for too many years the mainstream Church; we just did not know better. And the Minor Seminary of the Diocese Munich-Freising, which I attended for five years, had fallen prey to that *new spring* of the II Vatican Council. There, instead of being strengthened, I lost step by step the blessed Faith of my childhood.

In my mid-twenties however, I heard Our Lord knocking on the door of my heart. I tried my vocation in different Missionary Orders (the White Fathers, Divine Word Missionaries, Marists) and visited several Seminaries, but from the real spiritual life which I desired, were everywhere nothing but miserable trace-elements left. E.g. at the White Fathers' Seminary one would spend the evenings smoking, drinking and watching

TV... So I gave it up. But towards the end of my studies our family, through an old priest, found its way back to Tradition. And eventually I entered the Seminary in Zaitzkofen, in 1992 when I was 30 years of age.

AP When were you ordained and where have you been assigned?

RB I was ordained in June 1998. My assignments were:

- 98-2000: Sydney/Australia with the Mission in Papua New Guinea;
- 2000-04: Prior in Perth/W-Australia to set up our Priory there;
- 2005-10: Assistant Priest in Melbourne, attending to our Mass centers in South Australia, and taking care regularly of the Missions in Fiji and Rotuma;
- 2010-11: Stuttgart/Germany, in charge of the main church of the District.
- 2011-12: Sanford/Florida in charge of our new Spanish-speaking, very lovable community in Miami and the chapel in Fort Myers.
- 2012-13: Arcadia/California in a most amiable priestly community with Rev. Fr. Daniel Cooper († 2018) and Rev Fr. Hawker. From there I took care of two other chapels in California. I enjoyed very much the wonderful weather.
- 2013-16: Chaplain of the recently started 'Missionary Sisters of Jesus and Mary' in Nairobi/Kenya, which are having many vocations.



Fr. Reiner Becher with two of his spiritual daughters.



- 2016-17: Return to Europe, exactly first to Vienna/Austria (due to health issues).
- 2017- present: Move to the Austrian District Headquarter in Jaidhof, being in charge of the two chapels in Steyr and Linz, which have since grown by about 30%.

AP What are your impressions about being sent to the Philippines?

RB Since I visited the Philippines several times when I was still in Australia, and had also filipinos in Perth and Adelaide, and even in Stuttgart there was quite of a bit of contact with filipinos, I am somewhat familiar with

the mentality and am looking forward to the move very much.

AP Any final words for our readers?

RB Even if you happen to be very intelligent, keep up that childlike simplicity, which Our Lord so loves, and which will guide you through all troubles and temptations. And please pray for me, as you are also already included in my daily blessings.

We should all be extremely grateful to Our Lord Jesus Christ that He gave us our holy founder Archbishop Lefebvre. Where would we be without him? Let us be worthy children of his.

INTERVIEW WITH REV. FR. JEAN-MICHEL GOMIS

Apostle [AP] First, can you tell us a bit about yourself? Where are you from? And when did you receive the grace of the priesthood?

Fr. Jean-Michel Gomis [JMG] With pleasure! I am from the city of Lille, in the North of France, a few kilometers from the birthplace of Mgr Lefebvre. I was ordained to the priesthood in Ecône on June 29, 2004, at the hands of Mgr. de Galarreta.

AP How did you first learn of the work of the SSPX?

JMG In a way, one can say that “I was born in it”, since I had the grace to be baptized by a priest of the Society of Saint Pius X, to grow up in the shadow of our priory of the [Holy] Cross (near Lille), to receive the confirmation from the hands of Monsignor Lefebvre and to carry out my secondary studies in one of our schools (in Camblain l’abbé). I thank Heaven for the countless graces given to me through our Congregation and the priests who devote themselves to it.

AP What offices within the Society have you held? Where have you been stationed?

JMG On the day of my ordination, I learned of my appointment to the South American District of the Fraternity, in the priory of Córdoba, located in the heart of Argentina. My last 16 years have been spent in this country, in different places. I spent 4 years in Córdoba, 1 year at the foot of the Andes in Mendoza and 11 years in Buenos Aires, or more exactly, in Martínez, at the District Headquarters, as secretary. During these years my apostolate and functions were quite varied: parish ministry, chaplaincy and school direction, preaching retreats... I also had the opportunity to visit many countries (Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay) and to observe the development of the Tradition in various contexts.

AP How do you view your new assignment in the District of Asia?

JMG After 16 years of Latin American atmosphere, it’s really a very different adventure for me! I am very happy that my superiors are giving me the opportunity to discover this immense Asian continent and its many regions. I hope to work hard there for the Reign of Christ the King and the salvation of souls.

AP Any final words for our readers?

JMG As the years go by and the different countries I have visited make me discover more and more the extraordinary fruits of Archbishop Lefebvre’s work. The grain of mustard planted 50 years ago in Fribourg continues to develop, from Patagonia to the tip of Japan... Tradition continues its work for the salvation of souls and is spreading little by little. May the example of our Venerable Founder, his unfailing love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, his tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin be the example that stimulates us to continue with fervor this magnificent work and leads us towards holiness, whether we are priest or a simple parishioner!





1970 - 2020

50 YEARS OF THE PRIESTLY SOCIETY OF SAINT PIUS X

“Tradidi quod et accepi.”
“I have transmitted that which
I have received.”
1 Cor. XV, 3





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