



# អ្នកនាំពាក្យ

## The Messenger

### Editorial

Beginning in 1984 the Catholic Church has been celebrating an event called WORLD YOUTH DAY on a bi-annual basis. This has become the most important regular gathering of world youth. The event began as a response by the late Pope John Paul II to the call by the UN to celebrate the INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF YOUTH in 1985.

In our world today more than 1.5 billion people are between the ages of 10 and 25, this is about ¼ of the entire world's population. In some countries the fraction is greater; in the case of Cambodia two thirds of the population is under the age of 25. The church has accepted as hers this urgent call of the UN made during the International Year of Youth which reminded us at the time of, "the profound importance of the direct participation of youth in shaping the future of mankind and the valuable contribution that youth can make in the implementation of the new international economic order based on equity and justice." The Church, throughout its history, has always been committed to the development of a new society based on the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and human solidarity that nurtures the minds and hearts of young people all over the world. From this perspective the Catholic Church encourages young people of all

countries to come together every two years to share these human and Christian values and to commit themselves to building a world of equality and justice.

World Youth Day (WYD) is in fact, a week-long series of events attended by many people including hundreds of thousands of young people. For this WYD, July 2008 in Sydney, Australia, the organizers are expecting the arrival of more than 200,000 young people and more than 800,000 pilgrims from all over the globe. The main purposes of this world event for youth are: - Gathering together, - Putting trust in the young and - Meeting the international world on a human level. The particular theme for this year is: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses." (Taken from the Acts of the Apostles 1: 8)

The 45 young Cambodians that are representing our youth in Sydney will share with the world the values of the Cambodian young person and will bring back to us their experience of having met so many young people from all over the world, with their hopes and their commitment to the building of a more equal and just society.



Fr. Ivan Campaña, MXY

### 'New' Missioners Learn Khmer Liturgy And Local Church History

Twenty missioners who have worked in Cambodia for up to four years came together to learn more about Khmer liturgical terms and local Church history, and visit Catholic historical sites.

The laypeople and Religious came from their mission areas across the country to the Catholic Cambodian Culture Center (CCCC) in Phnom Penh for the seminar, which started on June 2. After three days of studying about the Khmer liturgical terms and the 450 years of Church history, they spent another day visiting historical church sites near by the capital.

The goal of the seminar was to bolster the missioners' knowledge and understanding so they can help new Catholics appreciate their faith and the local Church, according to CCCC director Father Francois Ponchaud.

The Paris Foreign Missions (MEP) priest told CSC that for missioners to understand the local people, they must understand Cambodia's main religious traditions -- animism, Buddhism and Hinduism. "We cannot say other religions are bad. They are also looking for a way

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Photo : Ly Savanna

About 50 university students from several student Centers gathered at the Catholic Church Student Center - CCSC- in Phnom Penh, to participate in a seminar about "Psychosocial and Mental Health Education", held on June 18. The seminar was led by the CCSC in cooperation with the "Transculture Psychosocial Organization - Community Mental health Program(TPO). The goal of the seminar was to help the students to understand and control the stress in their lives. Many students usually stress themselves because they easily get worried about their future, poverty, social security, among other reasons.

## 'New' Missioners Learn Khmer Liturgy And Local Church History

to heaven," he asserted. However, Valeria Spelta, 36, admitted it is not easy to explain Catholicism to Cambodians even when using Khmer terminology. For instance, it is not easy to explain that Catholics believe in "one God" and, at the same time, the Holy Trinity explained the lay missioner of the Rome-based Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME).

MEP Father Vincent Senechal was intrigued to learn that from the 16th century, many missioners came to meet the Cambodian king to build relations. Understanding this and other aspects of Cambodian history will help him work with the people, said the parish priest of St. Joseph Church in Phnom Penh.

Father Denis Carrier, working in Kampot province, added that he can now explain Cambodian history to friends and relatives. "For sure I will stay with the Cambodian people. I understand a bit more about the formation of the (local) Church," said the 35-year-old member of the Canada-based Quebec Missionary Society.

During their last days together, participants visited historical sites associated with Catholic missioners from 1555 to the 1970s in Kandal province, which surrounds Phnom Penh. War has

destroyed some of the places, and others now belong to the government.

Portuguese Dominican Father Gaspar da Cruz introduced Catholicism to the country in 1555. The Vatican established the Apostolic Vicariate of Cambodia in 1850. The local Catholic community grew mostly in the period 1902-1939, and the vicariate was renamed Phnom Penh vicariate in 1924. Kompong Cham and Battambang prefectures were

carved from it in 1968.

Church sources claim Cambodia had 65,000 Catholics in 1970, but civil strife and the brutal 1975-79 reign of the Khmer Rouge destroyed local Church structures. Few Catholics and no native clergy or Religious survived the Khmer Rouge, and Cambodia did not restore religious freedom until 1991, more than a decade after Vietnamese troops forced the radical communist group from power.

### Health Center Gives Hope To People With Cancer

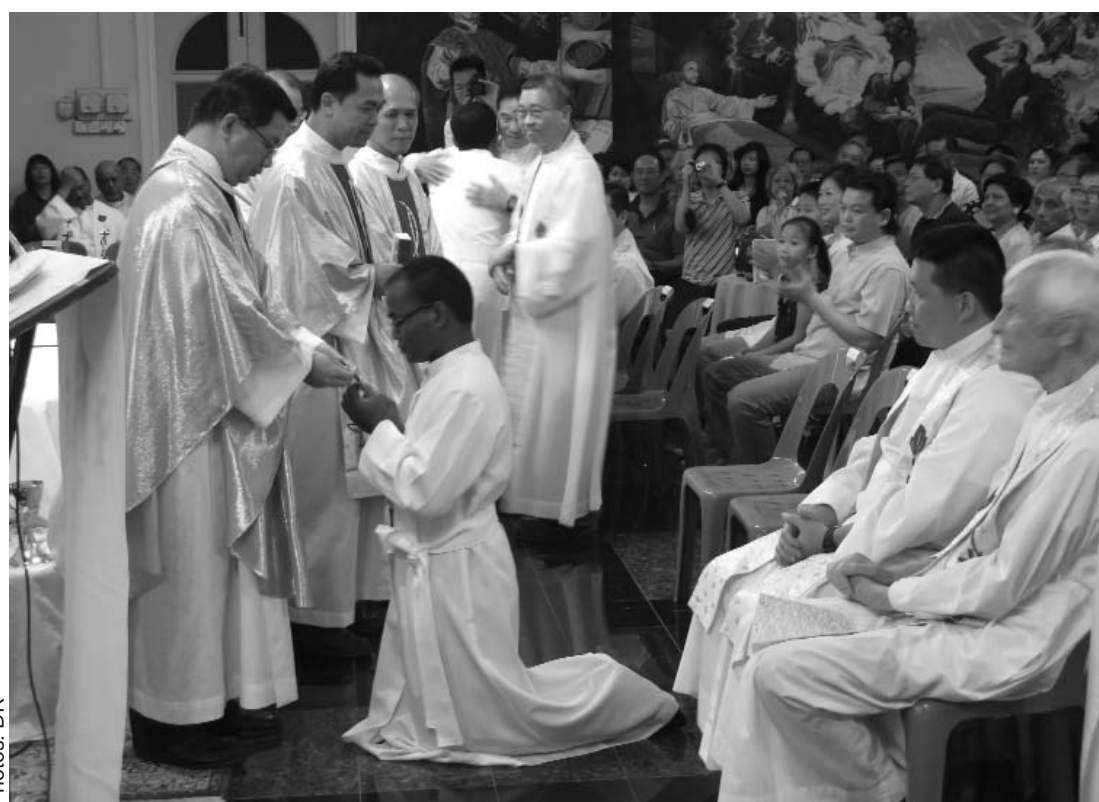
For many poor Cambodians with cancer or any other serious illness, getting medical treatment is just a dream, let alone receiving care at a proper health facility. Recognizing this, the Catholic Church in Phnom Penh opened Elizabeth Health Center to care for and support such patients from across the country, regardless of their religion.

"I have breast cancer, but I receive good care here at the center," Luy Eang Chheng told UCA News recently. Sitting on a chair with a red scarf over her head, the thin 53-year-old woman said she had been at the center six months and is in pain, but the care the staff provides gives her hope.

Elizabeth Health Center, which opened in July 2007 at Beong Tompon parish in the capital, now has 95 patients, according to center head Paola Maiocchi. The Italian lay missioner told UCA News it welcomes patients of any religious background. Maiocchi, also head of the Health Pastoral Committee of Phnom Penh apostolic vicariate, said the center provides the patients three meals a day without demanding payment from them.

Elizabeth Health Center has an annual budget of US\$40,000, mostly funded from Italy, Hong Kong and Australia. Only about US\$60 comes from the few patients who can make a contribution. Two Catholic medical students volunteer at the center.

## Pictures of the month



Photos: DR



The first Cambodian Jesuit, Ham Toeun (KAM) made his Simple Perpetual Vows at the Loyola Jesuit Novitiate in Singapore on May 19. Fr Gabriel Je, Delegate of the Korea Provincial in Cambodia was there to receive his Vows. Ham Toeun (KAM) will proceed to the Arrupe International Residence in Manila for his Juniorate and Philosophical studies.



Photo: Ros Dina

## Feature

# Domestic Child Labor

**By: Ros Dina**

Isn't it childhood the best symbol of modesty, happiness, honesty and purity of heart? Indeed it is, though we, sadly, realize that not all children are happy during their childhood since a great number of them are obliged to work as if they were already adults.

In Cambodia many Non Government Organizations manifest their concern for the increasing number of child labor, especially in the city of Phnom Penh.

According to a report of the National Institute of Statistics of Cambodia, in the year 2003 the country had 27,950 children, coming from different provinces, working in domestic services in the city of Phnom Penh and neighboring villages. For this year 2008 the figure has greatly increased, according to NGOs that focus their activities on protecting the rights of children.

Mr. Chea Phidan, executive director the NGO "Vulnerable Children Assistance Organization" (VCAO) said that "given that the population of Phnom Penh has greatly increased, the child labor has increased a lot as well, though there is not any sure statistics about it yet."

"Most of male-children work in construction, fabrics of bricks, washing cars, and farms around the city of Phnom Penh. A number of male-children also work in rural areas sowing corn, in regions like Battambang, Pailin and neighboring Thailand". According to Mr.

Phidan, 35% of those children come from Takeo Province.

Mr. Phidan said: "In rural areas and towns most of children are repeatedly forced to work in agriculture. However, if the owner of the house does not run any business, the children must do the work at home, such as to clean the house, to wash the clothes and the dishes, to cook, and to take care of other children.

### LABORING CHILDREN COMPLAIN

The child labor normally implies serious injustices such salaries that make us laugh or do not receive a salary at all, plus having no time to rest. Very often, children laboring in these conditions are easy victims of rape from part of a male member of the family. These modern slaves have to live under the rule of the family they are living with and rarely can avoid the abuse of their bodies, psychological harassments and sexual abuse.

**National Statistic Institute of Cambodia has reported that only 26,2% of children work in domestic services in Phnom Penh receive a salary and 73,8% do not receive any salary at all, since most of them are at the service of a relative. Usually a monthly salary for a domestic labor child worker is of 100,000 riel per month (USD\$ 25) for a male-child, while the girls only earn about 50,000 reil (USD\$ 12.5).**

*The International Labor Organization, on the program of Eliminating Child Labor in southeast and West Asia, has reported that 5% of male-children and 33% of girl-children work with a relative who runs a business outside home. 73,6% male-children and 57% of girl-children labor with relatives in their houses as domestic servants; while 21,4% of male-children and 10 % of girl-children work at their grandparents' home or with their close by relative.*

Normally, children under these conditions rarely complain about their personal situation because they consider themselves of a very low status and feel that they only deserve to be servants of those who took them. Of course, these children believe that their masters have a higher social status.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has estimated that children between 15 and 18-year-old are easily considered objects of sexual pleasure to be used by the sons of the head of the family they are living with.

Mr. Pan Vanna, a high level official investigator of LIKADO NGO, explained that "When children work with families who have a high education, they usually have better conditions than those who work with non-educated families. He added that there are some rich and powerful families that have more violent attitudes than families who are not educated. Very often these laboring children are tortured and deprived of food. It is also common that the neighbors, even though having acknowledged what was going on, do not dare to tell the authorities or to any Children's rights Organization, because they are always afraid.

### Domestic Violence is not a good example for children

"This horrible practice of violence against children is diminishing nowadays due to the higher awareness of our society about the domestic violence inside the family, and especially about the violence toward minors working as servants who are protected by the law", said Mr. Chea Phidan. However, Mr. Phidan expressed his preoccupation because, concerning other less violent actions, like insulting and cursing, there is not yet any form of punishment from part of the law.



Photo: DR

## Cambodia Youth Are Ready for WYD 2008, Sydney - Australia

**By: Ly Sovanna**

After several meetings of preparation, we are ready for WYD 2008 in Sydney, Australia from July 15th to 20th, said Father Leo Ochoa, SDB the team leader for the young Cambodians attending WYD. Father Leo Ochoa added that "WYD 2008" in Sydney is indeed an extraordinary gift to the Catholic Church in Cambodia.

There will be a group of 50 Cambodians participating in this gathering, including young people, priests and sisters: From the three Church jurisdictions there will be a representation of 24, plus 26 from other groups such as: the Salesian Youth Movement, the Marist Brothers' Young Adult group, Saint Vincent de Paul of Phnom Penh and the Jesuit service group (MAGIS).

Mister Srey Sokhon, 22 a young Catholic from Chum Kiri Parish, of the Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh talked to a CSC

reporter while applying for Thai Visa in Phnom Penh and said "the great joy of my trip will be to see the Pope and meet the other young people, and it will be a good opportunity to learn from them". He will bring back what he learns from WYD in Sydney to share with his other youth to help develop their views and the Church. Sokhon said "my parish Church is new, only beginning in 1995".

Miss Thuem Sinoeut, 22, from the Saint Vincent de Paul group in Phnom Penh told the CSC reporter that, though she has some fears, she is confident that it will be a good experience for her to open her heart and mind".

Father Ivan Campaña of the Yarumal missionaries, and parish priest of Kdol Leu parish of the Apostolic Prefecture of Kompong Cham told the CSC reporter that WYD 2008 is great occasion for Cambodian young people to express their life, faith, and

World Youth Day International level celebration: 1984 in Rome- Italy with present of late Pope John Paul II, 1985 in Rome- Italy, 1987 in Buenos Aires - Argentina, 1989 in Santiago de Compostela Spain, 1991 in Czestochowa - Poland, 1993 in Denver Unites States, 1995 in Manila - Philippine, 1997 in Paris - France, 2000 in Rome Italy, 2002 in Toroto Canada, 2005 in Cologne- Germany with the present new Pope Benedict XXI, and 2008 Sydney- Australia.

on July 3rd 2008 a group of 49 Cambodian Catholic youth will departure to Sydney via Bangkok by bus.

love to others. It is also a great time to share prayer and meditation on the word of God, and to be together. He added that the theme of WYD 2008 "Power, witness, Holy Spirit and Youth", is taken from Acts 1:8 "You will receive the power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witness".

Sister Srey Socheat, a Religious Cambodian Sister of the Congregation the Lovers of the Cross said that we are not just learning from the other young people but we also show to them our faith and culture. We will show to them our Catholic Church in Cambodia. We are preparing many activities such as Khmer Traditional dance, Khmer Traditional dress and songs, Church and Khmer history. We will have an exhibition on the brief history of the Church in Cambodia. We can tell them that the Catholic Church in Cambodia is now rebuilding following the dark years of recent history.



**Catholic Social Communications**

# 25 street 242, Boeung Prolet,  
7 Makara, Phnom Penh  
Tel/Fax:(855) 23 22 41 20

Mail: csc cambodia@gmail.com  
Web: www.catholiccambodia.org  
Commission for The MESSENGER  
Msgr. Emile Destombes, MEP  
Fr. Omer Giraldo, MXY

### Monthly Planning

- July 1 : Catholic Church in Kampong Cham opens a summer class of Mathematic, Physics, and Chemistry for students in grade 9 and grade 12
- July 3 : Cambodian Catholics Youth departure to Sydney for the WYD
- July 5-10 : Magis meeting in Seam Reap, delegate from Australia, Germany, Taiwan and Cambodia.
- July 21 : Arrival of Cambodia Catholic Youth from WYD 2008
- July 23 : A France Youth group visit St. Joseph Parish in Phnom Penh.
- July 30 - August 1 : Workshop in Seam Reap on Introduction for Radio Program produces.