



We have been informed that...

YANBIAN HOSPICE IN THE CITY OF YANJI

The Order was active in China for a period of time in the 17th century when Brothers associated with Portuguese expeditions in the Asia Pacific Region set up temporary hospitals on the Chinese coast at four locations.

A decision of the General Chapter of 2000 brought about a 'return' of the Order to China in 2006 with the opening of the Yanbian Hospice in the city of Yanji. Yanji was chosen because it is an important city of China's Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture and Korean Brothers and Co-workers would be able to benefit from the fact that the Korean language is widely spoken in that Prefecture.

The Yanbian Prefecture is near the borders of Russia and North Korea. It has a population of 2.1 million (2,188,000), of which 38.1% (834,000) are Korean. Han Chinese form 59% of the population and the rest is comprised of other minority races (2.9%). The majority races (Korean and Chinese) live a unique mixed lifestyle in terms of customs, tradition, housing, clothing and food.

The Yanbian Hospice aims to provide a total care service for terminally

ill cancer patients who are no longer responding to curative treatment. The hospice gives basic medical care and pain control as well as psychological and (if possible) spiritual assistance. The hospice also tries to give comfort and support to family members affected by seeing their loved ones in pain.



THE PRESENCE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE ORDER IN CHINA

The Yanbian Hospice was purpose-built and has 18 beds. Annually it receives an average of 166 patients. Patients, who are usually admitted in the latter stages of their illness, spend an average of 15 days in the hospice.

Besides the four Brothers working in, or for, the hospice, there are 30 Co-workers – including two Religious Sisters. They are Korean



members of the Sisters of St Vincent De Paul. Sister Ignatius Bae is a dietician and Sister Martha Kim is a nurse. They both contribute in a very positive way to the quality of care in the hospice.

The hospice also provides a mortuary service so that traditional Korean funeral customs can be observed. The mourning ceremonies can last up to three days. So there is very close in-

volvement with the family at every stage of the time that the patient spends in hospice care. The main achievement of the hospice has been to make the local government and populace aware of the help and support that can be given to both the patient and his or her family as they try to cope with terminal illness and how it is possible to create an atmosphere in which the patient lives the end of his or her life in a dignified and pain free manner.



The hospice has become well established in Yanji and the Government has recognised it as a non-profit organization. A feature of a recent publicity program was opening the hospice to members of the public and local and civic groups so that they could tour the hospice and get a clearer idea of its purpose.

This is becoming better understood and nursing students from the local nursing college visit the hospice as part of their training. It is hoped that the general public will come to see the hospice as a place that can offer pain control and respite care, rather than as a place to die.



Canonically the Community and Work at Yanji are part of the Korean Province. The Community is an international one being composed of Brothers from Korea, Ireland and Vietnam.

Recently Vietnamese Brother Jerome Cuong was replaced by another Brother from Vietnam – Brother James Phan Duy Tan. A Korean Brother who has completed his nurse training is now gaining hospice experience in Gwangju, Korea, in order to go to China at a future date.



With regard to the future, the Province and Community are now considering an expansion of the existing homecare programme which is carried out on a very small scale. Also the Province has decided to set up the ground floor of the present hospice building as a 24 bed unit for people

with Alzheimer's syndrome. The hospice will add three nurses and a doctor to its staff. These new staff members will be sent to the Order's centre at Gwangju in the Republic of Korea for three months of working experience. In the meantime the ground floor of the hospice building will be renovated so that it is suitable as an Alzheimer's unit. The first Alzheimer's patients are expected at the end of November 2010.

