

## **Southeast Asia Pacific Capuchin Conference**

26 March 2003

### **Pontianak – West Kalimantan - 18-20 March**

(below) Br Michael Burges (New Zealand), Br Julian Messina (Australia), Br Alex (Japan), Br Cyril Repko, (Papua New Guinea) and Br Petrus Rostandy (Pontianak) with a group of Dayak ceremonial dancers.

The annual meeting of the SAPCC was held in Pontianak, Indonesia from 18 to 20 March. The Provincials from the Philippines, Medan, Sibolga, Pontianak, and Australia. The Vice-Provincial of PNG, a delegate from the Custody of Japan, the Superiors of Thailand, Malaysia / Singapore, South Korea and New Zealand, participated at this fraternal gathering.



The most constant topic for the SAPCC has been the actual makeup of the conference. Some feel that the diversity of cultures of the friars, the differences in mentality and language, the socio-economical, historical-political and religious differences of the countries represented. The varied "ecclesial types" of the circumscriptions. The size of the area covered by the conference, etc., presents a real challenge to bring things together.

The question was asked - *What is the real purpose of a Conference?...* If a Conference is simply meant to be an expression of fraternal sharing then, there is no problem at all.

If by reorganising the SAPPCC we bring about a weakening of the fraternal aspect expressed, then, most feel that it is better to leave the Conference in its present form.

Perhaps regional gatherings of same-interest-groups within the Conference, as already exists between the three Indonesian Provinces, will help provide platforms for discussion by those circumscriptions who have more in common with each other.

Malaysia may benefit in attending the meetings of the three Indonesian Provinces, for example.

The Vice-Province of the Marianas and Hawaii and the Province of Australia might, for example, be invited as *observers* to the North American Capuchin Conference.

# Shared Reflection on CPO VII - SAPCC Meeting

– Pontianak, Indonesia – March 18 – 20

Br. Joseph Nacua, Definitor General, opened the discussion by giving the gathering a few ideas on the nature of CPO VII. Br. Joseph said that the idea of CPO VII was to complete the work done by CPO VI in that while the 6<sup>th</sup> CPO focused on individual poverty, the 7<sup>th</sup> CPO will be looking at the fraternal dimension of poverty and minority.

**How do people perceive our Fraternities?**

**How do we live our life of poverty and minority in fraternity?**

For example: **Priesthood** – How is this ministry exercised with the people and within the fraternity. Is it seen as an office of prestige and power rather than a service? Do the friars who are priests appropriate this office as a personal ministry, without giving adequate attention to the ecclesial and fraternal dimension of this office?

- How do we handle *authority*?
- How do we handle *leadership* roles in fraternity?

Who are the real "*minors*"? Are we like them? Our Gospel fraternal way of life is to be a witness to the poor a leaven to empower them.

To be "*pilgrims and strangers*" means availability. We have the tendency to be attached to our ministries. Often our ministries become our private possession which sometimes leads us to place too much trust in what we do and to put ourselves above the needs of the local and provincial fraternity even to the point of becoming insensitive to the good of the People of God.



Postulancy House in the Country at Sanggau Ledo

Often our functions and the models we use take on identities of their own without due consideration to our Capuchin Franciscan identity.

**Discussion that followed...**

- *Provincials* sometimes become corporate bosses
- *Guardians* become managers and administrators instead of "Home makers" and animators
- *Parish Pastors* follow the classical Diocesan model of Parish Priest
- *Ministries* become private possessions rather than corporate witness of fraternity.

Our Friaries should be homes where friars live in an atmosphere, which is conducive to our Capuchin lifestyle. In many of the circumscriptions of the SAPCC, friaries are also parish houses. This often creates tension between the needs of the parish and those of the fraternity.

Some examples of how the various jurisdictions attempt to face this reality.

- return parishes to the Dioceses (Indonesian Provinces, Philippines to give up 3 parishes).
- return parish houses to the diocese and build Friaries for the friars to live in – (Malaysia, Australia)
- appoint Guardians who are not Parish Priests – (New Zealand, Australia)

Our Constitutions tell us that we are to share the facilities of our Friaries. Br. Joseph Nacua pointed out that the background to these references in our constitutions are more intended for our older Provinces who have large empty friaries – institutions – libraries –buildings. These could be put to good use for the people.

How we form communion among ourselves is how we form communion with others. Our fraternities are to be "schools of communion". As Capuchins we are called to be brothers foremost. The Guardians are to be animators not just good administrators. The Local Chapter is the preferred instrument of animation and formation. We must ensure that they don't become simple occasions to organise house timetables and work assignments.

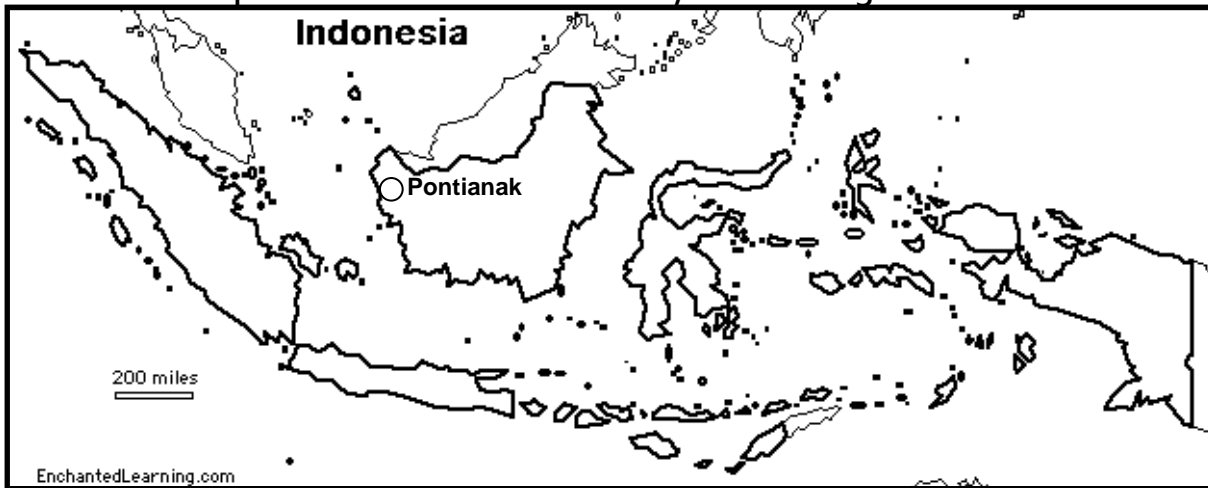
Our "minority" is artificial. Minors are those deprived of dignity, those who have no voice. We talk about minority but we are not real minors (this is the response we get from our students) we are not real minors as compared to minors in our society.

For example, when one becomes a Religious in Indonesia he acquires a high status. The first missionaries were European who were considered high in social status.

We are influenced by Western cultures and we enjoy that status. Too often we allow ourselves to be affected by the secular and consumeristic attitudes of our time. *Personal and communal egoism continually threatens to undermine efforts towards establishing community.. Much of the breakdown of solidarity can be attributed to a false notion of self-fulfilment and individualism. As individualism undermines the unity of the family, so in our Order and our fraternities, individualism threatens to undermine our basic value of fraternity. Despite the fact that we say that the gospel life lived in fraternity is our chief apostolate, in reality, individualistic apostolic activity conditions fraternity.*

*While there are hopeful examples within provinces, all too often we witness in the Order a kind of minimalism regarding community prayer and time spent around the table. When the brothers do come together for recreation in common, it is often dominated by television. The consequence is an erosion of bonds of fraternity among us, a tendency to give priority to community elsewhere and, again increase individualism. (CPO V, 18)*

## The Capuchin Province of St. Mary of the Angels – Pontianak –



Geographically the Province of Pontianak covers the whole island of Kalimantan (Borneo), except the northern part which is part of Malaysia. The presence of the Capuchins in Borneo began with the arrival of four Dutch Missionaries on 30 September 1905. After a short stay in Jakarta they erected the first mission station in Singkawang (central part of West Borneo) where they ministered to a small community of Chinese. In 1909 they opened a mission in Pontianak in South West Borneo which was to become the eventual headquarters of the province.

The first Indonesian Capuchin, Pacificus Bong was ordained in 1934 after studying in the Netherlands. In 1949 the minor seminary was opened in Nyarumkop but it wasn't until 1957 that the first candidate entered the Novitiate in Parapat. The second Dayak Capuchin who was sent to the Novitiate at Parapat was Hieronymus Bumbun, the present Archbishop of Pontianak.

After a long period of being a regional part of the Indonesian Capuchin Province, on 12 February 1994 the Province of Pontianak became one of three provinces formed out of the one Indonesian province. Br. Bart Janssen (Dutch) was appointed its first Provincial. At the Chapter of 1997 the first national friar, Br. Samuel Oton Sidin, was elected to this office, a post he held until January 2003. During his term of office, the province began diversifying its ministries, handing over some mission stations (Parishes) to the dioceses and opened new fraternities with varied ministries. Two retreat/spiritual training centres have been opened. "Trita Ria", Pontianak, in 2000, "La Verna" at Sanggau Kapuas in 2001. The second Novitiate for the Indonesian Capuchin Provinces was inaugurated in June 2001 at Poteng.

The majority of friars of the province are engaged in parish apostolate, however, this is slowly changing. Friars are also involved in formation ministry, education, technical training and various other categories of ministries such as retreats, bible study groups, marriage encounter, spiritual direction, and charismatic renewal.