

## Anniversaries of Profession

### FEBRUARY

02	Fr Peter Collins	1969	
04	Br Stephen Thompson	1985	
	Fr Paul Vu	1985	
	Fr Philip Watkins	1987	
05	Fr Joe Geran	1955	
	Fr John Morton	1955	
	Fr Pat Negri	1955	
	Fr Don Cave	1956	<b>50 years</b>
	Fr Frank O'Dea	1956	<b>50 years</b>
06	Fr John Frawley	1954	
27	Fr Kevin Ouvrier	1959	
	Br Gerard Devlin	1960	
	Fr Ken Boland	1961	
	Fr Marcellus Glynn	1961	
	Fr Jo Dirks	1962	
	Fr Tony McSweeney	1962	
	Fr Joe Fernando	1963	
	Fr Tom Knowles	1965	
	Br Joseph O'Callaghan	1965	
28	Fr Jim Dekker	1958	

### MARCH

03	Fr Graeme Duro	1975	
19	Fr Alf Rivett	1950	
	Fr Terry Hammond	1951	<b>55 years</b>
	Fr Laurie Sullivan	1951	<b>55 years</b>
	Fr. Ralph Hinton	1952	
	Fr Bernie Hammond	1953	
	Fr Ed Wood	1953	

### APRIL

05	Fr Mark Rigney	1953	
21	Deacon John Pugh	1973	

### MAY

01	Fr Alfred Yap	1985	
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## Anniversaries of Ordination

### MARCH

19	Deacon John Pugh	1987	
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### MAY

08	Fr Peter Collins	1976	
13	Fr John Magill	1958	
26	Fr Tom Knowles	1973	



## THE MANILA FOUNDATION: AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE<sup>i</sup>

*In preparation for the celebration of their Golden Jubilee in 2007, the Province of Our Lady of the Assumption in the Philippines, invited Jo Dirks to submit a message which will be printed in their Souvenir. Jo's contribution follows.*

In 1948, Fr Len McKenna was asked by the General to investigate the possibility of a SSS foundation in Japan. Fr McKenna left Sydney in a Chinese cargo ship, the Changte, for Hong Kong and then Japan. The crew were all Chinese and the only passengers were nine religious. Fr McKenna was accompanied by Fr Hervé Thibault SSS and a Father Bell<sup>ii</sup>, a Marist Father from Australia. The Marists were also considering making a foundation in Japan. On board were also six Australian Good Samaritan Sisters. One of the religious sisters was Julian McKenna SGS, the cousin of Fr Len McKenna and the sister of Br Raphael McKenna SSS now in our Chatswood Community. Between Hong Kong and Nagasaki the ship ran into a typhoon. Normally the ship covered 180 nautical miles per day. But the ferocity of the typhoon was such that the daily distance shrank to 140 miles, then 100, then 80, then 20 and finally the ship was actually being driven backwards. The seas were mountainous and crashed right over the ship. The bow would disappear and then the stern. "It was impossible to say Mass<sup>iii</sup>". The piano was sailing around the room. The chairs were broken. The masts were broken. We thought we would not come out alive. It went on for five days. Then suddenly we drifted into the gentlest of seas, the inland sea of Japan. The Chinese crew, who at first were very suspicious of us, felt they had been saved because we were on board – a bit of a Jonah story<sup>iv</sup>".

The site for the SSS foundation was to have been on the hill of the Japanese Martyrs in Nagasaki. The city had been destroyed by the atom bomb at the end of the Second World War. The two priests stayed in the bishop's house. But after three weeks' sojourn they were still unable to secure an interview with the bishop<sup>v</sup>. It was winter and Fr McKenna had contracted pneumonia. Instead of having to wait for a ship home, he managed, through a service chaplain, to get a V.I.P. seat on an American bomber. Once more there was a typhoon and the plane was forced to land at Clark Field, a U.S. army base in the Philippines. "No planes could take off. Planes were being blown over on the tarmac<sup>vi</sup>".

Fr McKenna met a young U.S. officer who said, "Look, as you are not going anywhere, there are some Australian Redemptorists in Manila. Let us go on the train to see them." Fr Charles Taylor met Fr McKenna and said, "I'll show you the place where you should be, right here in Santa Cruz." Fr McKenna noted that the whole area had been reduced to rubble. The Church that had been there had taken a direct hit from a bomb. Fr Taylor said, "The Blessed Sacrament Fathers from St Francis ought to be here where the whole city converges!" Fr McKenna spoke to the Apostolic Delegate, Mgr Egidio Vagnozzi,<sup>v</sup> and also met the Vicar General, Bishop Rufino Santos, later Archbishop of Manila in 1953 and Cardinal in 1960. Fr McKenna was himself Superior of St Francis at the time of his visit to Manila becoming Vice Provincial in 1950 and Provincial of the Australian Province from 1955 to 1965.

Fr McKenna said he started writing (to Rome) about the possibility of a Manila foundation for years. "That's the start of the foundation there . . . one of our best<sup>vi</sup> . . . brought about in that casual landing" (on the way back from Japan). In the midst of the negotiations he stated "We were asked to take on Colombo" (Ceylon). The Archbishop<sup>vii</sup> there had asked for a SSS foundation. Fr McKenna and the American Fr Rosario Morin SSS were sent from Australia to investigate. "Fr Morin was to become the first superior of Santa Cruz". Why was Santa Cruz not an Australian foundation? Fr McKenna commented that politics played a role. Arthur Calwell, a regular at St Francis' Church, Melbourne, had been the Federal Minister for Immigration. He had deported a Filipino family back to Manila. Australians were not welcome at that time in the Philippines. On the other hand the Americans were not welcome in Ceylon.<sup>viii</sup> So when the SSS foundations of Colombo<sup>ix</sup> and Manila<sup>x</sup> took place, the Australians went to Colombo and the Americans to Manila. And so it happened that a group of five young Blessed Sacrament Religious from the American Province of St. Ann was installed in Santa Cruz Parish on 15 August, 1957. Deo Gratias!

The Australian Province of the Holy Spirit rejoices at the Golden Jubilee of the Province of Our Lady of the Assumption. May the charism and mission of St Peter Julian Eymard to make the Eucharist known and loved continue to bloom and flourish in your country of the Philippines!

Jo Dirks SSS, Australian Provincial, Thursday, 22 December 2005

<sup>i</sup> I am principally reliant on a tape recording of oral history observations made by Fr Len McKenna SSS in 1984 to the novices at Chatswood, NSW, at the request of the then Novice Master, Fr Graeme Duro SSS.

<sup>ii</sup> This was Fr James Bell SM, the Australian Marist Provincial (Source is Sr Julian McKenna SGS). The Good Samaritan Sisters and the Marist Fathers did make Australian foundations in Japan.

<sup>iii</sup> There were normally three Masses said each day during the voyage. There was no concelebration before the Second Vatican Council (Source is Sr Julian McKenna).

<sup>iv</sup> This bishop, not named by Fr McKenna, was Paul Aijirô Yamaguchi † (15 Sep 1937 Appointed - 19 Dec 1968 Retired). Nagasaki became an archdiocese on 4 May 1959

<sup>v</sup> Mgr Vagnozzi was appointed apostolic delegate of the Philippines, 9 March, 1949, bishop in 22 May 1949, and later Apostolic Nuncio in the Philippines 9 August, 1951. He later became Archbishop and then Cardinal in 1967.

<sup>vi</sup> Fr Len McKenna returned to Manila in 1981 to give a Retreat to the SSS there.

<sup>vii</sup> Archbishop Thomas Cooray became a Cardinal in 1965.

<sup>viii</sup> The Colombo Plan began with seven members of the British Commonwealth as members---Australia, Canada, **Sri Lanka (then Ceylon)**, India, New Zealand, Pakistan and the United Kingdom. By 1954 these countries had been joined by Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, **the Philippines**, the United States, Thailand and Malaya. The Colombo Plan subsequently applied to the enlarged Federation of Malaysia, and to Singapore, from 1963. The Colombo Plan occupies a prominent place in the history of Australia's relations with Asia. **It is best remembered here for sponsoring thousands of Asian students to study or train in Australian tertiary institutions.**

*The Hon. Alexander Downer, MP, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AUSTRALIA*

*Speech, Canberra, 23 May 2005, Launch of "Australia and the Colombo Plan 1949-1957".*

Note that the first SSS vocations from Ceylon (Sri Lanka) arrived in Australia in 1958 to begin their studies for the priesthood. This policy continued until the end of 1969 when the decision was taken that first formation should be done in the country of origin. (Bolding emphasis is mine)

<sup>ix</sup> The official date of the foundation of the Colombo House is 31 December 1955, *Repertorium 2005, p. 45*

<sup>x</sup> The official date of the foundation of the Manila House is 25 December 1955, *Repertorium 2005, p. 47*



Thank you to all our contributors to this issue of "The Vineyard".  
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