

July 2014

Volume 1, Issue 2

# Connections

A Newsletter of the Asia Pacific Commission



The Hospitaller Order of St. John of God

# generaldelegategreetings

Dear Brothers and Hospitaller Friends,

*The reign of God is like yeast which a woman took and kneaded into three measures of flour. Eventually the whole mass of dough began to rise.*

(Matt 13:33)

Jesus' revelation of the Reign of God demonstrates that all of life has a spiritual dimension. Each of us at some time is confronted by questions about the meaning of life: Why am I here? What is this restlessness within me? What does it mean to be fully alive? What is the meaning of suffering? Who is God for me? Such questions echo in the human heart. This quest for meaning does not lead to ready answers but can lead to wisdom and understanding through a struggling with our own humanness and vulnerability as we live with these questions. We find that we are restless until our hearts rest in God. As we discern the movements of God within, we become more and more attuned to the ways in which God tenderly reaches out, inviting us into a personal bond of love.

At times we are inclined to place God in a separate space; God can be experienced as distant and remote, someone we might only call on in times of

trouble. Or God might be imaged as a stern judge, one who scrutinizes our every thought, feeling and action or some sort of 'Gift-giver' to whom we send our requests. The Christian tradition reminds us that while God is beyond our naming or describing, God is always more than we can hope for or imagine. The Gospels have something to say in this regard as Jesus carefully reveals a God of unconditional love who calls us into close relationship. Through Jesus we learn that God is *Abba*. This expression of intimacy reveals that God cares about us and is interested in all aspects of our life (Lk 12:28) and calls us into wholeness and healing. (Mk 10:46-52)

This year as an Order we have taken time in each Province and General Delegation to pause in Chapter and notice God's presence, engaging with one another and discerning the way forward faithful to the Mission. There are many challenges facing us in our Asia Pacific Region, however each of us are offered great comfort and encouragement with the knowledge that God is with us in the ordinariness of our everyday lives. I am encouraged by the bold vision of the Asia Pacific Commission (APC), supported by the Prior General, in the development both the Regional Novitiate and our regional Centre for Hospitaller Formation. I ask your prayerful support for these projects which are like the yeast in the dough, offering us signs of hope for the future of the Order.

Thank you to the USA Province for the kind hospitality shown during the recent meeting of the APC in Los Angeles, and I particularly wish to express gratitude to Brother Timothy who has served us so generously as President of the APPC over recent years.

I hope you enjoy reading this next issue of Connections and encourage you to share the good news widely of all that you do in the name of St John of God.

Fraternally,



Joseph, oh.  
General Delegate for Asia Pacific & North America





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"Do good to yourself by doing good for others"  
*St. John of God*

Connections is published three times a year by the Asia - Pacific Commission (APC) to promote the works of the Ministries of the APC in the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God.

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# provincialchapters2014

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**“Living Hospitality Hopefully and Boldly”**

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# brothers' assembly in papua new guinea

Brother Brian O'Donnell, O.H.

The absence of a representative group of Papua New Guinean (PNG) Brothers at the Oceania Provincial Chapter in February 2014 due to visa problems led to a decision to hold as soon as possible an assembly of Brothers in PNG to, in effect, continue the work of the Chapter with relation to the life and mission of the Order in PNG.



This assembly took place over five days from 20th to 24th May 2014. This time visa problems for Australian Brothers resulted in a greatly reduced participation in the assembly of Brothers from outside PNG - including the Provincial himself. Only one Papua New Guinean Brother did not attend the Assembly - Brother Peter Kal - who was not able to absent himself from his studies for the priesthood at the national seminary in Port Moresby. The non-nationals at the Assembly were Stephen Coakley (in his capacity of the Provincial Delegate's mentor) and Brian O'Donnell (the only member of the Extended Provincial Council able to travel to Papua New Guinea at that time). The Assembly was facilitated by Sister Anne Lane PVBM.

The Brothers reached a unanimous consensus that they would respond positively to the Order's constant call to renewal of their initial fervour for Religious Life and initial commitment to the Hospitaller Mission. They will focus on the Brothers' Life of Prayer, their Community Life, and their Ministries. To renew their Life of Prayer and Community Life they will resort first to the Programme of Community

Life. In the area of Mission, they committed themselves, with all the necessary training and planning, to two particular fields of ministry: Rural Health and Addictions Counselling.

The liturgical life of the Assembly began with an inaugural Mass celebrated by the Archbishop of Madang, Very Rev. Joseph Reichert OFM. It concluded with a thanksgiving Mass celebrated by Father Luke SVD. Morning and Evening Prayer were prepared, in turn by each community, based on prayer sheets sent from the Provincial Office in Sydney.

Special features of the occasions of prayer included a time dedicated to paying a tribute to Silver Jubilarian Brother Philip Teingo. There was also a special occasion when the outgoing Delegate, Brother Bernard Boromane, was thanked for his leadership over a number of years before he handed over the duties and responsibilities of leadership, symbolically in the form of a Melanesian basket and staff, to the newly nominated Delegate, Brother Cris Kasoni.

Participants in the Assembly left the Assembly feeling that a new page had been turned in the history of the Order in Papua New Guinea. The Brothers renewed their determination to make their lives and ministries more authentic in terms of the Gospel witness that we Religious are supposed to give.



# apcmeetsinlosangeles

Brothers from the Asia Pacific Region gathered in Los Angeles this past June to envision a future of collaboration between the Provinces and Delegations of the Pacific Rim. Brother Joseph Smith, O.H., General Delegate of the Asia Pacific & North America thanked Brother Timothy Graham, O.H. for his leadership and service as President of the APPC. The goal was to evaluate and make recommendations on the following:

- To change the name from Asia Pacific Provincials Conference (APPC) to Asia Pacific Commission (APC) to be more inclusive and in line with the other regions of the Order.
- The membership elected Brother Joseph Smith, O.H. as President of the APC.
- To develop and strengthen our 2014 collegial leadership and to clarify the direction of our Hospitaller Order mission over the next four years in the Asia Pacific Region.
- To lead and manage the Mission of Hospitality in our Region, particularly in how we authorize and promote collaboration in the areas of formation and resourcing for mission, finance and joint projects that are essential to developing a culture of Hospitality.

The Brothers and Co-Workers who attended the APC Meeting were:

Br. Joseph Smith, O.H.  
General Delegate for Asia Pacific & North America

Br. Timothy Graham, O.H.  
Provincial of Oceania

Br. Mathew Tran Doan Phi, O.H.  
Provincial of Vietnam

Br. Gerardo D'Auria, O.H.  
Provincial of Rome

Br. Pablo Lopez, O.H.  
Provincial of USA

Br. Michael Lee, O.H.  
Provincial of Korea

Br. Benedict Won, O.H.  
Provincial Delegate of Japan

Br. Francis Mannaparampil, O.H.  
Provincial Representative of India

Br. John Baptist Tran Cong Minh, O.H.  
Vietnamese Interpreter

Jo Young (Anna) Lee  
Korean Interpreter

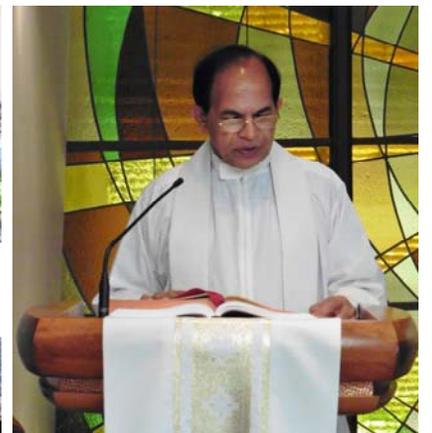
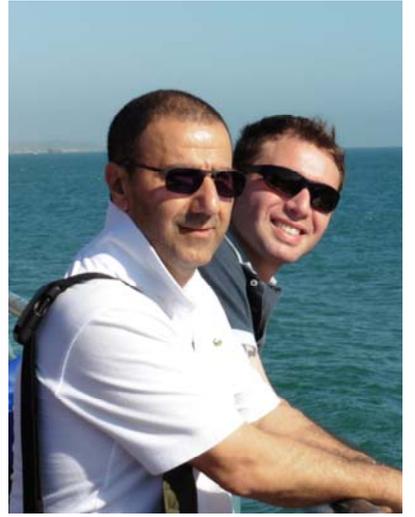
Raffaele Pilla  
Italian Interpreter

Father Michael Mullins  
Facilitator



# LOS Angeles





# newnursingcollegeinindia

On 7th June, the new building for the college of Nursing at Kattappana St. John's Hospital, Kerala, India, was blessed and inaugurated. The blessing was done by His Grace Mar Mathew Arackal, the Bishop of Kanjirappally, Kerala. The inauguration was done by the Chief Minister of Kerala, Mr. Oommen Chandy. Many dignitaries and public were present for the public function conducted after the Blessing.

On Nurse's day at St. John's Auditorium, the School of Hospitality had conducted an induction programme known as "towards the path" for the recently joined co-workers of the St. John of God Family at Kattappana, Kerala, India. It was a one day programme and was attended by 49 co-workers. It was a wonderful opportunity for the co-workers to have a sense of belonging to the Family of John of God.



## visit to granada

A group of Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd was recently led by Brother Joseph Smith oh, General Delegate for Asia Pacific and North America, on pilgrimage as part of the process of fusion with our Hospitaller Order. The pilgrimage followed in the footsteps of St. John of God in Granada. The Brothers resided at the Hospital San Rafael during their visit to Granada and reflected each day upon the life of our founder relating his journey in hospitality to their own journey of becoming his followers. After this time with Br. Joseph the Little Brothers were kindly hosted for a couple of days by the Andalusian Province visiting a number of communities and centres of the Province. We continue to hold the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd and all their associates in our prayers as we prepare to welcome them into our Order in early 2015.

# letustalk

## hospitalityagingbioethics

Brother Stephen de la Rosa, O.H., MA Bioethics

What does hospitality, bioethics and aging have to do with each other? I have come to see them as three interrelated components of decision-making in the latter part of life. Illness in aging represents a challenge.



Advances in medical technology have given those who are aging and their family members or care givers hard choices and alternatives in answering questions.

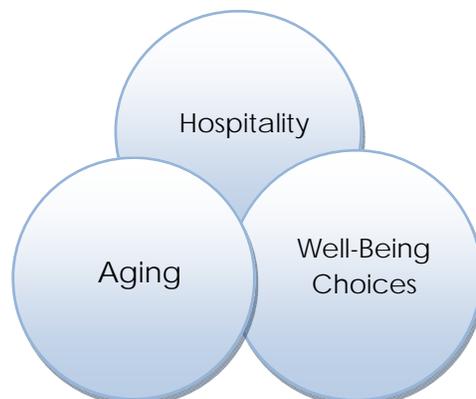
Sometimes the decisions which they face can be confusing and difficult. Every adult has the right to control the health care he or she receives. This right is exercised by making your own and informed decisions. In certain cases weighing the benefits and burdens of treatment complicates the decision making process and the simplest of choices become challenging.

Bioethics, as a discipline, has a significant role to play in helping people to clarify issues, promote reflection, facilitate decision making, enhance communication, provide support, avert crises, and manage resources. These issues can be addressed with a bioethical consultation with a qualified individual or with a Bioethics Committee which can assist in unfolding the sanctity of life and quality of life issues.

Hospitality, when seen as attentive and compassionate care, becomes a fundamental moral practice of assuring the dignity and respect of life. When people feel down and out, it is beneficial to pay attention to their needs especially with care and compassion. This will touch people's hurt, loneliness, pain and restore new life. One of the opportunities that we have as ministers of hospitality is to bring hope. We offer people a vision that things do get better and that there is a progressive journey that one takes from being broken to becoming whole.

We need to continuously encourage each other to communicate our fears especially about health when issues of care become burdensome. As keepers of the story of St. John of God, who went about making sure that in Christ everyone felt like someone, we need to follow in this path.

A project that would be helpful in spanning the diversity of bioethical challenges within the Asia Pacific Region would be to identify the most frequently asked questions in making health care decisions. In this manner we would understand the particular challenges people within our Region have about their health care needs. This goal is not to find answers. It is to assure that there is a hospitable and bioethical reflection process available to assist people in making an informed choice. Let's talk about it amongst ourselves so that in hospitality we meet the decision-making needs of the residents/patients in our centers of hospitality.



# brothersunitedinspiritandministry

As part of the fusion process that will unite the two religious institutes on 19th January 2015, representatives of the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd and the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God met in a Combined Assembly at the Bethany Conference Center at Lutz, Florida, USA, from 5th to 15th June 2014. The theme of the assembly was "Brothers United in Spirit and Ministry"

Approximately 50 Brothers attended the assembly – including the two Superiors General, Brother Jesús Etayo and Brother Justin Howson. The Asia Pacific Region was present at the assembly in the persons of five members of the Province of Oceania and one member (Brother Vincent Kochamkunnel) from the Province of India.

The assembly began in the Center's chapel with a Morning Prayer that was a sample of the other well-prepared community prayers and liturgies that would be a feature of the event. In the assembly hall, after welcoming speeches, a Good Shepherd Brother, Gerard Sullivan from Albuquerque, gave a presentation that focused on the fusion of the two institutes. Under the heading of "Lighting the Way, Fulfilling the Dream", he pointed out that fusion is a process in which two bodies form a new body and generate new and greater energy. This was discussed in mixed groups before the assembly adjourned for an important liturgical event – the first profession of religious vows as a Little Brother of the Good Shepherd by Brother Enrique (Rick) Wong. This was an historic event in that, if all goes to plan, it will be the last profession of a Little Brother of the Good Shepherd. If Brother Rick renews his vows in a year's time it will be as a

Brother of Saint John of God.

The Superior General of the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd explained the assembly as an occasion of on-going formation for all present – but especially the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd. The programme was designed to give them practical information about a variety of aspects of life as a member of the Hospitaller Order of Saint

John of God. The various presentations, made by Brothers of Saint John of God with a wide range of experience, included the following topics: "The Charism of Hospitality", "The Family of St. John of God", "Brothers United in Spirit and Ministry", "Grieving, Letting Go and Letting God", "The Institute of Hospitality", "On the Shoulders of the Good Shepherd", "Life in a Hospitaller Province", "Hospitaller Formation, Initial and Ongoing", "Hospitaller Priesthood", "Charismatic Management", "Ethics in Ministry" and "Pastoral Care vs Spiritual Care in the Ministry".



One much appreciated event of the assembly was a 'question and answer' session in which the Prior General Jesús Etayo answered various questions from the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd about the life of the Order and the fusion process. Brother Jesús also had a personal meeting with Brother of the Good Shepherd.

When the participants departed at the conclusion of the assembly there was a general consensus amongst them that the event had been successful and had resolved and final doubts and reservations.





**Connections Newsletter**

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“When you think  
everything is someone  
else’s fault,  
you will suffer a lot.  
When you realize that  
everything springs only  
from yourself,  
you will learn both  
**peace** and **joy**.”

*His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama*

