

Greetings to all from Hilongos, Leyte - The Philippines

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

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www.peterthrupp.com

Quote of the Month:

"There is one defect a good Judge has in common with a bad judge: He judges"



This quote was given by the Master in response to a disciple's boast that he was a good judge of character. Lately I have had to work very hard indeed to follow Jesus' wisdom "Judge not and you will not be judged" There is a mini crises in our little School of St Teresa and it revolves round the teachers being very poorly paid. A third of what their cousins down in the road get, namely the State School teachers. Unfortunately the director handed out the fortnightly pay packs today and the teachers found the package even lighter than last month's payment by some P1000, so three teachers threatened to resign on the spot and who would blame them. I heard that the school lost nine teachers in one day last year so it is a problem that existed well before we arrived. Now with three extra unpaid teachers entering the fray (we brothers) I would have thought the same cake would have allowed the share to increase not decrease. So this state of affairs left me not a little puzzled to say the least. My reaction was to judge the Director. (Not a good stand for a foreigner to take I grant you) Anyway the interesting thing is just last week because things were so bad we Brothers agreed to pay all the staff a little bonus (P500) just to encourage them to continue their good work of teaching the kids and they are good at what they do, believe me. Now we are discussing whether we should actually subsidise their pay rather than give them a bonus occasionally. We need to tread carefully here as we may not be solving the problem by just stepping in whenever there is a crisis. Frank is the level head here so I am leaving the solution in his hands as I would have acted immediately just to maintain the status quo. I tend to act first and think about it later. I hate the idea of losing anyone. It's simply a matter of justice as far as I can see but the Director chooses to see it only as a matter of economics.

Now let's touch on another bit of news for the sake of those generous souls who filled my pockets with some loose change to bring back with me after my May break in Perth and to spend as I sought fit. We have been in Hilongos for about four months now and are certainly accepted even if we are not part of the furniture yet. The first big task I gave myself was to prepare a professional report on the general condition of the School facilities and come up with a strategic plan to put those things in place that needed to be put in place and those things that needed to be repaired have them repaired. A priority system was suggested as

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the list got quite large and the many individual tasks were divided into three distinct phases, each phase being given a time line for completion. Money was a problem of course so I poured all my donated cash into this project. \$3000 has already been spent and a lot more is needed if we are to complete the three phases by the end of March 2009. Frank being the wise one here has suggested a 50 /50 partnership which would allow our money to go much further. Unfortunately the School doesn't seem to be able to keep up their %50 as cash is hard to come by so things are slowing down a bit. However things have been done and we are more than satisfied with the progress. Whiteboards in every secondary class have been put in place, WCs have been upgraded, three Payags (small outdoor shelters) to protect the students from the fierce heat at recess time have been built, we have also employed an electrician to fix the all the electrical faults on the School property and of course my pet project the upgrading the computer room. So now you know where your money was spent. None of the classrooms have windows or doors except Bro Frank's Science room of course so that may well be the next item on the agenda. Then of course we have my 1st year classroom which has a temporary roof and once again no doors or windows and certainly no lights or power. All the classrooms are flooded after each typhoon so maybe doors and windows may solve this one. I found out we may need about \$150,000 to complete the unfinished classroom which was placed in phase three of the overall project so this will have to wait for some future money drive. Watch this space.

Three large boxes of books arrived last week and the librarian is a happy vegemite so we now wait for Jim van der Zalm's forth box which should arrive in a couple of weeks time hopefully. Thanks to the Girrawheen Parish and some of our own Schools in Perth for this lot. Bindoon Catholic College also arranged a box of books, cloths and some soft toys to be sent and they arrived in one piece and have been distributed, so thanks Frank Donough and School community up there in Bindoon. I have asked Frank to see if he can arrange to send us a set of 40 Good news bibles as they don't even have these in the school so if there is anyone who can help on this one please ring Frank in Bindoon. The other expense which I covered with my fast dwindling fund was buying 10 Mathematics text books for those in my 1st year classes who could not afford to buy them due to the poverty which seems to pervade all society here in the Philippines. Now everyone in my class has a math book. I have not a bottomless pit so I guess I will run out of money soon but at least no one can accuse me of hoarding the stuff Ha! I leave this paragraph hoping that someone at home can come up with a strategy for raising monies for the completion of the unfinished classroom.

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Last weekend I went down with some mysterious chest infection and it really did knock the stuffing out of me. I am back at School but only running on four cylinders (usually I need to run on six to be effective) so let's hope things improve soon. The latest piece of fun writing went into the website under amusing musing this week so if you want a laugh go for it. There are three such articles in the home page tab now. Carl will return on August 13th so we certainly are looking forward to his return as he is solely missed and not only by Frank and I but the whole Hilongos community.