



# SVD CHINA PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

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願天主聖三生活在我們和眾人心中

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## A Word from the Provincial

I am writing these words two days after Easter. During the Easter Vigil Mass at our Holy Trinity Parish in Dapinglin in Taipei there were 19 baptisms of adults. That is a big number for what we are used to in Taiwan where the Church seems to be dying in many places. The following morning, on Easter Sunday, I was present and so many people were present that the hosts were not enough for all who wanted to receive Holy Communion. It is amazing how a vibrant Christian community under the leadership of a parish priest who allows the laity to participate can attract so many new people. I hope and pray that this can happen also in other places in Taiwan.

We are still far from the numbers we had in Taiwan in the early years of the 1960s. Looking at baptismal records of countryside parishes in the Chiayi area, I saw more than 200 baptisms in one year in one single parish.

Is that our goal? I don't think so. We are happy if the Church grows, and the Church should grow, but as countries' economy can't grow so fast without dangers of "overspeeding," the Church has to be careful to avoid the triumphal attitude of expecting very large numbers. In the Church of Taiwan we already suffered the consequences of an "artificial over growth." We should learn from that lesson.

I have been thinking these days of the words of Peter: "God raised Jesus from death on the third day and caused him to appear. He was not seen by all people, but only by us who are the witnesses that God has already chosen." (Act 10,40f).

W

Why was the resurrection not a world wide show? Why was it seen by so few?

Many of us could witness the arrival of the first man on the moon in 1969. I remember my father saying at that time that more amazing than the arrival itself of a man to the moon was the fact that we could see his arrival on the moon from the TV in our bedrooms. In a similar way, not so long ago we could see by TV the falling of the Twin Towers in New York on September 11, 2001. We could see 12 months ago the last days of Pope John Paul II and the beginning of the Pontificate of Benedict XVI.

Why did nobody see the resurrection of Jesus? Why were there so few witnesses of that event which is probably the most important in the history of humanity? This reminds us of the questions of Judas in the opera rock "Jesus Christ Super Star." Why did God not choose this time of Mass Media to carry out his plan of redemption?

It is certainly because it is better for us. I think that the change of the world must be done through the personal conversion of each man and woman.

Did we have a conversion in our lives because of the arrival of a man on the moon? Am I more able to love my neighbor because I saw the destruction of the Twin Towers? World wide events with mass media coverage have an impact, but usually quite superficial, not deep enough to change us from within.

Let's hope and pray that we missionaries would learn to let lay people take initiative and responsibility in sharing their personal experience of the Risen Lord.

I

It is understandable to worry about numbers. Every parish priest has to report to the Diocese every year on the number of people who were baptized, and the Diocese to the Holy See. Numbers are important, but are also dangerous; they tempt us to forget quality for the sake of quantity. Only once did the Risen Jesus appeared to 500 at the same time, and the event is not described in the Gospels. All the rest of the apparitions were to small number of disciples: one, two, at most twelve.

God wants us to have a personal experience of the Risen Lord who calls us one by one and calls us by our own name.

In big parishes the missionary has to work through the laity: only then will he be able to reach in a personal way a high number of people. In this time when people in Taiwan has access to education, many lay leaders can get a good theological training and be missionaries in their own environment. Let's hope and pray that we missionaries would learn to let lay people take initiative and responsibility in sharing their personal experience of the Risen Lord so that others could have also a similar experience. Some confreres have done that and it works, because that means letting Jesus himself work.

Happy Easter time!

Fr. Sergio Edwards SVD

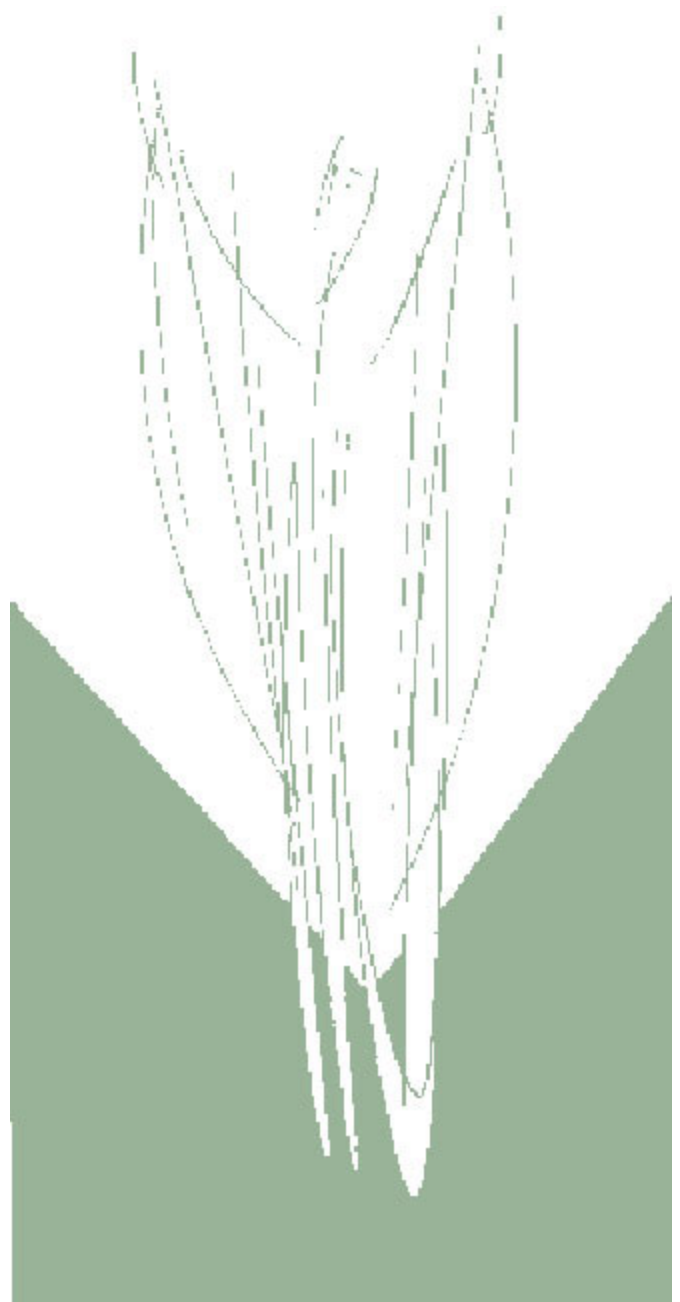
# 23 New Life in Christ.

## Alleluia

**E**aster is a season of joy, celebrating God's great love. Through Jesus' passion, death and resurrection, we experience God's redeeming love that fills our heart with hope and faith. Here in Dapinglin, Holy Trinity Parish, the joy of Easter was multiplied 23 times. Blessed by God through the concerted effort of Fr. Tarsis, parish priest together with the dedicated volunteer catechists and parishioners, 23 people were baptized. Nineteen adults during the solemn celebration of the Easter Vigil, and 4 lovely children during the festive Easter Sunday Mass were baptized.

As we rejoice and give praise to God, we continue to share the Good News Christ came to bring. The parish offers catechetical classes every Monday, Thursday and Sunday. For those who have difficulty with the set time, special arrangement is also possible. Easter brings us new life and hope, as it brings new members and growth. Alleluia! Together we continue to share and witness, that Jesus is alive!

Fr. Dennis Manzana SVD



# TASTE OF TAIWAN CHURCH

**T**his year I attended the liturgy of the Easter Triduum at St. Francis Church in Taishan. Apart from practical reasons (it is the nearest church from our Formation House), there were also pastoral reasons, because they just needed mass servers. Actually, the Franciscan Church in Taishan has quite a few altar girls and boys. They are very smart and cute, but none of them are more than 10 years old.

I liked the three-day liturgy there very much, because it was simple but meaningful. The parish choir's performance was outstanding too. The "high point" of the Triduum for me was the baptism of 5 people: 3 adults and 2 children. This was the first time in my life I witnessed such a special baptism. One of the children was sick and started to vomit during the liturgy of the Word. Fortunately, he was quite okay just when it was his turn to be baptized. After the priest poured water on his head, he smiled and at that moment all the parishioners were happy too. I think this particular baptism can be a parable. The church in Taiwan is struggling, "vomiting" to get new followers of Jesus. His followers are few, but happy when they finally find the Way.



Frt. Piotr Budkiewicz SVD

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