

**Greetings to all from The Philippines - Hilongos and Kabankalan**

**Monthly Diary No21 - August 31st 2008 -**

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

**For more photos and reflections go to our website:**

**[www.peterthrupp.com](http://www.peterthrupp.com)**

*Quote of the Month:*

*"A happy and joyful disposition can be attributed to the learnt gift of seeing goodness and beauty everywhere" from the Master*



**Health:**

Well as much as I hate to admit it I am still struggling health wise but never the less as happy as a cherry on a sound young tree. (Don't try to interpret that apart from reading the quote above which just might help) I go to the clinic nearly every day in the hope of getting a little relief from this voice box problem; (nebulizer treatment). Basically I keep losing my voice which is not very helpful when you are trying to teach. The Doctor has put me on four monster disgusting brown tablets which I am to take each morning, which is quite a drama as they don't go down easily. She assures me they will solve the problem provided I talk a little less. My friends in Australia may well laugh as they know only too well of my inability to say just a few words when a few more can be said, but I have promised to try. Frank is fighting fit and is slowly getting more and more involved in School administration, though his first priority is still with his 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years. Carl is just back from six weeks holiday in Sydney, so he is really ready to go. He says he did get to see the Pope, but try as we did, we were unable to find him in the crowd, though I would have to admit, that was a tall order, since there were up to half a million people. Frank and I enjoyed the Pope's Mass together on Cable. I have told the Doctora to keep her report brief when interviewing Bro Vincent as I have no intention of quitting just because I have a little voice box problem. It will be sorted believe me folks.

**Kauban:**

Let me tell you very briefly about a wonderful custom here in the Philippines. When one goes to hospital one must have a retainer (Someone who looks after your every need and usually the same gender and a family member of the patient) this person is called a Kauban. Well the both times I have been in hospital I was unable to have a brother attend me as that would be too opulent and anyway, brothers though they be, they did not volunteer either as they are expected to stay with the patient 24 hours of the day which would be an awful waste of resources I would think. So here in Hilongos Doctora gave me one of her lads, Christian, who

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was a perfect Kauban in every way and I must say at one stage one hand was swollen like a balloon (accident with the drip earlier) and the other was anchored to the drip so I was helpless as a child. He showered me and feed me and cared for me with such compassion and discretion I was quite amazed. He was taken in by Doctora about a year ago when he found himself on the streets as it were. He works at the clinic during the week and goes to night School so he can finish his secondary levels. Doctora pays him a small wage and looks after all his expenses. Jerome is the other lad who works around the clinic and he was taken in also. They are both 20+ and have a delightful disposition, but maybe all Filipino people have this anyway. Jerome assisted me by giving Christian a break occasionally. I thank Doctora for these two angels who were devoted to me like I was family. Wonderful experience all together. Praise the Lord for such unexpected gifts. The only trouble you can get quite attached to these people so the weaning process is going to be difficult.

### ***The Bishop celebrates his Birthday:***

We made our way down to Maasin to spend the morning helping our Bishop Precious Cantillas celebrate his 55<sup>th</sup> birthday and it started appropriately with a Mass in the great St Joseph's open space. Some 2000 students joined us and it made for a splendid sight. The singing was heavenly. Then we all moved to the magnificent Gym where a concert was presented to the Bishop. We three were in an honored place on the Dias, which was a little embarrassing as we wanted to move back to Hilongos before the Lunch started .We all had afternoon classes which Frank believes we should try very hard to attend for the sake of the kids. What really impressed me was the Police Academy presentation, (Criminology Department) which is part of the College programme. The four platoons (Boys and Girls) performed drill which would have done the American Marines proud. Very professional display, though I did notice their guns were made of wood, so there was something a little artificial about it, though no less enjoyable. St Joseph's College is the flag ship of the Diocese so money does not seem to be a problem unlike our little School up at Hilongos. However, now we share the same President (the Bishop) and Director (Mam Berdin), things may well improve, though I won't be holding my breath on this one. Fr Van, our original Director, resigned causing Mam Berdin to step into the position. Life at the School is good and we have only lost one staff member so things are improving slowly. We also went down to Maasin the following week for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Diocese. Archbishop Joseph Adams, our Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, graced us with his presence. He said that there are 95 Papal representatives around the world. (Some new photos on the website)

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### ***Our Province Leader:***

I popped over to Cebu to meet both Vincent and Carl at the airport a few days ago and after a late lunch at the Presentation Sisters in Cebu and a quiet afternoon together, the three of us set off for Hilongos on the 9pm Ferry arriving about 3am the following morning. I gave up my little room and set up a bed near our Chapel so we could have as much time as possible with him. I think Vin was quietly impressed with the banner Doctora and the Hilongos community arranged for him at the entrance to our little Barangay. Hilongos likes to do things right if they can and there is a great community spirit here. Two days followed, which must have been tough for Vin, as everyone, including the Bishop, wanted to meet him. We kept the official welcome down to one and of course a School assembly which went well. The Kids have been preparing for this for weeks. I had just finished doing a Religious Knowledge Week on Edmund Rice with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years so they were certainly primed up. (If anyone would like to send over some copies of that wonderful story booklet which was produced in comic form on the life of Edmund that would certainly help us get this great man known here in the Philippines)

### ***Kabankalan:***

Knowing that some of the readers of Thruppy's 'Diary' were involved in the fund-raiser organized by Mimia and Terry Gee in Perth last month, I want to take this opportunity to thank all involved in any way – those who did the work, those who attended and others who supported us financially. Word from Melbourne during the week has us expecting just under A\$8000 to reach our account in the coming week. Half will promptly be forwarded to Hilongos. Thank you all so much. It is very welcome and will be well used.

John Moodie returned to us Wednesday. He and Carl travelled together as far as Manila. He was straight into a flurry of activity in preparation for visits by Nudgee College who arrived August 16 and later visits due by Aquinas College from Perth and CBC Adelaide next month. John has left the 99 in the safe care of Neil – meaning his Alternative Learning System – while he looks after the Aussie visitors. He will be tied up with them for the next few days.

We had a quite wonderful evening on 15<sup>th</sup> August. On Neil's suggestion we had spent time over the month leading up to the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Edmund's first vows, in sometime reflection. Peter put together a beautiful liturgical celebration which was attended by 10 Presentation Sisters. The high point was both groups renewing our vows. We then repaired to a nearby restaurant for a happy meal together.

Our new houses are making good progress. The architect/builder was here today together with the roofing sub-contractor. Roof trusses are in place; purlins are being fitted. We

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should see roof cladding beginning to go on in about a week. One good aspect of the house building is that this is the off season for sugar workers, and is widely recognized as a period of hardship for unskilled labourers. The work our house is providing is quite a boon to many of these. Work processes here are quite labor intensive. The men don't seem to mind. It gives them an income they were perhaps not expecting at this time.

We have had a spate of expensive losses – Peter, John and Rod have all had to replace mobile phones recently. John's was last seen in Sydney. Peter doesn't know whether his was stolen or left on the bus. Going to sleep on the journey to Bacolod is easy to do but there are some hazards. Rod's was blatantly stolen on a jeepney in Bacolod. We are all vowing greater care. Perhaps it is a sign of the aging process!

Otherwise we are all well here – keeping busy but trying to keep a balance in our lives. There is plenty of rain at this time of the year. It was a little disconcerting today when the heavy rain penetrated my bedroom; a job for a local tradesman coming up.

Greetings to all our friends and supporters.

Rod



The banner was well done and did surprise Vincent a little.

I made a dash back to Cebu to see Vin off last weekend and to purchase a computer for Doctora. I also enjoyed a quiet couple of days with the Presentation Sisters in Cebu who have decided to adopt us any time we visit their city. The three of us are now back together again and ready to tough out the last two weeks of the first semester. (Not sure what else to call it) We did recognize the 15<sup>th</sup> of August with the renewal of our vows and a little sharing which was great but as Dean is to make the official visitation latter in the year, Vin was able to relax a little with us and seemed to enjoy the easy life style we offered him.

Till next time from Br Peter T - Hilongos