



A Word From The Provincial

“If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation”

This is the title of the message of Pope Benedict XVI on the occasion of the Word Day of Peace, January 1, 2010. If you haven't done so already, I suggest you download a copy and read it (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/peace/index_en.htm).

Growing up during the period when the United States and the Soviet Union had enough nuclear weapons to mutually destroy each other and probably much of the sentient life in this world, we used to ask our professors a theological question: Would God allow the human race to destroy itself? There is no doubt that God allows human persons in their freedom to wield almost immeasurable harm on other members of the species. But would God allow us to destroy our planet and in the process destroy ourselves? I don't know the answer. But I do know that the question is again being raised again not in the context of nuclear war but in the context of gradual environmental degradation and the resultant conflicts that will arise in its wake. Again I don't know the future but even the fact that the question is being raised should alert us that something has to change.



“Our first parents in the Garden of Eden were vegetarians. Human kind is not only to be the master of the material world, but also its steward and guardian.”

My students in classes in professional ethics used to bring moves to class – tsunamis inundating Manhattan, rising waters flooding most of the planet, un-controllable desertification, gargantuan tornadoes and other scenarios. But these movies are in a distorted way wrongly comforting. We know it’s a story. We know it probably will not happen in the dramatic way pictured. And so we don’t worry. The doomsday prophets obviously have it all wrong. What we miss is that environmental degradation is getting worse, and, as the title of Pope Benedict’s New Year’s message indicates, the environmental problems will lead to violence and conflicts both within nations and among nations. The danger is not a once-and-for-all cataclysm as is often portrayed in the movies. The danger is a downward spiral of environmental degradation, conflicts among peoples and nations and more environmental destruction. “If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation” What can we do?

The first thing to realize is that we cannot go backwards. While there may be prophets and romantics who return to the simple ways of earlier times, for most of us auto and air travel, air conditioning, 24 hour electricity and hot water will remain part of our life style. If we cannot go backwards, then the same science and technology that brought us these conveniences, as well as this crisis, will also have to help us work our way out of this situation.

But the need for technological solutions will not obviate the need for life-style changes. Those of us living more affluent life styles (and this includes essentially all of us in the China Province) cannot continue to live as we have in the past. Things are going to change and human persons as individuals and as communities are going to have to make hard decisions. What is also becoming clear is that the accumulated wisdom of our religious traditions will have a fundamental role to play. So the first question we have to ask ourselves as Christians and as Divine Word Missionaries is how to bring our Catholic faith to bear on the issues of environmental degradation?

While some have blamed the Abrahamic traditions and Christianity in particular for the ruthless exploitation of our planet, there are also ample resources in the Christian tradition to help us to turn things around. “God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good” (Genesis 1:31).

Our first parents in the Garden of Eden were vegetarians. Human kind is not only to be the master of the material world, but also its steward and guardian.



Many would argue that the great traditions of China have something to teach us about our place in the cosmos. I am currently reviewing the book *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans* (Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthong editors, Harvard U. Press, 1998). There are rich resources for the environmental movement in Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism.

But we have to begin to make the small changes that add up when they are undertaken by the billions of fellow human beings with whom we share this planet. Recycling is quite advanced in some areas of the province and quite dismally absent in others. A simple frugality in the use of things – from air-conditioning to electronic gadgets, from packaging to modes of transport – can make a difference. Taiwan has a growing tradition of vegetarianism – whether for religious, economic or health reasons. Cutting down in consumption of meat can help the planet and improve our health.

These simple measures may seem out of proportion to the crisis which I suggested in the first paragraphs. But we have to start somewhere and simple life-style changes can prepare us for the larger ones which may be necessary in the future. We also have to become more socially and politically savvy. The SVD and many other groups have added “integrity of creation” to the titles of the groups working for justice and peace. It is up to us to make “integrity of creation” a basic component in our thinking.

Ultimately I am suggesting that there has to be a conversion, a *metanoia*, a change of direction. **Ecological concerns have to become part of our prayer and meditation. There will have to be appropriate life-style changes. Our teaching, preaching and spiritual direction all should mirror this new direction in our individual and community lives. There are prophets among us who are quite pessimistic about the future of the human community on this planet. Others are more cautiously optimistic. At this point we simply do not know the future.** But not knowing is not a reason to stand on the side lines. We have become part of the solution. “If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation”

Frank Budenholzer, SVD



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he had made, and he found
it very good”
(Genesis 1:31).*

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND AND OTHER ESTIMATES

By: Brian Lawless SVD

For the friends of Deacon Lin Ruo-wang who live in the North of Taiwan, Saturday 17th April began somewhat earlier than usual; three am to be precise. Not a happy hour to be climbing aboard a coach for the long journey to Pingdong where Deacon Lin would metamorphose to Father Lin in an ordination ceremony scheduled to begin at 10am. Estimated travel time was a subject of much discussion. Only one thing was agreed upon: three am was not the time to leave. Those of a more nervous disposition felt it was too late. Those blessed with a relaxed attitude felt it was too early. Three am was fair in that it favoured neither one side nor the other. Those of us domiciled in the South of Taiwan were scheduled to depart at the more civilized hour of seven am, but that stretched to seven thirty as we waited for the most attitudinally relaxed passenger to arrive. By strange coincidence, our moment of departure from Chiayi coincided with the arrival of the Taipei contingent in Pingdong. With two and a half hours to kill, they went for a bit of sightseeing and then took the coach for a wash, arriving clean and shiny at the National Nei- Pu Senior Agricultural-Industrial Vocational High School, hereafter referred to as “the venue”, for obvious reasons.



About two months earlier, in Chiayi Mission House, we had held the first planning meeting for the ordination. At that point, the most urgent item on the agenda was the invitations. We needed to get them out at least six weeks in advance. Depending on how many replies we received, we could then plan the meal. Based on previous experience, I estimated we would need to prepare food for five hundred people.



Most of the preparation would be done at local level by the parish council, so for the next meeting we travelled to Ping-dong and experienced first hand the dynamics of a Paiwan Parish Council meeting. It was emphatically chaired by the council leader who brooked no repetition, rambling or deviations from protocol, but even he was eventually reduced to silence by an almighty shower of rain which hammered down at 110dB on the tin roof of the meeting hall.

The main question was the feeding of the multitude, the estimated number of which had now swelled to five thousand. Both sides of the political divide agreed that the local caterers would not know what a buffet was if it hopped up and bonked them on the nose, so lunch boxes it was to be – five thousand would be no problem according to the chairman, accustomed as he was to feeding the masses at political rallies. Someone suggested soup, at which point the discussion became somewhat heated with regards to preferred flavour. Finally, there was the matter of roast pigs, upon which there was

Parents of Fr. Lin Ruo-Wang

harmonious and unanimous political consensus that three would be better than two. So it was with great expectations that we alighted from the coach at the expansive front gates of the venue at nine am on a balmy Saturday morning. We took a short walk along the tree-lined main avenue of the campus, then a sharp left turn towards the auditorium where we were confronted with a riot of colour and activity. The avenue was lined with gaily decorated stalls, deep fried delicacies at the perimeter, then (hopefully unrelated) pet mice, hamsters and rabbits, various handicrafts and souvenirs, and finally a long line of stalls selling religious paraphernalia. To add to the spectacle, a procession of smiling Paiwan and T'chou aboriginals in traditional finery browsed the offerings as they edged their way to the auditorium, while the shutterbugs snapped away in ecstatic frenzy.

Sappy Confreres



Fr. Frank, Rou-wang and Fr. Rector

As the designated hour drew near, three deacons, eighty priests, two bishops, an archbishop and a cardinal processed to the main door, where each unhatted celebrant was topped with a traditional wreath of fern and berries, which, combined with the white alb, gave one confrere an uncanny resemblance to Nero, while another brought Bacchus to mind. The huge auditorium was packed to the hilt. On the stage, the massively carved altar and lectern designated the sacred space. Behind the celebrants giant carved eagle feathers and orchid festooned branches provided the backdrop; the forestage a cascade of floral

bouquets. The combined effect gave a very strong sense that this was a special place and a special time. Down below, at floor level, the parents and family of Deacon Lin Ruo-wang took pride of place in the front row. Mr. Lin looked resplendent in his Sunday best, a cowrie fringed red waistcoat and wild boar skin head-dress with a crest of impressive looking tusks. Beside him, Mrs Lin in traditional Paiwan black, glowed with pride and fought back the tears as she watched her son being called forward to take his place in front of Cardinal Shen. Readings were read and songs were sung. Then readings were sung and a litany chanted. The assembled priests filed solemnly up the steps to the sanctuary to lay their hands on the head of the new priest in sacerdotal solidarity.

When the parents were called to the front of the altar to assist the new priest in donning his vestments for the first time, the floodgates finally opened. It was a very moving moment and the whole auditorium rustled to the sound of ladies opening tissues packs to dab the tears while the men surreptitiously scratched damp itches at the corner of the eye.

The music and singing were heavenly, alternating between languages and styles. Under the competent direction of master of ceremonies, Jenny Pu of the Tchou tribe, the ceremonials marched onward with smooth and measured step, taking in some mercifully short thanksgiving speeches before culminating in the solemn blessing.

Next came the feeding of the multitude. As it happened, only one thousand nine hundred people replied to the invitation sent out some weeks earlier. Using a formula devised by the ancient Greeks for such occasions, we multiplied the number of confirmations by pi over 2 ($\pi/2$) and ordered three thousand lunch boxes, including one hundred vegetarian boxes. After everyone had eaten their fill, the leftovers were gathered up and amounted to about two hundred

alternating between the Paiwan and Tchou tribes. Towards the end, Fr. Lin Ruowang was called to the stage along with his parents who were presented with a bouquet of flowers each by Fr. Frank Budenholzer and Fr. James Huang. By two o'clock in the afternoon, the last of the dancing troupes had danced their tributes and we made our way back to the coaches for the journey home.

As the procession of coaches left the venue, quite a few were seen to turn south rather than north. For many, it seems, the prospect of missing a visit to the town of Wen Ruan, famous for its pig's foot delicacy, was more than they could bear.

Overwhelmingly carnivorous indeed.



and fifty lunch boxes, including ninety vegetarian boxes. Catholics are clearly overwhelmingly carnivorous.

No aboriginal celebration would be complete without dancing, so as lunchboxes and softdrinks were being consumed, the assembly was treated to a series of dance performances,

Aunties of Lin-Rou-wang





SVD Hongkong-Macau Profile

Fr. Johnson's Ordination

Final Vows of
Frt. James Ho Ngo,
Lu Vien (胡吳,侶圓)
and
Frt. John Le, Van Ba
(黎文柏)



Rev. Regie's Ordination