

Letter from Cambodia  
Friday, January 21, 2005

Dear everybody,

... From the beginning of our time in Cambodia, it was clear that the Lady wanted to plant her feet in this country as well.

When we visited the old capital of Cambodia with its famous temple Angkor Wat, our small hotel was situated close by the little catholic church. The Indonesian priest knew the prayer card and thought it was beautiful. He gave us the address of a Khmer priest in Phnom Penh and was enthusiastic about the idea to spread the prayer card in Khmer, too. There are only five Khmer priests in Cambodia, the rest of them are foreigners. This is chiefly a result of the terrible persecutions that took place during the regime of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. In that time nearly all Catholics either fled the country or were killed.

The Khmer priest in Phnom Penh has translated the prayer card together with another person. We then went to the bishop of Phnom Penh, who is originally from France. Actually, he did not quite know what to think of us and said he first wanted to study the text thoroughly. Yesterday morning we visited him. He reluctantly gave permission, ... provided that we would remove the titles Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate out of the accompanying text. This was no problem for us as nothing was detracted from the prayer itself. The bishop knew of the campaign for the dogma, and was against it. But we had a good conversation with him after all.

The next step was to go to the printers. The Salesians of Don Bosco have built a very large complex, at a long distance from the city, where students are offered a variety of professional training. In this building the Salesians also established a very modern printer. A Philippine father, who, of course, knew the prayer card, runs it. It appeared that he also knew bishop Thakur very well. He was very pleased with the prayer card and was eager to print it. He promised us also to take care of the spreading and to see to it that it will be sent to the three dioceses of Cambodia. 30,000 Prayer cards and 3000 posters with the prayer will be printed; the title will of course be in Khmer. There are only 30,000 Catholics in Cambodia, so this should be enough. At the end of next week everything must be printed. We will bring a number of them back home; in the coming days we will also send the PDF file of the prayer card so that everything can be put on the Internet, too. The beauty of it is that there is no other Marian devotion present in Cambodia. ... The Lady has truly planted her feet in a country where she had not come before.

We will fly to Burma on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February. We are very curious to see if we are able to print something there. Cambodia is a relatively free and democratic country, whereas the regime in Burma is very repressive. We shall see.

Many loving greetings to you all and also to the members of the campaign. We wish you an inspiring meeting.

Pieter and Chiel