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Spiritans in Vietnam

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Spiritans in Vietnam

An Eventful Year

Pat Palmer CSSp

The past twelve months have been eventful ones for the Spiritans in Vietnam. Six more students made first profession into the Congregation in Ho Chi Minh City. A further six joined our formation programme in September bringing our student total to 30. Five students are in Manila following their course in theology to prepare for ordination to priesthood. One student is in England for his Overseas Training Programme and five more will go overseas for their training.

One of our big concerns is to build a larger house in Manila for the students. Thanks to the generosity of our benefactors and the grace of God, we hope to start the building this year, and, if sufficient funds come in, to finish it within a year.

Our General Council has recognized Taiwan/Vietnam as a Province of the Congregation — an act of faith in our future in both countries.



Fathers Trinh Le, Pat Palmer, Frederic Rossignol, and Quoc Le

Fathers Trinh Le, Frederic Rossignol, Quoc Le and I continue our work with the students and in various pastoral and charitable involvements. There is no shortage of needs to be ad-

dressed in the orphanages, with children who cannot go to school, or with people confined to hospitals or care centres. We ask for your prayers and assure you of our prayers for you and your families. ■

The Joy of the Gospel

Frederic Rossignol CSSp

At times, people say to me, "Father, you are a young and dynamic person, you like to relate with people, why don't you work in Belgium? What is the point of working as a missionary abroad when our western society is day after day becoming more secularized?"

The answer is to be found in the gospel itself. When Jesus starts his public ministry he is very successful: "Everyone is looking for you," the apostles say. But he replies, "Let's go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also."

Every Christian is by definition a missionary. A Christian cannot keep the good news to him/herself. Pope Francis tells us that we are called to communicate to others the Joy of the Gospel. At times we don't dare to pay attention to that call. We are shy, we are afraid to bother others, we want to be safe, we don't want to take risks. We forget that we are called to care for the happiness of our brothers and sisters. And since faith is a privileged way of bringing joy and peace into their hearts, it is our duty to share that faith with others.

The missionary responds to this call. He renounces a family, a job, a social network. He goes into the unknown but he does not go alone — God sends him and accompanies him wherever he goes. As missionaries we belong to a new family, we enlarge our horizons, we let ourselves be transformed by the people we reach. All this calls for effort and commitment.

Training a new generation of Vietnamese missionaries, we know that they will soon face many challenges. They will have to be capable of renouncing themselves in order to be ready to serve any kind of people in any circumstance. They will be successful if they respond joyfully to their call.

Since life and vocation are not magic, they will suffer frustrations. Some may give up. But I am sure that many of them will be happy witnesses of the joy of the gospel. Pope Francis says that "life grows by being given away and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others" (The Joy of the Gospel #10)

Let us be enthusiastic people who make life enthusiastic for others.