



# អ្នកនាំផ្លូវ

The Messenger

## Editorial

A world to discover, to grow in relationships, knowledge to acquire, look for entertainment and leisure time activities, to build up a family, to have a profession, are all among the main dreams and daily life efforts of young people. Youth is the period between childhood and maturity; according to the United Nations "between the ages 15 and 24 years". Latest statistics of the population in Cambodia estimates that about 62% of the total population is less than 24 year-old, clearly showing the immense potentiality Cambodia has and the real possibilities there are to build a reliable future based on the cultivation of youth values. In this issue, THE MESSENGER gives a general review of the preferential option Cambodian youth has in spending their spare time and in looking for leisure-time activities. "The importance of leisure-time activities in the psychological, cognitive and physical development of young people is recognized in all societies", states the World Program Action for youth of the UN. It is of great importance for the Cambodian society to question itself about the way our young people are spending their spare time. Is it done in a healthy way? Do young people in Cambodia have good means available to develop their potentialities by a wakening them in

Mr. Ly Sovanna, CSC



healthy leisure-time activities? Very often we are discouraged by seen a large number of young people, both men and women, (even with children) performing unhealthy leisure-time activities such playing cards long hours or drinking alcohol or simply being lazy without doing anything creative. Children and young people are the present and the future of our country. How is our society taking care of them?

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This coming month, from July 15 - 20, 2008, will take place in the city of Sydney, Australia, the World Youth Day (WYD), the largest youth event in the world, organized by the Catholic Church. It will bring together more than 200,000 young people from all over the world, invited without any discrimination of religion, race or nationality. The WYD, initiated by late pope John Paul II in 1984, has a very positive influence, not only on the huge crowd of young people joining the encounter, but also on millions of young people all over the world. Cambodia will be present in this year's WYD with a representation of 45 youngsters of the three Church jurisdictions of of the country. Congratulations to all!

## Solidarity With Myanmar People

The feast of PENTECOST for the Catholic Communities of the three Church Jurisdictions of Cambodia, last May 11, was a good occasion to awaken the sense of solidarity among the faithful Catholics in Cambodia with the people of Myanmar who have recently suffered the terrible cyclone Nargis. The dead are being counted by thousands and the homeless by millions. The money collected among the faithful of the three dioceses or Church Jurisdictions of Cambodia ascended to USD \$ 5,000. Bishop Emile Destombes, the Apostolic Vicar of Phnom Penh expressed his deep sorrow in solidarity with the unimaginable suffering of the Burmese people due to this recent natural disaster. "It is urgent that our local Church manifests its sense of solidarity and togetherness with our brothers and sisters of Myanmar. We shall not only pray for them, but also send them some material donation as a sign of our love", said bishop Destombes in the Pentecost Sunday liturgy. "Do not think about the quantity of money! What really counts is our sharing with love", he emphasized.

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Photo : DR

CYCLON NARGIS : "The greatest destruction occurred in the area of Yangon, Myanmar's largest city, and the Irrawaddy delta region to the southwest, covered by Pathein diocese.

## Solidarity With Myanmar People

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Mr. Chum Rolong, 43, a faithful from St. Joseph Parish of Phnom Penh told CSC reporter about his sadness for what is happening to thousands of people in Myanmar: "We, as members of one great family, the Church, and as children of the same God, come together in mutual solidarity. Now they are suffering because a terrible natural disaster. We want to let the Myanmar people know that we are with them," said Mr. Rolong.

Ms. Oem Sokhorn, a newly baptized Christian, from Neak Loeung parish of Kompong Cham Prefecture told CSC reporter that this tragedy occurred in Myanmar has helped her very much to discover the deep sense of communion and solidarity a one Catholic Church that does not have any boundaries.

Bishop Antonysamy Susairaj, the Apostolic Prefect of Kompong Cham, told CSC reporter that the small Christian communities of his Prefecture gathered on Pentecost feast to pray to the Holy Spirit to assist the suffering people in Myanmar, to strengthen their hope and to guide their leaders towards a soon relief of their pain due to this unexpected great natural tragedy in their country. "I was very happy to realize the sincere solidarity of our Christians, not only in

terms of prayers but in material donation, as well", said bishop Antonysamy. Bishop Kike Figaredo of Battambang Prefecture said to CSC reporter that "We felt a deep inner joy while witnessing the strong sense of charity of our local Churches." "Most of Cambodians know by heart what suffering is, due to the deep physical, moral and psychological sufferings since the early 70's," added Bishop Figaredo. The donation collected was sent to the

Archdiocese of Yangon. Archbishop Charles Bo sent his thanks to the Church in Cambodia for this sign of solidarity with his people. According to UCA News, "Church volunteers, under the newly formed Myanmar Disaster Relief Committee, are carrying out emergency work in his archdiocese and neighboring Pathein diocese, bringing survivors to relief camps, and providing food, water medicine and shelter," said Yangon Archbishop.

### Health Pastoral committee of P.Penh

We would like to inform everyone that The Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh under the leadership of Msgr. Emile Destombes has organized a Health Pastoral Committee (HPC). We are a group dealing with health concerns and issues. The goal of this committee is to be a forum to exchange ideas and experiences about health related problems and to coordinate activities at the level of the diocese.

Since it's a newly created group, we are open to receive more suggestions and other opinions to make this committee effective and realistic.

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## Pictures of the month



Photos: L. Sovanna



On PENTECOST SUNDAY, May 11, Bishop Emile Destombes, MEP, Apostolic Vicar of Phnom Penh administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 63 adults. Among them there were some of the newly Baptized last Easter Vigil. The ceremony took place at Saint Joseph Parish, located in Phsar Touch, Phnom Penh, Bishop Destombes encouraged them to live in faith as witness of Jesus' Love.



Photo: L. Sovanna

## Feature

# HOW YOUNG PEOPLE IN CAMBODIA SPEND THEIR FREE TIME?

By: Anne-Laure Porée

When you question young people on how do they spend their free time, they usually have a moment of hesitation because in the fast growing Cambodian society, the tendency is to firstly discuss jobs before talking about leisure. However, from this dialogue emerges a remarkable fact: young people in Cambodia are seldom bored and rarely ask themselves if they are missing something. In general their desires for recreation are simple and undemanding.

### Spare time number 1: Television:

Most young people like to watch the TV when there is a free moment or when they do not want to go out! Watching and singing along with karaoke channels is a straightforward and enjoyable pastime for many. Seila, is a 15 year-old, she has a preference for artistic programs, traditional spectacles such as dance for example, while Lyna, a 19 year-old, can't wait for the Chinese TV serials. If we just get the seven Cambodian TV channels, there is little choice in the programming. Olivier Sieber, executive director of Apsara television, agrees that "the questioning about the content of Cambodian television frequently comes up and will continue to be posed; this is due to the lack of better trained personnel to produce local programs of good quality. However, access to many foreign TV channels through cable TV and satellite has

immediately increased the range of programs for those who have the economic capacity to pay for a subscription.

### Going out with friends:

Some of the major outside activities for young people in Cambodia are: To go to a cinema with a group of friends, to visit a night club, to eat and to drink something outside. "I do not have the wish to live alone", said Seila. "When I was at the university, I used to go out in the evenings with my friends even if we did not have any money to spend. Now that I have a job and receive a salary I do not have the time to go out. However, when I am on holiday, I meet with my friends in Siem Reap and we go to a discotheque. Our preferred place to meet is "Zone 1" since it is new on the scene and it is a modern design. There is also the "X.O." and the "Martini", though we do not go there too often because now it is quite

### Reading and training.

**Puthy, an obedient child, likes reading books. Even though, reading is supposed to be a pleasure, not all young people perceive reading as a relaxing exercise, except for Neat, who is 10 years old and enjoys telling the story of the sweetened Cucumber to his elder sister. Vannarith who is 20, has decided on his own, that it is more important to learn than just to have fun.**

**Video games:** The number of children trapped by this way of entertainment is increasing and the gaming rooms are never empty. As an example, Puthi aged 15 spends much of his spare time playing games on his Play Station 2 and when he receives a visit from his uncle, he takes advantage of the occasion to ask him to take him to buy a new video game.

out of date." In Phnom Penh, the Spark (and its singers) is more relaxing and it is also less expensive than an elegant night club like the "Rock".

To go out and enjoy time with friends is not necessarily costly. Many young people enjoy going up and down the banks of the river in Phnom Penh, or stop at the Hun SEN gardens just "to take a look", "to see what is new",

"to see the world", and also "to look at the girls"! It is on the banks of the river that Tueu, a moto-taxi driver aged 23, comes to take a break and to forget the material difficulties of his life. "I like Phnom Penh because I can come to walk", says Reo, a young worker 20 years of age, from Kien Svay village and he kept on walking as he spoke.

### Shopping:

Sophea, is a victim of new fashions, and his favorite spare time activity every weekend consists of going up and down the different floors of Sorya Center looking for the tee-shirt that he desires and that will make his friends envious. He is also interested in the latest telephone handset and, is even prepared to spend a month of salary to make a purchase! The icing on the cake of such a day is to end up in a Pizza center to share a "Junk Food" meal where the thick edge of the pizza is filled up like a pork sausage, and then there is the big spaghetti bolognaises, which would be a surprise even for a person of Italian stock.

### The sport and outdoor games:

Football, volley-ball and sey have their followers throughout the country. The game of Boulez (Bocce) is also played, since it does not make people perspire as much as other sports. Among girls, badminton is very popular. Some people also enjoy playing table tennis, even though this remains a luxury for many Cambodians. Some young parents make efforts to familiarize thier children with the practice of sports.



Photo: Fr. Jark

## Catholics Remember 'Bishop' And Others Killed By Khmer Rouge

Catholics for the first time have gathered at a village in Cambodia to mark the death anniversary of Monsignor Paul Tep Im Sotha, apostolic prefect of Battambang, whom the Khmer Rouge killed 33 years ago.

The group of approximately 300 Catholics also prayed for thousands of others killed by the radical communist group from 1975, when it took control of the country, until 1979, when Vietnam invaded.

Coming from all over Battambang prefecture, the Catholics gathered May 7 at Kbal Spean, a village in Banteay Mean Chey province, near the border with Thailand. It was here where Monsignor Sotha, a native of Phnom Penh, died in 1975. Battambang prefecture is based 250 kilometers north west of Phnom Penh.

Jesuit Father Sushil Lakra, parish priest in Banteay Mean Chey town, told the gathering that this was the first time people had come

together in a meaningful way to remember the slain prelate whose death bore witness to the love of Jesus Christ in Cambodia.

Dam Pracnha, 56, a parish council member of Battambang who was closely associated with Monsignor Sotha, called bishop by the local people, recalled how the prelate was aware of his impending death. "He seemed to know everything, and on the last Sunday Mass our bishop told us, 'From now on, enemies will arrive,'" she recalled.

"He is a good example for us," Pracnha added, telling how Khmer Rouge troops killed the Church leader in Kbal Spean, near the border town of Poipet, from where the Khmer Rouge expelled many foreigners.

Hnem Yard, 56, now a Chom Noum parish council member in the province, recalled trying to help Monsignor Sotha escape.

"Our bishop was very worried about all the foreign missionaries and because he had

Monsignor Sotha did his seminary studies in France and Italy and was ordained priest in 1959. He served first as parish priest of St. Mary's Parish in Phnom Penh. He was appointed apostolic prefect of Battambang when the Vatican created the new Prefecture on Sept 26, 1968. He was killed at the age of 41.

Battambang prefecture covers eight provinces Banteay Mean Chey, Battambang, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Thorn, Oddar Mean Chey, Preah Vihear, Pursat, Siem Reap and Pailin city.

seen how many people were killed," Yard told CSC News. "I offered to take him across the Thai border another way, but he refused because it was illegal. He decided to go on National Road No. 5 to Poipet, where he was killed by a soldier for no reason," Yard narrated with tears in his eyes. He said the Church leader lived a "simple" life of poverty.

Jesuit Father Totet Banaynal, Battambang vicar general, told CSC News the blood of martyrs would help sow the seeds for God's kingdom and the growth of the Catholic Church. He said the prefecture built a school at the place where Monsignor Sotha was killed and erected a pillar that tells about his death. The pillar, he pointed out, was the villagers' idea.

Srey Laoy, who was baptized in the 1990s, told CSC News she learned much at the memorial service that helped her understand the Catholic Church better.

"It strengthens my belief, because of the witness of our dear bishop, brothers and sisters, who were killed in that difficult period," she said. "They knew they would be killed but they trusted in Christ."



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## Monthly Planning

- May 24-25 : Seminar on "Leadership" at Tropang Kandoul parish, Apostolic Prefecture of Kompong Cham lead by Fr. Bruno Cosme - MEP, Rector of Major Seminary of Cambodia.
- June 1 : Scout of Chamcar Teang Parish, celebrate Childrend day
- June 2- 4 : Seminar on "Khmer Religious Vocabulary", lead by Fr. François Ponchaud - MEP, at Catholic Cambodia Cultural Center.
- June 7: Ceremony of graduation of 14 sawing students of the tailing program of Neak Leang Parish.
- June 14-15: Forth workshop for Catechists of the three Church Jurisdictions in Cambodia, take place at Saint Joseph Parish, Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh.