

## FROM MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

The Provincial Council of this quadrennium met for the 15<sup>th</sup> time on 23 and 24 November 2015. All the elected and nominated members were present, as well as Brother Joseph Smith who attended the first day of the meeting in his capacity of General Delegate for the Asia Pacific North American Region. Various issues in the life of the Province were discussed at the meeting and they included the following which could be of particular interest to the members of the Province:

- a) The final formalities connected with the withdrawal of the Order from Walamu have been completed and Saint John of God Health Care's Social Outreach and Advocacy Services have undertaken to develop a model for a mental health promotion programme that the Province could support in Madang.
- b) Through the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (CLRI) the Province explored whether it could make 9 White Street, Strathfield, available for lodging Syrian refugees on a temporary basis. It was found that the situation is so complex that it could not be considered as a realistic option for the Province.
- c) The Provincial Council agreed on some adjustments to its strategic plan for the presence and future of the Order in Papua New Guinea. Owing to the fact that some rearrangements require the agreement and approval of various bodies and persons, the details will be published at a later date.
- d) A Renewal Program for Simple Professed Brothers in PNG commenced on 9 November, 2015, and the Brothers attending are Chris Kasoni, Patrick Yei, Samson Kapuot and Adolf Yungki. The programme includes a retreat directed by Brother Joseph Smith at Alexishafen Prayer House from 6 – 13 March, 2016.
- e) Various movements had taken place in the Asia Pacific Region with the following results: a) the physical Centre for Hospitaller Formation, in the Philippines, has become the Regional Ongoing Formation Programme which, while hosted by the Philippines Delegation, can operate in other locations as and when required; b) a Regional Postulancy Programme will begin in the Philippines on 8 March 2016; there will be a Regional Conference of the Asia Pacific Region from 15-19 February 2016; c) the new Chairman of the Asia Pacific Commission is Indian Provincial Brother Yanka Sharma; d) the next meeting of the Asia Pacific Commission will be on 18 February 2016 and it is planned to have a discussion on that occasion with the Prior General to "facilitate possible restructuring of Provinces and Delegations within our region to best serve the Order into the future".

Thanks are due to various sources of information for this issue and they include: the General Delegate for Asia Pacific and North America (Br. Joseph Smith); the Philippines Delegation's Newsletter; and the PNG Provincial Delegation.

## REFLECTIONS ON ASSEMBLY OF ORDER'S MAJOR SUPERIORS (ROME, OCT. 2015)



As you are aware the Provincials of the Order met with the General Curia Team in Rome during October of this year. The aim of the gathering was to provide an opportunity for the leadership to spend time in reflection and dialogue on a vision for the future of our Order given the varying context in which our charism is expressed. Our facilitator was Father Luis Alberto Gonzalo, a Spanish Claretian, who while having good knowledge did not

appear to be that well equipped for providing the type of facilitation necessary for the cultural diversity of our group.

However thankfully we spent a majority of time in our regional groups, a challenge in itself given the composition of our Asia/Pacific Region (China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Philippines, India, Mauritius, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and Haiti). Despite language and cultural differences a very fraternal, open and honest atmosphere has developed within our region. As you are probably aware our region is comprised of provinces that are aging and diminishing, such as our own, as well as provinces that are growing and developing in the number of brothers as well as apostolic ventures. We have spent many years developing close relationships in the region and are collaborating in important formation projects all of which are providing a solid foundation for the future of the Order in the region. Similarly the African and Latin American regions are working together collaboratively.

It became clear however that many of the well-established older provinces, particularly in Europe, are struggling dreadfully with the ongoing burden and complexity of running large institutional apostolates. Some provinces expressed serious concern around identity, as they struggle to comprehend any other way of expressing hospitality other than in and through traditional institutional apostolates. The Prior General exhorted us all to be honest and courageous in “re-structuring, revitalizing” our future. He highlighted that in many parts of the Order there is a great urgency to change the way we have been in ministry and life-style, if the religious life and our apostolates are to remain vibrant, relevant and witnessing to the Good News of God’s love.

*Brothers I cannot help but reflect on how well-placed we are as a province in having made tough decisions about what we hope will be the best future for our institutional apostolates and then having the courage to place them in the new structure of the Public Juridical Person – St John of God Australia. As well we embarked on the long and sometimes difficult journey of embracing a radically different life-style in the expression of our consecration as Brothers of St John of God. Thank God, through our pain and letting-go, we have hopefully been able to grow in our awareness of living hospitality in our everyday life, no matter where we find ourselves.*

Faternally,  
 Joseph.

## FORMATION IN OUR REGION

In the area of formation, collaboration is advancing between the Provinces and Delegations of the Order in the Asia Pacific Region. Already the Philippines Delegation has received Papua New Guinean novices and scholastics. The attempt to open a Regional Centre for Hospitaller Formation in Quezon City did not succeed due to financial constraints. The concept behind that attempt has evolved into a Regional Ongoing Formation Programme. The Philippines' initial formation centre at Amadeo (pictured) expects to begin accepting postulants and novices from other parts of the Asia Pacific Region from 8 March 2016. This development will be known as the Regional Postulancy Programme and criteria for acceptance has been established for the acceptance of the first candidates to come from Vietnam and India. The Filipino Novice Master, Brother Fermin Paniza, visited Vietnam from 16 to 19 October to assess the needs of the nine candidates there in order to prepare a program of individualised formation. As a follow-up to this Brother Vianney Welch spent from 21 to 30 October in Manila working with other members of the Regional Formation Group (Brothers Richard Tawamana of Papua New Guinea and Filipino Brothers Fermin, Romanito Salada and Rocco Yusay) on a broad outline of the program for postulants and novices to be adopted in our Region. It was agreed that it is necessary that each participating Province or Delegation should send someone to the Philippines to join the Regional Formation Group to help overcome language and cultural differences. The Indian Brother Paul has been nominated to accompany the Indian postulants.



## MINISTRY PLANNING IN MADANG

Saint John of God Health Care personnel, Ms Anthea Ramos and Ms. Jenny Tait-Robinson, visited Madang for three days recently to assist planning a model for a service to provide support to people with mental health issues. Anthea and Jenny worked with Brothers Patrick Yei, Chris Kasoni, Samson Kapuot and Peter van Peperstraten. They all met with Archbishop Steven, staff from the Diocese of Madang, nurses from the Psychiatric Clinic of Modalin Hospital and some local people of Madang. It became clear during these meetings that the



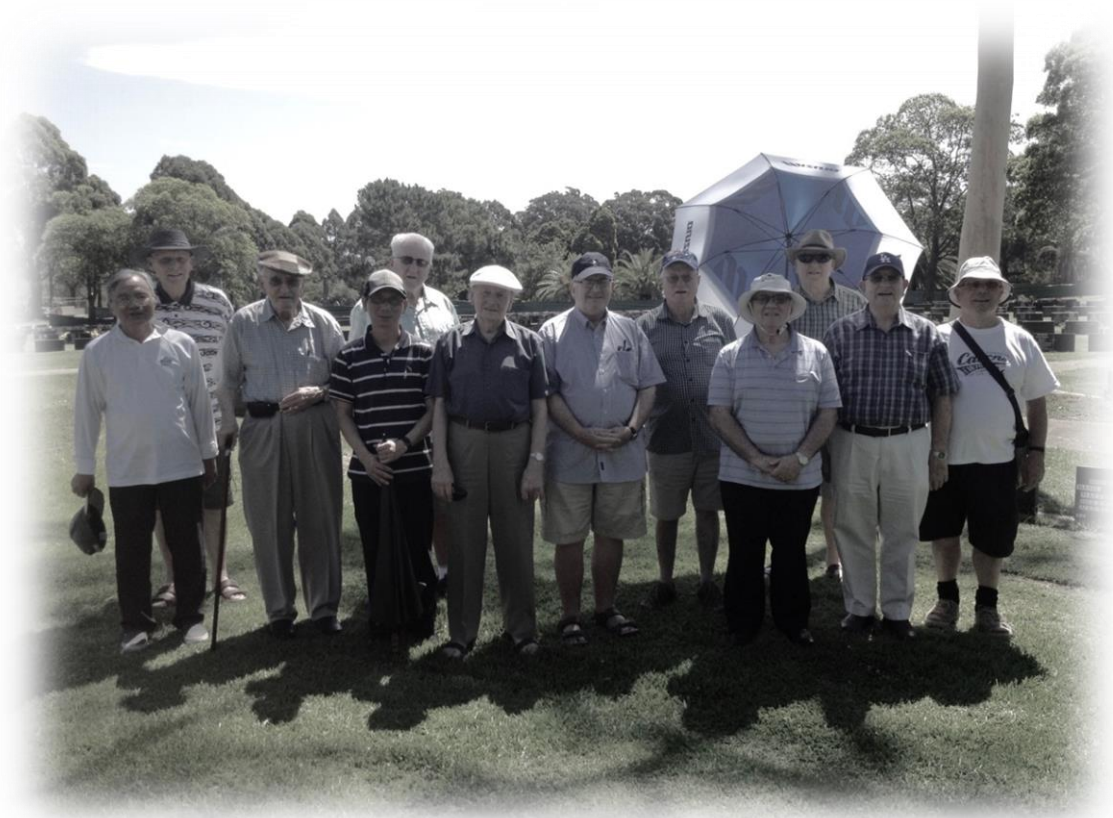
biggest need is to provide rehabilitation services to younger people (mainly young men) who, being bored, turned to the use of drugs. There are people who have acute and chronic mental issues as well as those with both physical mental issues and emotional scars from childhood. Jenny is now working on an overall plan for presentation to the Brothers in April 2016.

## BROTHERS' ASSEMBLY



A variety of circumstances meant that a reduced number of Brothers attended the recent Brothers Assembly however there were 14 Brothers present on the first day and 16 on the second day. The focus of the first day was the papal encyclical *Laudato Si'* and this was introduced by an audio-visual prayer and reflection exercised entitled "Eucharistic Prayer of the Cosmos". By means of personal reflection and sharing in groups and the assembly itself the topic of the environment as a reflection and gift of the

Creator was explored in some depth. The second day began with a celebration of the Mass of the Patronage. A special intention of that Mass was the needs and wellbeing of men who had spent some time – in many cases, years – in our ranks before leaving to follow another path. This intention was given particular poignancy by the reading of a letter from the wife of Bernard (Brother Norbert) Quin which recounted his life-long faithfulness to the charism of hospitality. Dr John McManus of MIND & MATTER Consulting then led a deep discussion on the issue of aging. The day ended with a photographic presentation of the deceased members of the Province and a ceremonial visit by Assembly participants to the Province's section in Saint Joachim's Circle of the Rookwood Cemetery.



At the cemetery

## THE LATE BROTHER RAPHAEL DILLON REMEMBERED



A small group of Brothers (Stephen Coakley, Kevin Lawson, Rodger Moloney, Julian Liddiard and Brian O'Donnell) attended the annual commemorative Mass for deceased residents at Gertrude Abbott Aged Care facility, Darlinghurst, Sydney on Tuesday 17 November. During the Mass Brother Stephen read the First Reading and Brother Kevin accepted the commemorative photo and bookmark of the occasion. It was evident from remarks made to the Brothers that Raphael is well remembered for the service

that he gave at the front desk and on the phone while he was in Sister Anne Court – and his cooking skills in making cakes and sweets for the centres' annual fetes and other celebrations.

## “Pomegranate Seeds for the Future” in Papua New Guinea

The recent meetings and festivities of the Brothers at Aitape drew attention to a John-of-God tradition that continues in that place. There is a small group of children (some seen here with Brother Fermin Paniza of the Philippines) who are known by the name of “The Pomegranate Seeds of the Future” who



were started years ago by the postulants and novices of 2012-2013. Over recent years the group gradually grew into a number of children aged between five years to ten years. This little group was initiated to help the postulants and novices in Aitape to entertain the patients of **Raihu hospital**. The novices or postulants would go out on weekends and put up a video show for patients who would be bored on week days and weekends. This went on for some time with great appreciation from doctors and nurses who have noticed great changes from this little apostolate and began to highly speak about the miracle it brings in the lives of the patients each day. Today the Saint of God Children are committed to prepare liturgy and provide music for all the events of the Brothers at Aitape. They recently organised music for the celebration Mass of the Silver Jubilee of Brothers Philip and Emmanuel.



## DATES MARKED IN OUR CALENDAR

### THIS YEAR

**27 November:** Brother Edward Collins goes into Lake Macquarie Private Hospital, Newcastle, for knee reconstruction.

**17 December:** Brothers' Christmas Morning Tea at Provincial Office.

### NEXT YEAR

**9 January:** Golden Jubilee of Brothers Kevin Wallis and Stephen Coakley.

**15-19 February:** Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Korea.

**2-3 March:** CLRI annual meeting at Parramatta.

**21-22 March:** Next Provincial Council meeting.

**23-24 March:** Brothers' Assembly.

**27-28 July:** Brothers' Assembly.

**23-24 November:** Brothers' Assembly.

