

Precious Blood Children's Village Blessed and Opened

On Wednesday, May 1, His Lordship the Bishop blessed and Mr. D. C. C. Luddington, Deputy District Commissioner, New Territories, opened the Precious Blood Children's Village, Fanling, New Territories.

The history, nature, and purpose of the village were outlined by His Lordship the Bishop in the following speech.

"It is with great pleasure indeed that, on behalf of the Precious Blood Sisters as well as on my own behalf, I welcome you all here to-day, for the official inauguration of the Precious Blood Children's Village.

"To-day's occasion marks the realization of a long cherished plan, conceived, of their own initiative, by the Sisters themselves, actuated by their affectionate interest in the welfare of the children entrusted to their care. For, the Sisters well know, as the Church has always known, that the best education is family education, the education a child receives from his parents in the special environment of the home. As orphans have no parents and no family of their own, the best way to bring them up is to place them in an environment as similar to the family as possible. Hence the village with its cottages and its house-mothers, to provide the needed home-like atmosphere. The key-role or, rather, the most important and difficult task is the one to be executed by the house-mother, who has to be the mother of each individual child, so as to mould his character and develop and train his personality. . . .

"The Precious Blood Orphanage was established in 1932, in premises ad-

joining the Precious Blood Hospital. In 1952 these premises were converted into the Babies' Home, and a new orphanage was built here at Fanling. Since March 1963, all the children in the Babies' Home have been housed in the Children's Village, and the Babies' Home had been converted into day-nursery.

"The new Children's Village consists at present of 10 separate cottages, providing accommodation for 120 orphans. The orphans actually housed here are 113: only seven vacancies left. Fourteen of the orphans are children mentally or physically handicapped, and they are housed in a separate cottage, under a specially trained house-mother. The old orphanage building is now used as a vocational training school for the orphans.

"The realisation of the Sisters' long cherished plan has been made possible by the generous support of many benefactors: in particular, of the H.K. Jockey Club, Catholic Women's League, Catholic Youth of the Limburg Diocese through Caritas Hong Kong, for covering the cost of one cottage each; of Mr. Joseph Chong, Mr. Wong Chok Ting, of the teachers and students of the Precious Blood schools and of the Hong Kong Government.

"All donations received, including the proceeds of a bazaar and raffle, sponsored by the Sisters, amount to HK\$332,483.27, while

the expenses for building and equipment total HK\$512,876.37. The deficit of \$180,393.10 is covered with funds provided by the Sisters.

"The expenses for the running of the village are borne by the Sisters who, in their turn, receive annual subventions from Hong Kong Government, HK Jockey Club, HK Football Association and the Wah Kiu Yat Po funds, collected for the relief of underprivileged children in the Colony.

"The sisters wish to express their gratitude and appreciation to all those who in one way or another have contributed to the materialization of the scheme.

"Grateful thanks must be given to the Architect, Mr. N. J. Chien, who with his usual skill and competence has prepared the plans, to Messrs. Sang Yuen for having carried out the construction works; and to Fr. A. Poletti for his advice, encouragement and supervision of the works; to Caritas Hong Kong for providing electrical installation to the whole village; to the Tack Ching Girls Middle School, whose pupils and teachers have donated the marble statue of St. Joseph; to the Social Welfare Department for its advice and a special subvention for furnishing the cottages; to the Catholic Relief Services for foodstuff and clothing.

"The Sisters and children of the village are much indebted to one and all."