

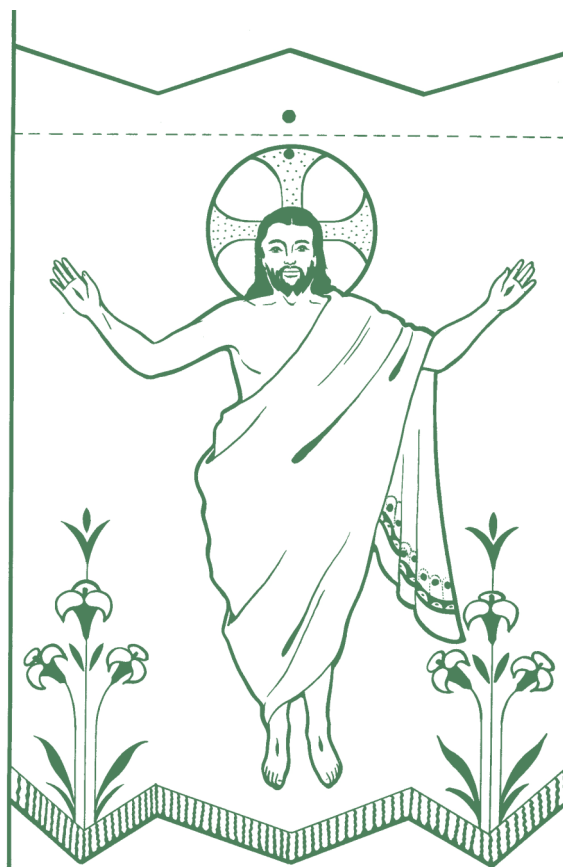


A Word From The Provincial

Presence and Accompaniment

During the Easter Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil), these two words -- presence and accompaniment -- describe, at least for me at this time, the core of what we celebrate in the Liturgy. We celebrate the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and in his death and resurrection. We also attempt to accompany Jesus during his final days in Jerusalem and, more importantly, recognize that Jesus is accompanying us in our journey toward new life in him.

Presence is a multivalent word. There are all kinds of ways that things and others are present to us. The chair I am sitting on and the computer I am working on are in some sense present. But this is simply the presence of one object to another. However, beyond the presence of one object to another, there is also the presence of persons to each other. In this presence the two persons are acutely aware of the other's being there, share in some real sense knowledge of the other and in so doing confirm the basic dignity of the other. This mutual recognition is then the base for caring and mutual love. This mutual love seeks what is best for the other. In different relationships it is expressed differently -- the love of spouses, the love of family, the love of friendship and the love of caring for fellow human beings and all of creation.



Conscious presence as described above is a peak experience and comes and goes. Accompaniment is the day-to-day drudgery behind mutual self presence. Accompaniment describes the willingness to be together with someone during both the highs and the lows. We also recognize that we rightly have multiple relationships and responsibilities all of which may pull us in very different directions.

So far I have talked primarily about the presence of human individuals to one another and the willingness to accompany one another. But I think that the liturgy of the Easter Triduum is also ultimately about presence and accompaniment. We attempt to accompany the Lord for these three days and, if we are blessed, there are moments when we do experience presence of the Lord with us and recognize that the Lord also accompanies us.

We began the Easter Triduum with the remembrance of the Lord's last supper shared with his disciples. What exactly Jesus knew is a matter of theological discussion.



However, it is clear that Jesus knew something both frightening and decisive was about to happen. At the Holy Thursday Mass we accompany Jesus in the washing of the feet when Jesus tells us in a concrete action that service must be at the heart of the Christian life. And then we share the bread and the wine. As Catholic Christians we believe this is not just a memorial of Jesus' last supper but that Jesus is truly with us – really present. The drudgery of accompaniment is there. It's a long service and we have done this so many times before. Perhaps we doze off or start thinking of all the mundane tasks that lie ahead.

But then perhaps there are moments when we truly feel the presence of the suffering and risen Jesus in the Eucharistic meal.

The Good Friday service is a very simple service. We listen to God's word and hear the story of Jesus passion and death. We pray for the people of God and for all the people of the world. We reverence the cross, not for its own sake but for what it symbolizes – the fact that Jesus, the Word of God as a human being suffered and died for us. And finally we receive the Eucharist, sanctified on the previous evening. Even in death, Jesus stays with us. In the Good Friday service we accompany Jesus when we hear the story of his passion and death and when we join Jesus' prayer for all people. In the veneration of the cross and in receiving the Eucharist we join with the women disciples and the Disciple John at the foot of the cross. Perhaps we also feel the presence of Jesus. But it is not yet the presence of the risen Jesus but the presence of Jesus at one with those who are victims of violence in our all too un-redeemed world.

In the Easter vigil we accompany Jesus as he moves from death to new life. The lighting of the Easter fire is perhaps a throwback to the traditions of our pre-Christian ancestors. In the fire we hope for new light and new direction. Then we hear the story of creation – everything that exists comes from God. It is very good. We also hear that we as human creatures, made in the image of God, can represent all of creation in actively desiring and hopefully finding peace and harmony in the presence of God. We then hear the story of the Jewish people in their search for God. And then in this year’s reading from the gospel of Luke (24:1-12), there is the story of the empty tomb, the joyous faith of the women disciples, the doubt of the disciples and then the hesitant, incipient faith of Peter.

Luke’s Easter gospel perhaps indicates our own faltering attempts at accompanying Jesus. The empty tomb points toward the reality of Jesus resurrection, but it is only one interpretation. The angels tell us that Jesus has in fact risen and the women believe. But the disciples still are not so sure. We also vacillate between belief and unbelief. Sometimes our belief seems clear and simple; but then sometimes we are not so sure. From a theological point of view, Jesus has risen to a new reality, something we can only begin to understand. We do our best to accompany Jesus on his journey to new life, recognizing that in this world we are still waiting for the fulfillment. There may be glimpses where we experience the presence of the risen Jesus – in the New Testament the experience of the disciples at the transfiguration (Matt 17:1-9) and Paul’s description of his own mystical experience are two clear examples.

But I believe the most important fruit of our efforts to accompany Jesus and to experience his presence is to recognize that Jesus continues to accompany us, even when we don’t feel his presence. We accompany Jesus at his last supper, in his passion, death and resurrection. But in this process we are not so much actors as we are recipients. Jesus continues to be with us on our journey.

Frank Budenholzer, SVD
Holy Saturday
March 30, 2013

**Accompani-
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We Are One in the Divine Word

Paul Han, SVD

The 17th General Chapter of our Congregation started on June 16th and successfully finished on July 15th of 2012. The theme of this Chapter is: “From Every Nation, People and Language: Sharing Intercultural Life and Mission.” As the delegate from the China Province, this is my first time to attend the General Chapter. Of course, I had a lot of imaginations, wonders, and expectations for this historical event not only for my personal life, but also for the entire Congregation. With all of these, I arrived in Nemi on time.

For exactly four weeks, all the 125 capitulars, representing 6015 confreres living, working, and studying in 51 Provinces/Regions/Missions (the newest is South Sudan) located in the four zones composed of 71 countries and regions, prayed, shared, discussed, deliberated, voted, and at the same time, played, danced, relaxed together. Not only do the native tongues, dresses, customs, ways of worship of the capitulars’ differ from each other, but also our economic, social, religious, and political situations, to say nothing about the personality and mood of each one of us. Nevertheless, all of these differences turned out not to be a hindrance to our common prayer, sharing, discussion, worship, and other activities; on the contrary, they became a source of mutual enrichment and blessings for all of us. One may say this is because of the special occasion in Nemi and due to the careful preparation of the various committees that all these good things were able to take place smoothly; in ordinary times and during day to day activities, this may not be the case. There must be some truth into it, but my personal thinking is: if this can happen in this kind of setting and occasion, then it at least gives us an opportunity to look at our ideal way of mission and life together as the Divine Word Missionaries or

members of the Arnoldus Family, namely, unity in diversity for the common vision and purpose. The task we have now is to make it happen as well in our ordinary times and day to day activities, not only among ourselves, but also with the people we work, cooperate and serve.

Following the month-long works in Nemi, the annual retreat and workshop in light of the just finished General Chapter took place in the three areas of our China Province. Lo and behold, another concrete example of unity and diversity took place in front of my very eyes and through my personal participation: Regardless of how different in many aspects of these three areas, the participation level and style, from leading prayer, conducting liturgy, sharing concerns, voicing opinions to washing dishes and organizing social activities, showed a clear sign of unity among us as confreres from the same Province.

For some time, due to the “very different” realities, we had been seriously talking about dividing the China Province into two Provinces and one Region, but with the recent experiences of the 17th General Chapter and our Province annual retreat in the three still very different realities, I am pretty at peace to put this talking point into our newly organized archives at Dapinglin office.

About my Work...

After having taught the classical languages for 10 years in Beijing, it is perhaps good to present a short report. Yes, in September 2002 I started to teach Latin and Greek to a group of 4 or 5 PhD students at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. This was a first effort, and I had no textbook for teaching Latin, nor a Latin-Chinese dictionary, only a good number of German textbooks for teaching Latin, because Fr. Sprenger and Fr. Mueller had taught that language to a handful of students when they were still at the Normal University back in 1988. From these textbooks I gathered some Latin stories and grammar lists and started to write my own teaching material. This manuscript I copied again and again until 2006, when my “Dictionary of Latin Proverbs” was published, which has in the appendix 10 pages of grammar tables and a concise Latin-Chinese dictionary containing the 1500 most common Latin words. Then I started to use my own books as teaching material for Latin (and Greek). The Hebrew textbook I use was (upon my suggestion) published in Shanghai in 2008, thus since 2008 I also offer Hebrew courses, averaging 40 students each semester, which means that around 80 students are introduced to the mysteries of the script of the Old Testament.

In spring 2004 I started to teach at the Literature Department of Renmin University of China (RUC). In the first semester I had only one course with 20 students, but the “Basic Latin Course” has developed into a very popular course in the last years: last semester (spring 2012) I had 146 students taking the exam. I worked hard to popularize Latin, and now I somehow can reap the harvest.

Let me say something about the books: In 2007 I published a theological dictionary (Latin-English-Chinese), entitled “Hanyu Shenxue Shuyu Cidian”, and one year later a polyglot dictionary of legal maxims (proverbs and definitions related to the law): “Falü Geyan Cidian” (Latin-English-German-Chinese). Because of this dictionary I was invited by the Chinese University of Political Studies and Law (Zhengfa Daxue) to teach Latin to the undergraduates there. Then in 2010, the famous Commercial Press (Shangwu Yinshuguan) finally published the improved version of my old manuscript as “Jianming Ladingyu Jiaocheng” (Cursus brevis linguae Latinae), and so far this book has been my greatest success. In summer 2012, the book was already printed the third time, now with an output of 5000 copies (the first two editions ran 3000 each). This means there are several thousand students in China who want to learn Latin. Last year (summer 2011) my “Ladingyu Hanyu Jianming Cidian” (Concise Latin-Chinese Dictionary) was published by another publishing house, and this is now the only available Latin-Chinese dictionary in all of China! However, since 2005 I have been elaborating a bigger “Latin-English-Chinese Dictionary”, which amounts to around 3 million characters (1000 pages) and should be published by the Commercial Press, but perhaps the corrections will take another year (Please pray that it can soon be published, I have been waiting

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for seven years already!) Once this bigger dictionary is published the students in China will finally have a useful tool to guide them through the Latin texts I present to them.

The series “Chinese-English Summaries of Western Classics” started in 2009, so far three volumes have been published (no. 1: “100 classics from antiquity”, no. 2: “100 classics from late antiquity” [actually a good textbook for teaching the Fathers of the Church], no. 3: “100 classics from the Middle Ages”), the fourth volume (Renaissance and Baroque) should come out this (2012) September. And now I work on the fifth volume (“100 classics from 1750 to 1950”). I was glad to hear in a bookshop near Taiwan University that some teachers of Taiwan University chose to use the first volume of this series as one of their important reference books or textbook. Thus, it seems this series is known and used also in Taiwan. Since year 2006, I also have been teaching at the seminary of Beijing Diocese (only 40 students), and there I can use this series of “Western Classics”, because they ask me not only to teach Latin and Greek, but also “History of Western Philosophy”. Because I had to teach “History of the Church” there, I also translated the three volumes of Bihlmeyer’s “Church History” (published in Beijing 2009-2011).

Besides teaching Latin at Renmin University, each semester I offer a course on basic Greek, on basic Hebrew, advanced Latin, and “Latin for Lawyers”. And since 2005 I have been offering courses on western literature, such as “History of Latin Literature”, “History of Greek Literature”, “History of European Medieval Literature”. Naturally in these courses I can also talk about famous Christian scholars, from Tertullian to Thomas Aquinas and Erasmus. As I mentioned, I have been teaching at the “Zhengfa Daxue”, and since 2006 I have been teaching (4 hours a week) at the Philosophy Department of Beijing Normal University (Latin and Greek). Thus during the last 4 or 5 years I regularly had a teaching load of 30 hours at four different institutions per week. Therefore, now I try to give up the teaching at “Zhengfa Daxue” in order to be able to write more.

I like teaching even more than writing. I like to surprise the students with things they do not know about their own language and history. The first Latin teacher in Beijing was Monte Corvino OFM, who came in 1296 and taught a group of boys Latin! Emperor Kangxi learned Latin! I like teaching Latin grammar and Latin words, especially since I discovered so many connections between Latin and Chinese, for example “mother tongue” and “muyu” both come from “lingua materna”, the word “muxiao” (“mother-school”) comes from the medieval “alma mater”, and the English “influence” (Chinese: “yingxiang”) was perhaps used first by Thomas Aquinas (“influentia”), civilization (“wenming”) comes from “civilis” etc. etc.. Thus the study of Latin must lead the Chinese student to reflect on the meaning of Chinese words, of these words they use every day! I often tell the students: “you have learned that society is the product of class-struggle, but if you analyze the root: society (“shehui”) comes from *societas*, from “socius” (friend), thus you should think that society is the product of friendly relationships”.

Because Renmin University is a top university in China, my students come from all provinces and are very talented (the university entrance examination system admits only the best students to our university). And since my courses are elective (non-obligatory) and for all departments I get undergraduates who are really willing to learn, and they are usually disciplined and talented students. Since their English is generally good, they recognize the similarities between Latin and English easily. Greek and Hebrew are more difficult, but I am very satisfied with the examination results. And there is great interest in

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the classical studies. In 2010 our university opened a “Classical Studies Experimental Course” (directed by the famous Dr. Liu Xiaofeng), where each year around 15 new students can start a 3-years course to really learn Greek and Latin well. Hopefully this will develop into a regular department of “classical studies”, just like the one that has been opened by Peking University last year (probably the first regular department of classical philology in China).

Around 2009, a camera team came to my classroom and recorded my Latin and Greek courses, put it on the internet, and since then you can see me and listen to me under “Baidu” – “Xueshuchaoxing Leilibo” (Academic superstar Leopold Leeb). This and the many comments my students make on the internet about me contributed mightily to my “fama” (fame, popularity), and thus I hope the university will keep me for some more years as a teacher who makes students and publication houses happy.

It seems they want to integrate me now as a formal professor employed under the same conditions as the Chinese professors (among ca 70 teachers of the Dept. of Literature I am the only foreigner).

My mission is of course to stimulate and support more students and young people (the next step may be the High Schools of Beijing, where Latin is badly needed) to get enthusiastic about the classical languages and enjoy them in as many ways as they can. During my classes we sing Latin songs, and sometimes I ask the students to translate Confucius’ proverbs into Latin. (Next year my “Confucius Teaches Latin” will hopefully be published, the most truly Chinese textbook for Latin that has been written in the last 2500 years...). Of course I neglect Greek a little, but I found out that Latin will be more popular in the long run, and why should we not follow the “way of the masses” (zou renmin qunzhong de luxian), as our great leaders of the last century suggested? By the way: the modern idea of “renmin” is also a very eminent Latin invention, compare Cicero: “Res publica est res populi” (the state is a matter of the “renmin”) – how modern this Roman lawyer Cicero was!

As you can feel: only one who has himself deep admiration for Cicero, Augustine, Thomas, and Ma Xiangbo, can be a good Latin teacher, and exactly this is what I want to instill into my students: respect, enthusiasm, and admiration for true greatness, for the great figures of the western philosophical, literary, and religious tradition.

About 20 years ago and even 15 years ago I was so worried about what I could do in China, how I should work, which kind of studies or translations are most needed, but now I know my mission, and I answer with a wholehearted commitment: teach and write about that language (or these languages) that is/are the mother of our thinking and the muse of our inspirations and the root of our scientific terms: Latin (and Greek). This is what I can openly and joyfully announce to my students and to anyone who wants to hear it: Learn Latin, learn the classical languages! The greatest joy is when (which happens rarely

though) at the end of a semester a student comes to me and says: “Lei laoshi, you have convinced me: after having learned one semester of Latin, I made up my mind to also learn the other two languages, Greek and Hebrew.”

In June 2012 a young lady from Beijing Normal University wrote a 20-pages letter to me basically saying: “I have now found the mission of my life. I want to go to Europe and study classical philology and bring the deep wisdom of the west back to China. What shall I do now?” I answered: “Just wait, because you have only studied for one semester. Maybe after the second semester you will no longer feel this enthusiasm.” But I know from my own experience: the longer you read the classical texts, the deeper you know and feel: this is really “via, vita, and veritas”. May the Deus et Dominus who guided me on my way to here give me some more years in China to enjoy the classical languages together with my students! Please pray for me and for this great country that is longing for classics in a modern world.

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ASPAC News: Province/Region Coordinators Assembly in 2013

The orientation of the 17th General Chapter is the implementation of 15th and 16th General Chapters’ Vision and Action Plan. In order to carry forward the Action Plan of the Provinces and Regions in the Asia Pacific Zone (ASPAC), the Coordinators of Bible, Mission, Justice and Peace, and Communication have been invited for an ASPAC Assembly of the Four Characteristic Dimensions of our Society. The meeting will be held on November 4-8, 2013 at Nong Bualampu in north eastern Thailand. To make this Assembly more fruitful and action oriented in our Provinces and Regions, a lot of preparation is required. Accordingly, the various Province/Region Coordinators of Bible, Mission, Justice and Peace, and Communication are requested to meet at the sub-zone level and discuss their activities and prepare themselves well before the Assembly. The Coordinators are also requested to prepare Action Plan for their Province/Region for the coming next three years for implementation. We shall pray that our efforts will bear fruit in the animation of our Provinces/Regions in the characteristic dimensions of Bible, Mission, JPIC and Communication ministries.

Highpoints of the 17th General Chapter

The Society of the Divine Word held their 17th General Chapter from June 17 to July 15, 2012 at the SVD *Ad Gentes Center* in the town of Nemi in the Alban Hills near Rome. The theme of the chapter was **“Sharing Intercultural Life and Mission.”**

Over the five weeks of the chapter there were many activities. From an historical point of view, perhaps the most important was the election of the new Superior General, Fr. Heinz Kulüke and his council. The chapter discussed and ultimately approved a set of Congregational Directions, sort of a road map for the SVD for the next six years. These Congregational Directions were the focus of the China Province retreats in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI visited the capitulars on Monday, July 9. While looking a bit frail he was clearly happy to be with us. Setting aside his prepared text, he reminisced about his visit to Nemi 47 years earlier when Fr. Johann Shütte gathered an eminent group of bishops and theologians at Nemi to prepare the Vatican Council document on mission, *Ad Gentes*.

At the end of the chapter we were asked to complete the usual questionnaire and one of the questions was what, in your opinion, were the highpoints of the chapter. Many mentioned the election of the new superior general; others mentioned the visit of the pope. I mentioned two experiences: getting to know confreres from literally every corner of the world and our Bible sharing.

In Taiwan and Hong Kong, many people when they think of the SVD they immediately think of our internationality. It has never been clear to me whether Arnold Janssen knew to what extent internationality would become a hallmark of the SVD. But he surely set the basis with his decision to found his mission congregation in the Netherlands and to send as one of the first two missionaries to China Fr. Josef Freinademetz whose native land was Tyrol, now part of Italy. Attending the chapter were 70 superiors and 44 elected delegates from 57 provinces, regions and missions. Currently the approximately 6000 SVDs work in 67 countries. It was a quite amazing group of people from every corner of the globe united in a mission to share the good news of Jesus with their fellow human beings.

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The peoples of the earth are continually threatened with violence and the planet is in danger of environmental collapse. A gathering such as the chapter with people from such diverse backgrounds united in their Christian vision gives brings hope to our world. And for me the microcosm of the larger group was the Bible sharing group of which I was a member. There were 10 SVDs in my group representing Papua New Guinea, Ghana, the China Province, Indonesia Ende, the Generalate, Poland, Portugal, US Chicago Caribbean, India Central and Germany. (We had the luxury of all being fluent in English.) Each member had to first listen attentively to the Word – what does the Bible text tell us, how does it challenge us? Each then had to meditate on the Word and attempt to understand it both within his own cultural context and what it had to



say to us a group. Some of the sharing by members of the group was literally quite startling – a new way of understanding God's Word. Finally we prayed together. We prayed for our families and friends at home. We prayed for fellow SVDs in the provinces where we live. We also prayed with an eye to the future. We asked the Lord to help us share his Word with the peoples of the world.

As SVDs and as members of the community of Jesus'

disciples in greater China, we must first thank the Lord for the gift he has given us – to share intercultural life and mission. And we have to allow the Word of God to penetrate our minds and hearts. Our sermons and sharing must be based on listening attentively to God's Word and having the courage to allow ourselves to be challenged by it. Those with whom we work know the difference between pious platitudes and sincere conviction. "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth."

Alma

Frank Budenholzer, SVD