



Sihanoukville, December 2016

“YOU ARE CHRIST’S HANDS. CHRIST HAS NO BODY NOW ON EARTH BUT YOURS, NO HANDS BUT YOURS, NO FEET BUT YOURS, YOURS ARE THE EYES THROUGH WHICH TO LOOK OUT. CHRIST’S COMPASSION TO THE WORLD” St. Teresa of Avila

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM SIHANOUKVILLE, CAMBODIA!

As the year of 2016 comes to an end, we wish to extend to you our warmest greetings and best wishes for this holy and festive season.

Paradoxically, while the Christmas season marks the end of one year for most of us, for about 260 young people in Sihanoukville, it is the beginning of a new chapter in their personal journey.

For some, it is the first time in their lives when they do not need to wonder if they would be safe tonight, or when their next meal would be.

The keen, bright-eyed young people being referred to are the new students who have just started their vocational training here in the Don Bosco Technical School, Hotel School and Kindergarten.



Don Bosco Technical School students. Nov. 2016

All will learn new skills which would enrich their lives and those of their families, be they in welding, electrical, automotive, mechanical, childcare, hospitality, secretarial or social communications.

All would improve their proficiency in English as a second or third language.



Don Bosco Kindergarten Sihanoukville. Nov. 2016

The new kindergartens in Sihanoukville and Kep are daily hives of activity. There are bright colors, dangling toys to supplement the singing, games and learning activities which occur with unbridled enthusiasm every day.

Our Vice Rector, Father Albeiro, despite the heavy workload in Kep, still finds the time to come to Sihanoukville once a week to teach the Social Communications students here. Sometimes, accompanied by a horde of volunteers, mostly from South America.

It was so heartening to see our 1st year students celebrating the Khmer Water and Harvest Festivals recently. There were traditional Khmer games, Khmer music and Khmer dancing aplenty!



Our Rector, Father Eugene, and fellow Salesian, Brother Michael, although fairly recent arrivals are now fluent in the Khmer language, songs and dancing- well, perhaps not the song and dancing! Many of the 2nd year students from the Technical School have already started their daily English lessons for the little children from the neighboring houses who gather each afternoon in the rotunda out in the school oval.

Most of the 2nd year Hotel School students are away on internships in other hotels at the moment. This is part of the 6-month internship program as required under the ASEAN Syllabus. The Hotel School has, this year, adopted the ASEAN syllabus. This will mean that a graduation certificate from the Don Bosco Hotel School will be recognized in all the ASEAN member countries.



Don Bosco Hotel School drone view.

While the students are improving their prospects for employment, which would potentially help their families and the Cambodian economy, the Children's Fund has also been busy working with rural families and prisoners.

Sometimes stories are best told with the use of anecdotes. One of our volunteers, whilst in class, was trying to help students locate Cambodia on the map. This proved to be quite a challenge for some. However, many students already knew about Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Australia, England, Mexico, India, US and Colombia. It is a matter of word-association. In their minds, these countries are associated with "donors" and "volunteers"!

To our benefactors from these countries, and others, from around the world, we take this opportunity to say a big

**“Thank you” and the Merriest of Christmases!
HAPPY NEW YEAR 2017**



Roberto Panetto
Brother Roberto Panetto

Don Bosco Hotel School students. Nov. 2016