Australasian Province Changes Title

The 18th Chapter of the Province of Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, held at Sydney, Australia, from 1 to 4 March, decided to change the name of the Province to that of “The Oceania Province”.

The presence of the Order today in this part of the world was foreshadowed when, in 1606, four Brothers of John of God came as far south in Oceania as Vanuatu as members of a Spanish expedition led by Pedro Fernandez de Quirós.

In 1947 the Irish/English Province established a Provincal Delegation in Australia and New Zealand. After some foundations of the Order had been made in Australia and New Zealand the Communities and Apostolic words of the Order were made into a Vice-Province in 1952 and then a Province in 1956. After becoming a Province the apostolate was extended to Papua New Guinea in 1971 where the Communities and Works were made a Provincal Delegation in 2001.

The term "Oceania" was coined in 1831 by French explorer Dumont d’Urville and is now used to denote a ‘virtual continent’ composed of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and proximate Pacific islands.

Newly Elected Vietnamese Provincial Definitory

The fourth Chapter of the Vietnamese Province began on 22 February and during its course Brother Peter Pham Van Phu, 46 years, was elected Provincial.

In the previous Province Government Brother Peter was a Provincial Councillor. He entered the Order by becoming a novice in 1993 and made his first temporary profession in 1995. He made solemn profession in 2001. He graduated as a professional nurse in 1999 and completed six years of philosophy and theology at the Dominican Institute in 2008. In 2009 he was a vocal to the General Chapter in Mexico.

The full membership of the new Province Government (seen above with General Councillor Vincent Kochamkunnel and Prior General Donatus Forkan) is (from left) Br. Joseph Tran Van Thong, Br. Peter Pham van Phu, Br. John the Baptist Tran Cong Minh, Br. Dominic Tran Van Hiep and Br. Dominic Le Huy Hoang.

The latest official statistics of the Order show that its membership in Vietnam is composed of 60 solemn professed Brothers, 15 temporary professed and 10 novices. They carry out their mission in four Apostolic Works and two other services.
Brothers of Vietnam Province with Prior General

On Sunday 21st February the Vietnamese Province marked another milestone in its history by blessing the new community building and chapel at Thanson. The Auxiliary Bishop of Xuanloc Diocese, Bishop Thomas Vu Dinh Hieu blessed the new constructions. He then

presided over Holy Mass followed by the blessing. The event was attended by many Priests, Sisters, Brothers and other friends. About 1500 people attended the function. During the ceremony a number of benefactors received Papal blessings organised by the Province.

General Councillor Brother Vincent Kochamkunnel, representing our Prior

General, addressed the gathering and congratulated the Vietnamese Province—especially the then Provincial Brother Mathew Tran Doan Phi and the Local Superior Brother Bonaventure Nguyen Manh Hoan who had led the Brothers of the Thanh Son Community in their efforts to realize this dream. After the celebration everyone present took part in a celebratory meal.

New Provincial Elected in India

During the Chapter of the Indian Province that began on 15 February Brother Antony Palamattom, seen above receiving the seal of office from the Prior General, was elected Provincial. His Councillors are Brothers George Kizhakkenath, Pius Manithotil, Piuskutty Kochuparampil and Raphael Swamidas.

Brother Antony, 56 years, has been a member of the Order since he entered the novitiate in 1973. He made first profession in 1975 and solemn profession in 1981. He spent some years as a nursing student at the Order’s Vienna hospital from which he graduated as a general nurse. Back in India he served as Provincial Delegate (when the Communities and Apostolic Works of the Order in India were a Delegation of the Rhine Province). He also served as CEO of the Order’s St. John of God Hospital at Kattappana in Kerala. Most recently he has been superior of the Order’s HIV/AIDS centre at Trichy.

The most up to date statistics of the Order show that the Indian Province is composed of 34 solemn professed Brothers, 12 temporary professed and two novices and that they and their Co-workers are active in five Apostolic Works.
General Statutes Translations Group Meets in Rome

The Brothers responsible for the final versions of the new General Statutes in the main European languages of the Order met at the General Curia in Rome from 17 to 20 February.

They were (from left to right above): Brothers Brian O'Donnell (English), Hubert Matusiewicz (Polish), Victor Martín (Spanish), Jesús Etayo (General Councillor and Chairman), José Nunes Dorguete (Portuguese) Emerich Steigerwald (German), Elia Tripaldi (Italian) and Alain-Samuel Jeancler (French).

With the help of interpreters, translators and a canonical expert, the group went through the various translations article by article to make sure that they are faithful to the official Spanish text approved and brought into force by the Prior General on 25 December 2009.

When these translations have been approved by the General Definitory the Provinces and Delegations of the Asia Pacific Region will be able to use them as a basis for translations in their respective languages.

Creation of a New Province

Three of the entities of the Order in the Asia Pacific Region were especially interested to see the transformation of the English and Irish Provinces on 1 February into a completely new Province to be known as the West European Province of Saint John of God.

The Australasian Province and the Korean Province are daughter provinces of the former Irish Province. The Philippines Provincial Delegation had a close tie with the English Province through the four English Brothers who helped with religious formation in the early days of the re-establishment of the Order in the Philippines.

The first Provincial of the West European Province is Brother Laurence Kearns (pictured at left) who was the Irish Provincial. His Council is made up of two Brothers of the former Irish Province (Fintan Brennan-Whitmore and Gregory McCrory) and two Brothers of the former English Province (Stanislaus Neild and Mark Morgan). The Curia of the West European Province will be in Dublin, Ireland.

The establishment of the new West European Province is only the first change in the canonical structure of the Order that will take place as a result of decisions that will be made at some Asia Pacific Region Chapters in February and March.
The Family of St. John of God Grows in East Timor

On 19 December last year, in association with a Mass celebrated by Brother John Jung at Gwangju, 11 Co-workers were baptized into the Catholic Church. Eight of the Co-workers were from the Order’s Hospital at Gwangju and three were from the Order’s Damyang Nursing Home. Families of the newly baptised were present and joined in the rejoicing and celebrations.

The newly baptised Co-workers had attended an eight months preparatory course.

The Order came to Korea in 1959 when five Brothers of the Irish Province arrived in the country which was still devastated by the recent war. They purchased land and a building and renovated it into a modern medical service, Saint John of God Clinic, Gwangju, which was opened on 2 January 1960.

Later Korean vocations to the Order and the cooperation of many Co-workers enabled it to make other foundations in Korea at Chun Cheon, Seoul, Damyang and, in China, at Yanji.

Today 26 Brothers and 317 remunerated Co-workers form the nucleus of the Family of Saint John of God in Korea.

The Indian Provincial Province has decided to expand its apostolic activity to the island nation of Sri Lanka. The Province has accepted an invitation of the Bishop of Badulla, Most. Rev. Julian Winston Sebastiano Fernando, to go to his diocese. This decision follows an exploratory visit earlier in the year by Provincial Brother Augustine Polaprayil (second from left), Brother Pius Manothottil (far left) and Brother Albert Thekkumkaduthadathil (far right). The initiative will follow what could be called “the East Timor” approach: two Brothers—Albert and Bino Parakkunsamy—will live in a rented house for two years at Badulla (capital of the Uva Province) in order to be close to the people and find out what their most urgent health needs are. On the basis of the Brothers’ experience the Indian Province will plan a more permanent work. As soon as the two Brothers receive their long term visas—hopefully before the end of this year—they will go to Sri Lanka.

Brother Albert Thekkumkaduthadathil is an experienced missionary and (after learning French in Paris) led the new team at Pamplemousses (Mauritius) for several years.

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