You can inspire others through your life - no matter how insignificant you think that your life might be...Fr Brian Gore, 2015

These words spoken by Fr Brian Gore are the first entry written into my notebook on my recent Caritas Immersion trip in the Philippines. Fr Gore is a Columban Priest who hails from Australia and has almost 50 years of stories to tell about his life, living and working with the poor and marginalized in the Philippines. The remarkable part is that the most inspirational people to me were those who were working with support from Caritas to address the needs of the poor and marginalized.

While I travelled with Caritas I saw and heard about a multitude of partner projects -

- aquaculture including fish farms and crab fattening
- agriculture which included hog production, community vegetable gardens and rice fields, pili nut plantations, honey production and vermiculture
- community food banks and the storage of food for times of disaster
- environmental protection and reef conservation, disaster prevention and typhoon preparedness
- health training, the provision of medical services and programs to address malnutrition
- the provision of water pumps and sanitation
- education which included both 'in school' and 'out of school' courses for children, youth and women in the community, supporting school fees and supplying books and tools
- business skills such as bookkeeping and office management

Through the work of Caritas and its Philippine partners I had a great sense of 'pag-asa' or 'hope', but what I came to realize is that as a participant on this trip I now need to be the bearer or carrier of hope. Although our school's contribution to Caritas through Project Compassion might be just a little pebble in a very big pond, what I was able to witness was that the ripple effect is enormous. It is not about being rich through handouts but more about creating a sense of community where life is better for all. This is the essence of Caritas' work, simply making life better!

Caritas, in working with community partners ensure that funding goes to those who best know the local situation and what type of help is required. Their goals are of building self sufficiency, self management and self empowerment where fairness and having a voice is the key to creating self sustaining communities. Caritas is in the business of helping than building a constant dependency on charity.

If you think of the old Chinese proverb about 'giving' a man a fish or 'teaching' a man to it all works.

I was greatly inspired by the significance of Caritas' contribution to the Philippines through its chosen partners and I can assure you that in this instance, your generosity through Project Compassion is appreciated and exceptionally well appropriated to those who
Our sympathy is extended to the La Sala family (Alastaire Gr 5) on the passing into eternal life of his great grandmother, Betty, aged 92 years. May she rest in peace.

Please pray for our families

We have a number of parents struggling with health issues and some of our wonderful grandparents are critically ill. Please remember to pray for them with your children.

Denise

In this edition

St Augustine’s newsletter is always a good read as it keeps you up to date with what is happening in and around our school. This edition asks for adult helpers for Year 5/6 camp, some more master chefs for the Bunnings BBQ and some helpers for our annual twilight sports in the last week of term.

Ms Jodie provides the 5 Golden Rules for Parenting Success in 2015 on the Student WellBeing page and on the Religious Education page you will find some articles about Social Justice action as well as important information about the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Check out the Parish News page where there’s a call out for participants in a Holy Week play and an invitation to have your say about Mass times.

Enjoy a quick trip Around the Classes and be sure to keep up with all the events between now and the end of Term One on the Looking Ahead page.