The 7 Postulants

Prior Provincial's July Calendar
2 - Meeting with Bishop Raymond Wickramasinghe
6 - Bahay Dominiko House Chapter Meeting
7-14 - Retreat Cainta Nuns, Cainta
9 - One Year Death Anniversary of Fr. Pedro V. Salgao, OP, Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon City
16 - Mass of the Holy Spirit, Letran Manila
17 - Meeting of the Project Development Office, Bahay Dominiko
21 - Planificatio Meeting, Bahay Dominiko
22 - Blessing of Physical Therapy Clinic, San Lorenzo and Companion Martyrs Parish, Navotas
26 - BOT Meeting, University of Santo Tomas
27-31 - Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines - Men, Tagaytay City

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- The Postulants for FY 2018-2019
- Bartimaeus 2018: A Journey To Sight
- Anchors Away to Camiguin!
- Dominicans Observe Day of Reparation in ALD
- Lyceum of Camiguin Opens SY 2018-2019

JULY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATORS
3 Br. Edmund Nantes, OP
4 Br. Siddharta Chiong, OP
5 Br. Junel Pedrosro, OP
6 Br. Roberto Reyes, OP
8 Br. Herminio Dagohoy, OP
9 Br. Raul Obsioma, OP
13 Br. Nico Paolo Moron, OP
14 Br. Hector Mariñas, OP
15 Br. Ariel Adolfo, OP
16 Br. Jaime Alamilo, OP
18 Br. Allan Lopez, OP
19 Br. Vince Stanley Iligio, OP
23 Br. Ernesto Arceo, OP
25 Br. Eugene Cabillon, OP

BIENNIAL COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 19-21, 2018

RETREAT OF THE BRETHREN OF THE DOMINICAN PROVINCE OF THE PHILIPPINES
OCTOBER 22-26, 2018
ST. PAUL RETREAT HOUSE, ALFONSO, CAVITE
SITIO MAGARUBAT CELEBRATES FEAST OF SAN ANTONIO DE PADUA
By Br. Felix delos Reyes Jr., OP

The community of Sitio Magarubat in Barangay Balatubat, Camiguin Island celebrated the feast of their patron, San Antonio de Padua on June 13, 2018. Despite the inclement weather condition, the festivities in honor of the patron saint were conducted at the community chapel. The elders of the community led the rosary and the novena prayer in Ilocano. Fr. Felix delos Reyes Jr, OP, presided over the Holy Mass. In his homily, Fr. Delos Reyes urged the community to always bring the Child Jesus in their life’s journey, just as how Saint Anthony carried the Child Jesus in his arms. After the Holy Mass, nine (9) children were baptized. A community salu-salo was held in front of the chapel. The fluvial procession and swimming competition were not pushed through because of the turbulent waves. Parlor games were conducted for the children along the seashore instead. Outgoing Barangay Captain Gina Ballesteros and other barangay officials graced the occasion with their presence. Brs. Ariel Adolfo, OP and Jaymar Capalaran, OP assisted during the celebrations. The chapel of Magarubat is one of the nine (9) chapels under the Parish of Saint Vincent Ferrer in Camiguin.

ITINERANCY
(as a Priority of the Province)

Br. John Stephen Besa, OP, is assigned to the Convent of St. John Lateran on July 11, 2018.
Br. Ramiro de Belen, OP, is assigned to the Convent of St. Raymond of Peñafort on July 15, 2018.

DEEPER FRATERNAL INTEGRATION
(as a Priority of the Province)

FEATURED BATCH

First Name: OSCAR
Middle Name: LAURIO
Surname: MANLAPAS
Nickname: “Fray Oscar”
Birthday: 3 Oct 1947
Entrance to the Novitiate: 31 May 1970
Simple Profession: 31 May 1971
Solemn Profession: 31 May 1976
DPP ID No.: 197101
Current Assignment: Sto. Domingo Convent (since Oct 2011)


First Name: HILARIO JR.
Middle Name: QUILALA
Surname: SIÑIAN
Nickname: “Fr. Larry”
Birthday: 1 Oct 1951
Entrance to the Novitiate: 3 Jun 1970
Simple Profession: 4 Jul 1971
Solemn Profession: 4 Jul 1976
Ordination: 3 May 1980
DPP ID No.: 197105

Current Assignment: House of San Lorenzo Ruiz and Companion Martyrs (since Mar 2011)

Previous Assignments: Convento Santa Sabina (Curia), Italy (Oct 2008-Mar 2011); Priory of St. Thomas Aquinas (May-Oct 2008); Bahay Dominiko (May 2005-May 2008); Priory of St. Thomas Aquinas (Mar-May 2005); Sto. Domingo Convent (Sep 2002-Mar 2005); General Vicariate of the Queen of China, Taiwan (Jan 1998-Sep 2002); Bahay Dominiko (Jun 1997-Jan 1998); Priory of St. Thomas Aquinas (Jun 1984-Jun 1997); Sto. Domingo Convent (Feb 1982-Jun 1984); Convent of the Most Holy Rosary (Feb 1980-Feb 1982); Sto. Domingo Convent (Jul 1979-Feb 1980); Convent of the Most Holy Rosary (May 1977-Jul 1979); Sto. Domingo Convent (Jul 1971-May 1971)

THE POSTULANTS FOR FORMATION YEAR 2018-2019

AGUEDO FLORENCE A. JALIN JR.
(Cooperator-Brother)
Birthday: October 16, 1969
Age: 49
Address: 2235 Molave Street
Batangas, Tondo, Manila
Education: Lic. Canon Law -UST

JONAS P. MEDIAVILLA
Birthday: June 18, 1988
Age: 30
Address: Brgy. Baguingin
Tigbauan, Iloilo
Education: BS Fisheries - University

IAN ROBERT V. ANGELES
Birthday: November 13, 1993
Age: 24
Address: 4 Del Pilar Street
Dinalupihan, Bataan
Education: Bachelor in Secondary Education-Biological Science - Bataan Peninsula University

MICHAEL ANGELO DELA ROSA
Birthday: April 29, 1995
Age: 23
Address: 132 D Lawa
Obando, Bulacan
Education: Bachelor in Secondary Education-Values Education - Philippine Normal College

MARCO MIGUEL C. LORENZO
Birthday: December 17, 1998
Age: 19
Address: 3073 Rizal Avenue
Manila, Metro Manila
Education: Senior High School - Espiritu Santo Parochial School, Tayuman Metro Manila

KENNETH A. RAMOS
Birthday: May 25, 2000
Age: 18
Address: Unisan Quezon Province
Education: Senior High School - Dominican Academy, Unisan Quezon

DENVER MARX BAYSON COLEGADO
Birthday: September 18, 1999
Age: 18
Address: 475 Poblacion
Makilala
9401 North Cotabato
Education: Senior High School - Notre Dame Makilala Inc. North Cotabato
BARTIMAEUS 2018: A JOURNEY TO SIGHT
By Br. Rocky Niño L. Manire, OP

Eight Dominican Student-Brothers including one Franciscan Religious Brother, two religious priests and one former diocesan administrator composed the 19th batch of the Bartimaeus program held in Caleruega Philippines Retreat Center in Nasugbu Batangas. The program was conducted by professional psychologists, headed by Fr. Noel Deslate, former chairman of the Galilee Center in Tagaytay City, under the Tagbadbad Foundation, Inc. The program, which was held for 12 consecutive days, from June 11-22, 2018, aimed to deal with the deepening and renewal of one’s understanding about oneself through the unconscious.

The name “Bartimaeus” is inspired by a biblical character from the New Testament. Bartimaeus is a blind man who asked Jesus to let him see (Mk. 10:46-52). Like Bartimaeus who entrusted himself to the Lord to receive his sight, participants of the program are encouraged to trust the process, and to entrust themselves to God as they undergo the processing. During the orientation, Fr. Deslate said that unlike other psycho-spiritual processes, the Bartimaeus program is a complete, therapeutic process. It deals with its participants individually, letting them “discover who they truly are and to change the distorted thoughts which were accumulated and instilled in them in the collective unconscious.”

Common sessions were only held during the orientation on the first day and sharing on designated days, the rest of the days were dedicated for private and individual sessions. The individual session lasted for about an hour, one in the morning and another one in the afternoon. The first five days were dedicated for the relaxation of the mind and body, through the Audio-Guided Relaxation (AGR) and Visual-Guided Relaxation (VGR). Two days were allotted for a break and free time, while the remaining five days focused on the processing which had 10 sessions. Three professional Psychologists who mastered their profession in Brazil helped the participants to engage themselves to their inner beings, correcting and healing them from their distorted thoughts about themselves.

To help us in our spiritual exercises, daily Mass integrated with the Lauds was celebrated in the morning. The Exposition of the Holy Eucharist and Vespers were done in the evening, to help us meditate and connect to the Giver of Light who guided and journeyed with us in the “digging” of our collective unconsciousness.

QUALITY FORMATION
(as a Priority of the Province)

ANCHORS AWAY TO CAMIGUIN!
By Br. Vince Stanley B. Iñigo, O.P.

I just finished bathing at the salty and rocky shores of Barangay Balatubat, Camiguin Island while writing this and it is with great delight to tell you all stories not so much of my adventures but of people with genuine hospitality.

But before anything else, I thank the Almighty God for this opportunity to be sent to the Island. I was assigned to teach and I realized that I was a student more than a teacher because the natives of this place have taught me plenty of things which I consider priceless. After our Solemn
Investiture in Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, I told our Director for Pastoral Formation that I was excited yet was filled with nervousness because it would be my first time to sail across massive waters and to follow a curriculum in teaching. He replied that it is normal but his reminder was that I must instead cherish what God unfolds in this journey. And so, praying for enlightenment from the Holy Spirit, together with my brothers, I conquered the tides of Babuyanes.

One thing I realized was that teaching is not easy. As a teacher, you really have to EDUCATE your students – literally, to lead them away from ignorance. For everyone’s information, I am not a teacher by profession [yet] nor had I taken courses like Certificate in Teaching Program before. Almost everything was alien to me. What I carried with me were bits of knowledge and experiences as a student and my ever-loyal friend, a journal notebook.

June 6, 2018

Two days of teaching? Not a piece of cake. I thought all the while that Creative Writing will be easy but then I have to realize that I am teaching in a school in an island where there is no electricity in the morning and text books used by advanced schools are scarce. Students are competent and bright. But how can we say that we are succeeding in teaching if our pupils are struggling? O my! I thought that the textbook that I have in hand shall do the trick. I was wrong. I have to bring the students back to basics. This is not a wish I myself ask to be granted, it is a cry of grade 12 students who are eager to have a voice.

If people would ask whether I had been strict as a teacher, I would answer that I wanted to but I had to think twice if I really had to be or not to be. The people of Camiguin live a very simple lifestyle. No wonder the Student-Brothers who grew up here wish to come home if given an opportunity. Coupled with that simplicity that I was describing is labor regardless of age. Teenagers would have to cook dinner, or feed farm animals, or catch some fish or crustaceans once dismissed from school in the afternoon. I never experienced such thing in my entire life. I had all the leisure of time to sit down and relax during my high school and college days, to open books and the internet, to accomplish my paper works and lessons. My students and I have the same desire to achieve as a bonus academic honors, that is why, they are in a way competent. Because my students lack review materials, I thought that the class would find it difficult to move forward but then, God made things easier for all of us and so I worked double time to make lessons comprehensible and simple. The greatest consolation about the Grade 12 students of Lyceum is that they know how to obey even if they find “their teacher” (which is me) boring. “Love begets love”, as the dictum goes and that became an effective tool. I did my best to learn to love them and so they did the same to me.

Only in Camiguin have I experienced being a Brother, a “priest” (because of their absence for the meantime), and a “matinée idol” all at the same time. I don’t know where my photos with the students will end up but I tried reminding my students to see and hear God’s message instead of “God’s messengers”. And speaking of students and children especially those who loved to play at Lyceum’s compound every afternoon, they allowed me to go back to my childhood days playing and sharing smiles with them even if we do not understand one another’s dialect. At least I was able to ask them one by one, “Anya ti nagan mo?” and if asked me, in return I would say, “Siak ni Manong Vince.”
As to how I would describe my overall experience in Camiguin, I would say that it was like a paradise. People might think that I exaggerate but no. If they would only have a chance to savor this Mount Tabor, they would definitely understand why Peter, James and John would like to build tents instead of going down. While people share their life stories, I feel that I am being reunited with God. If I were the lost sheep, I am glad that God has found me throughout my stay. If only we could read the contents of the missionaries’ hearts, we would understand that there are plenty of reasons why they wanted to be sent here. But just like Peter, James and John, I myself have to go down from Mount Tabor because there are other people waiting, hopefully this time not for the messenger but for the Message.

I thank the Lord for my missionary experience as a Corista. I also thank the people who helped us throughout our stay: Nanay Anita with her daughter Joanna and her granddaughter Mylene, our housekeepers who cooked for us and who hardly digested their meals because of laughing at our jokes, Sir Anthony, a teacher and all-around convent staff for making us feel comfortable even as guests, his co-teachers who are dedicated and cheerful in educating the students, my Grade 12 students and the rest of the students whom I wish have learned more about God than my kapilyuhan, to the Capalaran and Pagaduan families who also treated us as their children whom they want to gain weight, and to all the people of the Island who open their arms and hearts for us to their home. And as I pack the precious memories which I will bring with me back to Coristado, I pray that I will have a safe trip for another long ride and I tell myself that I will “Camiguin”!

DOMINICANS OBSERVE DAY OF REPARATION IN ALD

By Br. Gian Linardo Mari T. Estrella

In solidarity with all the priests and religious of the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan (ALD), the community of the Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary, including the Dominican novices, and the Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag observed the Day of Reparation in ALD on June 18, 2018. The Day of Reparation was declared in order to atone for the sins of blasphemy against God, for the sins of sacrilege and slander against the clerics and bishops, and for the relentless killings in the nation especially of priests. Recently, there were three priests killed, namely, Father Mark Ventura, Father Tito Paez and Father Richmond Nilo.

At 4:30 a.m. on June 18, Fr. Allan Lopez, OP, Parish Priest of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag, Fr. Roberto Reyes, OP, Master of Novices, Rev. Jayson Gonzales, OP, the Dominican novices, and the youth and lay faithful of Manaoag Parish joined the penitential pilgrimage on foot from San Jacinto Parish Church to the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag. Priests and seminarians, religious men and women from different congregations and the lay faithful from various parishes also joined the penitential walk which took about two hours and approximately 20,000 footsteps.

The Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan, Most Rev. Socrates Villegas, DD, together with the priests of the Archdiocese, celebrated the Eucharist at the Basilica after the penitential walk. In his homily, Archbishop Soc urged everyone, especially the priests and seminarians, not to be afraid but to have confidence in God. He also told the faithful to be courageous despite imminent perils and to use fasting and prayer, especially the rosary, as tools to obtain justice and peace. Finally, he encouraged all to rely in the certainty that what is currently happening shall pass and to always trust in the Divine Mercy of God.

The Dominicans in Manaoag also observed fasting and abstinence during that Day of Reparation. Masses were offered, confessions were heard and the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for one hour at the Basilica.
Furthermore, the bells of the Basilica rang for fifteen minutes at six o’clock in the evening of the same day to commemorate the time when Father Richmond Nilo was killed. Lastly, the image of Santo Entierro was also brought out for procession to close the Day of Reparation.

In a humble yet strong manner, the Dominicans of Manaoag, together with all the priests, seminarians, religious and the Archbishop of ALD, preached the Truth at a time when it was needed most.

LYCEUM OF CAMIGUIN OPENS S.Y. 2018-2019
By Br. Vince Stanley B. Iñigo, OP

Most of the school calendars in the cities, especially Catholic institutions, might have adjusted their academic years, but not for Lyceum of Camiguin. On June 4, 2018, Lyceum of Camiguin opened its school year for 2018-2019. The opening began with the daily routine such as the flag ceremony and the praying of the Holy Rosary. This was followed by the introduction of teachers and of the Dominican Student-Brothers who were assigned in

the island for their Summer Exposure. Class orientations were also held that day.

Br. Felix delos Reyes, O.P. presided over the school’s Opening Mass on June 8, 2018 – the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In his homily, he told the students and teachers that every one’s heart must be “burning” like that of Jesus’ Sacred Heart. In order to love and serve our neighbor, we must all be passionate and alive. He related this to the Philippine National Anthem’s lyrics which says, “Alab ng puso sa dibdib mo’y buhay.” After the homily, he led the Induction of the officers of the Supreme Student Government (SSG).

A series of activities was also held as part of the opening of the school year:

June 10 – Parents-Teachers Meeting and Orientation
June 16 – Team Building Activities of Faculty in Naguilian Beach and Team Building Activities of Student Leaders in Lyceum of Camiguin
June 17 – Parents’ Recollection (St. Vincent Ferrer Parish Church)
June 18 – Students’ Recollection (Lyceum of Camiguin)

The one-month Summer Exposure of the student-brothers in Camiguin Island included teaching courses in Senior High School, assistance in the school and in the
parish activities, recollection-facilitation, and concert of the members of the Joyful Friars.

More God-filled experiences await the coming years as the people of Camiguin welcome more Dominican missionaries in the Island.

**July in DPP History**

(Culled from the Archives of the Province)

1975 July 1 – The administration of the parish of Mati was officially turned over by the Maryknoll Fathers to the Dominican Province of the Philippines. It was done within a concelebrated Mass headed by Bishop Joseph Regan, MM. The other concelebrants were: Fr. Thomas Lopez Francisco, OP, who represented the Prior Provincial, Fr. Rogelio B. Alarcon, OP; Fr. Jack Walsh, MM, the outgoing parish priest; Fr. Amador Ambat, OP, the incoming pastor; Fr. Eduardo Flotildes, OP, assistant pastor; and the Provincials of the P.M.E., Fathers and Redemptorist Fathers.

1987 July 21 – 400th anniversary Mass in Sto. Domingo, Quezon City, for the arrival of the Dominicans to the Philippines.

2006 July 22 – Blessing of the first canonical House in Indonesia, the Rumah Santo Dominikus.

**BROTHERS ON FOREIGN TRIP**

(By reason of Office)


✈ 9 Jul-1 Aug – USA – Br. Pompeo de Mesa, OP – To attend the homecomings of the alumni of the UST Faculty of Pharmacy in Illinois and California.

✈ 13-17 Jul – USA – Br. Winston Cabading, OP – To give a conference on spiritual warfare to the catholic community based in Santa Clara, CA.

✈ 15-24 Jul – Europe – Br. Senen Ecleo, OP – To serve as Chaplain in a Marian Pilgrimage.

✈ 28 Jul-11 Aug – Guam, USA – Br. Hermel Pama, OP – Invitation of the sisters of the Religiosas Misioneras de Sto. Domingo to serve as preacher in their annual retreat.


**DEATH IN THE FAMILY**

We pray for the eternal repose of the souls of:

SR. CLARA D. ALVAREZ, OP, of the Congregation of Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, Philippines, who passed away on June 13, 2018.

SR. MA. CATALINA CHAVEZ CARBON, OP, of the Dominican Sisters of the Most Holy Rosary of the Philippines (Molo), who passed away on June 27, 2018.

FOR OUR DECEASED BROTHERS

Per mandate by the Eleventh Provincial Chapter Statute 26, V, we kindly request all communities to include in the intentions of their Conventual Mass and Evening Prayer our deceased brothers during the anniversary of their death in the month of July.

July

3 + Br. Jephte Lucena, OP

6 + Br. Gregorio Hontomin, OP

9 + msgr. Mario Baltazar, OP

18 + Br. Rodolfo Atienza, OP

Thanks to our Brothers and friends who contributed articles and pictures for Phildom.

We in the secretariat will do our best to publish the PHILDOM newsletter monthly for all the readers. **We apologize for any inadvertent mistake in the content of this newsletter.**

Help us by sending your:

» Creative comments

» Articles and news

» Thoughts to ponder

» Suggestions for improvement

Fax to: 732-4652 or e-mail to: opphil@phils.op.org

All articles sent to the Secretariat/Phildom shall be given due consideration. Due to some limit in space however, we may not be able to print them all at once. It may come out at the forthcoming issues. Just the same we are grateful for the articles and newsbits. Please continue sending them; they will be most welcome.
Installation of Br. Rodel Aligan, OP, as Prior of the Priory of St Thomas Aquinas on June 6, 2018 during the evening prayers of the community.
Tzu Chi Free Dental Mission in San Lorenzo Ruiz and Companion Martyrs Parish
June 20, 2018 (Photos from the Facebook posts of Ms. Arlene S. Bautista)
Angelicum School Iloilo Celebrates 40th Foundation Anniversary
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<th>PROGRAMS</th>
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<tr>
<td>AB Communication</td>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>MAY 2018 ➤ MAY 2021</td>
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<td>Tourism Management</td>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>MAY 2018 ➤ MAY 2021</td>
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<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Level III Reaccredited</td>
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I am packing up my things with the enthusiasm of a boy scout in his first outdoor camping – or biblically speaking, like Lazarus who in his sepulchral slumber heard the Master’s bidding to come out of the dark. Oh, life in the niche was not exactly infernal. I was in fact enjoying it to the full. Being a professor emeritus is living a life in continuing sabbatical. It is like going everyday to Boracay for a refreshing swim before the place has become in the words of President Duterte a giant “cesspool”. No daily hurry to hit the road before the traffic gets nasty only to discover to my dismay that my punctuality will not be duly compensated. My students who live just in the residential wing of the building are either persons with physical disability or do not have a sense of direction so that they always get lost on their way to the classroom. Result: here I am always waiting for the proverbial Godot. All that waiting is now over. I have bowed out of the stage just in time before the curtains fall on me. I never want to be dragged out of the stage like Norma Desmond whose super star complex brought her madness to believe that she would always be an actress whose glamour would forever outsize the screen. Less than a versatile actor in this life’s drama, I am just rubbish. That is how I look at myself as a professor emeritus.

But don’t get me wrong. I am not engaging in a senile self-depreciation. I am rubbish all right but the non-biogradable type – open to perpetual recycling. Retiring me from the academe has not made me inactive. I cannot afford to even if I want to. In my life I have not been known as SOMEBODY. My name is actually ANYONE. “Gonzales” is a family name so prosaic in the world that even “Speedy Gonzales”, a cartoon character who always ends its TV episode in misadventure bears my name. I did not zoom in my professorial career like the morning star. I started teaching in my early years grade-four pupils and prepared seven-year old tots for their first communion. My looks are not beguiling either. My appearance does not intimidate anyone. Standing beside me, someone will always look better. In everything indeed, the only rank I can aspire, that is, if I were lucky enough, is to be the second best. But funny, this is precisely what makes me rare. There are so many best – or at least they think they are – that I alone stand as the second best.

Back to the rubbish me. I thought that after receiving my certificate of professorial good-bye, I would be enjoying more dreamy days with my reclining chair. I thought that I would find myself at home with my room. But no. My confreres in Santo Domingo would kid me that now that I am no longer in my regular teaching regimen, they could hardly find me at home and would learn that amazingly I am almost anywhere and everywhere. But I am ANYONE remember? And only the second best. So, when people find it hard to solicit the aid of the best – because allegedly, they are always busy, or choosy, or expensive, or all of the above? He must be praying hard to God that God gave him an immediate reply: “Get the second best and I will do the rest.” Thus enlightened, the kind Bishop wrote to Fr. Napoleon Sipalay Jr, OP, the Prior-Provincial of the Philippine Dominican Province, to please send the second best to teach in his seminary. The Prior-Provincial, knowing his men, identified immediately whom the Bishop was referring to. He must be ANYONE.

As I travel through the newly built highway that has made travel time to Bataan shorter and the travel experience comfortable, I cannot help but feel the adrenalin rushing through my body. I feel young again. I am reversing the tide of history. This must be the same road from Bataan to Capas which during the World War II both the Filipino and the American soldiers who surrendered to the Japanese conquerors journeyed through what history had called “Death March”. Now, no longer in the gory atmosphere of “Death March” but in the comfort of a Toyota Super Grandia, I am cruising along the same road but in the opposite direction: from Capas to Bataan. Mine is a happy “Life March”. Without the menace of a war but with the hope of a future, God’s Providence shows itself benevolent as ever.

God is kind to everyone, but in a most special way, to ANYONE.
The Catholic Church in the Philippines is once again in profound grief after one of her priests was mercilessly murdered. Fr. Richmond Nilo, from the diocese of Cabanatuan was shot several times just before he celebrated the Mass at a chapel in Zaragoza, Nueva Ecija. His body, soaked with blood, was lying on the floor at the foot of the image of Blessed Virgin, another disturbing and painful image. He becomes the third priest losing his life in a bloody attack in the past six months. On December 4, 2017, Fr. Marcelito Paez was ambushed in Jaen, Nueva Ecija. Just a few weeks ago, on April 29, Fr. Mark Ventura was also gunned down moment after celebrating the Mass. We may also include Fr. Rey Urmeneta who was attacked by a hit man in Calamba, Laguna. He sustained a bullet in his body, yet he survived death.

Several weeks ago, I wrote an emotional reflection on the death of Fr. Ventura (see “A Death of Priest”) and I would never hope that I would write another one, yet, just a little later the priest was buried without justice being served. Fr. Nilo lost his life in the line of duty. Surely, this is not the first time a priest is killed in the Philippines. History has witnessed the killing of both Filipino and foreign priests in this land, but to lose three lives in just six months is truly alarming. I was asking myself, “Are we now living in the perilous time for priests? Is to become a priest a dangerous vocation? What’s the point of becoming a priest if it brings nothing but persecution and death?” We have left everything for Christ, our family, our future. Should we give up our lives in this heinous manner as well?

These questions are valid, yet these questions also, I realize, spring from fear. Many priests and even brothers, myself included, have lived in the comfort of our convents.

Provided with readily available basic necessities, with individual cozy rooms, with good-quality education, with other facilities and even amenities, with regular outings, with expensive gadgets, we are actually living as middle-class, if not rich, bachelors. These privileges are meant to make us better and well-formed priests for the service of the people, but getting used to these facilities, we often lose sight of their primary purpose. Our priesthood is called as the ministerial priesthood because the ordained priests are to serve the people of God, but sometimes, the priests and brothers end up being served by the people of God. At times, the virus of clericalism and careerism infects our minds. Ordinations and positions in the Church are seen as promotions, career, or prestige. A better position means better perks! If the priesthood is just another way to make us rich, we have lost the priesthood even before we die! The death of a priest is terrible sorrow, but the death of priesthood in our hearts is the tragedy!

Bishop Pablo David, DD of Caloocan, Metro Manila, reminds seminarians who are aspiring to become priests, that if the deaths of the priests gave them discouragement, rather than inspiration, it is better for them to forget the priesthood and leave the seminary as soon as they can. Bishop David notes that they are not helpless victims, but rather martyrs that bravely choose to face the dangerous consequence of preaching the Gospel and working for justice.

Since the beginning of Christianity, to become Christians, more so, to become priests is a dangerous vocation because we follow Christ in His way of the Cross. Yet, the martyrdom of the three priests turns out to be a shock therapy that wakes us up from our comfortable slumber. It is a call for many of us, seminarians, religious, and priests to ask what the purpose of our priesthood is. Have we died every day to ourselves? Are we ready to give up our lives to God and His people? St. Dominic aspired to give his life even as martyr as he preached the Good News; as his sons, are we ready to follow the steps of St. Dominic?
What is more shocking than the killing of priests is the absence of a massive public indignation regarding this, considering that there are approximately 80 million Catholics.

There was a time when active support for the Church and respect for priests were hallmarks of Catholic identity. Last year, several Catholic priests in China banded together to stop government workers from destroying a church building. Parishioners and other lay Catholics, when they learned about this, came out to support the priests. They sat in front of the government workers and their heavy equipment. Some of them were beaten and sustained injuries. But they stood their ground until the workers and security officials left the venue.

In Mexico, when the government publicly shamed and criminalized priests in order to muffle public outcry whenever a priest was murdered, many lay Catholics immediately came out to fight this strategy. For instance, when the government announced that a priest was a pedophile because CCTV footages showed him holding the hand of a minor, a woman came out immediately and showed proof that the man was not a priest but her husband, and the minor was her son.

In our country, few Catholics openly come out to support priests when the latter become victims of false accusations, intrigues, or hate crimes. In fact, there is an increasing antipathy towards priests, probably due to the media’s tendency to print or broadcast the moral indiscretions of a few members of the clergy, and the constant barrage of obscenity hurled at priests by the President himself.

It takes more than ordinary strength and courage to serve as a priest today. Many priests go about their work burdened by the hardly bearable circumstances that have befallen their vocation today. So, if 80 million Catholics will not stand up for their priests (whose number is diminishing every year), from whom shall priests seek solace and support when faced with life-threatening or difficult situations?

Many priests easily become target of hate crimes because they champion advocacies that threaten the status quo and the vested interests of the rich and powerful.

But many priests are forced to do this mainly because very few lay Catholics (especially those in parish organizations and far-reaching transparochial communities) hardly raise a collective dissent against the ills of our nation. They forget, or simply ignore, that their main mission as lay Catholics is to permeate the secular sphere with the spirit of the Gospels.

Such apathy and indifference are manifest when self-proclaimed enemies of the Catholic Church unfairly criticize, curse, and savagely attempt to destroy her. Worst, many of them — big shot politicians and their compliant mercenaries and unthinking trolls — are themselves Catholics. This reminds me of William Butler Yeats’ poem:

“Things fall apart;
the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed
upon the world. . .
The best lack all conviction,
while the worst are full
of passionate intensity.”

We celebrate today the birthday of John the Baptist, the “voice crying in the wilderness.” Let us pray for the good Catholics who make their voices heard and are not afraid to be called “fools for Christ” firmly believing that what is popular is shallow and transitory, while what is beyond the understanding of the well-educated but morally dumb, is nothing less than God’s word searching for a human voice.
Have you heard the news? Filipinos who want to travel to the U.S., United Kingdom, Australia and Canada, do not need to apply for a visa. A passport is enough. There is another worrisome news. There is a dreadful contagious skin disease that originated from Pangasinan. It is airborne. Once the wind that touched the infected person touches you, you would be contaminated.

Here is another news. President Duterte has just signed a Presidential Proclamation ordering all owners of public vehicles that the computation of the fare should not anymore be per kilometer. Por kilo na! Kaya kung mataba ka, mas malaki babayaran mo.

What I have just mentioned are all what we call nowadays fake news! They are like an infectious disease that afflicts our society. And they are all over the social media and sometimes even infiltrate mainstream media. So many lies are being weaved to achieve selfish interests.


He said to me. “Did you know, my child, that all this time you have been struggling, you have actually been growing roots. I would not give any of my creations a challenge it could not handle.”

He said. “Then in the fifth year a tiny sprout emerged from the earth. Compared to the fern it was seemingly small and insignificant.

But just 6 months later the bamboo rose to over 100 Feet tall.

It had spent the five years growing roots. Those roots made it strong and gave it what it needed to survive. I would not quit on the bamboo. I will never quit on you. Don’t compare yourself to others.”

He said. “Your time will come, “God said to me.” You will rise high!”

By Br. Virgilio A. Ojoy, OP

PHILDOM • JUNE 2018
should I rise?” I asked. “How high will the bamboo rise?” He asked in return. “As high as it can?” I questioned. “Yes.” He said, “Give me glory by rising as high as you can.” After all, I planted you. Source: http://www.jokebuddha.com/Seed#ixzz5IY1TmCDc

My dear brothers and sisters, we are God’s seeds. He watered us through the drops of his own blood. He gave us sunshine through his teachings and his love. We can flourish in goodness, in truth, in justice, in charity and peace. During the times when evil, lies, people hurting and killing one another seem to predominate, those are the times when the roots of the Kingdom grow in us. Source: http://www.jokebuddha.com/Seed#ixzz5IY1TmCDc

STS. PETER AND PAUL: UP FOR A CHALLENGE
Matthew 16:13-19, June 29 at 8:19 AM
By Rev. Jayson Gonzales, OP

Sharing my Gospel reflection for today from Matthew 16:13-19

For the past days, our faith has been stirred by recent activities that should not dampen our spirit but rather invigorate us in the practice of our faith. Today is the best time to be a “real” Catholic. We are all given this chance right now. But what shall we do?

Our Gospel readings for this week emphasize the importance of the conformity of our thoughts, words and actions. These three should be rooted in our identity as “Christians.” We share in the name of Jesus Christ and we ought to follow His teachings, His examples and most of all, His way of love. However, we cannot follow someone whom we do not know. We cannot claim to be authentic Christians if we do not know Jesus Christ.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus even asked his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” He is also asking us the same question. How well do we know Jesus? We can only answer based on our personal encounter and experience with Him. Do we make time for Jesus? Like Simon Peter, can we also say confidently “You are Christ, the Son of the living God”?

Today, we celebrate the Solemnity of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, apostles of Christ. They are great reminders for us that despite our weaknesses and shortcomings, we can still follow the way of Jesus. Saint Peter has denied Jesus three times before he bravely stood for Jesus. Saint Paul has persecuted Jesus before he experienced a life changing moment that led to his conversion. Both of them are known to preach the Gospel to others that has contributed to the growth of our faith. May this Eucharistic celebration animate our zeal to deepen our faith in God and to be true to our calling to love as what Jesus does. We are now given the opportunity to be Christ-like especially this time our faith is being tested. Are you up for the challenge? #hugotnifray
In one of our province-wide activities, the Dominican Communities in the Philippines gathered in Santo Domingo Church to pray the Evening Liturgy as one family under the mantle of our Blessed Mother. As we moved our lips and sang the psalms in unison, the vast majority of lay faithful were attracted and inspired to the graceful celebration of the liturgy. This simple gesture of being and proclaiming our religious identity encouraged them to participate actively in each and every liturgical celebration.

However, to be assigned to prepare the “liturgy” for this liturgical celebration is nothing but “rubrics” – a series of red, often italicized written rules about the do’s and don’ts of the liturgical celebration. These were the initial thought that occupied my mind after being elected as the head of the “prestigious” Studentate Liturgical Committee last formation year; and I must admit – these “red rules” rattle me whenever I prepare the rites of a particular liturgical celebration.

There were a lot of times I fell short to actively do my job as head of the liturgical committee, probably because I misunderstood the role of rubrics in the Liturgy and in my religious life as well. Admittedly, I am guilty of not waking up in the morning to participate in the morning liturgical celebration for several times, just to save the requirement papers I need to submit the next day. I am also guilty of the times I would rather extend my sleep in the afternoon than attend the Vespers, because of so many excuses that are not even important. But it is when I recognized the real value of rubrics that I realized that I fell short in understanding the sacred liturgy – an element which would nourish and quench the thirst of my spiritual life – that every time I do not wake up in the morning, Jesus is hurting; that every time I skip our Vespers, Jesus is saddened by my unfaithfulness; that every time I participate in our liturgical celebration half-heartedly, Jesus is wounded by my inattentiveness.

Rubrics are written to give us appropriate instructions, to give us a more meaningful and more graceful understanding of the flow of the liturgical celebration. They are not written to confuse people, to mislead people or even to mechanically dictate the end of the celebration. Rubrics are not the Liturgy per se, but the guide with which our efforts to be worthy in front of God would be more aligned with the proper reception of his grace and sanctification.

Rubrics will only be appreciated if applied in proper context, that the directives they signify are properly executed for the gracefulness of the liturgical celebration in glorifying God and sanctifying his people. Rubrics lead us to the gracefulness of Christ’s love story with humanity in commemoration of his passion, death and resurrection. Rubrics will certainly not lead us to heaven, only love, but these rubrics can be an instrument for us to be in heaven, because it is through these rubrics that we understand what we love, who we love, and why we love. As I continue my journey to strive for perfection for the sake of God’s kingdom, I hope and pray that these rubrics will always inspire me more to fully appreciate the beauty of liturgy, the beauty of praying and praising God as he sanctifies us in our full, conscious and active participation in this foretaste of heaven.