

# BAN KONTHIP

NEWS 2010

*The Holy Family's Mission to its friends in occasion of Christmas and New Year*

LORD God of hosts,  
how long will you frown on your people's plea?  
You have fed them with tears for their bread,  
an abundance of tears for their drink.  
You have made us the taunt of our neighbours,  
our enemies laugh us to scorn.

God of hosts, bring us back;  
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

(Psalm 79)



Faith: a light in the night

To believe means to trust someone who gives you hope above everything else

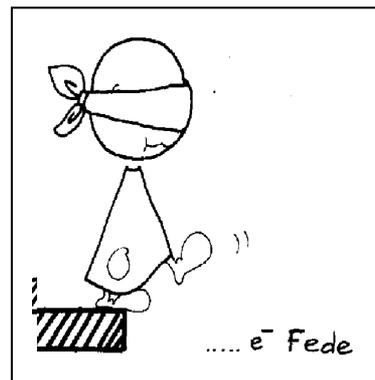
"The Father himself loves you, because you have loved Me and you have believed that I have come from God" (John 16,27)

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The life of faith, the life of the soul that loves God, the life of the devout soul consists of thinking, speaking, entirely acting according to the teachings of the faith, according to the words, the examples of Jesus, entirely for supernatural motives for faith. This needs to silence all the suggestions of human reason, of the experience, however reasonable they might be, as soon as they not only are in disagreement with the doctrine of the Catholic faith, but also with all that faith asks us to think, to say and to do. (brother Charles de Foucauld - MSE 499°)

"Do not fear, just believe"

.. We believe that Jesus can do everything and that He will grant us what we ask Him with faith: He will grant it because He is infinitely good and almighty; He will grant us even more, because He has formally promised to do so to us. He will grant us what we asked for, or He will give us something better; if He makes us wait, if we receive late or we never receive, be sure that this is for the best; that to receive late or never receive is better for us than to receive immediately ... (M.S.E., 197° Charles de Foucauld)



I used to pray and ask for something. I became impatient if I didn't get it, almost as if it was something due, just because I

asked for it.

With time I realised that often what I have, believe, might not be so, and what I asked for might not be as good as I thought...With time I have realized that God knows what is better for me... and as for things that were not granted me, really... I have been happy not to get them, with hindsight. With some things... perhaps I will never know during my life, but I am convinced that it is better this way. And so ....I began to pray in a different way.

(elle)

## DEVELOPMENTS:

**a new hall, kitchen and house for the younger children.**



On the eastern side of the hall we have built the kitchen and the attached services. Another step forward was taken this year to make life at the Centre easier and more profitable for the children. We have built a Hall, which will be used as a dining room, a classroom, a centre for the many activities of a community of 200 young people and a stage to help the children show their talents and skills. Everybody can have meals at the same time, while before we had two sittings.

We thank all those people who have supported these new buildings, and we remember those who keep on helping us, because buildings, once finished don't require anything else, but a little maintenance, whilst 200 people that eat, study, and work every day keep on consuming all the time. Although we try our best to be self-sufficient through the sale of handicraft products and articles from our workshop, it is not easy to make ends meet. But Divine Providence always seems to find generous hearts to help us.

## **Two classrooms for the small children.**

While the work was in progress for the construction of the Hall we decided to build two classrooms for the little children, so that they will be able to live and grow in an environment more suitable for them.



## **Activity of the Centre**

The main activity for our children and older girls concerns everyday life: the children attend the elementary school in the village, while the girls attend courses of non formal education at the Centre. Nowadays, the non formal education program has improved and our girls can complete their secondary education. Some of them are even courageous enough to go on to Ratchaphat University of Chiang Rai. At the same time the girls learn dressmaking and sewing.

All household duties for the community are carried out by the young people themselves.

Besides routine activities, our year is filled with events bring variety and excitement to the life of the community.

## Here are some of those events:

- **Visit of the high school students of the Lycée Français of Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.**

In February we welcomed a group of high school students from the Lycée Français de Kuala Lumpur. A group has been coming for the last eight years. This year the number increased to 20, because the Lycée has grown, so those finishing High School has increased a lot. This creates a problem for us and so this has been the last year of this project.



- **Mother's day.**

Everybody has a mother. On the evening of August 11th, the Centre came alive with the arrival of our children and of the girls' mothers. Our few orphans had the love and warmth of the Centre Director and the older girls, big sisters for them, "mothers" for the occasion. There was a welcoming party and a talent show, songs, hugs and kisses, along with tears, both from the young people and from the mothers and a lot of promises to behave well and to work hard. A beautiful day.



- **Congratulations**

Before going on holiday, we arranged for a big celebration to congratulate everyone for their success in the examinations and for completing the sewing course. There was farewell and best wishes both for the children who were starting middle school elsewhere, and for the girls who felt ready to face their future in the tailoring shops in town. Go on always with courage.



- **Channel 7 of Thai TV.**

Our large family has become point of reference for many and also for the district authorities, who send us visitors. Last August we had a visit from Thai Television. A while later a programme was broadcast on what we do and on our way of living together.



- **Visit to the villages.**

In August, we ensure Holy Mass to all the villages to celebrate the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The villages are more accessible than years back, but this year Fr. Alberto and Fr. Pornchai lived an adventure worthy of 20 years ago. They spent three days in the Doi Ngam area to visit 6 villages, 3 each. It rained the whole time. Going out of the village to return home, they spent three hours moving 50 meters on a track made impassable by the mud. We did this out thanks to the help of the people of Doingam. It was like old times.



- **Visit of the parents of Fr. Pornchai.**

Fr. Gabriel Pornchai has been with us for two years. On his birthday, his parents, who live very far away, in Mae Hong Son, the north-western province of Thailand, wanted to come and see where their son lived. They stayed with us a few days, made welcome by all of us.



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Fr. Phonchai Sukjai and our seminarians organised this marvellous experience. 157 children attended the course, among them 49 who made the first holy Communion.



**Long life to the friends of Jesus!**



## Benediction of the church of Pakia

Besides the responsibilities of the Centre, there is also pastoral work in the villages.

There are 22 the villages under our pastoral care. Their size varies from 40 families (around 200 people) to 130 families (around 600/650 people). We try to ensure they have mass every two months; in the most accessible villages we try to go once a month.

Most of the villages were founded around 30/35 years ago, while 5 only about 10 years. At the beginning a church was built in bamboo with a thatched roof. As the houses of the people improved, so the church improved too. When people are ready and ask to rebuild a church; knowing that people don't have the means to complete the work alone, we help and we begin the construction, but we ask them for a contribution of at least 20-25%.

Two years ago we built the church of Panklang, a village of 40 families. The church is dedicated to St. Matthew.

This year we have succeeded in building a church in Pakia, dedicated to the Holy Family. The images refer to this church. Pakia has 60 families. The Bishop of Chiang Mai blessed the church on April 2nd 2010. A lot of people came for the occasion from all the other villages. After the ceremony lunch was prepared for everybody according to their tradition.

In other villages there is a need to build a church: Balaa, Huaynamrin, Ban Jong, Huay Rai and others. The cost of building a church in the villages is around 10.000 Pounds. But for Huay Rai to build a new church we need at least 60.000 Pounds. It is a village of 230 families and still growing. I wonder how it will be possible to face these expenses in such difficult financial times. I am convinced however that the people will eventually have a more stable structure in which to gather and pray.



**St. Mathew's Church of Panklang**





## Benediction of the church of Ta kò de

Two years ago the Betharram Fathers decided that the moment had come to stretch themselves beyond the Diocese of Chiang Mai and accepted the invitation of the Bishop of Nakhon Sawan, to send two priests Father Peter Phairote, who had worked for 3 years at Ban Pong and Father John Baptist Arun, to the region of Mae Ta War and Mae Tan. They have worked in collaboration with a Father of the Foreign Missions in Paris (M.E.P.). On 14 May of this year a church was built under the direction of P. Peter in Ta kò de. To reach Mae Ta War from Chiang Mai takes 6 hours by car. A further six hours with a 4WD on a rough track to reach Ta kò de.



"On the evening of May 12 we went to sleep in Pa Noy Pu, where there is a centre for agriculture, created to educate to boys and girls that don't have intellectual capacity or the desire to attend a regular school.

We left early at 6 o'clock to pick up the Bishop in another village. After an hour and a half along cement path and on earth tracks, we reached the village, Ta Po Pu, and met the Bishop who had spent the night there with Fr. Arun.

A coffee and then off again. And up and down, climbing the Paper mountain, the tallest in the area; we were on top of the mountain. Once the Mhongs planted opium poppy here; perhaps why the forest has disappeared in so many places and the tops are bare. Before long the crest and a glimpse of the village: Tha ko dé.



Before proceeding to the benediction of the church devoted to S. John, apostle and evangelist, Fr. Peter Phairote read the history of the conversion of the village:

"... the people of this village were animist and linked to magic rituals to protect themselves from the spirits. In 2004, Mr. Pe boo became interested in the Christian religion and went to a Christian village, Ban Lé ko to observe how Christians lived and worshipped. Convinced of the value of the Christian religion (Catholic), he asked to enter his family and himself, instructed by a catechist. Other families followed.

In the 2007 Pe boo asked to P. Alain, M.E.P., to build a chapel to have a centre in which to pray together. They built a chapel with a bamboo structure and a roof of leaves, devoting it to S. John, apostle and evangelist.

Today, there are 15 Christian families, 75 people of which 48 are baptised and 27 are catechumens. Tha ko dé belongs to the sector of Ban Lé ko that has 13 villages and is attended by two catechists.

In 2010, because the first chapel fell down, the catechists and the people of the village with Fr. Peter Phairote, new responsible of the district, decided to build a new chapel in wood. It was started on February 9 and finished March 30th 2010, with a total expense of around 200,000 Baht (around 5.000 Euros). ..."



Mons. Joseph Phiboun Visitnontachai, Bishop of Nakhon Sawan, cut then the ribbon and blessed the church.

## CHRISTMAS reminds us the INCARNATION of Jesus, the SON of GOD

### Friend:

You should trust confidently into the arms of God.

I know people that, when they are up to their neck in trouble, turn to God.

They mouth their prayers as words, but they don't trust entirely and don't let themselves go into His arms.

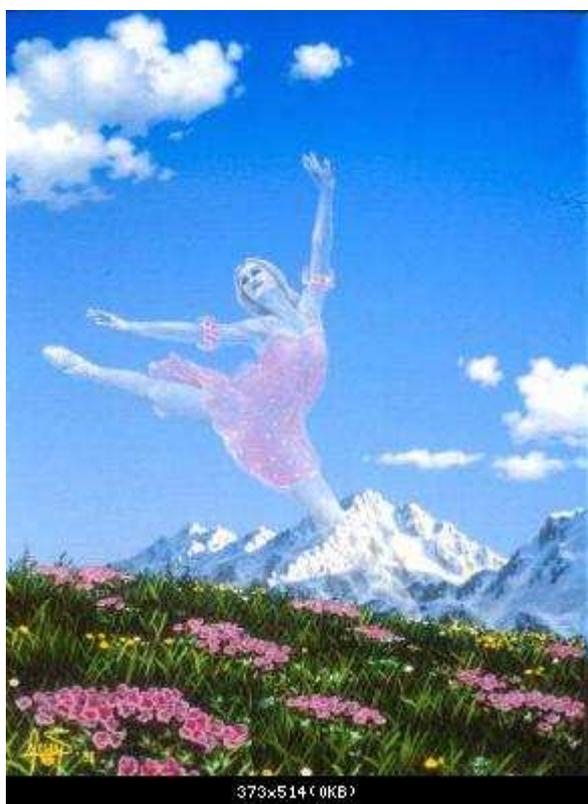
At times our life is troubled and full of doubts so we pray to God, but don't give Him the chance to act and save us;

we speak to God, yes, telling Him what He has to do.

Do you want to be a disciple, a follower?

Then put your life and your wishes in the hands of the Master:

actually, really, seriously.



...A LIFE ABANDONED IN THE ARMS OF GOD

*To be a good dancer, with you as elsewhere,  
It is not necessary  
To know where dancing leads.  
It is necessary to follow, to be lively, to be light.  
And especially not to be stiff.  
It is necessary to be like an extension  
Of you, agile and alive.  
It is not necessary to want to move forward at all cost.  
But to welcome the turn, the sidestep.  
It is necessary to know how to stop and glide instead of walk.  
But we forget the music of your spirit,  
And we make of our life a gymnastic exercise.  
We forget that, in your arms, life dances.  
If we were happy with you, Lord,  
We would be unable to resist  
this urge to dance that is sweeping the world  
And we would be able to discern  
how it is you would like us to dance,  
By following the steps of Your Providence.*

*Madeleine Delbrel*

**CHRISTMAS reminds us the INCARNATION of Jesus, the SON of GOD**

**🚩 Ban Huay Rai**

Ban Huay Rai is a big village of recent formation a few kilometres from the Centre at Ban Pong. It very quickly developed. The first chapel was in bamboo with a straw roof, a room of four meters by six, on ground of 400 square meters. It soon became much too small, and more land was purchased, around 3500 square meters. On August 13th, 2000, the new church, seen in the photo, replaced the first one; it was built in a corner, so as not to be demolished when a bigger church is built. The first photo shows the original church of Huay Rai, the other in August 2010 shows the congregation during the celebration of the Eucharist, outside and inside the church.

The people ask with insistence, but... ..do we want to lend them a hand?



or... do we leave them this way!

TO ALL FRIENDS OF OURS, MANY THANKS

Brethren: rejoice always,  
pray without ceasing,  
in everything give thanks;  
for this is the will of God.

(1 Tess, 5, 16-18)



MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND  
A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Donations to help our missions in India and Thailand should be sent to Bro Michael SCJ

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