

Bimonthly Diary No29 – July 1st 2009 -

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

Our website: <http://www.peterthrupp.com/>

Quote of the Month:

"One touch of Nature makes the whole World kin."

William Shakespeare



Peter T: A touch of Nature can help in meditation. I am heading for Mt Archer next month and should find a little of that there. I have been appointed to this Community till at least Christmas. I look forward to a little down time plus a retreat and some ongoing Spiritual Direction. Maybe I can find a little work to do on the property while I'm there. The Doctors have given me the all clear so I head for Queensland on August the 12th. We wish Denis and Paul all the best as they have just arrived at Hilongos. They arrived on the 30th of June and plan to stay till Christmas though that does not rule out a possible longer stay in the future

Kabankalan News: Laurie Collins arrived amid much joy on Sunday June 14. Joe and Anne Stynes had been to Manila to check out dictionaries and fiction works in what I think is the best outlet in the country, National Book Store. They have an excellent range and we were keen to find authors that are both attractive to the students and culturally close. They came back with 56 books and a set of dictionaries, very user friendly. We thought this a good way to spend some of the money our supporters have been raising. We expect follow up purchases will be possible soon. So they came down from Manila with Laurie. Also a good friend who has been a Lay Missionary with the Philippines Lay Missionary Society, a Filipino group, was coming home the same day. Her name is Gigi Tropa. She is planning to marry soon. We were able to offer her a position working with John Moodie. She was delighted and so are we. Peter Hardiman, who had been with us for a few days came to Bacolod to greet Laurie, et al. We had a happy gathering for lunch at a pizza parlour and then the two hour trip home was much more convivial than is often the case.

Peter has been very warmly welcomed back by his many friends and admirers. It has been a happy time for him I think. There were jobs he had no time in March to complete, related to his teaching courses, which he is now working at, to leave a good record for future teachers of those units. I hope to get such mundane things as signatures at the bank straightened out also this coming week.

Laurie has found many adjustments to be made as he settles in but will be a big help to KCC and to our community. The first set back was that a course he had spent time preparing was re-allocated to another teacher. The decision was related to the need to satisfy the Commission for Higher Education, and to the short-term nature of Laurie's commitment here. So he is teaching two units at Kabankalan Catholic College instead of the three he expected. In the short term that will make life a little easier for him as there is a lot of catch up reading involved, especially in the unit on Filipino Church History.

He is really starting from scratch. Longer term I can see Laurie having a little time for other contributions which I think may prove very valuable to us.

John Moodie is in Australia taking his holiday. He worked very hard with the assistance of Angie Garares before he went preparing children for a return to school – that is children who had dropped out for some time. The number of elementary children he now sponsors has risen from 20 to about 45 and there are a few at high school level. We are monitoring closely, needs versus resources. John will be back on July 18.

Classes generally began in the Philippines on June 8. Colleges were immediately closed for a week ostensibly because of the A (H1N1) scare. Strangely no one seemed to think kids at high school or elementary school, were in danger! The Nation's Congress has made a very controversial decision relating to constitutional change. Protests were planned around the country for June 10. Some commentators have unkindly suggested the closure of colleges and universities might have had more to do with closing off a potential supply of marchers than with swine flu – swine of a different hue, perhaps!

Rod met with 18 of the 19 high school principals last Wednesday. The “Let's Say it in English” project - related matters, took up about half of the meeting time. It looks like the project is going to make an impact – we hope so anyway. Joe and Anne are putting in a huge effort and are very professionally in their work. Bp Buzon will come to dinner on Tuesday specifically to thank them for the work they are doing. Our continued and sincere thanks to all our friends and supporters out there.

John, Anne, Joe, Laurie and Rod (and for another 9 or 10 days, Peter H)

Hilongos News: The new school year in Hilongos is up and running. At St. Teresa's some things appear to be better organised than last year, although there are still frustrations caused by what we from Australia and New Zealand would classify as lack of planning and poor communications. The good news is that the Year Eight classroom that had been left in an unfinished state for the last two years, is being worked on. Classes cannot use it at the moment, as workmen are still busy with concreting, reinforcing, etc. It should be completed by the end of the first week of July. At present, the Brothers have not assisted financially with the renovation of this classroom, but this could well change. However, it is good to see that progress can be made.

There is a total now of some 28 students at five different schools who have been financially assisted by the Brothers to enroll in school this year just begun. About 20 are attending Government Schools (mostly elementary, but 2 at High School), so no fees need to be paid out, but uniforms, school exercise books, school bags, stationery, etc are bought for them. The other 8 are attending the Private Schools, St. Teresa's and MLG, so School fees and textbooks have to be paid for, as well as the other requirements. So far all appears to be going well, with a very satisfactory attendance rate. We hope that this continues.

Until next time Peter T