

Sarnelli House

NEWSLETTER

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

I hope everyone is poised for a blessed Christmas season, and a healthy and happy New Year! Let's face it. The last 3 years really sucked, and we hope that nightmare doesn't return! It has been quite a year for Sarnelli House. Of all our staff and kids, only two escaped Covid. Both of these women worked in the finance office. Many children caught the virus twice, and one little girl, age 5, came down with Covid three times! All the kids' cases were relatively mild, but older folks had some serious cases. Me, being the oldest by nearly 25 years, survived Covid fairly well but then, after two weeks, suffered the effects of "long" Covid. But, we all survived, and that is what counts.

We went through a rocky two year period, seeing our kids coping online. First, the boys didn't cope. Right about the time of the first online classes, I drove into Sarnelli, to see if the boys were settled and eager for this type of learning. Instead of sitting expectantly around the computer screen, they were out on the soccer pitch, having a furious intramural game!



But in the best of times, the online classes were a waste of time and effort. Thank God that era has passed.

Another break we received was that with the passing of Covid, volunteers have returned. Lucas and Lars are older teenagers from our Redemptorist Center in Bonn, Germany. There are two German girls from the Lutheran Church in Oberhausen Germany, plus a Dutch couple who have promised to volunteer for 7 months. And Kate and Brian who have been here for years! Now, guests are returning to visit the kids. I also have two O'Connor cousins here and my niece is coming for Christmas, with my brother and sister coming in February. One of my nephews and his wife are coming in March. It kind of sounds like I will be enjoying my Living Wake.

On July 9, we lost a wonderful lady, who died of cancer. All three of her daughters work for Sarnelli. And 24 years ago, when she heard that I had a wagon full of little kids, with no place to house them, gave me her house to use, and she moved to Pai Si Tong, to stay with relatives. It took me 10 months to pay her \$3,000 for her house, which was the first "Sarnelli House".

This year, we saw many young women and men graduate from college or vocational school and move on. Our population was down to a little over 100 children. Then many babies were given to us, many of them with mental and physical problems, since the parents were taking drugs the whole time. We also received older kids. We now have a set of 5 year old twin girls, and their older sister, so our enrollment is steadily increasing.

We had a bumper harvest of rice, with our fish ponds full and gardens planted. God has been good to us, despite the high prices in food, fuel and electricity. At this Christmas time, we bless the Lord who helped us through the rough patches, and ask His continued help in the future. We thank you all for your help and support during these trying times. I hope all receive the blessing of the Holy Family, and all

God's good graces in the New Year!

Fr. Mike, the staff and the children.

