

## Monthly Diary No18 - June 30

REGISTERED NAME: Edmund Rice Brothers, The Philippines, Inc.

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*Quote of the Month:*

*"Man who lives in glass house should change clothes in basement"*



I was thinking of the saying so well known "He who lives in a glass house should not throw stones" which makes me much less likely to criticise anyone these days but the above beauty had me even more cautious. It is so easy to be critical of some things that go on here in the Philippines. Frank and I have now reunited with Carl after our Annual four weeks holiday spent at home. Carl will make his well earned departure in July to synchronise with the Pope's Youth Congress visit. (I think he qualifies as he is young at heart) We are still on Tourist Visas here which has its draw backs. Firstly we are obliged to exit the country every 12 months (not a hardship) and pay an exit and entry tax as we go and come. (Not a bad money earner for the Government) We also need to renew our visas every two months which is quite expensive and time consuming. We are in the process of trying to acquire a missionary Visa which may make things a little easier for us. This requires going to Cebu, a five hour Ferry ride, and using the services of a travel agent who knows the ropes. They say it will take a few months before anything can be finalised as Government departments grind slowly in the Philippines.

### ***Celebration time:***

In the last week we have celebrated our own Barangay Fiesta and the 110<sup>th</sup> Philippine Independence Day. Some photos do help tell the story. (Website) Filipinos certainly know



how to celebrate. The programme started with the flag ceremony outside the Mayor's Office, which by the way is the grandest building in Hilongos, and a prayer from our local Parish Priest and after all the speeches they finished with some delightful Cultural dancing provided by the young people of Hilongos. We even had the Governor of Leyte at our little Barangay celebrations. (Elections soon) This special day, up till 1962, was celebrated on the 4<sup>th</sup> of

July which is Americas' Day of Independence, but America did not give them the freedom promised and in fact the Filipino people were ruled and controlled by the American Congress on many important aspects of their lives for many years. For this reason The

Philippines now celebrate on the 12<sup>th</sup> June, the day they gained independence from Spain after 300 years of Colonial Rule.

***Start of School Year June 10<sup>th</sup>:***

School is finally up and running. We have survived the first week though Schools here don't run quite as efficiently as ours do at home I'm afraid. We go from Kindergarten up to 4th year, some 400 students. This is a fee paying School unlike the Government Schools, so it is battling a little. One class room is incomplete and from what I have heard will stay half built for some time yet. Would you believe it my 1<sup>st</sup>



Year class scored it. At least it's got a roof so I should not complain. You look out the gap in the wall down on some shanty dwellings and plenty of basura. (No don't ask) No windows and no doors at least it will encourage any breezes to grace our gathering, though this time of year there seems precious little of them. (How does it compare with the classroom I had at Aquinas in the 80s over looking Aquinas bay I hear you ask? Please don't ask) No lights or power just makes the atmosphere very cosy indeed. (My prayer is for a fan) This is supposed to be the wet season but we have had very little rain so far and what we have had seems to come quite heavy and go very quickly. (A little strange) The weather has been hot and muggy most days but I hasten to add not oppressively so. Frank is teaching upper School Science and RE while Carl, respecting his advanced years, has a handful of RE classes only, though I see he is also the assistant to the counsellor. He also takes upon himself to visit every elementary class once a week. I am teaching Maths in lower secondary, Computers and of course RE. Frank has just been appointed Assistant Principal. (I am not sure what he has got himself into here but he has enough on his plate I would have thought teaching six hours a day and this is supposed to be part time. Ha!) Thanks to the generosity of my friends in WA and some funds left over from the now closed *Eddy's Carpentry Shop*, I am in the process of upgrading all the computers in the School. Yes we are enjoying teaching here at St Teresa and are in high spirits even if it is hard going. Edmund is watching over our endeavours.

***A little extract from Carl's diary:***

Day 290. (Numbers of days in the Philippines) After attending the 8am Mass I travelled to Maasin (an hour journey) to withdraw our monthly rent money from the Bank. The Minivan (A generous description) I travelled in had not only 14 passengers and 3 extra standing outside on the running board but also had 6 large bags of vegetables, coconuts, bananas etc. crammed in with us. I was sitting surrounded by all these goods. This was a memorable trip and it only cost me P40. (\$1.00) The point however I would like to make is, that this is the way the poor people travel every day with no complaint and seem to be happy despite their discomfort. I was impressed to see the way they helped each other as

more people joined us or alight on arrival at their destinations. For this reason I was quite happy to experience this small discomfort in solidarity with them.

### ***Kabankalan Community:***

In Kabankalan, John and Neil have opened two classes in an existing Department of Education, Alternative Learning System. They worked hard to come to an understanding of what is involved. Two teachers are employed but there have been many problems to resolve. The first of these is the maths involved in 55 enrollees. On day one 38 of those enrolled arrived plus 16 not enrolled. On day 2 there were 50 and day 3, 54. Making things interesting. John had 60 desk chairs ready. The 'student' ages range from 16 to 28! Discipline must resemble the first week that Edmund Rice had to cope with! It will be an interesting ride ahead.

Meanwhile about 20 children have been assisted to return to Elementary (Primary) School. That is a major achievement and will change the lives of these kids. John's other projects assisting young people to enrol in post school vocational courses continues.

Peter has doubled his Theology teaching at Kabankalan Catholic College and is coaching Grade 5 and 6 pupils in guitar learning as well. So he is at the College most days. The Theology classes take significant preparation time as well. As house bursar Peter does an unsung task that is quite time consuming as we live in an almost totally cash economy.

Rod has had a hand in the appointment by the Bishop of seven new Principals. Problems in one school appear largely resolved while in another, a major sixty year-old wooden building in a poor state, together with relational problems between key personnel in the school, has taken a considerable amount of his time. The school has opened with a full faculty and an almost full enrolment, but some situations remain to be resolved. Across the diocese the schools have generally had a smooth beginning to the School Year which runs from early June to the end of March.

Meanwhile a start has been made on our new house. Pegging out began on June 10<sup>th</sup>. We have hopes of occupying the housing in October. Finally, I am off to the Chapter in the next few days so keep us all in your prayers at this important time for the New Oceania Province.

Rod.

Till next time Peter T – Hilongos Leyte

