WELCOME TO OUR 20TH EDITION!

At last there is a breathing space – just about – to put pen to paper and let you know how things have been for the TST in their ministry of establishing clusters of communities in the developing world. This year has been an exciting one, full of activity and challenging work. In this edition, we will share with you more stories from the different members of the TST as each of us works ahead to further Journeying Together.

THE ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

You will have read some details of the OP in the April edition of the bulletin, and here we want to give you a flavour of how things are going. We have twenty-two Brothers doing the OP: two from the Philippines (Theo and Dennis), one from Australia (Moy), seven from Kenya (Allan, Edwin, Isaac, Kelvin, Melkizedeck, Silverio and Wycliffe) and twelve from India (Arvind, Bipin, Con, David, Edwin, Gambhir, Joachim, Mahendra, Placid, Romeo, Roshan and Willie). It has been difficult getting visas for OP participants from outside India so we congratulate those who succeeded and offer sympathies to those from Sierra Leone, Zambia and Australia who didn’t. We are planning a further OP in Africa to cater for those who were unable to enter India. This will take place from 17th September and will most probably be in Tamale, Ghana.

It is heart-warming to see how the Brothers are entering into the spirit of the OP, and participating actively in all aspects of the programme. As this bulletin goes to press we will be in our twelfth week. Recent weeks have seen workshops on sexuality, cosmology and a new look at the historical Jesus and we recently had a five day session with three psychotherapists to reflect on how the Brothers are relating with each other. This proved to be a rich experience for all. We are now engaged in a process for the creation of the new communities in India.

On the website each day we give a fairly detailed account of the goings on, and you can read about what is happening by logging onto journeying2gether.org. The Orientation Programme offers a rich integration of presentations and processes that inspire, inform and hopefully are transforming the participants into a new way of being Brother.

We are fortunate to have a highly-dedicated team facilitating the OP. Sunil is the Director
with Sr Aurea Dias, a Presentation Sister and David as team members.

CLUSTER PREPARATION

Ruvan has been very occupied with the building of the hub and mission community houses. Three houses are being newly built at Patharlyndan, Umtyrkhang (mission communities) and Nongpoh (Hub community). The first sentence does not do justice to the amount of work involved in taking on this herculean task. From the very design of the houses, to the sourcing of building materials, to the supervision of the foundation work, Ruvan has been working flat out to make sure that the houses will be ready for the Brothers to move in December. The recent monsoon rains have not helped progress, as the downpours mean that the work is often suspended or delayed. However, this does not stop Ruvan forging ahead. More recently, it was decided to drill bore holes in each of the places to ensure a good supply of water. From the outset, the local village headman and council have been involved in the house construction process. Half the labour force for the building is drawn from local men and as much building materials as possible are sourced locally. Many local people attended rituals of blessing at each site as the foundation stones were laid.

We want to acknowledge the generosity and proactivity of the PLT in India who are our partners in this whole project. Working in collaboration with them has been hugely energizing for us and their support for TST, is deeply appreciated.

LIFE ON ST EDMUND’S CAMPUS, SHILLONG

The TST community house, generously made available by the Indian Province, now hosts the TST accountant and project offices, as well as the North East regional office of Pratyek, the Province Advocacy organization. It is good to see Brothers and locals coming and going into the Mary Immaculate Juvenate building.

Sunday morning Eucharist in St Edmunds chapel is a highlight of the week which draws many locals including many of the OP participants. A hearty Indian breakfast, courtesy of the Brothers’ community on campus, is much appreciated by the OP participants each week!
TST IN ZAMBIA

Chris Meehl is our representative in Zambia where he is in frequent contact with the hub community and the mission communities in Western Province. Recently, the cluster had a very interesting workshop on Advocacy given by Kevin Mullan from Edmund Rice International. There were over sixty participants – the Brothers from the cluster, and their co-workers from Limulunga, Luampa and Senanga. The high number of participants points to the commitment of the Brothers to work alongside the local community in a community engagement approach.

Chris and Donal continue in important conversations with the Leadership Team of South Central District and the Hub community to plan and organise the transfer of governance of the Zambia Cluster to the District.

ROME

Francis and Donal attended the Congregation Leadership Group (CLG) meeting in Rome which began on 6th June and went on for two weeks. ‘Sailing into the Wind’ was the theme of the meeting. Depending on people’s experience of sailing, the metaphor could be exhilarating or terrifying!

The meeting was skillfully facilitated by Michael Burke from South Africa. A Jesuit priest Fr Gerry McGlone, who had been involved in the formation meeting in Zambia last September, set the tone by facilitating sessions on how we address the culture of neglect within the Brothers. This challenging topic created a realism among the participants which led to much fruitful conversation.

The annual CLG meeting is a very valuable opportunity for the leadership of the Congregation to raise important issues and plan for the future. Donal and Francis found it a very worthwhile time of connecting with leadership across the Congregation, especially as discernment takes place about the next Cluster Preparation Programs and the third cluster.

Following the CLG, the TST met with the CLT for a week’s sharing on Journeying Together. The week was very well facilitated by Br Jim Donovan who kept the meeting going at a good pace, and helped both CLT and TST to engage in robust conversations.
THE STORY OF JOURNEYING TOGETHER

At present, David is writing up the story of Journeying Together. In this publication, he traces the development of the project from the time when the Constitutions were re-written in 1984 through the subsequent Chapters to Munnar which gave the impetus for A Way into the Future. In the book, he has gathered the voices of those who were involved in this Congregational initiative, and outlines the development of the project up to the present time. The book should be ready in the next few months.

A YEAR LATER

The TST has published a limited edition of A Year Later which contains the reflections of the Brothers who have lived for the past year in the first cluster in Western Province, Zambia. Reading their testimonies is a heart-warming experience. These Brothers demonstrate courage, generosity and a deep commitment to Journeying Together, and we salute them as true pioneers of a new way of being Brother. The full texts of their testimonies will be included in The Story of Journeying Together. What follows is just a taster of a rich reflection on life in the Zambian cluster.

One Brother said, “My experience of living in the Zambian Cluster gives significant support to the idea that the steps we are taking are calling us to live life at a deeper level... Being in the Cluster has given me more time for contemplation, for centering prayer, for reading widely, given the mobile library and the library resource at the Hub. The check-ins at our community are open; sharing is at a deeper level, away from simply repeating the diary of the week, to a focus on the highs and lows, the energy draining and the energy enhancing moments, the joys and sorrows of the week. “

Another Brother comments, “What I find different and distinctive about Journeying Together, especially from previous Congregational efforts at renewal, is that it comes with a structure built around it, namely, the Hub and the Cluster system. This is proving, I think, to be an effective and creative way for us to move into the future.”

And a third Brother said, “For the past one year, I have been on a journey, an adventurous journey, which has continued to expose me to a whole new way of being human, a whole new way of being Brother to the people of Western Province, by leaving what was familiar to me, my comfort zone, my secure God and coming to live among the people of Mongu.”