



MISSION NEWS

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A VIOLIN, A SCHOOL, THREE MEALS A DAY: A DREAM BECOMES REALITY IN THE HIMALAYAS

by Fr. Peter Balleis, SJ

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Jenny Cafiso
Director



Photo: P. Balleis SJ

Twin brothers Ram (left) and Lakshu (right) Tshering have been playing violin at Gandhi Ashram for four years, while attending school in class IV.

Three years ago children from Gandhi Ashram in Kalimpong, India, were invited by Missio and the Jesuit Mission Office in Nuremberg to do a concert tour in Germany. Recently Fr. Balleis, SJ, director of the German Mission Office returned to Gandhi Ashram. This is what he writes after his visit.

The conductor raised his baton and gave the downbeat. I closed my eyes. Suddenly I heard a piece of wonderful and beautiful music by Mozart. I opened my eyes and I saw sixty children from eight to seventeen years of age concentrating on their violins and cellos, playing. It was a dream come true.

A Dream Becomes Reality

Fifteen years ago Canadian Jesuit priest, Fr. Ed McGuire, dreamt of the day when the children of the poorest families could go to school, eat three meals a day and play music. The first two goals of his dream were not so difficult to

realize, but playing the violin seemed hopelessly out of reach.

Yet for the last few years Fr. Ed McGuire SJ has listened each Monday and Thursday, just as I did at the end of August, to the violin orchestra of the Gandhi Ashram school of music. The children have been playing Nepalese tunes, Mozart, and other masters of European classical music on their instruments.

Barefoot and Hungry Children

None of the children could have ever gone to school were it not for Gandhi Ashram. Their parents are poor farmers whose fields on the slopes of Kalimpong cannot sustain their families. Many parents who earn their additional income by working as coolies (laborers) receive less than one dollar a day. But even this is not enough to feed the family. Hunger is a daily reality for their children.

Fr. Ed wanted every child in the Gandhi Ashram school to have three meals a day. His only criterion for admission to the school was that the children be among the poorest. Most of the 150 children walk to school every day, but those who live too far live as boarders in the school.

With Music in their Blood

At the age of six, almost too small to hold a violin, the children begin their normal instruction on how to play the violin. The purpose of teaching how to play the violin was in part to help the children to concentrate. The results achieved by the older pupils who continued their education in the upper grades in other schools, confirmed this hunch of Fr. McGuire. The children who played violin turned out to be especially good in mathematics and were able to concentrate better.

But there is more. The Nepalese

continued on page 5...



A WORD FROM

Jenny Cafiso

Director CJI

Much has happened since the last issue of this Newsletter. It has been a time of unimaginable tragedies that have shaken the world to the core, such as the tsunami which in just a few moments wiped away entire villages and caused the death of over 200,000 people. Closer to home there was hurricane Katrina and more recently the earthquake in Pakistan. This time has been also marked by the equally unimaginable, but less known tragedies such as AIDS, malaria, malnutrition and war that have killed millions of people in the developing world and left millions more orphaned, sick, homeless and without a way to make a living. These deaths and this suffering could have been prevented.

Yet the overarching theme of this newsletter is one of hope. During this same time we have been surprised by the overwhelming generosity of people, such as the donor who sent me an e-mail a few hours after the tsunami struck to see how she could help; the students at St. Paul's High School in Winnipeg or at the University of Regina, who responded with creativity and generosity by raising funds. We find hope in the story in this newsletter (page 5) of Janati in Indonesia who is able to respond with courage and determination

to her loss.

Closer to CJI this has been a time of transitions – of losses, but also of new beginnings and great hope. Two Jesuits who were among the first to go to India to work with the poor in Darjeeling died this year, Fr. Ed McGuire and Br. Nick Johannesma. They both started important work in Darjeeling that has given new hope to many people among the poorest; Fr. Ed through the Gandhi Ashram School for poor children and Br. Nick with his training of farmers in organic farming.

The hope is in knowing that with every passage there is a new beginning. Both of them planted seeds and these seeds have already sprouted new growth. This hope was exemplified by the visit to Canada of Fr. Julius Kujur SJ who succeeded Br. Bob Mittelholtz SJ, the founder of Jesu Ashram who died last year.

Our hope is based on a knowledge of all the death that surrounds us, the injustices that cause so much suffering, and of the passage of great icons of commitment and service. Our hope is also nourished by faith, by the strength and determination of people who rebuild their lives, by new people who are willing to take up the leadership of projects, and by the generous and long term commitment of all those who support this work.

AND THE MUSTARD SEED GREW

by Fr. Julius Kujur SJ, Director of Jesu Ashram, Darjeeling

“The work at Jesu Ashram is God’s work. If it needs to be carried on, God will provide all that is necessary.” Br. Bob Mittelholtz, founder of Jesu Ashram, would often reassure me with these words. He knew because he had seen the Ashram evolve from a group of thatched huts to the brick and concrete structures we see today. After Br. Bob’s death, a number of supporters stepped forward to reassure me that God’s work must and will continue.

I was further encouraged during my recent trip to Germany, Belgium, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Italy and Canada. I wanted to meet and thank all our benefactors. I returned to the Ashram energized by their show of support and grateful to them for opening their hearts and homes to me.

“The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed.” After a small beginning 36 years ago, Jesu Ashram is now well known in the neighbouring villages for its work of caring for the dying and the destitute. In the tuberculosis section all the 140 beds are occupied, yet we keep welcoming new arrivals. Plans are underway to build separate rooms for patients in need of palliative care.

Of the 3996 patients admitted to the Ashram in the past year, 1022 had tuberculosis, 514

had leprosy wounds, and 2460 had various other illnesses. Everyone is given free medical treatment, food, a bed, clothing and a bus fare for those who go back home. Forty patients were HIV/AIDS positive. It has become clear recently that Jesu Ashram has to develop the capacity to address the needs of an increasing number of patients with HIV and AIDS.

The Ashram employs 13 nurses to care for the 350 in-patients on a daily basis and 220 out-patients on a weekly basis. Our new

nursing student’s residence will be completed by December 2005 and will accept 36 nursing students by 2007. The students are not charged any fees as most of them come from poor families.

God’s Kingdom seems to be present here among the poor and my trip to Canada and Europe convinced me that we can continue to build it. It was truly a blessing and a privilege to meet Br. Bob’s sisters, his brothers and their families during my visit to Canada. In

Europe, I was able to meet 19 of the 74 children who had been adopted from the Ashram. Six of the people I met during my trip visited the Ashram in October and some have stayed to work here for a couple of months. “And the mustard seed grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air sheltered in its branches.” (Lk.19/13)

Every Thursday we offer Mass for our benefactors. Please continue to pray for the patients and the staff of the

Ashram so that the tree will continue to grow and blossom and provide shelter for the birds in its branches.



Fr. Julius Kujur SJ (centre) with Mrs. Gertrude Edwards (left) and her son Paul (right), following Fr. Julius’ presentation at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Toronto which was attended by more than 50 people.

Photo: J. Lee

education program for 22 health workers who have committed themselves to work in the Ashram for a year following their training, has provided us with additional caring hands. The

people, the mountain people of the Himalaya, seem to have music in their blood. Children have excellent musical talents and enjoy music immensely. The music, the beauty of it, helps to foster self-esteem for these barefoot children who cannot afford a school uniform. Fr. McGuire believed that it also helps to foster good behavior. Music brings the best out of the people.

The children love the music. They come to school before classes begin in order to play the violin, and they often stay after school. The Gandhi Ashram has become their home.

The Death of the Founder: a Pause

When the children learned on 15 August 2005 that Fr. McGuire died of a heart attack, it was like a nightmare. He was seventy-five years old. Only a few days before, he had been interviewed by a North American TV crew and he had learnt that his best violin student, Kushmita, was accepted by the Conservatory of Music in Munich. His life's work had reached a peak. Now its continuation is in the hands of Fr. Peter Jong Lepcha, a young Jesuit musician, who has been appointed director of Gandhi Ashram, and of those who support this project.

Kushmita's Dream

Two weeks after Fr. McGuire's death the fifteen-

year old Kushmita sat at the table with the local Jesuit provincial and myself. She said, "I have a dream. I would like to get a good education and then come and work at Gandhi Ashram."

She has already been accepted by the Richard-Strauss Conservatory of Music in Munich and is living with a family in Munich, receiving professional education in string instruments. She will have a major role in the future of the Gandhi Ashram school.

The School Must Expand

With the Darjeeling Jesuit Provincial we discussed our dreams for the future of the Gandhi Ashram school of music. The school will continue to provide the poorest children an education, three meals a day and music instruction. As in the past, there will not be school uniforms as it is customary in India. This is to give freedom to the young artists and to ease the burden of their parents who cannot afford such unnecessary costs. The children of the Gandhi Ashram music school should be recognized by the violins under the arm and by their music.

The school now offers classes up to

grade ten, so the children can stay longer in the school and play music. We also hope that in the future, the school will be able to receive 300 pupils instead of the present 150.

A Symphony Orchestra for Kalimpong

But the dream of music knows no bounds. The orchestra needs additional instruments like trumpets, horns, flutes, oboes and clarinets. We are dreaming of a full Gandhi Ashram symphony orchestra. The music will be more deeply rooted in the musical tradition of Nepal and India while open to the western classical music. With this we hope to make a contribution to the education of young people in India, to harmony among people, and to overcoming poverty.



Photo: P. Bulliac SJ

Children concentrate on their studies at Gandhi Ashram school

My Dreams Come True

Kushmita Biswakarma is a student from Gandhi Ashram School. She writes this letter from Germany where she is now studying at the Conservatory of Music in Munich.



Photo: P. Bulliac SJ

Kushmita Biswakarma plays her violin at Gandhi Ashram

I am fine here and I am practicing very well. I had problems concentrating on my practice the first week I was here. I had a lot of things in my mind, but now I am fine.

I was five years old when I went to the school. I was brought up by Fr. McGuire and his staff. I was lucky to be at this school because it is very expensive to go to school in Kalimpong. My parents are just coolies. They don't have their own land. They work in other people's fields to earn their meals. So I couldn't dream of doing something important in my life like going to school and learning things. I would have helped my parents in the fields instead of playing violin.

Thanks to Fr. McGuire, I can now read, write, and play violin. Now, I am in Germany, learning more about the world and about music and thinking about my

own future.

I learned how to play violin at Gandhi Ashram. I always played Nepali and Hindi tunes. People were impressed by my playing. I was proud of myself – I thought I was great. But this changed when I came to Germany. I was not only the one who played violin well, I did not know as much about techniques and about classical music. But now, I've learned them and I can feel music.

My dream was always to go to foreign lands to play. And now, one of my dreams has come true. I am in Europe thanks to the violin and music. I know I can't become a great violinist, but I have decided I want



Fr. Edward (Ed) George McGuire, S.J.
September 25, 1927 - August 15, 2005

...continued from page 5

to pass on my knowledge to others. I would like to teach music to the small children in Gandhi Ashram and show them the right way to play violin.

I am very happy that I am learning a lot over here. I am very heartfully thankful to Fr. McGuire for bringing me to this stage of my life.

Yours sincerely,

Kushmita Biswakarma

It costs:

Cdn\$280 a year to support a child in Gandhi Ashram, for food, clothes and school fees.

Cdn\$100 to buy a violin in India

Cdn\$362 to buy a cello

Tribute to a Friend, Teacher, and Brother

BR. NICHOLAS (NICK) JOHANNESMA, SJ

JULY 28, 1931 - JUNE 4, 2005

by Ron Augustin

Br. Nick Johannesma passed away peacefully during the night of June 4th, in Pickering, Canada.

Born in The Netherlands on July 28, 1931, he studied agriculture and emigrated to Canada in 1953. He joined the Jesuits in 1958 and in 1965 he was sent to India where he worked in the Darjeeling District.

Br. Nick was passionate about agriculture. He loved living with the farmers and sharing the simple life of remote mountain communities. In 1971, the Queen Mother of Bhutan invited him to help establish the Agri-Horticultural Training Institute in Kanglung, where he trained extension workers, farmers, district officers and teachers for more than 18 years. In 1986 he was appointed Coordinator for Agro-Industries in the Ministry of Trade and Industries. There he was responsible for

setting up food processing units in Kanglung and Thimphu.

Nick was known for his outspoken ideas and straightforward methods.

He was a hard worker, always the first to put a spade into the ground. He always said that it was in Bhutan that he learned so much - from Buddhism as a religion, a philosophy, and as the people's way of life. During the past 15 years he traveled from Canada to Bhutan and the Kalimpong area to organize farmer training workshops and to set up agricultural training centres. His last stay in the region was earlier this year.

He will be dearly remembered as a friend, teacher and brother.



Photo: J. Cefiso

Nick Johannesma SJ (centre) with local farmers

CJI GIVES ITS BEST TO AJAN!!!

William Mbugua, SJ, a scholastic of the Upper Canada Province and, until recently, member of the CJI Board, has joined Canadian Jesuit Michael Czerny at the African Jesuit AIDS Network (AJAN). He will be based at AJAN House in Kangemi, on the outskirts of Nairobi,



Photo: J. Cefiso

William Mbugua, S.J. and Michael Czerny, S.J.

during his regency, from 2005 to 2007.

For Mbugua, as he is known to his friends, this is a return home. He was born in Kenya in 1972. His family lives in Giathieko, 40

minutes outside of Nairobi. Mbugua came to Canada in September 1966 to do his BA in religious studies in Winnipeg. He got to know the Jesuits through St. Ignatius Parish and in 2001 entered the Upper Canada Province.

Mbugua will be involved in all aspects of AJAN's work: communications, research, publications, and working with Jesuits in developing the Society's response to HIV/AIDS in Africa. "This regency is a wonderful opportunity," said Fr. Len Altilia, SJ, director of formation for the Canadian Jesuits, "not only to experience the international character and mission of the Society, but also to make a significant contribution to an important ministry that is still shaping itself."

To contact AJAN: aids@jesuits.ca or visit www.jesuitaids.net

CJI VISITORS

CJI was very fortunate to have a record number of visitors from overseas, who came to rest, study, visit their families and fellow Jesuits, to meet their supporters and...to visit us at our office!!!

From Africa came Fr. Michael Czerny SJ, Br. Al McAndrew SJ, Fr. Jack Doyle SJ, Fr. Antoni Baranowski SJ. From India came Frs. Joe Victor Pitchai SJ, Julius Kujur SJ, Bill Bourke SJ, Lalit Turkey SJ, Gerard Van Walleghem SJ. From Armenia came Fr. Laurier

Harvey SJ. From Jamaica Frs. Jim Webb SJ and Peter McIsaac SJ. From Nepal came Fr. Antu Sharma SJ. From Ukraine we received Fr. David Nazar SJ.

We are also happy to have with us Kelvin Munsanje from Zambia. Kelvin is a staff person at the Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre in Zambia who has worked with the director Br. Paul Desmarais SJ for several years. He is in Canada to do a Masters program at the Land Resource Department of the University of Guelph.

TSUNAMI: WHEN TRAGEDY MEETS HOPE

On December 26, 2005 a tsunami hit parts of Asia and East Africa. An estimated 200,000 people died and thousands more lost their means of livelihood.

The world community was shocked by the scale of the tragedy. People from all walks of life responded with compassion and generosity, volunteering their time and talents and contributing with financial donations.

CJI responded in its own small way, assisting with the reconstruction process. Our response was made possible by the presence of local Jesuits in the affected area. For many years the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has been present in the hardest hit areas of Sri Lanka and Indonesia providing services to thousands of people displaced by the wars which have ravaged these countries for decades.

This would not have been possible without our donors and the Jesuit communities and Province of Upper Canada who responded with generosity and compassion. To our donors and to those who are still working in the affected area goes our deepest gratitude.

MAKING FRIENDS

By Pudji Tursana, JRS Field Officer, Aceh, Indonesia

The mission of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is to Accompany, Serve and Advocate for the cause of refugees. JRS has been present in Aceh, Indonesia for many years working with people who have been internally displaced by the war.

Mrs. Janati 36, talks about her chips business while wearing a bright smile. She is happy with her business. She was struck with terrible grief when the tsunami hit Aceh on December 26. However, she has had to carry on with her daily life. Mrs. Janati is one of 36 beneficiaries of a JRS Income Generating Activities (IGA) Program in Padang Reube Village, Nagan Raya District.

The IGA Program is one way JRS supports internally displaced persons (IDPs) to help them rebuild their lives. The first meeting is very important. Sometimes the success of humanitarian action begins with a smile, with a question and a genuine concern for the lives and the experiences of people who have suffered. After a relationship of trust has been established, people who fit our criteria are encouraged to make plans for their activity individually or in groups, no matter how small.

It is a source of great joy to see people restarting

the businesses that were destroyed by the tsunami. The work distracts them from sadness. The tsunami may have destroyed their businesses, but not their motivation, skills and knowledge. This is the case of Mrs Janati, who had a chips business before the tsunami.

JRS also focuses on the situation for children and youth after the tsunami.

We believe that education is as important as any other emergency response. It is essential for their future, and for peace for the Acehnese who have lived with armed conflict for 30 years. Two weeks after the disaster, we sent 15,000 dozen books and stationary to the hardest hit west coast of Aceh.

JRS has also set up health programs in Aceh Besar and South Aceh serving both the IDPs displaced by the tsunami and by conflict with a mobile clinic and health education programs for women and children.

In the three years I have worked with JRS in Indonesia, I have seen the horrible consequences of conflict, but I was not prepared for the unimaginable destruction caused by the Indian Ocean tsunami almost one year ago. My contribution may be small compared to all the needs of the Acehnese, but I believe that making friends will mean a lot to the people that I have the privilege to meet.

ST. PAUL'S HIGH SCHOOL, WINNIPEG

The students and teachers of St. Paul's High School, Winnipeg, raised more than \$10,000 for the tsunami relief efforts of CJI. Tom Lussier, Principal of St. Paul's High School, describes these efforts for us:

"Each homeroom class was asked to raise funds. The Maroon and White Society, a service leadership group of students under the direction of Mrs. Cindy Kochanski, organized the drive. The student council offered an incentive to the class that raised the most money. On Friday, January 14th we had a "casual dress" day where any student bringing in funds would be allowed to dress casually that day. Each morning a student would address the students on the PA about the fund raising drive and I spoke to the students twice during the week as well."



Christy Gadet, John Meehan SJ and Laura Sauder are ready to serve at the Tsunami Benefit Lunch held at the University of Regina.

Photo: AV Services, University of Regina

Seeking Sea

Resting with reason
Moving with passion
You came.
Belly swollen with children
You returned home.

The pied piper lured away
With a melody.
You opened your arms wide
And children ran
Giggling and eager.
With one massive fold of arms
You made barren
All mothers
Standing ashore.
The net was cast
And the young un's caught.

Were you saving them
From a world gone mad?
How long did you plot this,
Surging in a wave
Of rage and rampage
You came.
Are you even now
Counting your catch
Getting ready to cast
Again the net?

Now as you move
Comforting women with waves,
Are you saying -
Believe your children
Are safe,
Purified and preserved
Within my womb.

SUDHA COOMARASAMY
DECEMBER 30, 2004

Sudha Coomarasamy is a Sri Lankan living in Toronto and is a member of the CJI Board of Trustees. Following the tsunami, she worked for three months as a volunteer in Sri Lanka.

NOAH'S ARK: TOGETHER WE BUILD THE WORLD

by Sandra Dewing

Sandra Dewing is from the Wikwemikong Unceded Reserve on Manitoulin Island. She and Gabriel Bennett from the Sagamok First Nation on the North Shore of Lake Huron traveled to Nuremberg, Germany on July 22, 2005 to participate in a two week gathering called Noah's Ark. Canadian Jesuits International was invited by the Jesuit Mission Office in Germany to send two Canadians to participate in this international gathering of young people from 15 countries. Thanks to Fr. Robert Foliot SJ, director of Anishinabe Spiritual Centre in Espanola, we invited Sandra and Gabriel to go as the Canadian representatives.

The experience was one of the best things that ever happened to me. Living in the same building with people from all over the world gave me a new feeling inside. Everyone was very open about their faith in God. I really felt 'at home'. Now I miss my Ark family.

There were 85 'passengers' in Noah's Ark from every continent. Our task was to identify the five most important issues for youth. We had many discussions about

problems experienced by youth around the world, but we also prayed, sang, danced and partied together.

The representatives from each country were asked to identify five issues to present to the gathering. Gabriel and I spoke of alcoholism; drug use; the loss of our identity, traditions and language; the loss of religion; and, finally, teen pregnancies. We spoke to about 120-130 people as different classes of German students came to listen to the presentations.

We first worked by continent, then, after two weeks of praying, dancing and talking to one another, we, 'the passengers of the Ark,' finally emerged with five key areas that demand our attention: neo-liberal globalization and discrimination; education; health and the environment; the role of women and of the family in society; faith and values.

After the meeting, we participated in an Ignatian pilgrimage called Magis, visiting

prisons, nursing homes, and facilities for the mentally and physically disabled. When we left, even some 'tough' guys in the prisons were crying, as some of them came from our same countries.

We decided to create a global forum through a series of websites. We will keep each other informed of all the good and bad things that are happening in each country.

The whole experience was awesome. Meeting everyone from all over the world was something I could never have hoped for.



Send-off meeting with youth group of Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Toronto. From L to R, Jackie Jacalan, Fr. Bert Foliot SJ, Jessica Benedicto, Roseanne Athaide, Gabriel Bennett, Sandra Dewing, Zarab Benedicto

TSUNAMI DONATIONS AND DISBURSMENTS

Donations

Donors	58,822.41
Jesuit Province of Upper Canada	52,480.00
Jesuit communities	10,100.00

Total Donations Received 121,402.41

Disbursements

JRS Indonesia	50,000.00
Jesuit Tsunami Service, India	5,000.00
JRS Sri Lanka	56,848.81
Post Tsunami Reconstruction, Sri Lanka Jesuit Province	3,000.00
Development and Peace*	6,553.60

Report Total 121,402.41

*this amount was matched by CIDA

WE COUNT ON YOUR SUPPORT

Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) is a Jesuit organization committed to the service of faith and the promotion of justice internationally. Originally named The Canadian Jesuit Foreign Mission, CJI has for over 50 years supported the work of Canadian Jesuits and others among the poorest and most marginalized people in the world. CJI has also helped to raise the awareness of many Canadians on the situation of poverty in which millions of people exist and on their efforts to live a life of dignity.

For information on Canadian Jesuits International or to make a donation, please contact us at:

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