

SVD THAILAND

Volume 1, Issue 1

Newsletter Date

Special points of interest:

- SVD's, known as Society of the Divine Word or Divine Word Missionaries.
- Arrival in Thailand.
- Development of the Mother of Perpetual Help Aids Center.
- Expansion of SVD presence in Thailand.
- Ministries in the Diocese of Udon Thani.

Inside this issue:

- Children's Programs
- Aids Education and Awareness Program with the youth in schools throughout the Province.
- Home for HIV teenagers.
- New parish ministries with the arrival of SVD priests
- English language ministry in Government schools.
- Training program for teachers to give Aids Education.
- Hospice Care

SVD's Come to Thailand

A New Mission Venture for the SVD:

Seventeen years ago the SVD were encouraged by a former Superior General, Fr. Henry Barlage to venture out into new horizons. Br. James Wilkins and Br. Damien Lunders took up this challenge and were given permission to come to Thailand with the invitation from Bp. George Phimpisan, CSsR to work in the Diocese of Udon Thani in the Northeast.

On March 20, 1999 Brothers James and Damien arrived and soon after began to study the Thai Language. The Thai language was difficult, but with determination soon the Brothers were able to communicate; though, never

100% because of their age. After one year of language study the Brothers came to Udon Thani to begin their ministries with HIV/AIDS and teaching English in local Government schools. For the next two years Brothers James and Damien were to be the only SVD's working in Thailand until the arrival of Brother Ron Fratzke who continued to teach English in the schools.

The Mother of Perpetual Help Center continued to develop with the help of many donors who made it possible to construct the Center as it is today. As the years passed many activities evolved which has given aid and service to the poor and needy in the Province.

Early Activities of the Center

Initially small projects to help children of HIV families; some of these children were also HIV positive. In these early years there was much discrimination for persons with aids so it was difficult for families to find employment; this added to difficul-

ties for them to education their children properly, so the help given through the Center enabled children to receive a decent education. Initially the number of children being help was 60—this number has grown to more than 400.



**Mother of Perpetual Help
Nong Bua Lamphu,
Northeast Thailand**



Assisting Children of HIV & Poor Families



Since 1997 Mother of Perpetual Help Center has been assisting babies and young children of HIV and poor families in the Province of Nong Bua Lamphu. This program started with assisting about 40 children and has grown in to helping almost 400 each year. We are grateful especially to the Holy Childhood in Rome for giving financial assistance as well as so many good benefactors in the States and Europe. Without this help it would not be possi-

ble to help these children. The children and their families are most grateful for help with their school clothing, transport and school supplies.

Most families being assisted are rural rice farmers with little land here in one of the poorest Provinces in Thailand. Here too with the dry arid land it is difficult for families to make extra money to support their families. It is only in the past two years that more develop-

ment is taking place here in the Province.

Nong Bua Lamphu here in the Northeast of Thailand is only about 90 kilometers from the border with Laos and only a 1 hour flight to Vietnam. Because of the short distances and being so close to the Thai borders there are many migrants coming to find work not only here but in other cities in Thailand as well.

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS



One of the priorities of Mother of Perpetual Help Center over the years has been our Aids Education and Awareness Program with the youth in schools. With little decrease in the spread of Aids it continues to be necessary to carry on with this program. With the Nong Bua Lamphu Province having only 6 Districts the Center has

concentrated on giving the Aids Education program to Junior High students in up to 20 schools each year. With a large time constraint the Center decided 3 years ago to begin training teachers and other Government personnel for taking up this important task as well; thus, reaching a much larger number of students every year. Teach-

ers and other Government personnel have taken a keen interest to become part of this training program. Many of the Government personnel reach out as well to villagers in the Province.

Ban Mae Marie – Home for Teenagers



Because of a very generous family in America it became possible to build this home for HIV teenagers. Since the home was completed in 2000 many teenagers have come and gone. Now with less teenagers coming for care Ban Mae Marie has opened up for care of non HIV

as well for care of the elderly. In recent months with an increasing number of persons needing care at Villa Marie Hospice many of those who are able to care for themselves are now living at Ban Mae Marie where they can with some assistance look after themselves.



New Parish Ministries

SVD's are now in Thailand 17 years. The first few years with only 2 Brothers. With many new young priests interested in working in Thailand, the SVD are now 12. Of the 12 the SVD are proud to be of multicultural nationalities. Of the 12 confreres we are Vietnamese, Indonesian, Indian, American and German.

One of our priests is pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Church here in Nong Bua Lam-

phu. Other priests have been assigned to various parishes throughout the Diocese of Udon Thani. Many of them are in parishes which had been neglected over the years so they have stepped in for ministry to many of the small parishes.

With the small number of Catholics in Thailand often there are many, but small parishes so it is necessary to travel from one small church to another on week ends. In spite of the small

Number of Catholics there have been a large number of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. In the Udon Thani Diocese there are a large number of religious orders: SVD, Vincentian, Redemptorists, OMI, along with an endless number of local religious women's groups.



English Language Ministry

From the first arrival in 2000 to Nong Bua Lamphu, the English language ministry has been an important task of the SVD.

There are always people asking to be taught English. One of the Brothers has been involved in the local Government schools since his arrival in Thailand some 14 years ago. Re-

cently he has started teaching at one of the local Kindergarten schools and has found it to be a new challenge.

Teaching English is another easy ministry for those coming for the SVD Overseas Training program. We encourage them to learn the Thai language before beginning ministry in spite

of the program being for only 2 years. Hopefully after their 2 years they will consider returning for a permanent assignment to work in Thailand.



Mother of Perpetual Help Center

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Check out our Web
Page

www.aidshelpthailandia.com

Objective:

To be a center for the development of the body and spirit, the potentials of HIV infected persons as well as the poor in the Province of Nong Bua Lamphu, Northeast Thailand.

To assist homeless and abandoned children as well as adults with a decent livelihood and a proper education.

To assist HIV positive men and women with counseling and livelihood projects for a better life style.

To create and to promote more awareness of the HIV disease in schools and villages as a means for future prevention.

Donations can be sent through our Mission Office at Techny, Illinois

*Divine Word Missionaries
Mission Office
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Techny, IL 60082*

Villa Marie Hospice Care Center



This is the story of Phaen, Mr. Sawan Phimpan from the Kalasin Province in Northeast Thailand. Phaen came to Villa Marie Hospice in 2008 in a poor condition nine years ago. When he arrived the aids antiviral medications had been introduced shortly before. These medications have brought hope and improvement to the lives of so many. There are three stages of medication according to how the body reacts. For Phaen he went from stage one medication to stage three all within a months time as the medications had reacted negatively. For Phaen his skin turned black,

became flakey and peeling. Over the next few months with the third stage of medication which his body accepted, Phaen slowly began to improve and after many months his skin gradually returned to its normal color again.

With his cheery disposition and joyful nature Phaen has been a delight to have at the hospice. As time went by we put him on the staff and to this day he is helping to look after other patients. He helps with the cooking, taking other patients to the hospital for regular check ups. With his knowledge of the dis-

ease he is a great counsellor. Several months ago with his increased ailments including diabetes he himself needed more care and had given all here a good scare. He has come through though and now back in good health once again, back to his cheery and happy disposition which is a help with the other patients at the hospice.