

## Monthly Diary No 17 – Special edition - June 08

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*Quote of the Month:*

*"Life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late."*



The reason for this month's quote comes from the fact that I turned 65 since last I wrote and somehow I have to say I don't know where the years have gone and certainly feel that I could do with a lot more wisdom? The only satisfaction is that all my contemporaries seem to have the same notion, though I hasten to add that wisdom is something that is recognised in one by others and very seldom even admitted to by the one who is supposed to possess it. In the Philippines; being elderly means that one is respected and young people really do seek your advice. The whole idea of the young children seeking your blessing is also quiet moving and not part of our western culture to any large extent. Carl, Frank and I have struggled to cope with this phenomenon called "Mano Po" and parents often encourage their children to have us perform the Mano Po with them. They gently take your hand and place it on their forehead. 30% of the population here is below the age of 18 years and so old fellows like us are certainly in the minority. Grand Parents are revered and cared for by the family. Old peoples homes just don't seem to be part of the scene, certainly not where we are anyway.

### ***Holidays:***

The month of May saw me taking a very restful four weeks break back in Australia so very little local news I'm afraid. As I write this diary I can't help thinking how different the two countries are. Australia is well named as the lucky country and has so much to offer. The highlight of my break has to be the wonderful five days I had in the Kimberley hosted by Berkeley and Shane. A flight out of Broome to Gibb River was truly amazing and I have to add here it is just as well I did not go north before coming here to the Philippines last year as I feel I might have never made it to these shores. There is plenty of work to be done in our own back yard and I admire the men and women who have dedicated their lives to working with our Indigenous people. The website has a set of photos telling the story of those memorable few days in the Kimberley. The rest of the time was spent in Perth.





My first Panorama photo – Broome Cable Beach May 2008 and my first ride on Adam's Guzzi

### ***A big Thank You:***

While in Perth I arranged the official closing of Eddy's Carpentry Shop which had been serving the Perth Community for the last ten years. I started this northern Suburbs project in 1998 and though sad to see its demise, rejoice at what was able to be accomplish in such a short time for the Kids at risk in the surrounding area. The good news is that Swan Tafe are taking up from where we left off and are actually running out of the same premises and are even using all our equipment. A small sum of money was donated to the Philippines Mission by Tafe in recognition of the Brother's generosity in allowing such a smooth transition to occur. I guess I will never know just how effective the whole programme was but feel reassured in the belief that God knows. I take this opportunity to thank all our supporters - far too many to list here. May God reward them a hundred fold.

### ***Boxes:***

The last thing I attended to in Perth before returning to Hilongos involved making arrangements to send three boxes of books and bits and pieces to the Philippines. Two have already been packed and are on their way. They should arrive by the end of July. The third box is seating in Girrawheen waiting for more people to donate books that are in good condition (library books, text books and exercise books along with pencils pens and other useful classroom items). So if you want to get involved just ring Br Jim on (08) 92473657. School in Hilongos starts again in the second week of June and the whole three of us have joined the little Catholic School called St Teresas, Hilongos. Frank will teach Science and Maths, Carl will do some Christian living or Values Education, not sure what name Religious Education goes under these days, and I will get involved in Computers and teach Maths. Let's hope we can make a difference and at the same time we learn how to be brother to the kids in this very poor part of the Philippines. Thank you to Aquinas College Manning, Aranmore Catholic College Leederville and the Girrawheen Parish who went out of their way to help us fill those two boxes. Finally there is a function being arranged to raise money for our work to be held at Trinity College Perth on the 26<sup>th</sup> July. (A fun evening for \$25, just ring Terry on 93048788).

### ***From Kabankalan:***

The wet season has come with a vengeance. After a couple of weeks of occasional moderate falls, the rain really set in two nights ago and it is raining steadily as I write. This morning John and Neil crossed the Ilog river which flows beside the small city of Kabankalan. They needed a small boat to access the steps leading up to the foot bridge. Rod contented himself with seeing that, and then headed for the road bridge further out of town. The river was quite a sight. A section of an older bridge downstream has disappeared. The river narrows at this point. The flood waters were surging through. Not even Horatius could have swum across! The town of Ilog near the coast could well be flooded by now. We checked the land we have recently purchased for our new house. No flooding! Alleluia! Not far away though a major drain was backed up causing water to flood the road. Parts of the market area roads were flooded too.

Our schools are gearing up for the new school year in June, with most commencing enrolments next week. Teachers undertake quite a number of seminars during the long holiday break. We have coordinated two – one last week and one next in Religious Education, and Peter Hardiman, supported by two Filipino teachers will present a third in the first week of June.



John Moodie and Neil Langan are preparing a new venture for high school aged kids who have dropped out of school. They will use materials from the Education Department's Alternative Learning Scheme. Yesterday they finally got to see the modules. There are about 250 and most of these are in Filipino (Tagalog based) which of course they will not be able to present. The two employed teachers, Angie ... and Dina ... will have to teach these. There are about 40 units in English, in the subjects English and Maths, but grammar and fractions and the like don't get a Guernsey. As the title indicates, the program has different aims and processes from those of formal education. It will be an interesting experience for them. Coordination and keeping the show on the road will take up much of their time anyway. Rod.

***Until next time - PXT***