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THE RECOLETOS OBSERVER

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History:

The First Indio Recollect
Brothers and Priests

Witnessing:

Recollect spirit reaches Malaysia

Renewal:

Community and the Vowed Life

Love is missionary



TO ALL RECOLLECT RELIGIOUS:

Our *OAR Heart* was set on fire! The Congress on OAR History that culminated the year 2004 has truly re-rooted us in the missionary dimension of our charismatic identity. Constant reference to this charismatic identity was repeatedly done during the 53rd General Chapter in the discussions on the areas of apostolate. Perhaps there is more than coincidence here. In the recently concluded *Congresso* 2004 of all major superiors of religious institutes (Rome, November 22-27) the general secretary of the Union of Superiors General and one of the organizers had this to say: "One of the big changes to religious life is that, until recently, we focused on 'providing services'; now we are focusing more on expressing *charisma*."

The provincial council of St. Ezekiel Moreno and the priors of our communities met and underlined the most salient developments in the province after the General Chapter. These were interpreted against our Triennium Plan, the Three-Year Guide of the *Recoletos 400* and the results of the General Chapter. Three highlights were presented and which were first shared with our communities in Negros and Cebu last Advent 2004.

1. The focus is on the missionary dimension of our Order. Within the remaining part of the triennium we campaign for more volunteers to the missions prioritized as follows: Sierra Leone, Palawan, Brazil and Taiwan. This campaign includes the invitation to improve our financial planning and widen our linkages in support of the

missions and formation of religious and missionaries.

2. We need more seminary formators and professors. The brothers are invited to take up further studies in the sciences of the Church. We also continue to encourage religious undergoing secular development programs to enrich their studies with ecclesiastical and Augustinian Recollect element.

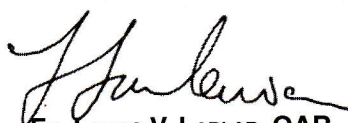
3. The "desire to grow and work" is evidenced by the many improvements in the different areas of apostolate. All these, together with the need to go to the missions and to take up higher studies, may "scatter" the religious. We can fall into that "multiplicity" of concerns mentioned in our Constitutions (Const 11). We might turn into professionals or workers of religion and cease to be OAR religious sharing their *charism* in their works and professions.

This can be avoided. Let us renew ourselves. Renew with joy and hope... we can be a happy community, sharing with the other members of the Church the Augustinian Recollect *charisma*.

May we begin the year with Mary as we *keep the OAR fire burning* (2005) in every brother, in every community! OAR life, more than doing a job, is being witness of Augustinian spirituality lived the Recollect way... all for Christ and his Church, the people of God. *Onwards Recoletos 400 (2006)!*

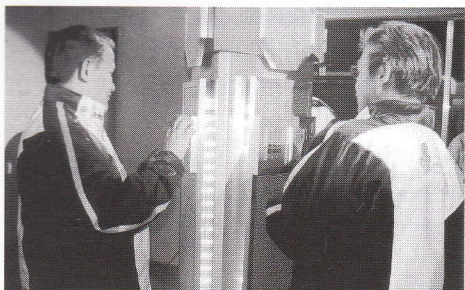
December 26, 2004
Feast of the Holy Family
Quezon City




FR. LAURO V. LARLAR, OAR
Prior Provincial



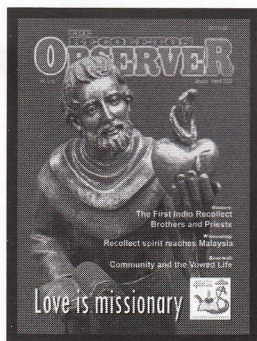
**National Conference on OAR
History, Culture & Legacy — PAGE 6**



**Globe Telecom--USJ-R Partnership
— PAGE 9**



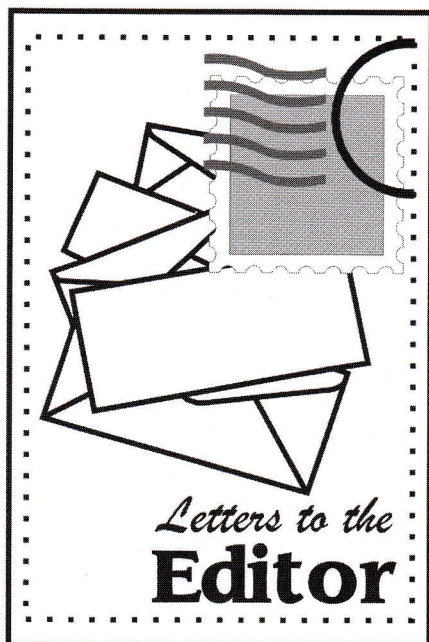
**Blessing of the convent and sacristy
in Caidiocan — PAGE 15**



COVER

Authentic love reaches out and serves.
It is, therefore, missionary.

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[Note: For brevity, the letters were edited and replies had already been sent to our 'reactors'.]

REACTION to the article: **"VALENCIA, NEGROS ORIENTAL 1854 or 1856? That is the question."**

I suppose you agree with me that **THE RECOLETOS OBSERVER** which "*is the Official Quarterly Newsletter* (emphasis added) of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno – Order of Augustinian Recollects" (quoted: inside back cover, The Recoletos Observer, July-December 2003) is a "MEDIA" and as such is for public consumption. One of the FIVE (5) criteria of the Catholic Mass Media Awards which is based on Pope John Paul II's "ETHICS IN MEDIA" is **LOVE FOR TRUTH** - *media productions that reflect the highest standards of TRUTH and FAIRNESS.*

I shared your article with my brothers, sisters, friends and some fellow Recoletos. These are their reactions: "*unprofessional, unethical, unkind, unfair, unjust, character assassin[ation], can be sued for libel.*" Why? Because:

First: You attributed to me the "*Authorship of the First Account. Entitled: **The History of the Parish of Our Lady of the Abandoned** (emphasis added)...is penned by Rev. Fr. Rafael Cabarles...*" which I never wrote. Somebody must have read my work in Cebuano: "*Drama-Tableau: Ang Balaanong Kasaysayan sa Valencia...*" and then "put words in my mouth" as my own in English.

Second: Granted, without admitting, that I was mistaken, you could have **verified** first if I am the author and if I have based them on the **primary sources** before publishing. I was and am still alive, and not six feet below the ground.

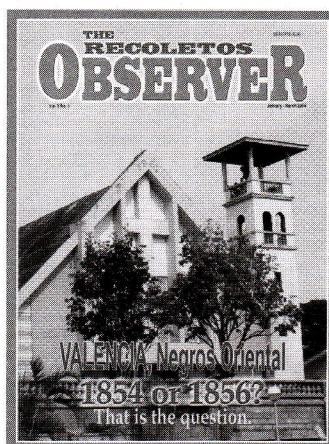
Third: What was your **motive** in publishing without verifying? To seek the **truth and fairness** or to destroy one's brother's character? There was a shade of malice. A wise saying says: "*See people not as they are but as they can be.*" No wonder why even Fr. Provincial, who holds the highest position of the Recoletos in the Philippines, insinuated before the presence of Valencianons during the Culmination of the Jubilee Year last March 31, 2004 that based on Recollect Archive: "*Bad news is: It seemed unclear at least to some, whether the celebration was meant for the town or for the parish.*" I was so embarrassed that I did not join the gathering after the ceremonies. He cast doubts among the people of Valencia whose Sanggunian made me "**ADOPTED SON OF VALENCIA**" (**Resolution No. 65, Series of 2003**)

You ended my supposed article: "*It is unfortunate however... that it failed to identify its sources...*" (emphasis added). You condemned an innocent brother without due process!

Then you proceeded by saying, "**Birth of the Second Version...** This propelled Fr... a church historian ... He entitled his work **"A Short Historical Information on Valencia, Negros Oriental..."**

"After reading the Second Version, I found that we differed not only on two historical data but on eight historical data..."

--Fr. Rafael Cabarles, OAR



After reading the Second Version, I found that we differed not only on two historical data but on eight historical data...

Before you concluded you put your five "**Sources**" as primary sources on which you based your Second Version.

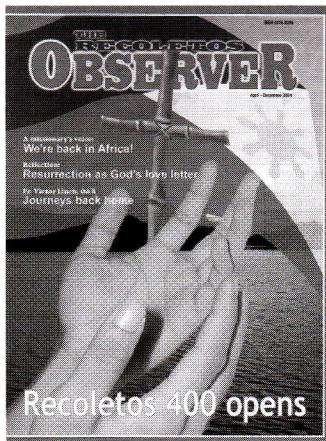
Then you continued: "**This version... Was Valencia as a town founded in 1854 or 1856? Was Valencia as a parish founded in 1854 or 1856?**" Then you concluded: "Here we are **certain**: (emphasis added) *based on the available primary sources*, (emphasis added on underlined words) *the second version rectifies the major historical flaws of the 'first' account.*"

"Quod gratis asseritur, gratis negatur."

Since you said that: "*based on the available primary sources, the second version **RECTIFIES THE MAJOR HISTORICAL FLAWS of the first account***," please prove to the world by putting your **primary** sources to the eight (8) historical data, as properly indicated. As Prof. Romanillos said that books are not primary but secondary sources of data. Manuscripts are primary sources of the data. I hope you can cite their sources, their dates, and their pages.

Since you already published the corrected "*flaws of the first account.*" You must have your primary sources at hand: "**...based on the available primary sources, the second version rectifies the major historical flaws of the 'first' account**" (emphasis added) and therefore you do not need to do more researching but just put your corresponding primary sources to the eight historical data. †

FR. RAFAEL CABARLES, OAR
Santo Tomas de Villanueva – Recoletos
San Carlos City, Negros Occidental



**"I've made the
RECOLETOS
OBSERVER one of our
principal sources
of information about
the Recollects
in the Philippines."**

--Mr. Dennis Madrigal

Your July-December 2004 was a good source for theological, pastoral and religious topics which can be used in catechesis and lectures. The news keep us abreast of what's going on with the Recollect province in the Philippines, especially that we are preparing for the RECOLETOS 400 celebration. Since we are also publishing our department magazine (*TOLLE et LEGE*), I've made the RECOLETOS OBSERVER one of our principal sources of information about the Recollects in the Philippines. In fact, we are very grateful that you have given us the permission to reprint the article, "The Unique Characteristics of the Passion of the Christ" by Fr. Leander Barrot, OAR. It has helped the Religious Education Faculty reflect on the catechetical aspect of the film. †

MR. DENNIS MADRIGAL
Editor, *Tolle et Lege*
University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos
Bacolod City

Conference on OAR History

San Sebastian College-Recoletos, MANILA—The National Conference on OAR History in the Philippines on 3-4 December 2004 was pushed through despite the threats of “Yoyong” (international codename: Nanmadol), a super typhoon that was ravaging particularly the southern and eastern parts of Luzon. By a leap of great faith, pleading for their friar-ancestors’ intercessions, the organizers decided to get on with the conference as scheduled.

To grace the early morning’s ceremonies, His Excellency Most Rev. Gaudencio Rosales, D.D., Archbishop of Manila cut the ribbon marking the opening of the OAR EXHIBIT. The prelate also led the opening prayer to launch the conference in an ambience of thanksgiving to God.

Shortly after, the conference proper began. The speakers of the said conference were respected historians: Fr. Angel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, the official Recollect historian based in Rome, talked about “The Augustinian Recollect Missions: Arrival in the Philippines and Spread of its Mission”. A Butuan-based parish priest, Rev. Fr. Joesilo Amalla shared his notes on “The Augustinian Recollects in Mindanao”. Dr. Luciano P. R. Santiago, a medical doctor by profession, dwelt on “The First Indio Recollects and Recollect Beatas” while Rev. Fr. Jose Arcilla, a Jesuit historian, attempted to clarify the age-old question concerning “Jurisdictional Conflicts between the Recollects and the Jesuits in Mindanao.”

The following day was as much interesting and informative as the first. Dr. Esperanza Gatbonton delivered the paper prepared by Bambi Harper on “The Augustinian Recollects from a Layperson’s Viewpoint”. Prof.

Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos talked about the “Augustinian Recollects’ Contribution to Arts and Culture.” The final afternoon of the conference was dedicated to the themes “The Augustinian Recollect Sisters: The Spirituality of the Beaterio de San Sebastian” delivered by our very own historian Fr. Emilio Edgardo A. Quilatan, OAR and “Augustinian Recollects’ Contribution to Engineering and Architecture” by another renowned historian, Prof. Regalado Trota Jose.

Close to 500 participants attended the conference: The Recollect

religious, priests and sisters coming from the different islands took a pause from their daily chores so as to be informed about the great and rich heritage the Order has bequeathed to the Philippine society and culture. The Recoletos de Baguio community showed their full support braving the inclement weather. Theologians and novices trooped to San Sebastian College auditorium for an early preparation and registration. The Secular Augustinian Recollects associated with the different Recollect communities so desiring to know about the yesteryears of the religious family they now belong to also came by waves. Historians from the different universities in Metro Manila and elsewhere as well as students of history from different institutions trickled in. There were Recollect ‘aficionados’ representing the different parishes founded and once administered by the Recollect missionaries. Also present were representatives of the different congregations. †



Archbishop Rosales led the ribbon-cutting ceremony

Family Reunion 2005

Not just a party

Provincial House, QUEZON CITY—The Recollect family of St. Ezekiel Province celebrated a Christmas Party last January 6, 2005 at the Provincial house to thank the Almighty for the blessings and graces received in the year 2004 and to welcome the year of the rooster (2005) in the spirit of renewal.

This year's gathering was a bit different since it was intended to spark a year-long renewal as a fitting preparation for the Fourth Centenary celebration of the Recollects' continuous presence and missionary work in the Philippines and Asia.

After a Holy Hour liturgy at St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish church which ended at around 5 pm, the brothers made a communitarian reflection on "Community and the Vowed Life" prepared by Fr. Ferdinand Hernando who underscored the need



The community of brothers before the Eucharistic Lord

for forgiveness as necessary ingredient in achieving growth in common life.

Group sharing ensued. All Recollect priests, religious and seminarians were divided into smaller groups so as to share thoughts on the dynamism of shaping human and vocational growth within the community context and to recall

lessons drawn from the experience of having forgiven and being forgiven.

At 7 pm, party began. A sumptuous dinner, bingo social, and gift-giving were all prepared by the Provincial house.

Seminarians from the Novitiate, Pre-Novitiate and Theologate houses took turns in greeting their elder brothers by their festive carols. Not to be left out were the formators from Baguio led by Fr. Bernard, the rector, who represented the CaReS community in their impromptu rendition of "What Child is this."

The Recollect's annual party is traditionally held after January 1st when all other sectoral celebrations are over. †



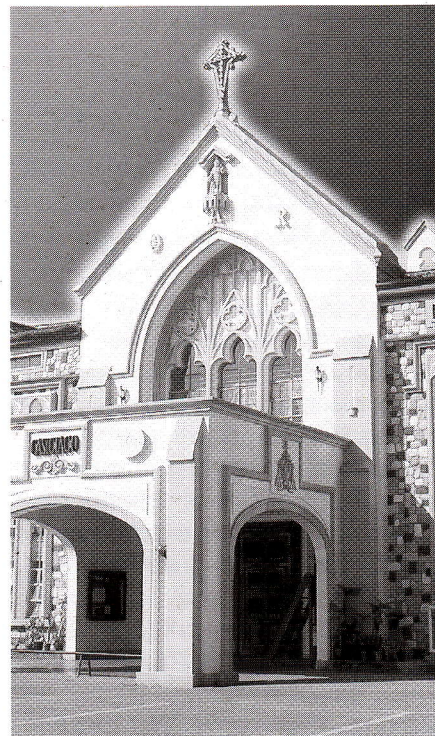
Sharing of presence

Recoletos de Baguio wins "City of Lights" Competition

BAGUIO CITY—What was intended to be just a customary putting up of Christmas lights in the seminary premises turned out to be a great surprise. As early as November seminarians would already start adorning the trees and poles in the seminary façade with variegated lights glittering in the evening like bushes flocked by millions of fireflies, mounting a giant Christmas tree with multi-colored lanterns on top of the "heli-pad" kiosk, putting up a lighted crucifix with three lines of series lights streaking down to the pillar... Then on the feast of St. Thomas of Villanova, on 25 November, a ceremony would take place right after vespers to beckon the observance of Advent season. This year was no different, except in the motif and style.

The thought of participating in a contest was last in the minds of the Recollects. It was only later that news floated around informing the community of an ongoing city-wide "City of Lights" competition. "Well, we lose nothing if we participate," the Fathers thought. So, for the sake of filling up the forms, Recoletos de Baguio submitted its official entry to the *Office of Barangay Affairs*. Little

did the community know that, while most of the members were on vacation, a team of judges came to see the seminary campus one night and adjudged it the best among the participants. On December 30, 2004 a certificate of recognition together with a claim stub for the prize money of Php30,000.00 was awarded to the seminary at the skating rink, Burnham Park, Baguio City. †



Seminary facade

CaReS bags 1st prize in logo contest

BAGUIO CITY—The annual gathering of high school and college seminaries here in Baguio City, or the so-called *Inter-Seminary Forum of Baguio* (ISF-B) took place last January 16 and 30, 2005. The San Pablo Seminary in Crystal Cave hosted the two-Sunday events. Among these events participated in by 4 seminaries was the logo-making contest with the theme, "SangKristohan". Bro. Richard Alvin Plata, a senior seminarian of Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary (CaReS), won the first place. The winning entry will be used for the next school year's program. †



The ISF-B Logo:

The hands represents the 4 seminaries in Baguio City: St. Francis Xavier Seminary, Maryhurst Seminary, San Pablo Major Seminary, and Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary. They form a cross which signifies unity under the banner of God.

The Chalice and the Host represent Christ, the Eucharistic Lord, who binds and strengthens that unity.

The blue background represents our contemporary times: ISF-B is a unity of seminarians in the midst of a changing world. †

Recoletos to Return to Palawan

BAGUIO CITY—"Due to some sentimental reasons, we are glad to be back to Palawan!"

Declared Fr. Bernard Amparado, OAR regarding our missionary apostolate in a 60-minute *State of the Province Address* (SOPA) to the participants during the second day of the Fifth OAR Formands' Convention last October 26, 2004.

Fr. Bernard, the third provincial councilor, was speaking in the name of the Prior Provincial who, together with Frs. Regino Bangcaya, OAR and Constantino Real, OAR, first and second provincial councilors, respectively, was then attending the General Chapter in Rome.

Recoletos Philippines is intensifying more the spread of her missionary efforts both locally

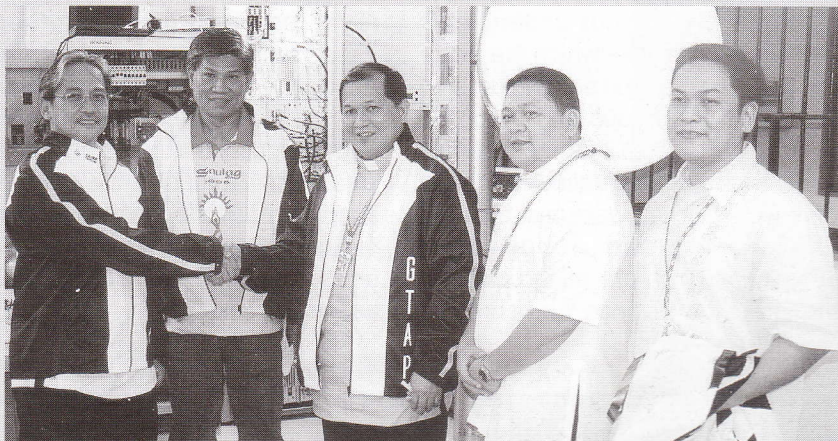


Celebrating the joy of one another's company...that's the Recollect spirit.

and internationally. Fr. Bernard, also rector of Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary hosting the said convention, disclosed: "Actually, we have many invitations for missions. However, we prioritize the one in Palawan

because it has a special role in shaping our humble beginnings as missionaries." Then, he added, "What we are now are all fruits of these earlier missions. Right now, the question is when are we to return to Palawan?" †

USJ-R avails itself of GTAP



(L-R) Jones T. Campos, Globe Telecom head for public relations, Dr. Enrique P. Grecia, CHED director for Region 7, Fr. Constantino B. Real, OAR, USJ-R president, Fr. Sixto Bitangjol, OAR, VP Academics, and Dr. Gregg Victor Gabison, Dean of graduate school.

Sun.Star CEBU—University of San Jose-Recoletos (USJ-R) Cebu is the only university in the Visayas and the first in the country to avail itself of the Globe Technical Advancement Program (GTAP).

GTAP is Globe Telecom's nationwide industry-academe linkage program that intends to promote student excellence in the fields of science and engineering by providing hands-on training as an important extension to classroom learning through the use of digital technology and equipment that Globe is known for.

cont. page 10

USJ-R avails / from page 9

The project also offers a curriculum development module that will help integrate basic Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) information in the existing curriculum. [...]

According to Jones Campos of Globe's Public Relations Division, they plan to have one school in Luzon, one in the Visayas, and one in Mindanao to host this project.

"We coordinated with CHED and found out schools that are centers for excellence and ones with electronics and communications courses with complete facilities. USJ-R is one of them and is the first university which positively responded to Globe's GTAP offer, which we believe, will go a long way and will give birth to more initiatives that students will benefit," Campos said during their recently concluded launching held at USJ-R's Conference Room.

For Globe Telecom, GTAP is an expansion of their mission of connecting people through technology while for USJ-R president Fr. Constantino Real, OAR, it is the university's "continuing expression of its commitment towards quality education for our students." †
(Aurelia L. Castro)

Assembly of St. Augustine Province

Fr. Larlar stood as "book-enders"



Fr. Lauro Larlar (third row, third from left) with the participants

Oxnard, CALIFORNIA, USA—His interventions were attentively listened to and welcomed during the 53rd General Chapter in Rome. His views with regard to formation, governance, mission, common life, among others represented fresh and dynamic standpoints that articulate 'new' paths—without undermining charismatic fidelity—which the Order can take for the next sexennium and beyond. This religious who heads the youngest Province of the Order has administrative experiences for most of his religious life to back him up.

Words spread about those 'novelties' which are taking place in the Philippine province. And it brought

Fr. Lauro V. Larlar, OAR, prior provincial of an all-Filipino Recollect province, to a provincial assembly of 41 religious of the Province of St. Augustine. He was invited to the gathering which was held on January 10-14, 2005.

This year's provincial assembly revolved around the theme: "Reconciliation and Fraternal Unity". According to Fr. Larlar, he was not only invited to give a talk on the *Rule* of St. Augustine at the start, but was also made to align all the week-long sharings and reflections according to the same *Rule*. In that sense, he stood as "book-enders" of the entire assembly. †

Erratum

In the last issue (Vol. 5, nos. 2-4), under the title "Fr. Lluch, OAR Journeys Back Home", p. 33, one sentence there should have read: "He attended the Second Provincial Chapter held in **February** 2003..."

Love is missionary

Love is at the heart of Christian life. Therefore, every Christian is a lover.

To St. Augustine, its flip side seems surprising. In his *Tractates on the First Letter of John*, this great bishop of Hippo wrote: "Anyone who does not possess love, denies Christ's incarnation." Quite revolutionary but logical enough, because—as he also claimed somewhere—without the motive of teaching how much God loves us, and that we may learn to love him and our neighbors, there would be no reason why Jesus should have become our neighbor. Hence, a hardcore Augustinian cannot just resist nor refuse this fire of love that impels him to go where the Church needs him.

This overflowing love best exemplified by the sending of the Son to the world by the Father is, therefore, patently Christological! And that is the kind of love that is missionary...

As we in the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno align ourselves with the theme "*Amor diffusivus*" (*Diffusive love*) for this year 2005 in view of the fast-approaching Fourth Centenary celebrations, we are urged to reflect more intensely on this abounding love that gives birth to our missionary vocation. The incumbent Prior Provincial, ever allegiant to our Augustinian and Recollect traditions and historical roots, is himself an ardent "campaign manager" for the missions. While his advocacy has obviously gained support province-wide, he also unfailingly italicizes the primacy of our *primordial mission* of prayer and community life as our "full-back position" in our mission *ad gentes*. As a philosopher, he knows by heart the basic principle, "*nemo dat quod non habet*" (literally: *no one gives what he does not have*).

How true, then, is the reminder of Pope John Paul II's post-synodal exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* when it says that "there can be no true evangelization without the explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord" (#19)! Profound anchorage in the very person and life of Christ, the wellspring of love, is a necessity for an effective and dauntless 'gospelization'.

May we all heed the never-ending challenge of always *starting afresh from Christ* especially in our Eucharistic celebration for, indeed, "entering into communion with Christ in the memorial of his Pasch also means sensing the duty to be a missionary of the event made present in the rite" (*Mane nobiscum Domine*, #23). †



The First Indio Recollect Brothers and Priests

by DR. LUCIANO P.R. SANTIAGO

Excerpt from the paper entitled, "The Filipino Indio Pioneers in the Order of Augustinian Recollects: Priests, Brothers, Tertiaries and Beaterios (1621-1898)" delivered during the national conference on Recollect history, legacy and culture at San Sebastian College-Recoletos Auditorium, Manila on 3 December 2004.

Introduction

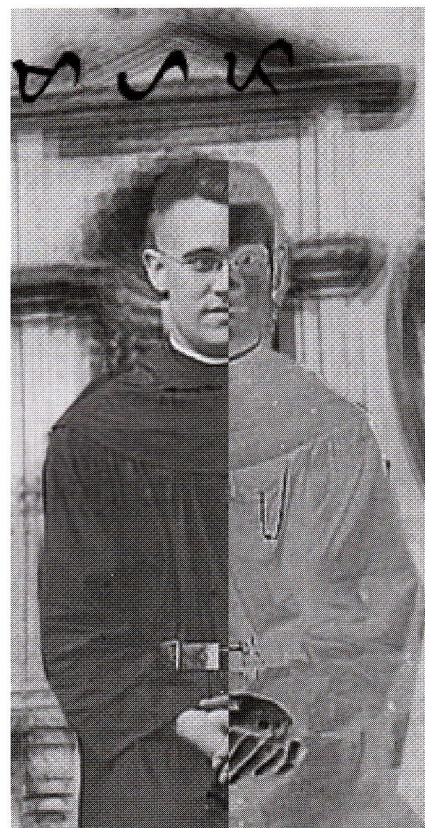
Historically, the term Filipino may be used to include those who were classified during the Spanish Period as Indios, Chinese and Spanish *mestizos* and *criollos* (Spaniards born and raised in the Philippines). In that era, the latter were the ones called "Filipinos." However, when it comes to the Filipino pioneers in the Recollect Order, we do not have to make distinctions as to their racial background because almost all of them were Indios, whether as specified in the original records or by inference.

Table 1.

Name	Provenance	RC	Status	Profession
Fray Juan Dimatulac de Sta. Maria	Macabebe, Pampanga	Indio	Lay Brother	1660
Fray Bernabe Barrios de la Ascencion (b.1651)	Romblon, Romblon	Indio	Lay Brother	1692
Fray Narciso Hernandez de Jesus Maria (1789-1865)	Pandacan, Manila	Indio	Priest	1813
Fray Mariano Lacandola de Sta. Rita (1793-1825)	Calumpit, Bulacan	Indio	Priest	1818
Fray Leocadio Pasaua de la Virgen del Carmen (d. 1861)	Binondo, Manila	Indio	Lay Brother	1848

The last of the pioneer congregations to reach the Philippines in 1606, the Recollects named their province after San Nicolás de Tolentino, the first Augustinian to be canonized. Half a century later, they accepted the very first Indio Recollect and lay brother: **Fray Juan Dimatulac de Sta. María**, a native of Macabebe,

Pampanga. A lay brother pertained to the first order and was a full member of the congregation. He was the son of Francisco Dimatúlac and María Uri. His paternal surname indicated that the family belonged to the brave warrior class that "could not be pushed around," the rough translation of their



patronymic. He professed on March 4, 1660. Nothing else is known about him.¹

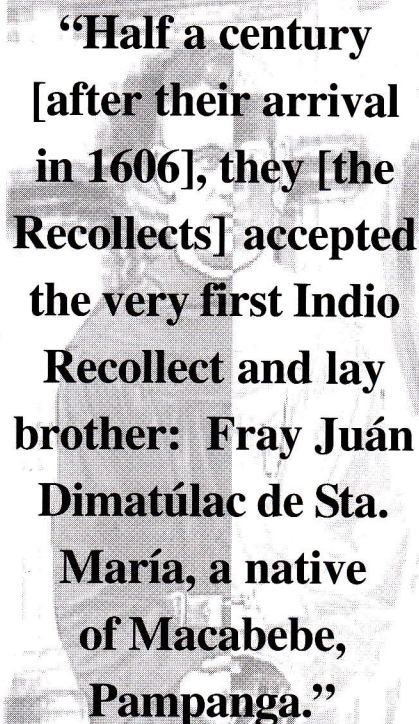
Seven months after his profession, the Pampango Revolt broke out and it spread to the provinces of Pangasinán and Ilocos. It reached as far as Bolinao then located in Zambales where the Recollects had started the first Philippine beaterio a year earlier. The rebels burned down the church of Bolinao. The town fell into deep poverty but this did not prevent the continuation of the local beaterio by the intrepid Recollects.²

Fray Bernabé de la Ascención, a native of Romblón, Romblón was the second Indio Recollect and lay brother. The

son of Antonio de Barrios and Francisca Simpán, he was baptized on June 12, 1651. Probably because of his racial background, it was only in middle age that he professed on March 2, 1692. No other data is given about him.³

The first Filipino Recollect priest and third Filipino Recollect was **Padre Fray Narciso Hernández de Jesús María**. He was born in Pandacan, Manila on August 5, 1789, the son of José Apolonio and Paulina Bini. He was either an Indio or Spanish mestizo. At least his mother was an India as implied in her surname, which means "gentle or modest" and which was carried by women of the native nobility. He pronounced his solemn vows on May 26, 1813. His first assignment was the Parish of Paminguitan (now Cortés) in Bohol. For forty-five faithful years, from 1819 to 1864, he served as the pastor of Nuestra Señora de La Consolación de Guindulman also in Bohol. He was nominated as the *prior vocal* of Baclayon (1828), Dapitan (1831), Cebú (1839) and again of Baclayon (1842).⁴

During his eventful term in Guindulman, its first church was razed by the followers of Dagohoy in 1827. Despite this wanton destruction, he magnanimously assisted in the peaceful resettlement of the rebels after their defeat in 1829. The Dagohoy Revolt was the longest in Philippine history (1744-1829). The construction of the next church, which was bigger, was attributed to him. He and Fray José García of León also helped the residents of Sinugbuan separate from Jagna, their matrix, into an independent town and parish in 1858 and 1859, respectively. In gratitude, the new municipality renamed itself



**“Half a century
[after their arrival
in 1606], they [the
Recollects] accepted
the very first Indio
Recollect and lay
brother: Fray Juan
Dimatúlac de Sta.
María, a native
of Macabebe,
Pampanga.”**

García-Hernández. At 75, Fray Narciso retired to his birthplace, Pandacan, where he died shortly on May 21, 1865.⁵

Pandacan was a Jesuit hacienda until the expulsion of the Society of Jesus from the Philippines in 1768. At the time of Fray Narciso's birth and childhood in the estate, it was still a government-sequestered property. In 1795, it was acquired in a public auction by the wealthy Dominican beata, Sor Petrona Tuazon who later became the superior of the Colegio Beaterio de Sta. Rosa de Lima (1812-28). She pawned the estate to support the beaterio. The River Beata of Pandacan was probably named for her. The hacienda passed on to the collateral descendants of Sor Petrona. The beaterio, on the other hand, was extinguished in 1866 (a year after the demise of

Fray Narciso) upon the death of the last superior, Sor Angela de los Santos. But it has remained a school for girls up to the present.⁶

Padre Fray Mariano Lacandola de Sta. Rita, was the fourth Indio Recollect and the second Filipino Recollect priest. A descendant of the last King of Tondo and a distant relative of the Talangpaz sisters, he was born in Calumpit, Bulacán on August 5, 1793. His parents were Don Nicolás Limag Lacandola and Doña María Molina. He took his religious vows on September 22, 1818. The next month, he was ordained to the minor orders and the subdiaconate. He was apparently raised to the priesthood in 1820 when he was sent in September as a missionary to the Marianas or Guam. Here he worked as the pastor of Pago and rector of the College of Agaña. He breathed his last, five years later in the Marianas on September 7, 1825 at the age of 32.⁷

Padre Lacandola had heroic Indio predecessors in the Marianas. Its soil had been enriched by the blood of several Filipino lay missionaries (1672-85) including Blessed Pedro Calungsod (1672), Nicolás de Figueroa and Damián Bernal (1672), Juan de los Reyes (1676) and Phelippe Songsong (1685), great-granduncle of the Talangpaz sisters. They were the first martyrs of Guam. Led by Blessed Diego Luís de San Vitores, SJ (1627-72), they had volunteered in 1668 for the distant islands, which was then the farthest part of the diocese of Cebú.⁸

It is interesting to note that other descendants of Lakandula also became Indio pioneers in other religious orders in Manila. The first Indio Augustinian was

Fray Martín Lacandola (d. 1590) and the first India Poor Clare in the 19th century (c. 1880) was Sor Josefa Estrada de San Rafael (c. 1855-85) of Binondo and San Simon, Pampanga where several descendants of Lakandola had settled.⁹

The fifth and last Indio Recollect during the Spanish Period was **Fray Leocadio Pasaua de la Virgen del Carmen**. He was the third Indio lay brother. Born in Binondo, he was the son of Andrés Pasaua and Silveria Rodríguez. As indicated by his devotional name, he was apparently a member of the Confraternity of the Most Holy Scapular of Our Lady of Carmel. He professed on December 16, 1848. He died in the convent of San Sebastián de Calumpang on October 30, 1861.¹⁰

The religious orders ceased to accept native aspirants in Manila in the 1850s. They had by then all established colleges in the peninsula for the formation of Spanish candidates for the Philippine mission. Moreover, the Filipino clergy had begun to openly question the government policies, which grossly favored the Spanish friars in the assignment of parishes.¹¹ †

Notes:

¹John N. Schumacher, SJ. "Early Filipino Jesuits: 1593-1930." *Philippine Studies* 29 (1981): 271-308; Francisco del Carmen Sádaba, OAR. *Catálogo de los Religiosos Agustinos Recoletos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Filipinas* (Madrid: Imprenta del Asilo de Huérfanos del Sgdo. Corazón de Jesús, 1906), p. 759.

²Luciano P. R. Santiago. *The Hidden Light. The First Filipino Priests*. (Quezon City: New Day, 1987), pp. 27-30.

³Ibid., p. 761.

⁴Ibid., p. 765.

⁵Regalado Trota Jose. *Visita Iglesia Bohol*. (Manila: NCCA, 2001), pp. 52 & 54.

⁶Luciano P. R. Santiago. "To Love and to Suffer. Development of the Religious

Congregations for Women in Spanish Philippines." Part II. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* (PQCS) 24 (1996), pp. 119-179.

⁷Sádaba. *Catálogo*, p. 766.

⁸Luciano P. R. Santiago. *Laying the Foundations. Kapampangan Pioneers in the Philippine Church 1592-2001*. (Angeles City: Holy Angel University, 2002), pp. 21-24.

⁹Luciano P. R. Santiago. "The Admission of Filipinas to the Monastery of Santa Clara in the 19th Century (1807-98)." *PQCS* 29 (Sept./Dec. 2001), pp. 284-295, 310 & 311.

¹⁰Sádaba. *Catálogo*, p. 768.

¹¹Schumacher. "Early Filipino Jesuits," pp. 276-277.

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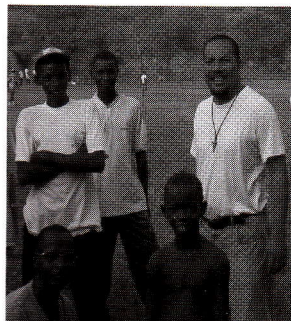
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when?

Saint Ezekiel Moreno Convent - Caidiocan

The idea of putting up a chaplaincy and rectory that would cater to the needs of the people of Caidiocan was conceived by the Augustinian Recollect missionaries more than twenty years ago. Assigned to take care of the pastoral and educational well-being of the residents of Valencia, Rev. Fr. Pedro Ko, OAR saw the need to promote the Word of God and expand the Augustinian Recollect apostolate to include Caidiocan. Considering the far distance of the place from churches in Valencia and Dumaguete City, the Augustinian Recollect community decided to purchase a spacious lot from Silveria Arabe. The construction of both the school building, which is now San Pedro Academy-Recoletos, and the Chaplaincy Convent immediately began. The overriding vision and mission that inspired its builders was the integral development of the human body, mind, and spirit.

After a number of years the Recollect Fathers of Valencia decided to make some renovations and transformed the chaplaincy to a center of recollection and retreat. Rev. Fr. Rafael Cabarles, OAR was responsible for the refurbished St. Ezekiel Moreno Retreat Center.

Aware of the growing population of the place and envisioning the possibility of establishing a community of priests and brothers of the Order of Augustinian Recollects here in Caidiocan, the Recoletos de Valencia saw the importance of laying the foundation for a higher pastoral goal. Thus, as the assigned chaplain, Rev. Fr. Vicente Ramon, Jr., OAR spearheaded the total repair and renovation of the convent on June 8, 2004. Included in the renovation were the sacristy, dining area, sala de recreo, two guests' rooms, chaplain's room, and three rooms for retreatants. For the first time the convent was entirely painted since its construction.

This latest renovation and repair of the convent were made possible through the support of the Provincial

Talisay City, Batangas, Quezon City, and most especially to PNOC and NAPOCOR and our friends in Caidiocan. Our gratitude also to all those who have contributed time, talent, and treasure to this noble project most especially to the builders and skilled-workers.

The newly renovated and repaired St. Ezekiel Moreno Convent was blessed and inaugurated by His Excellency Most Rev. John F. Du, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Dumaguete, assisted by Rev. Fr. Paulino Rommel H. Dacanay, OAR, President of the Secretariat of



A pose for posterity with Bishop Du of Dumaguete after the blessing

Curia and other Recollect communities in the Philippines. We acknowledge with profound gratitude our Filipino sponsors and donors from Australia, U.S.A., Japan, Hong Kong, Belgium, Canada, and France. Special thanks also, to our donors from Valencia, Damaguete City, Manila, Tondo, Bacolor, Kabankalan,

Ministerial Apostolate of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, Rev. Fr. Fortunato Garces, Provincial Secretary, Hon. Rodolfo Gonzalez, Jr., Mayor of the Municipality of Valencia and Architect Alexander Udjaji, the man responsible for the design and construction. †

PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

REV. RADNEY CAPARAS, OAR

Master of Arts in Theology
San Sebastian College-Recoletos, Manila
October 11, 2004

Thesis:

"St. Augustine's Notion of the Heart in the *Confessions*"

REV. JOSEPH DEXTER PALAGTIOSA, OAR

Master of Arts in Theology
San Sebastian College-Recoletos, Manila
October 14, 2004

Thesis:

"The Current Quality Assurance Level of the School of Theology of Recoletos Formation Center: Basis for Developing a Monitoring Scheme"



NEWLY-ORDAINED DEACONS: (L-R) Revs. Gideon Lagrimas (Laoang, Samar), Anthony Irineo (Banga, Aklan), Russel Lapidez (Koronadal City, South Cotabato), Henry Santiago (Malabon, Metro Manila), Virgilio Paredes (Pardo, Cebu). Most Rev. Honesto Ongtioco, D.D., Bishop of Cubao elevated them to the Order of Deacons on December 8, 2004 at OLCP, Mira-Nila, Quezon City.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED in KABANKALAN & ILIGAN

On 18 October 2004, the extended two-year Memorandum of Agreement between the Recollects and the Diocese of Kabankalan was formally closed. Frs. Ronel Gealon and Charlie Orobias who were loaned to the diocese as part of the formation team in Little Way College Seminary called it "Mission Accomplished."

Earlier, Frs. Urbano Galanido and Carmelo Borces signed the documents on 4 October 2004 marking the formal turn-over of the Immaculate Conception Parish (in Iligan, Lanao del Norte) and the convent to the incoming parish priest, Fr. Arnel Ranada. Also present that day was Mr. Bong Salalima, PPC treasurer.

TOUR OF DUTY

(as of January 2005)

FR. GAUDENCIO GERONIMO DE MESA, OAR

Appointed Novice Master (officially assumed his post on 16 October 2004)

FR. JOSEPH PHILIP TRAYVILLA, OAR

Newly-appointed Spiritual Director of RecoForCe, Mira-Nila

FR. RONEL GEALON, OAR

Prior of Recoletos de Valencia, Negros Oriental

FR. CHARLITO OROBIA, OAR

Parochial Vicar of OLCP, Mira-Nila, Quezon City

FR. URBANO GALANIDO, OAR

Chaplain, USJ-R Basak Campus, Cebu City

FR. CARMELO BORCES, OAR

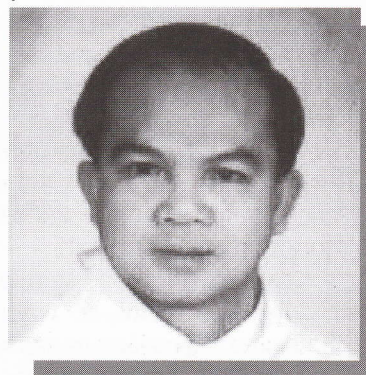
Parochial Vicar, Carmel Parish, Cebu City

FR. FELIZARDO DAGANTA, OAR

Loaned to St. Augustine Province

FR. RENÉ PAGLINAWAN, OAR

Preparing for Sierra Leone



FR. SAMSON SILLORIQUEZ, OAR

5th General Councillor & Postulator General of Causes of Canonization of Saints of the Order

Direct Line from ROME

It never crossed his mind that one day he would be sent abroad to take up higher studies. But now, the young and vibrant Fr. Renie Villalino, OAR is already finishing his two-year licentiate in Moral Theology from the Pontifical Lateran University (Alfonsianum) in Rome. How swiftly time flies, indeed! And how fruitfully, too! He has already learned a little of Deutsch from a summer class in Wien Universität (University of Vienna) in Austria. Here is a peek of what he has imbibed from his studies to become a better person, a better religious... Direct from Via Sistina, Rome, let's get a glimpse of what's going on and how he's coping up.

Like any normal student

"*Herzlichen Dank* [Heartfelt thanks -Ed.]... I feel glad and animated for having received a mail [from you] to momentarily take rest from worries. *Wir fühlen uns ausgezeichnet* [We feel quite well -Ed.] except for these days. You know it's examination days. I have just finished three this week, and I still have four more, *y realmente están matandome* [and they're actually killing me -Ed.]. And worse, the days ahead would require of me a bit of cool nerves. They would be quite headbreaking, and if I won't be able to get over them, then it's gonna be heartbreaking. (Better die than live with a broken heart, hahaha!) But I am not giving up on this. It's my solemn duty to be tough for a bright future of an *ambitious* student...! Shakespeare says it better: 'Ambition is made of sterner stuff'."

Lessons from Fr. Lluch

"You know, Fr. Lluch used to tell me, 'The best in your life is yet to come'. He was right. Oh yeah, I miss this fellow so much. My memory of him inspires me a lot. Because [when he was still alive], he was difficult to stop—that includes eating *lechon*. (We share the same favorites, you know.) I knew him also for being persevering for what he stood for. And that made a difference in me. Everytime I remember him, he always seemed to be giving me an animating pat. *Geist? Nein, auf keinen Fall!*

[*Ghost? No, definitely not -Ed.*] He's still a friend telling me to carry on with patience and courage. It's really tough out here, huh... but manageable."

The reason to go on

"I understand this is how I have to follow the Lord. And this, too, is the reason why everyday I need to struggle and contain all these trying circumstances and uphill odds which are pregnant with lessons to learn from. Like learning how to balance and what to do when I go off-balance, etc... And, of course, never forgetting the whole perspective that I am a proud Filipino Recollect... There's nothing

like being a Filipino Recollect! There's nothing compared to our treasured values and culture!"

Home-buddy?

"I am used to spend my spare time here listening to music, even reading comics and, sometimes, *Rauchen* [smoking -Ed]. I don't like staying out. And I don't like fitting myself into that world that is literally noisy, though I like noise sometimes. You know how noisy I can be. At the moment, we're now at the peak of winter and it's terribly freezing, and it's getting into my bones..."

Optimism

"By next semester, I'll be starting my *tesina* [thesis], and I want it done the soonest possible, God-willing. You know, I am not good at this, but, that doesn't mean I can't make it..."

Some insights

"Summing up everything I've learned so far in the course of my studies: Learning *Morals* is building a character to love. Love, more than an emotion, is a virtue, oriented by our will towards the value of the person. And that's what we all need, nothing less... and nothing less. So the love of my life is worth the struggle!" †



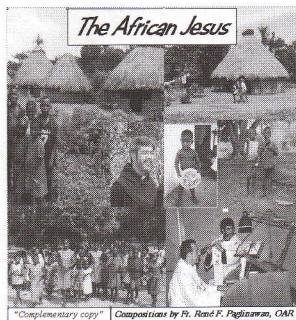
RECOLLECT STUDENT-PRIESTS in ROME. Eduardo Chirinos (Venezuela), Fernando Sanchez (Colombia), Miguel Flores (Mexico), Jaime Ivan Sanchez (Colombia), Arnel Diaz (Philippines), Arturo Yax (Guatemala), Mario Aparecido (Brazil), Miguel Camelo (Colombia), Emilio Quilatan (Philippines), Teodoro Baztan (Spain, new prior), Alfredo Martin (Spain, former prior), Esteban Soria (Spain), Renie Villalino (Philippines).

Schönen Danke, VIENNA

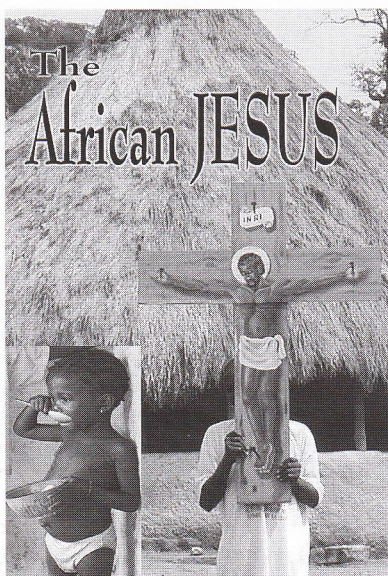
Filipino friends in Austria support Recollect missions in Sierra Leone, West Africa

Note: Excerpt from the letter addressed to the Editor by Ms. Alice Holitz & family

"I am quite busy helping Fr. René Paglinawan in the Augustinian [Recollect] mission work for Kamabai, Sierra Leone. On my suggestion, he placed his compositions in CD and burned 40 CDs in Rome before leaving for the Philippines. I am disposing them here in Vienna *gegen eine Spende* [donations]. I have burned 40 more CDs and still disposing them and I might still be burning 20 CDs again according to the list of friends I have noted down. Even if we have donated a lot for the tsunami victims, a lot of us Filipinos are still generous enough for Kamabai. The front cover of the CD was done with the big help of Julie Ann [my younger daughter] and I compiled the lyrics of the songs just like a notebook for the donors to sing with, together with the 2 letters of Fr. René." †



TheHolitzes: Gerhard, Alice and Julie Ann



THE AFRICAN JESUS

R.O.C.K. and ROME

René's Original Compositions,
from Kamabai and Rome

List of songs: *Lift up your Hands • Kyrie eleison • Glory to God • Alleluia • Blessed be God forever • Holy, Holy, Holy (1) • Our Father • Lamb of God • I will Nourish you • In my Father's house • Trust in the Lord • The African Jesus • God is love • Holy, Holy, Holy (2) • Late have I loved You • Live as One (Rule of St. Augustine) • Magnificat • Salt of the Earth, Light of the World • Stabat Mater • Yahweh is my Shepherd • A Doctor's Prayer*

A Witness from TAIWAN

Isang Paalam. Isang Pasasalamat.

Ang pangingibang bansa upang makapagtrabaho ay isang malaking sakripisyo. Lalo pa nga at ika'y malayo sa mga minamahal ng halos tatlong taon. Subalit sadyang kakayanin at titiisin alang-alang na rin sa kanila. Dumating ako sa Taiwan noong ika-12 ng Hunyo 2003.

Sadya yatang mapaglaro ang tadhana. Mag-iisang taon pa lamang akong nagtatrabaho rito bilang isang production operator sa isang semiconductor company nang mawala ang aking minamahal: Siya na nakasama ko ng maraming taon; siya na umaalalay sa akin; siya na nagbibigay ng lakas ng loob; siya na takbuhan ko kapag ako'y may problema; siya na nagbibigay ng pag-asa; siya na kasalo ko sa hiras at saya; siya na karamay ko sa halos lahat ng bagay; siya na nagmamahal sa akin...

Halos mawalan ako ng lakas nang sa gitna ng trabaho'y nakatanggap ako ng tawag mula sa Pilipinas upang ipaalam lamang sa akin na... wala na ang aking nakakatandang kapatid! Sumalpok ang sinasakyan niyang van sa isang shuttle bus.

Naroon ang panghihina at impit na pag-iyak. Gustuhin mang umuwi ng mga oras na yaon ay di magawa dahil may apat na oras pang nalalabi upang magtrabaho. Halos sumabog ang aking dibdib sa pagkontrol ng aking emosyon. Ibayong lakas ng loob at tibay ng dibdib na lamang ang aking pinaghari. Saka ko pa lamang nailabas lahat nang makauwi na ako ng dormitoryo. Halos di ako makakain ng mabuti ng mga ilang araw. Ang nais ko lamang ay mapag-isa. Gustuhin ko mang umuwi ng Pilipinas ay di ko magawa sapagkat wala pa akong isang taon dito at may katagalan ang proseso ng mga papeles.

Napakasakit isipin na sa aking pag-uwi ng Pilipinas ay hindi ko na siya makikita. Tanging mga alaala na lamang niya ang aking babalikan.

Sa isang banda'y lubos ang aking pasasalamat sa Poong Maykapal. Binigyan Niya ako ng mga taong mapagmahal—mga kaibigan sa dorm at ang Recoletos Family. Malayo man ako sa aking pamilya, sila ang nagsilbing lakas sa gitna ng aking pagdadalamhati na naging dahilan upang mabilis kong naibalik sa normal ang takbo ng aking buhay dito sa Taiwan. Kahit na paminsan minsan ay sumasagi pa rin sa aking isipan at maging sa pagtulog ang kanyang larawan.

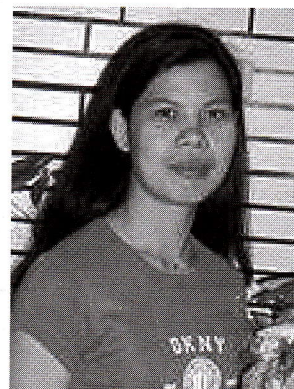
Ano man ang nangyari at maaari pang mangyari sa akin dito sa Taiwan ay iniaalay ko na lamang sa Kanya. Dahil batid ko na ang lahat ng ito ay may kahulugan. Maiksi lamang ang buhay at walang katiyakan. Hindi natin alam kung ano talaga ang meron para sa atin sa hinaharap. Tanging ang Diyos lamang ang nakakaalam ng lahat.

At kung sa ano pa mang bagay, tinuturuan tayo ng buhay na walang anumang bagay dito sa mundo ang makakapagbigay ng lubos na kasiyahan—na kahit bigyan pa tayo ng pagkakataong maangkin ang buong mundo, sa kapakapanaka'y mawawala rin sa atin ito. †



The kids under the Recollect tutelage

"Sa isang banda'y lubos ang aking pasasalamat sa Poong Maykapal. Binigyan Niya ako ng mga taong mapagmahal — mga kaibigan sa dorm at ang Recoletos Family. Malayo man ako sa aking pamilya, sila ang nagsilbing lakas sa gitna ng aking pagdadalamhati."



Ms. CARMILA SADANG
Kaohsiung, Taiwan

"The day-to-day interactions with distressed OFWs and Filnationals are, more often than not, filled with emotion-laden moments.

How does one cope with an environment characterized by anxiety, distress or so much unhappiness? How do I?"

Recollect spirit reaches MALAYSIA

ATTY. BRENDA VILLAFUERTE
Labor Attaché to Malaysia

Real-life Scenes

The phone rings. A trembling voice at the other end of the line solemnly declares that she's tired of cleaning a big house, washing clothes and three cars as well daily, in addition to feeding several dogs and looking after the three children of a very fussy employer who keeps on scolding her and calling her stupid. In between sobs, she says that she wants to stop working, go home and leave her employer of two months...

In the meantime, another phone rings. This time a male voice hesitatingly asks in case he preterminates his two-year employment contract, will his employer pay for his airfare back to the Philippines?

Suddenly, the door to the office opens. A lady worker comes in, smilingly announces that she's going on a holiday to the Philippines, and she needs an overseas employment certificate for travel tax exemption.

At the back of the room, the fax machine just then comes to life with a memo from home office. It's a request for assistance to locate a worker who left for Malaysia several years back and has lost contact with his family in the Philippines.

Even before the lady worker could have warmed her seat, the door opens once more. This time a liaison officer of a licensed

manpower agency enters the officer, carrying with him several documents, employment contracts of prospective domestic helpers from Iloilo, from Isabela, from Bontoc, Mt. Province, from Quezon City among other places. The contract workers are either single ladies, or married women, or single mothers but they all have the same aspiration in life: to find work in a foreign land.

The situations described above are real-life scenes that are just a fragment of the day to day happenings in the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in the Philippine Embassies or in Philippine Consulates throughout the world. While overseas employment has been regarded as a vital prop that keeps our economy going and the Overseas Filipino Workers hailed as "modern-day heroes", the reality is that the OFWs pay a heavy price in their effort to earn a decent living overseas for the sake of the well-being of their families.

New Destination: Kuala Lumpur

It was on a Holy Wednesday, in 2003, when I first set foot in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to assume a new assignment as the designated Labor Attaché. Inasmuch as this was my first overseas posting, I had mixed feelings as I started my journey to



an unfamiliar jobsite. To me then, the place seemed so far away although Malaysia is one of the "next-door neighbors" of the Philippines. I was both excited and happy to work in a foreign land. But at the same time, I was also full of apprehension as to what would be in store for me in terms of duties and responsibilities.

As a Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) regional director for a number of years, I was more or less conversant with the joys and pains that are attendant to employer-employee relationships in various jobsites and workplaces in the Cordilleras, Davao and Cotabato.

New Challenges in Overseas Employment

But, as I eventually found out overseas employment is altogether a different matter. While the office has to be knowledgeable on immigration laws, labor laws and regulations, criminal laws and police procedures of the host country so as to ensure the protection of the Filworkers, in the process of interacting with the distressed OFWs, one unconsciously becomes involved in the human drama that subsequently takes place. More often than not, such interaction becomes an emotionally draining experience. For how does one adequately

address the feelings of loneliness, the fears and insecurities, the disappointments and frustrations that grip their being because of shattered hopes and dreams?

Many of us generally believe that the primary reason for overseas employment is poverty or the absence of gainful employment opportunities in the country. However, a masteral thesis done by a Filipina in Kuala Lumpur showed the phenomenon of overseas employment in a different light. Majority of the domestic helpers who were interviewed for the study said that they applied for overseas work to ensure the well-being of their family.

New Programs

The Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in the Philippine Embassy is responsible for the implementation of the reintegration program of the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to the mainstream of society upon their return to the country. The labor attaché then takes charge not only of POLO but also supervises the Filipino Workers Resource Center (FWRC), the half-way house for distressed Filnationals, as well as the Skills Training Program (STP).

Both documented and undocumented Filnationals who have problems with labor and immigration laws are temporarily accommodated at the FWRC while their complaints/problems are being looked into by the Embassy/POLO, and while waiting for their repatriation.

On Sundays, however, the FWRC becomes a beehive of the activity. The OFWs who enjoy a day-off during the week attend a nine-month skills enhancement lessons under the Skills Training Program (STP) being managed by POLO. The subjects range from tailoring, dressmaking, hair culture, cosmetology, *shorinji*

kempo (self-defense for women), agri-business, basic computer, word processing, internet, guitar lessons, languages (Bahasa Malaysia, Basic English), among others.

Aside from reintegration program, POLO also implements the protection and welfare assistance program for the OFWs which includes not only networking activities with the host

case records/reports.

At a glance one could see that the protection and welfare assistance program is a comprehensive package of services being provided by the government to its nationals in foreign lands. The effective delivery of services, however, is dependent on several factors, the most vital of which is the availability of resources, human



Filipino Workers' Resource Center in Kuala Lumpur: Ma'am Brenda with Filipino volunteers preparing the boxes for the typhoon victims in the Philippines.

country, NGOs, Filcom groups, employers and recruitment agencies but also crisis intervention services.

What To Do

How does the office act on and monitor the complaints of distressed workers and Filnationals? The process starts with the filing of the complaint by the OFW or by the Filnational. Upon receipt of the complaint, the welfare assistance mechanism is now put in place. The services comprise of the following actions: assistance in the preparation of the affidavit, counseling, accompanying OFWs to relevant host government offices such as police, labor or immigration, retrieval of belongings, accommodation/ provision of food, airline booking, filing of claims, hospital/jail visits, attend

hearings/ investigations, securing as well as financial.

"Tatak Rekoleta" in Action

To the credit of the POLO office in Kuala Lumpur, it was and still is able to provide the needed welfare assistance despite the constraints faced by the office such as manpower complement. For the most part of 2004, there were only four stout-hearted people who took charge of the implementation of the POLO programs in coordination with the embassy officials and staff. But the lack of personnel, however, was not a stumbling block in addressing the needs of the distressed workers. The inadequacy in terms of quantity (i.e., the number of personnel) was more than made up by the strong commitment to serve the OFWs which was evident among

the staff. One could sense a compassionate, dedicated service to one's fellowmen. And why not? At present two of the four POLO staff are ex-Recoleta seminarians who are imbued with the Augustinian Recollect charism. And being 'God-centered', the love for fellowman shines through in their words and in their actions, in their day to day interaction with OFWs and Filnationals in the Embassy. Thus, the 'troubled souls' among the OFWs particularly the domestic helpers find solace and comfort when they seek assistance in the office.

Extending protection and welfare assistance to the distressed OFWs and filnationals is never an easy task. Apart from exerting effort in ensuring that the provisions of the employment contract are faithfully followed, the POLO also has to provide a listening ear to hear the cries of anguish of a troubled heart and a confused soul that is torn between the desire to be with the loved ones back home and the need for sustainable income to meet the growing needs of the family in the Philippines, and thus secure a well-provided future for their children. More often, those who work as domestic helpers of foreign employers have to bear tremendous hardships so as to ensure continued financial support to their families. At times they have to bear sarcastic remarks or verbal abuse if the household chores are not done well. Some complain of inadequate food, lack of sleep, heavy work load or over-bearing employers who seemed to be uncaring, cruel or difficult to please. When confronted with such an unpleasant working conditions, some OFWs impulsively decide to run away from their employer and seek solace in the Embassy.

The day-to-day interactions



Ma'am Brenda with the Recollect Fathers in Camp John Hay, Baguio City

with distressed OFWs and Filnationals are, more often than not, filled with emotion-laden moments. How does one cope with an environment characterized by anxiety, distress or so much unhappiness? How do I?

Thanks to the Recollects

I look back to the year 1998, to be exact, 01 June 1998, when I first set foot inside the serene and peaceful Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary chapel and heard the melodious voices of the boyish seminarians during the concelebrated mass officiated by young-looking priests. At that time, I could not really fathom the wisdom of my superiors in returning me to regional operations (i.e., being assigned in the Cordillera whose head office is in Baguio City) when I was in the middle of training for overseas work. Like a good soldier, though, I obeyed the marching orders of the DOLE Executive.

In as much as the office was just a stone's throw from the seminary, I spent a great deal of my time learning the Christian prayer, internalizing the homilies heard, participating in the community activities, family apostolate, chapel decorations

and gratefully sharing the generous outpouring of love and affection among the members of the Augustinian Recollect community.

Little did I realize that the four years spent in interacting with the community formed the vital core of my Christian life training, my spiritual awakening, so to speak. As clearly expounded in one of the homilies, it is only when one is Christ-centered that one is able to share love to his fellowmen without counting the cost, nor expecting anything in return. By having a listening ear and a kind, compassionate heart, one is able to reach out to a distressed soul and lift him out of his world of despair and misery. When that happens, then the once distressed person once again becomes inspired to go on with life either by continuing to work in a foreign land or by going back to his family and start life anew.

With this sharing, allow me to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Augustinian Recollect community for patiently showing the way in my journey of faith and for being with me all the way. With the many lessons learned, my heart and my life has never been the same again. †

Chapter of Renewal

Community and the Vowed Life

by FR. FERDINAND HERNANDO, OAR

Preamble

Religious life has been challenged by changing times and a changing culture. Today we are witnesses to the growing sense of individualism, among the young and the old alike. In the corporate world, teamwork is stressed in the service of productivity. But if, on the one hand, people of this age are very enterprising when it comes to conducting their own affairs, consecrated persons, on the other hand, have to be equally, if not more, enterprising in the things that concern their vocation and mission. *Creative fidelity* to our charism and tradition is one effective reminder as we revisit the meaning and relevance of the common life in the context of religious consecration.

Growing Together The world of children is characterized by the process of growth. When the child

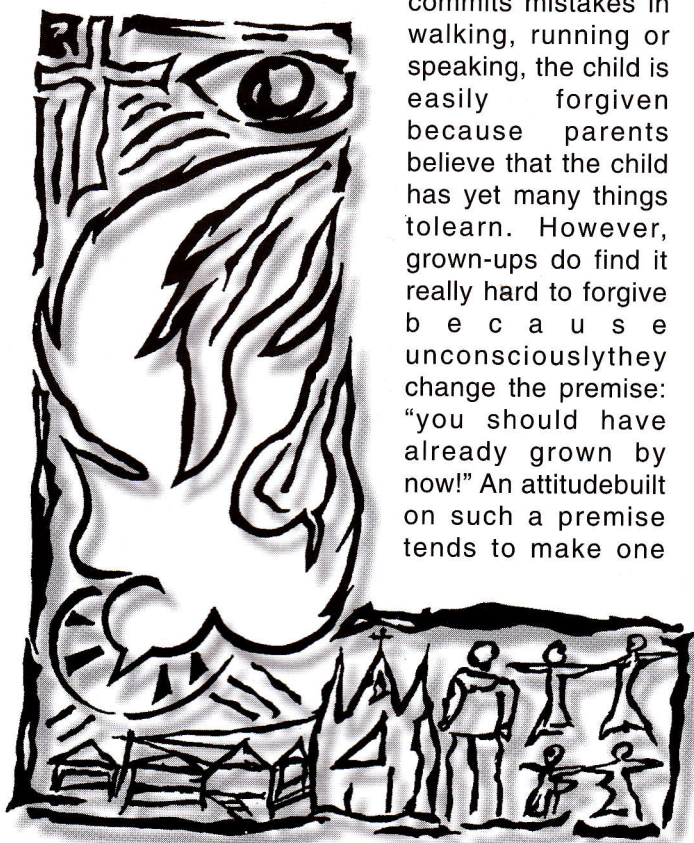
commits mistakes in walking, running or speaking, the child is easily forgiven because parents believe that the child has yet many things to learn. However, grown-ups do find it really hard to forgive because unconsciously they change the premise: "you should have already grown by now!" An attitude built on such a premise tends to make one

unforgiving. It will be hard for one to concede, "Forgive him, he still needs to learn." In reality, we need to recover the premise of a "continuous growth process" because we never stop learning, experimenting, or growing. Only self-righteous can claim full knowledge. How boring life can be for people who think they have nothing more to learn in life. This is what stunted growth is all about. The reality of a continuous growth process allows people to understand and respect one another's growth dynamics. In this context, the pace with which one undertakes his own learning process is to be respected in charity. If the growth process is slow in coming, it will simply have to be taken as such. Respect means not imposing one's growth patterns on another's. In fact, those who claim to have a faster growth of pace have the responsibility to understand and respect those whose growth pace is much slower. This is the beginning of wisdom: when one learns to understand and respect the dynamics of growth of others.

Growing in the Spirit together Growing together in community is not only about understanding and respecting individual dynamics of growth. Human maturity entails the *openness* to grow in wisdom and to *outgrow* old ways. In the language of fundamental spirituality, this twofold openness is expressed in "the cultivation of virtues" and "the practice of *ascesis*." Thus, the spirit of religious life is marked by self-giving love. Love without self-giving is romantic and illusory. What makes suffering a sacrifice is not the intensity of pain, but the quality of love that goes with that pain. Suffering without love is senseless. It brings about pain, anger, or bitterness. Sacrifice is suffering embraced by love. It is liberating, life-giving, and therefore, holy. Suffering love cannot fail to inspire. The greatest expression of suffering love is the cross. Only a suffering love can save. As lovers of spiritual Beauty (contemplative dimension), consecrated persons must be keen on "growing in the Spirit together." Each brother is therefore responsible for the building up of the community in the ways of charity and humility. "Charity and humility are, in reality, the foundation of the common life..." (cf. *OAR Const.*, # 43).

A Community Consecrated to the Lord Growing in the path of wisdom and grace always leads to common

...Cont. page 24



life. If "the consecrated life truly constitutes a living memorial of Jesus' way of living and acting" (VC, #22), then those gathered around Jesus and in the name of Jesus should take cognizance of the need "to become one with him, taking on his mind and his way of life" (VC, #18). This implies a fundamental experience with Jesus—an experience of being held fast by Christ (cf. Jn 15:16; Gal 1:15f), "touched" by the hand of Christ, a life where His voice is heard, a life sustained by his grace" (VC, #40; Starting Afresh, #22). Discipleship in community is "only a response in love to the love of God" (Starting Afresh, #22). The vows vigorously express the *radical character* of that *loving response*: "chastity [virginity] opens the heart to the measure of Christ's heart and makes it possible to love as he loved. Poverty frees one from the slavery to things and to artificial needs which drive consumer society and leads to the rediscovery of Christ, the only treasure worth living for. Obedience places life entirely in Christ's hands so that he may use it according to God's design and make it a masterpiece" (Starting Afresh, #22).

Reflection Guide:

1. Identify actual practices in the community that help shape human and vocational growth. In what way(s) can we enrich these practices?
2. Recall the last time you have experienced forgiveness—"forgiving or being forgiven." What insight(s) have you drawn from that experience?
3. What possible step(s) will you or your community take to express the *radical character* of the religious consecration? †

Canutama sojourn...

Fr. Loreto gives tips to future missionaries

After more than a year of missionary work in a small municipality of Canutama, Brazil, the soft-spoken Fr. Loreto Dacany, OAR came home for some weeks of respite. Last February 3, 2005, he had the opportunity to share his experiences to the future missionaries of the province, i.e., the philosophy seminarians of Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary, Baguio City. Bros. Ralph Laureen Ciceron and Hector Gonzales, fourth year and second year seminarians, respectively, took note of what Fr. 'Dacs' told them pertinent to the 'basics' of missionary life:

1. "Every stage of life is a mission."
2. "To become a missionary is not easy. It entails a lot of sacrifice."
3. "Pray aside from your community prayer schedule."
4. "Be simple in your lifestyle."
5. "Be faithful to your vocation."

Fr. Loreto also told his would-be successors that daily life consists usually of going out to the river to visit the small communities scattered along the bank for 2-3 months. The mission area is wider than the island of Luzon.

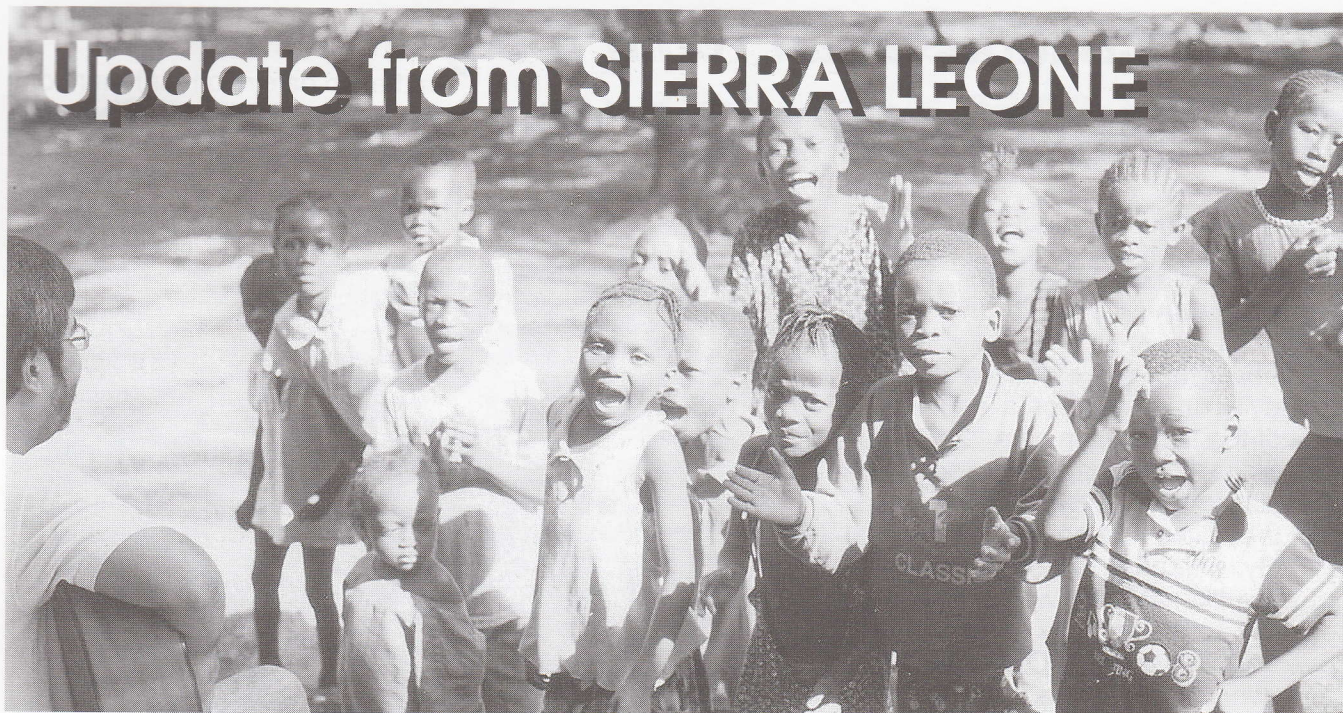
To the question whether he had experienced homesickness, Fr. Loreto said 'yes' and that was the first time when he lived with those natives there who speak Portuguese, aside from their own vernacular. Profound spirituality strengthened him, he confessed. Who does not need that when, at times, you find yourself alone in the river? Who does not need that when, many times, you would get sick? Faith, he said, cured his diseases, not aspirin.

As his last words to the seminarians, Fr. Loreto challenged each of them: "Your mission today is to be a good seminarian." †



POVERTY-STRICKEN. "Somos quarenta milhoes em situacao de miseria!" (We are forty million in miserable situation!) Fr. Loreto together with his lay collaborators.

Update from SIERRA LEONE



Fr. Rene as choir master - small kids with big voices

Right after the convocation of the 53rd General Chapter in Rome, Fr. Lauro Larlar, OAR proceeded to our mission station in Kamabai Parish, Diocese of Makeni, Sierra Leone. With him was the ex-General councilor, Fr. René Paglinawan, OAR who volunteered to be assigned with the newly-revived Recollect community in this black continent. The most recent pictures taken in mid-November last year mellifluously speak for themselves. †



Fr. Larlar presides at the Eucharist celebrated outdoors.

We speak one language in the Liturgy.



Tribal meeting with leaders.



Recollect Augustinian Youth Today

The Students That We Are...

by **CYNDI FATIMA R. SANTOS**
RAY member – Baguio City

Every afternoon I ride on a jeepney on my way home and, most of the time, I'm in company of little kids. Little kids who are so enthusiastic in telling their parents what they did at school that day. Actually, I think it's more of a bragging like: "Mama we had a seatwork today and my teacher gave me five stars!" Or, "You know what, Dad, I can already count up to 20!" Or even, "My teacher told me that I am good in spelling!"... And every time I see this scenario the common thing I recognize is that these kids never fail to make their parents smile. As a matter of fact, they never fail to make me smile.

These little angels evoke in me the joyous feeling I always felt whenever I have accomplished or proven something.

I can still clearly remember the very first time I've been an outstanding student. I was then in second year high school. That particular episode of my life had been both overwhelming and surprising.

You see, I know that I am quick in mind, however, I am also not that "fond" of studying. In truth, when I was in elementary I was only eager to go to school because of three things: my allowance, my playmates and my crush!

So I was really in awe and totally overwhelmed by that experience. I know my parents felt the same way for I can still recall my Mom giving me a custom-made medal just because our school is only giving a ribbon!



CaRes YOUTH CLUBBERS

(L-R) Sr. Rachel Ancheta, AR, KC Tabin, Maridel Navarro, Bro. Marion Rey Navarro, Marinel Navarro, Geraldine Ganzon, Sweet Santos, Cyndi Santos (the author), Therese Castellano, Angelie Tabin.

Thereafter, I thought that the impact of that event would end after I got up the stage, received my ribbon and smiled at the camera. I was wrong because from that moment on, I started to live on expectation—others' expectation of me and my own expectation for myself. And that was my second mistake...

I know that life has been good. I am well appreciated. However, I have discovered that such life can be tiresome and frustrating.

Honestly, there are moments when I wonder why I continually strive for a grade of 90 when a mere 75 would suffice to enable me to pass a subject. I wonder why I study at night when I could be out in a bar or disco to enjoy myself. Still I ask why study when a "cheating arrangement" could easily be hatched or a test leakage could easily be procured? To live up to others expectation? How inept!

It is difficult to study just to

please people as one cliché goes, "One cannot please everybody". And in the case of students, it is more difficult when there is confusion on who we want to please. For instance, there are your peers who expect you to join them in experiencing your youthfulness, while there are also your parents who expect you to give your 100% in your studies. Whose expectation would you choose to please? Why so?

Someone once told me that I am a "not-so-normal" student because I am too "serious"—all study and no fun. That made me think: am I that boring? Maybe I should go out more so I can prove

cont. page 27

to them that I can also have fun? Maybe life wouldn't be so tiresome if I am not too engaged in my school works?

But then, I know in my heart that something is still not right.

Then, again, I've read something, and it states: "WHAT I AM IS GOD'S GIFT TO ME, WHAT I BECOME IS MY GIFT TO GOD." And that is my answer.

My life as a student is my stepping stone to the kind of life I'll be presenting to God. Therefore life must be balanced.

I must study hard and strive to my premium because I believe that God created me 100% special so I don't think giving Him a 75 grade would suffice. I'll definitely still strive for a 90 or maybe even more. Likewise, I don't think God deserves a boring life. Besides, the life He has given me is so beautiful that I know He would want me to appreciate it—I know He, as my Father, wants me to be happy. And that is just what I want to give God: my happiness and not my frustrations for having a tiresome life.

So, my fellow students, I am aware that we share lots of sentiments and I know that life, as a student, is not that easy. But, hey, we have a choice how to give our life a bit of fun and a bit of significance.

Two suggestions:

1. If you are "all-fun-and-no-study" person, believe me, you'll have no proper direction in life. Know that there is a future worth anticipating for.
2. But if you are the "all-study-and-no-fun" type, take a break. For all that work, you definitely deserve to enjoy life, too—the life that you are so fond of studying...

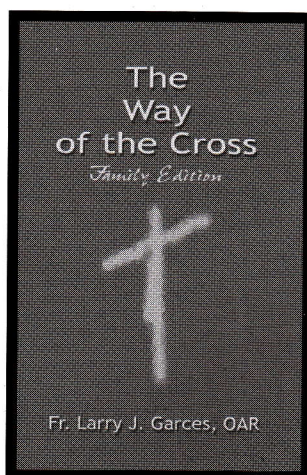
May God be with us... the student that we are...†

Lenten Reflection

"If my people...humble themselves and pray...and turn from their evil ways, I will hear from heaven and pardon their sins and revive their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

ON FAST AND FEASTING

FAST from judging others; FEAST on Christ dwelling in them.
 FAST from emphasis on differences; FEAST on the unity of all life.
 FAST from apparent darkness; FEAST on the reality of all light.
 FAST from thoughts of illness; FEAST on the healing power of God.
 FAST from words that pollute; FEAST on phrases that purify.
 FAST from discontent; FEAST on gratitude.
 FAST from anger; FEAST on patience.
 FAST from pessimism; FEAST on optimism.
 FAST from worry; FEAST on God's providence.
 FAST from complaining; FEAST on appreciation.
 FAST from negatives; FEAST on affirmatives.
 FAST from unrelenting pressures; FEAST on unceasing prayer.
 FAST from hostility; FEAST on nonresistance.
 FAST from bitterness; FEAST on forgiveness.
 FAST from self-concern; FEAST on compassion for others.
 FAST from personal anxiety; FEAST on eternal truth.
 FAST from discouragement; FEAST on hope.
 FAST from facts that depress; FEAST on verities that uplift.
 FAST from lethargy; FEAST on enthusiasm.
 FAST from suspicion; FEAST on truth.
 FAST from thoughts that weaken; FEAST on promises that inspire.
 FAST from shadows of sorrow; FEAST on the sunlight of serenity.
 FAST from idle gossip; FEAST on purposeful silence.
 FAST from problems that overwhelm; FEAST on prayer that sustains.



The Way of the Cross – Family Edition

Written and compiled by
 FR. LARRY J. GARCES, OAR.
 The said booklet is intended for
 our schools, seminaries, parishes
 and convents as a tool for
 Lenten devotion.

Mindoro Revisited

Pioneers' gathering focused on "Tatak Rekoleta: Paglilingkod at Pagbabago"

by Fr. NICK SALAMANCA, OAR

San Jose, OCCIDENTAL MINDORO—On November 8-10, 2004, sixteen (16) Recollects of the Province of St. Ezekiel who called themselves Pioneers, being the first products of the 18-year-old Theology House in Mira-Nila, Tandang Sora, Quezon City revisited the 7th largest island in the Philippines, SW of Luzon. Historically, Mindoro is the place where the early Recollect missionaries particularly St. Ezekiel Moreno, tirelessly and zealously worked for and with the Mangyans, the natives in this mountainous region. Its mountainous interior rises to c. 8,500 ft (2,500 m) at Mt. Halcon. What little arable land there is on the island is devoted largely to subsistence farming. Coal is mined, lumbering is an important industry. Puerto Galera is a well-known beach area.

The unexpected sojourn of the Pioneers to San Jose, Occidental Mindoro started with the idea of inviting a speaker from Mindoro, originally from Oriental Mindoro, after having decided to have the renewal activity in Puerto Galera. But the Spirit had an entirely different and mysterious leading. Finding no one, Fr. Larry remembered the letter of Bishop Antonio Palang to the Recollects during the feastday of St. Ezekiel Moreno on August 19, 2004. The benevolent Bishop was one of the few who greeted and congratulated the Recollects during that special occasion. When Fr. Larry contacted the Bishop with the request to be the speaker of this gathering, the Bishop did not hesitate to accept the request. In fact, he was so enthusiastic and excited about it that he even offered us his place for accommodation and center of our gathering. Without delay, we decided to have our renewal gathering at San Jose,

Occidental Mindoro. We disseminated to the members of pioneers the information about the change of venue. A day before the scheduled flight, many members of the Pioneers group arrived. The

following day, everybody was set to fly to San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. Present during flight were Frs. Mhadz, Edcel, Emil Q., Notnot, Larry, Popoy, Tony, Jun, Borge, Mesio, Cerry, Leander, Dacs, Soy, Nick and Bro. Ago.

The group boarded Asian Spirit bound for San Jose, Mindoro at 6:30 AM. The estimated time of arrival (ETA) was 30 minutes, but we arrived ahead of time. Two vehicles were waiting for us at the airport ... we boarded, then, we arrived at Bishop Palang's House where he stays and at the same time holds office. True to his words, Bishop gave us his warm welcome. We took our snacks, then, we were led to the rooms at the third floor fully equipped with air-conditioning, study table, 3



Hello freshness!!! Nothing more relaxing than the spray of sea breeze.



"Do you know how I 'reluctantly' became a bishop?"

but unfamiliar voice. He seldom sings. It was really a night spent in grateful remembrance of our brotherhood during our seminary days. It was so intimate an experience that even during the discussion we could agree and disagree without any inimical undertone. Maybe it was because we knew each other well, and therefore, we understood each other's weaknesses.

Another equally important feature of our gathering was the conference with the bishop. He shared with the group his life in the priesthood and his story about "the bishop in the making." He highlighted his unworthiness to be a bishop, conscious that there were SVD's who were more qualified to that position. But the Holy Spirit had a different leading. "All we have to do," he said, "is to be attentive and open to the Spirit's leading." The group handed a simple yet memorable gift, the two statues of St. Ezekiel Moreno and a couple of historical books. In turn, the bishop gave each one of us a necklace with the image Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. Then, we prepared for the Eucharistic celebration. We celebrated the Holy Eucharist with Bishop Palang, not as the main celebrant, but as a concelebrant. A very humble bishop can make a difference for such a beautiful Eucharistic celebration. Fr. Emil Q, being the "most holy religious," was the main celebrant. As a historian, he recounted the historical perspective with more accuracy the relevance of the historical facts and personalities worthy of emulation. The Holy Mass was celebrated in the newly-built chapel named after St. Ezekiel Moreno. It was, indeed, a solemn Eucharistic celebration. After the celebration, everyone

**[Bishop Palang]
shared
with the group
his life in
the priesthood
and his story
about "the bishop
in the making."
[...] "All we have
to do," he said,
"is to be attentive
and open to the
Spirit's leading."**

beds, shower room, aparador and a Bible. We rested, and set our meeting for the program of activities.

Before setting up the program, we reminded ourselves of the purpose of this gathering which was so embedded and rooted in our agreed theme, "Tatak Rekoleta: Paglilingkod at Pagbabago." A talk from a historian of the place had set the mood of the meeting. We tried to look and journey back to the past, to the place where the Recollects especially St. Ezekiel Moreno had served, given their lives and worked on the renewal of the natives of the place. Their lives spent in selfless service added a very important ingredient to our quest for relevance as we look forward to the 400 years of the Recollects' presence in the Philippines and Asia. By the way, our batch was given the task to formulate a one-year program of renewal for the whole Province of St. Nicholas.

After the talk on historical facts and figures, we settled on the schedule loose enough to have time for each other, time for sharing each other's dreams and vision for the Province, and of course, the untiring "kantahan sa beach," another version of "birit king" in channel 7. And the winner was "Fr. Dacs!" Why? It was because of his golden

except Fr. Soy and Fr. Nick was set to leave for the beach, 7 to 8 kms. away from the bishop's house. Fr. Soy was having a healing session with the bishop. Fr. Nick, on the other hand, waited for Fr. Soy who was, then, praying over the bishop. Accordingly, the bishop got relieved and relaxed.

Right after the healing session, Fr. Soy and Fr. Nick tried to catch up with the group. Everything was ready when they arrived. Dinner took place with a prayer led by Fr. Dacs. Hmmm, what a yummy and mouth-watering cuisine, and a sumptuous dinner! A 30-minute videoke session before the business meeting was allotted to burn all the calories and fats.

Then, business proper followed. We discussed the topics for the renewal program of the Philippine province for the year 2005 and how to go about it. We likewise talked about the topics to be given priority, to be shared with and reflected upon for a concrete renewal program before the 4th centenary celebration of the Recollect presence in the Philippines and Asia on May of 2006. It was sort of heated discussion, but everything was under control. There was nothing personal. It was done for the purpose of enhancing the program. Tired, tired, tired ... everybody was tired. So we paused, and ended the session with more singing and laughing to ease the tension brought about by the heated discussion. We finished off the videoke session with the last song "My Way."

Abortion! Our gathering was aborted and shortened to give way to a serious discussion on the program of activities. The following day was all preparations for the trip back home. We changed our flight schedule and took Air Philippines. We left in the morning of November 10 with the Bishop's blessing, and with an open invitation to come back



...as always...it can not be complete without the Eucharist, in a chapel intimately spaced and dedicated to our Patron



That image of what we hope to be:
St. Ezekiel Moreno

to Mindoro and occupy a parish with approximately 15,000 population. The Bishop was so serious in his invitation knowing that his diocese lacks personnel. We boarded the plane and arrived at Ninoy International Airport an hour later.

Mission not accomplished! We have not yet accomplished our mission. It was an unfinished business. We still had to formulate the program of topics and the dynamics to be adopted and implemented for the whole year of renewal.

Mentally and physically drained from the sleepless nights in Mindoro, everybody had the chance to take a few hours of rest. After our rest, we took our dinner at Wan Chai chinese restaurant. We ate to the full since

we knew we needed more energy for the next day's activities. We rested early.

The following morning was a busy and more serious day for all of us. But before we started the meeting, we gathered together at the chapel for the Lauds and the Eucharistic celebration. We took our breakfast, and did our personal necessities. We started our meeting at 9:00 AM. We first tackled the program and the consequent calendaring of the different activities and topics. The discussion was light. Maybe it was because we did not have anymore the energy to debate and argue with the topics being presented. The activity ended just before lunch. We took our lunch at the Provincialate in the presence of the community. Then, home sweet home!!! Kudos, Pioneers for the job well done! †

pOintLeSs pOintS to pONdEr nOt

by FR. ONZ, OAR

Some of us have lived more years than the number that lie ahead. As we wonder what we have done with our life, it's nice to remember the wisdom of Oscar Wilde's comment: "The gods have two ways of dealing harshly with us: the first is to deny us of our dreams, and the second is to grant them."

Most often the choice to do much unlimited ministry and apostolate begins as a desire to escape from an unsatisfactory personal situation or to compensate for some other areas in religious and personal life that are found wanting.

While doing your ministry, have you ever wondered or asked yourself what your ministry is doing to you?

Effective leadership, even in religious congregations, demands decisions that will at times disappoint and hurt some people and confreres.

It is sad that only when in much pain and confusion do we struggle for self-understanding. Even when in great pain we choose to live meaningless lives rather than embrace the process of knowing our real selves

Heard of a religious who asked the Lord for power that he might have praise of men? He was given weakness that he might feel the need of God!

Heard yet of another religious who asked for strength that he might be a great achiever? He was made weak that he might learn humbly to obey!

SUMMER RETREAT

Venue: Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary, Baguio City

When: April 11-15, 2005

Retreat Master: Most Rev. Rolando Tria-Tirona, OCD, D.D.
Bishop of Infanta

Year of the Eucharist



"In this year of the Eucharist Christians ought to be committed to bearing more forceful witness to God's presence in the world. We should not be afraid to speak about God and to bear proud witness to our faith. The 'culture of the Eucharist' promotes a culture of dialogue, which here finds strength and nourishment."

(Mane nobiscum Domine, 26b)