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**Eucharist from
a Recollect heart**

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SHIFTING PARADIGM

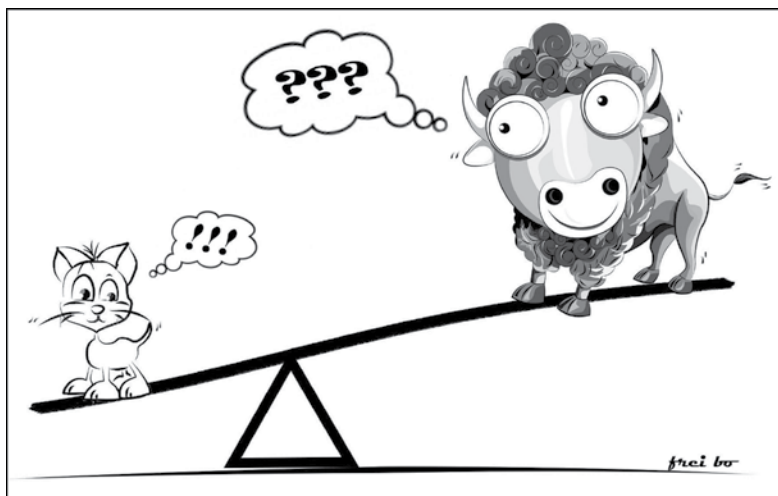
EDITORIAL

BY FRAY LEANDER V. BARROT, OAR

Paradigm shifting is a process welcomed to some, met with reservation by many and resisted by others. Behind any attitude one stands with, the uncertainty of the future versus the perceived comforts of the present lies at the fulcrum. In the end, history and motion will be the arbiters of decisions made and options undertaken as either meaningful or failure.

This edition of the Recoletos Observer can be categorized as belonging to a time frame of shifting paradigms. At the beginning of the year, as the Philippine church hosted the 51st International Eucharistic Congress held at Cebu City, the Papal Legate—Cardinal Charles Maung Bo—issued, in his opening message, the challenge to Catholic faithful to shift from simply being devotees of the Eucharist to becoming its disciples—“From Eucharistic Celebration to Eucharistic Commitment.” Indeed, in no moment of our history has the Church to face up to the insidious challenges to her core beliefs of the primacy of life, in the family as the safeguard of a civil society, the sanctity of matrimony, and in the faith of a benevolent and loving God himself. Our Eucharistic celebrations are to lead us to an advocacy for human life, to the defense of the rights of the poor and inclusiveness of the marginalized, and championing for the protection of mother earth.

Our Order, in the 55th General Chapter held last October 3-16, 2016, has affirmed the tenets of restructuring and revitalization studied and pursued years prior to the General Chapter. The merging of the Provinces consequent with the restructuring of her administration and legislations are means to live more fully her charismatic identity received from the Mother Church and respond to the various apostolic and ministerial services for the people of God.



Finally, this edition accepts with open arms paradigm shift caused by fast-paced technology and diffusive social media. Beginning this edition, the Recoletos Observer will be an annual magazine-type publication with a run-down of the annual significant events of the Province and considerable reflections on life, ministry, charismatic identity and mission works of the Recoletto friars and of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno. **RD**



COSAS NOTABLES

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2016

JANUARY

- January 9: Hometown thanksgiving mass of a newly-ordained Augustinian Recollect priest, Fray Rafael Pecson, OAR, from Jolo, Sulu—a first from the southernmost and critical part of the country, with heavily armed military escorting the almost 30 OAR priests.
- January 12: Fray Rene Paglinawan, OAR joined the Precapitular Commission meeting in Rome for the 55th General Chapter.



- January 24-31: Recollects joined the 51st International Eucharistic Congress (IEC) in Cebu City. Recoletos Communications was commissioned by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines to help CBCP Media in the documentation.

FEBRUARY

- February 1-3: REAP (Recoletos Educational Apostolate in the Philippines) General Assembly, the first for this triennium.
- February 2: Filipino Recollect students in Rome joined the Closing of the Year of Consecrated Life in the Vatican.
- February 6: Send-off mass for the 2 new Recollect missionaries, Fray Enrico Nacorda, OAR, and Mark Ryan Prado, OAR, to Sierra Leone, Africa.
- February 13: RC-RFC (Recoletos Communications-Recoletos Formation

Center) tied up for an echo conference: "IEC 2016 in Review: UPDATES. ECHOES. BOOK LAUNCH" held at Bulwagang Recoletos, Miranila, Quezon City.



- February 26: RAY Regional Summit-Visayas hosted by Colegio de Sto. Tomas-Recoletos, San Carlos City
- February 29: Fray Dionisio Selma, OAR, visited Panama in view of interprovincial collaboration on mission.

MARCH

- March 1: Conference cum workshop on Documentation of Movable Patrimony – Mainland Luzon Cluster, at the Provincial Curia
- March 4: Establishment of the Recoletos de Saipan community



- March 17: Conference cum workshop on Documentation of Movable Patrimony – Visayas Cluster, at Sto. Tomas de Villanueva-Recoletos, San Carlos City
- March 24: Arrival from Rome of Fr. Samson Sillorriquez for the closing session of the diocesan phase of

the cause of canonization of Alfredo Florentin Verzosa [1877-1954], the first Ilocano bishop

- March 29: Fray Lauro Larlar joined in the Meeting of the Equipo de Revitalización in Rome

APRIL

- April 14: General Assembly of Recollect Formators at RFC, Quezon City
- April 14: Golden Anniversary of simple profession of Fray Joaquin Jamelo, OAR



- April 17-23: RECAMSI (Recoletos Campus Ministry Summer Institute) was held and hosted by USJ-R, Cebu City
- April 30: Simple Profession of vows

MAY

- May 4: Silver Anniversary of Simple Profession (1991-2016)
Fray Antonio Zabala Jr., OAR
Fray Sixto Ciriaco Bitangjol, OAR
Fray Reynaldo Jaranilla, OAR
- May 11-13: Fr. Ryan Jimenez, apostolic administrator of Chalan Kano stayed at the Provincialate to finalize the MOA and dialogue with the members of the Recoletos de Saipan community
- May 25: Renewal of MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) with the Diocese of Cubao and the Province regarding the Recoletos de Project 6



community and ministry

- May 30: Meeting of priors and heads of secretariats and commissions, with ex-SVD Superior General, Fr. Antonio Pernia, SVD, as keynote speaker

JUNE



- June 6: Fray Edgar Tubio, OAR, stayed in Saipan for the transition preparations of the new community
- June 13: Nationwide opening of classes, especially of the Senior High School program which all Recoletos schools (except San Pedro Academy-Recoletos, Caidiocan, in Valencia Negros Oriental) offered
- June 19: Visit to the Provincial Curia of Bp. Christian Blouin, CMM, DD, of the Diocese of Lae, Papua New Guinea
- June 20: Launching of the Centenary of the Death of Fr. Mauricio Ferrero, OAR at San Sebastian Cathedral in Bacolod City, with Bishop-emeritus Vicente Navarra presiding the mass
- June 27-30: 3rd Inter-Clergy Springrain Mission Cup Basketball Tournament in Cebu City. Padres Recoletos placed second.
- June 30: Departure of two pioneering Filipino OAR missionaries—Fray AJ & Fray Jerik—to Bocas del Toro, Panama



JULY

- July 11: 40th Anniversary Of Presbyteral Ordination (1976-2016)
Fray Ceferino Añez, OAR
Fray Federico Gregorio, OAR
Fray Lauro Larlar, OAR
- July 16: 45th Patronal Fiesta Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish-Recoletos, Cebu City
Theme: "Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy" (Mt. 5:7)
Fiesta Mass: 9:30AM



- July 17: Golden Anniversary Of Presbyteral Ordination (1966-2016)
Fray Casiano Cosmilla, OAR
- July 25-31: XXXI WORLD YOUTH DAY
Venue: Krakow, Poland
Theme: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt 5:7).

AUGUST

- August 1: Provincial Visit Of Renewal to Africa (July 27-August 4)
- August 9: Send-off Mass for Saipan Missionaries
Time: 6:30 AM at SNTP Church, Quezon City



OAR Participants' Rehearsal for Musica Sacra Festival
Venue: Recoletos Communications Music Studio, Provincial Curia



- August 15: Solemn Thanksgiving Mass for the 125th Celebration of the Inauguration of the San Sebastian Basilica
Time: 6:00PM
- August 19: Solemnity of St. Ezekiel Moreno
Conference on Fr. Mauricio Ferrero
Venue: UNO-R President's Hall, Bacolod City
Speaker: Prof. Emannuel Luis Romanillos
- August 21: Thanksgiving Mass of Fray Leopoldo Estioko, OAR for his 25th Presbyteral Anniversary.
Venue: SEMONORE, Antipolo
Time: 10:00 AM



- August 22: Blessing of the EcoPark (in Danao City, Cebu) & Solemn Installation of the Statute of the Nuestra Señora de la Salud
7:30 AM – Eucharistic Celebration
- August 25: Silver Presbyteral Anniversary Thanksgiving Mass (1991-2016)
Fray Eduardo Celiz, Jr., OAR
Fray Carmelo Borces, OAR
Fray Leopoldo Estioko, OAR
Fray Jose Fortunato Garces, OAR
Fray Gaudencio Geronimo de Mesa, OAR
Fray Nemesio Tolentin, OAR
Venue: OLCP Church, Miranila, Quezon City



- August 28: SOLEMNITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Closing Of The Order-Wide 'OAR Year of Education'

First Fiesta Mass of the newly-declared ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO QUASI PARISH, Inayawan, Cebu City (under the OLCP-R in Laray, Talisay City, Cebu)

Time: 10:00 AM

Presider & Homilist: Fray Dionisio Selma, OAR



SEPTEMBER

- September 2: Province-Wide Closing Ceremony of The IYEA (Int'l Year of Educational Apostolate) of the Order
Theme: "Caritas et Scientia: Educating the Mind and the Heart"
Inclusive dates: September 2-3, 2016
Host Schools: SSC-R Manila, Canlubang and Cavite
Venue: SSC-R Manila



- September 4: Our Lady of Consolation OLCP-Miranila Fiesta Mass
Time: 9:00 AM
Presider & Homilist: Most Rev. Antonio Tobias, D.D. (Bishop of Novaliches)
- CANONIZATION OF BLD. TERESA OF CALCUTTA
10:30 AM (Rome Time): Holy Mass & Canonization Rites



- September 16: 104th Anniversary of Religiosas Familias

OCTOBER

- October 2: Start of the 55th General Chapter
Venue: Casa di Esercizi Spirituali Nostra Signora Madre della Misericordia
Via di Monte Cucco, Rome



- October 11: 24th Anniversary of St. Ezekiel's Canonization
- October 12: Solemnity of Our Lady of the Pillar
Toma de Hábito
Presider & Homilist: Fray Ian Anthony Espartero, OAR
(President, Secretariat of Formation and Vocation Ministry)
Venue: Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary
Baguio City



- October 12: Patronal Fiesta: Parish of Our Lady of the Abandoned
Valencia, Negros Oriental
- October 15: Sarf-Visayas Regional Gathering (October 15-16, 2016)
Host: SARF-Valencia Chapter
- October 20: St. Magdalene of Nagasaki, Patroness of the Secular Augustinian Recollects



CAPITULARS' SPECIAL AUDIENCE WITH THE HOLY FATHER
Vatican City

Presentation of Fray Jaazeal Jakosalem's Painting to Pope Francis
60th Founding Anniversary of Sarf-Cebu Chapter

- October 22: Sarf-Luzon Regional Gathering
Host: SARF Cavite Chapter





- October 24: Arse Semestral Retreat – Batch 2 (October 24-28, 2016)
Venue: Talavera House of Prayer-Recoletos, Cebu City
Facilitator: Fray Huberto Decena, OAR
- October 27: National Convention Of NFRBP (National Federation Of Religious Brothers In The Philippines)
Inclusive dates: October 27-29, 2016
Venue: General Santos City
Theme: “Merciful as the Father: The Challenge to Religious Brothers Today”



- October 28: Culmination of CST-R's 75th Founding Anniversary
Theme: “CST-R@75: Legacy, Heritage, Tradition through Academic Excellence and Recollect Values Formation”
Evening Event: Gabi ng Pagkilala: A Recognition Gala in Honor of Administrators, Faculty and Staff

NOVEMBER



- November 6: Start of “Balik-Nobisyado Program” (November 6-13, 2016)
Participants (12): Frays Julius Marcos, Anthony Morillo, Cristopher Maspara, Vicente Ramon Jr., Corvin Maturan, Ferdinand Fornilos, Joel Alve, Charlito Orobias, Randolph Castulo Castillo, Jose Ernill Almayo, Amado Emmanuel Bolilia & Jonathan Caballero, OAR



- November 12: Installation of Fray Philip Rollon, OAR as Parish Administrator of Sta. Remedios Parish
6:00 PM Mass
Sta. Remedios Parish Church (Tanapag, Saipan, CNMI)

November 18: 1st RAY Regional Gathering—Luzon
(November 18-20, 2016)
Theme: “Merciful like the Father”
Venue: RFC, Miranila, Quezon City



- November 19: Thanksgiving Mass on the Occasion of The Promulgation of The Decree on the Heroic Virtues of Bishop Alphonse Gallegos, OAR
- November 26: Marian Exhibit @ Bulwagang Recoletos
Duration: November 26 – December 5, 2016
Program: 0630 – Opening Mass (OLCP)
- November 28: 18th Founding Anniversary of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno (1998-2016)



DECEMBER

- December 3: AR-OAR Formands' Gathering 2016
Theme: “Augustinian Recollect Formation Itinerary: ‘Community and Prayer’”
Venue: SEMoNoRe, Antipolo City
- December 4: Marian Grand Procession Intramuros
(Nuestra Señora de la Salud joined for the first time)



- December 5: 428th Birthday of the Augustinian Recollection

25th Founding Anniversary of SEMoNoRe, Antipolo

Launching of La Salud

Venue: OLCP Church, Miranila

Program: 9:00AM - Enthronement of Our Lady of Health

Holy Mass with the Prior Provincial
11:00AM - Book Launching

Conference on La Salud (Fray Rommel Rubia, OAR)

Viewing of Marian Exhibit





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Eucharist and Mercy

BY FRAY IAN ANTHONY R. ESPARTERO, OAR

The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist finds its fullest meaning in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the High Priest of God, the Bread came down from heaven and the Sacrifice offered by God for the salvation of the world. That is why Jesus is Himself called the sacrament of the Father to His Church. And for the Church, Jesus is the greatest icon of the Father's mercy and love for humanity (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 1).

Mercy is concretized on the cross when Jesus offers Himself as a sacrifice. There, blood and water flowed from His side to wash away the sins of the world. The symbolisms of blood and water, as well as Jesus being offered as a sacrifice, speak of the very life of Jesus and the divine plan of the Father that must be fulfilled in obedience by Him. Nothing

is beyond compare to the boundless grace of God that is celebrated and offered in the Eucharist. It is God who gives Himself to us in order to be taken, blessed, broken and shared to the world.

Such a gratuitous gift is received by us despite our unworthiness. But because God is rich in mercy and abounding in love, He dwells in us

and enters into our life in order to show us that our life has hope and a future in the loving embrace of God. The Holy Mass is the vivid testimony of this richness of God's mercy and love for us. Our human sinfulness never hinders God to communicate His divinity with us in a covenanted relationship especially in the hours when we badly need Him the most. He





The Holy Mass is the vivid testimony of the richness of God's mercy and love for us. The 51st International Eucharistic Congress was held in Cebu.

keeps vigil with and for us all day long in order to assure us of His unfailing guidance, love and protection.

Consecrated persons like St. Faustina of Kowalska and Pope Francis see the Eucharist as the fountain of grace and mercy. In her diary, St. Faustina powerfully writes about the Eucharist saying, "Oh what awesome mysteries take place during Mass... this fountain of life gushing forth with such sweetness and power" (Diary 914). Pope Francis considers the Eucharist as "the summit of God's saving action: the Lord Jesus, by becoming bread broken for us, pours upon us all of His mercy and His love, so as to renew our hearts, our lives, and our way of relating with Him and with the brethren" (Wednesday Audience, February 5, 2014). In the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, we also read: "Especially from the Eucharist, grace is poured forth upon us as from a

fountain; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way" (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 10). God's grace is fully manifested in the outpouring of His mercy upon us through the Eucharist which is immeasurable and in return, it becomes the wellspring of life and grace that gives us a foretaste in the here and now of the full communion with the Father that characterizes the heavenly meal, the Eucharist.

The Eucharist, therefore, as the source and summit of our Christian life from which all our actions are directed invites us to live our life in eucharistic mercy that is made possible through the graced action of the merciful Eucharist, Jesus Christ. It is exemplified by Jesus for example when He is moved with pity

for the hungry crowd and He feeds them that leads to their fill. It can also be concretized in the world today through our action as believers of the Eucharist to make ourselves vessels of grace and mercy to the lost, the last and the least. In His life, Jesus is usually recognized by His disciples in the breaking of the bread whereby He gave Himself not just as a companion on the journey but also as the bread of life that came down from heaven. If we are to be recognized as persons of the Eucharist and dispensers of mercy, we too are to be ready to imitate Jesus in loving and caring for the needy and helpless, to frequent the reception of the sacraments particularly the Eucharist and Reconciliation, and to perform the works of mercy that seeks to bear witness to the very life of God in us as a merciful Eucharist endowed with Eucharistic mercy. **RD**



A Transforming Eucharist

BY FRAY LEANDER V. BARROT, OAR



CEBU CITY—On the second day of the IEC, the persona of St. Paul looms large. His conversion is commemorated and celebrated and how the saint preserved and promoted the memory of Christ's love from possible demise is highlighted.

Paul's devotion to the Eucharist began with his meeting with the Resurrected Christ (cf. 1Cor 15:8). Christ transformed him from within and he, recognizing the "surpassing value of knowing Christ" (Phil 3:8), considered everything that he once boasted of—his sense of ethnic supremacy, his hard-earned zeal for the faith of his forebears, his fanaticism to defend the same even to death—as rubbish. Everything he earned through diligence, hard-work, and industry cannot compare to the splendor of Christ's love manifest in His taking of the cross for humanity's justification.

Christ's passion, death and resurrection has occasioned the greatest equality before the eyes of God, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

The leveling of the playing field, so

to say, for all humanity is very much evident in the Eucharist. Before the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, all prostrate reverently irrespective of one's status in society and socio-economic prestige. Before our Lord, all are servants, in front of the Father all are children, and before God all are equally loved.

This equality that is an immediate consequence of Christ's sacrifice leading to everybody's justification remains to be the constant challenge of Eucharist. The increasing gap separating the rich and the poor is a constant reminder of how we have become simple devotees of the Eucharist but not committed to the moral consequences of our faith. The disregard for the dignity of women, the stealing from children their innocence by subjecting them to labor, the indifference to the plight of the elderly are affront to our very own faith and remain to be constant challenges to our faith in the Eucharist.

The constant celebration and reception of the risen Lord in the Eucharist strengthen our pledge to leave behind what St. Paul calls the "desires of the flesh" (Gal 5:16). The Eucharist spurs us on to be passionate to care for the poor, to value every person, to respect the dignity of others' name and honor, to promote equality irrespective of color, religion or nationality, to breakdown walls of defiance, and to promote the dignity of children and elderly. The same Eucharist sustains us in our quest for humanness.

Perhaps the moral question one can ask is how has our reception of the Eucharist transformed us from within. St. Paul has identified the beginning and summit of his conversion as "the surpassing value of knowing Christ." This has transformed him from being a persecutor of believers to become a defender of the faith and a missionary of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. The value of Christ for Paul is everything. **RD**



From Fish to Flesh: The Eucharistic-Economic Challenge

BY FR. FERDINAND T. HERNANDO, MB



CEBU CITY—One of the most dramatic biblical scenes that continue to amaze believers was the call of the first disciples (Lk 5:1-11). Dramatic—because of the contrast between night and morning, darkness and daylight. That early morning should be seen through the prism of Peter’s nightly work and sacrifice. But it was even more dramatic, nay a masterpiece—because the catch of fish happened against the backdrop of Peter’s empty boat. Thus, the dynamic shift was so powerful and inevitable—from darkness to light, from emptiness to fullness!

The Fisherman Meets the Carpenter

Peter, ever the veteran fisherman, must have seen his empty boat as a symbol of failure, or he must have consoled himself and simply shrugged his shoulders and thought of the very ordinary, and therefore, quite acceptable fact in fishing—that sometimes there was plenty of fish, and at other times, there was hardly any. Indeed, it is just the reality of fishing.

Something similar can be said of carpentry: sometimes there’s plenty of work to do, sometimes nobody hires

carpenters! As a carpenter himself, Jesus must have experienced those times when work was demanding. But then again, the reality of his trade must have taught him what it was to feel when at times there was little work to do, little earning to expect, and even nothing to eat.

When Jesus entered into the picture he could have simply told Peter, “come on, Peter, that’s life!” But then, Jesus had something greater in mind for Peter. “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch” (Lk 5:4).

Did Peter ever have a hint that Jesus, the carpenter, had something much greater up his sleeves? If he did not have the faintest idea of the divine power of Jesus, Peter must have protested at the back of his mind, “what has this carpenter to do with fishing?” Just as intuitively, he could have muttered things like “come on, since when has a carpenter been known to be an expert in fishing?”

This gives us a clue about the kind of priority Jesus gives to the fishing trade. A vast body of water teeming with life, freshness and energy, the Lake of



They were called and they came.



Galilee served as the right context for his evangelizing mission. It was thus a strategic move for Jesus to walk by the coastal areas of Galilee, whether in Capernaum or Gennesaret, or down south in Tiberias, considering how fast his message and works would spread around the rustic Galilean province via the maritime route. “At once his fame began to spread throughout the region of Galilee” (Mk 1:28).

“Go away from me ...” vs. “Do not be afraid ...”

The great catch of fish prompted Peter to think beyond the categories of human experience and connect the event to a divine cause. Thus, Jesus was no longer “the carpenter of Nazareth” (Mk 6:3), but Lord. “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man” (Lk 5:8). The contrast to Lordship is sinfulness. Here is the Lord of creation and history revealing himself to a sinful fisherman. The insight is inescapable: the sense of unworthiness indicates that Jesus is, in fact, getting too close for comfort. Such uneasiness reflects the divine invitation to transcend perspectives of human work (“the carpenter”) or origin (“Nazareth”).

Here is a powerful shift from the

economics of having nothing to the experience of having Someone, who is our everything. The spotlight now throws into sharper focus from the catch of fish to meeting God in flesh. Jesus comes to us in our poverty and reverses it to a divine encounter. If Jesus reveals himself to us in our poverty, then, we should find him, too, in our poverty. We all are afraid of poverty. But it is Jesus who will calm our fears by empowering us with a new sense of mission: from fish to flesh. “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people” (Lk 5:10).

True food, true drink

Another heartwarming scene in Scripture is the multiplication of loaves in the Gospel of John. “Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted” (Jn 6:11).

Undeniably, the action has Eucharistic overtones. It was an anticipation of the great liturgical movement of selfgiving love: “Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them” (Lk 22:19).

“I am the bread of life” (Jn 6:35), Jesus solemnly declares. “For my flesh

is true food and my blood true drink” (Jn 6:55), he continues. We all are afraid of hunger. The economic phenomenon of each one having access to bread and fish is the greatest equalizer.

The Eucharistic-Economic Challenge

But Jesus had to start with our little contribution—“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish” (Jn 6:9). Our willingness to give, give up, and give away what little we have is the key to the revelation and celebration of the Eucharist. But it is Jesus who will fill our empty stomach by empowering us with a new sense of direction, meaning, and purpose. Today, we may no longer find ourselves wandering in the desert of the Sinai peninsula, nor in the grasslands of Galilee, but there are still millions of people wallowing in poverty, whether in urban centers or in coastal areas, all over the world, worrying about what to eat. But Jesus is with us in the Eucharist.

The Eucharistic mission to share is at the same time an economic challenge. If the Eucharist does not transform our hearts, how could it ever transform our situation from poverty to communion? We receive the Eucharist. We must become Eucharist. **RD**

Jesus had to start with our little contribution.

Essential Movements in the Eucharist

BY FRAY JOSE ERNIL F. ALMAYO, OAR



CEBU CITY—Like other huge celebrations of the Church, the International Eucharistic Congress (IEC), which is described as “the Catholic Olympics of the soul”, offers another rich opportunity for spiritual growth. For Catholics, it is akin to new springtime to take a fresher view and appreciation of the fundamentals of IECs central features: its nature, history, program, relevance, updates, among others. For non-Catholics, and even non-Christians, it’s an open invitation to “come and see” (Jn. 1:39) “so that you may have fellowship with us” (1 Jn. 1:3).

While the congress itself as a gathering of brethren from various cultures and walks of life re-enacts in a more dramatic and massive way what sharing of a meal means, we cannot but see a big family of God’s children reunited— like ingredients coming from different sources, then processed, to form one loaf. The multiplicity of movements converges in one center. Truly, all roads lead to Cebu for the IEC 2016! But soon after this assembly will have been closed in a week’s time, people will leave this so-called “cradle of Christianity in the Far East”, each bringing his or her luggage of faith-laden experiences, realizations, and resolutions to his/ her point of destination.

While this diversity of movements is expected of an international event of this magnitude, here, particularly, it gives us a clue to outline, at least, some essential movements intrinsic in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

First, the downward movement. Implicitly conveyed by Pope Benedict’s apostolic exhortation, *Sacramentum caritatis*, this primary movement revealed in the Eucharist is traced back to the initiative of the triune God who is “a perfect communion of love between Father, Son and Holy Spirit”



(SC In the Eucharist, “God’s whole life encounters us and is sacramentally shared with us” (ibid.).

Here is the image of a loving and merciful God unconditionally reaching out to us—in and through the Eucharist—to win us back, to make us whole again, to strengthen us. This is a movement of God’s “absolutely free gift” to us, sinners we may be.

Second, the upward movement. Aligned with the teachings of Vatican II, Pope John Paul II’s encyclical letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, marks this upward movement: “Taking part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which is

the source and summit of the whole Christian life, they [the faithful] offer the divine victim to God, and offer themselves along with it” (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 11; *EE* 13b).

As one friend recounted: There was a time when he celebrated his birthday without a party. But by going to mass, his thanksgiving celebration for the gift of life was complete. True, the Eucharist as the highest form of prayer is man’s noblest medium of thanksgiving to God for everything favorable, or unfavorable, that happens to him.

Third, the movement *ad intra*. This



THEN: Augustinian Recollects attending the 33rd International Eucharistic Congress (February 3-7, 1937. Manila, Philippines)

corresponds to our interior journey as the Eucharist makes a profoundly personal and communitarian impact in our lives. “The Eucharist draws us into Jesus’ act of self-oblation. More than just statically receiving the incarnate Logos, we enter into the very dynamic of his self-giving” (SC 11). A sort of unexplainable restructuring occurs within when, for instance, we are touched by the homily and moved to change our ways. And more outward signs disclose this inner event like when we decide afterwards to initiate reconciliation, or carry out charitable acts, or join pro-environment advocacies. God’s grace is at work. To loan the reflection of one blogger: “In the Mass we encounter

Christ both in His Word, and in the Holy Eucharist – and in those two encounters, two liturgies, we find three distinct but related movements. In those three movements in the Mass we the Christian people are called first to Conversion, then to Consecration, and then to Communion. Each of the three is an encounter with Christ! All three are preparing us for the final Sending at the close of the Mass.” [R. Tomas Richard, “The

Mass in movements—conversion, consecration, communion.” Available at: <https://renewthechurch.wordpress.com/2012/04/09/the-mass-in-movements-conversion-consecration-communion/> (accessed on January 22, 2016).]

These series of processes within the ad intra movement are the domino effects of that transformative encounter with Christ in the Eucharist: “It is not the eucharistic food that is changed into us, but rather we who are mysteriously transformed by it” (EE 70). It enables us “to emerge from ourselves and drawing us towards our true vocation, which is love” (SC 35).

Fourth, the movement ad extra. This refers to the missionary character of the Eucharist: “The love that we celebrate in the sacrament is not something we can keep to ourselves. By its very nature it demands to be shared with all. What the world needs is God’s love” (SC 84). Moreover, our active participation in the holy mass requires “an accompanying effort to participate actively in the life of the Church as a whole, including a missionary commitment to bring Christ’s love into the life of the society”

(SC 55).

In affirmation, Pope Francis, in his *Evangelii gaudium*, concludes that communion and mission are profoundly interconnected (EG 23). Earlier, as Cardinal Bergoglio in his pre-conclave speech in 2013, he called for the Church “to come out of herself and to go to the peripheries, not only geographically, but also the existential peripheries: the mystery of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and indifference to religion, of intellectual currents, and of all forms of misery.” The Eucharist, therefore, sends us to renew not just the spiritual, but the entire, face of the earth.

As we become more aware of these essential movements in the Eucharist, may we be motivated to become effective witnesses of God’s love to the world. And let St. Augustine’s sermon 272 serve as our vademecum: “If you, therefore, are Christ’s body and members, it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord’s table! It is your own mystery that you are receiving! You are saying ‘Amen’ to what you are: your response is a personal signature, affirming your faith.” **RD**



NOW: Augustinian Recollects attending the 51st International Eucharistic Congress (January 24-31, 2016. Cebu City, Philippines)



OAR Friars singing the morning praise.



Most Rev. Diarmuid Martin, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin officiating Mass at the Cebu Capitol building.



Catholic faithful joining the Eucharistic procession to Plaza Independencia.

Clergy praying at the Plaza Independencia after the Eucharistic Procession.



Eucharist, embracing nature

BY FRAY JAAZEAL D. JAKOALEM, OAR

CEBU CITY—"It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation" (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* no. 236). The celebration of the Eucharist is a unifying moment of deepening our integral understanding of our Creator who loves his creation.



Inspiration of 'nature'

"The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation" (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 236). Care for the Earth is integral, "He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior

peace" (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* no. 10). The Eucharist fruitfully celebrated becomes an authentic venue for discovering nature's role in liturgical experience and praxis. The element of newness present in liturgical prayers, 'matter,' signs, symbols, and the like. all create unlimited pathways of integral spiritual experience.

We should all work to sustain creation, for so too is our life sustained by the transformative effect of the Eucharist. "The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us" (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* no. 13).

Hoping to make a concrete



response of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* challenge, our Philippine bishops made this call: "We call on our Basic Ecclesial Communities to make local threats to the eco-system and contributory causative factors to global warming and climate change a matter of community discernment, and the action in response to these threats, a matter of community resolve. The church will also oppose the opening of new coal-fired power plants and advocates the denial of government permits and licenses to coal mines" (CBCP, A Statement at the Conclusion of the Paris Conference on Climate Change, December 17, 2015).

Relevant moment

When we celebrate every 'eucharistic' moment, do we also remember the millions who barely have nothing on their tables? The many effects of ecological damage threaten our food sources. When we lose the value of our ecological life, we too can lose the value of the Eucharistic meal. During the days of COP21 (21st Conference of Parties, 2015 Paris Climate Conference), environmental activists including people from faith-based groups, echoed Pope Francis'

call for "ecological solidarity" by outlining ways of doing action for the planet: "divestment in fossil fuels, converting to renewables, energy-efficiency witnessing, response to climate adaptation, disaster response and supporting grassroots initiatives" (*Laudato Si'* Manifesto, no. 5). "The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* no. 13). In a parallel challenge made by Pope Francis, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines urges the Philippine church: "We call on our parishes, through our bishops and priests, to desist from those practices that aggravate an already-precarious situation, such as the wasteful maintenance of so many, unnecessary vehicles, the irresponsible use of electric power, the wastage of water, even otherwise laudable livelihood efforts that nevertheless pose a threat to the environment, such as the wasteful and destructive use of forest products" (CBCP, A Statement at the Conclusion of the Paris Conference on

Climate Change, December 17, 2015).

Shared Life

Eucharist is a sharing of life, as this has been the untiring mission of Jesus' life. Fresh and real, "the Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter" (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 236).

Truly, Jesus shared the bread with ordinary people. We should share the bread in street corners. We should break bread with people in areas of armed conflict. We should eat the food of life with workers in the factories. We should celebrate life in the homes of broken families. We should partake of the bread of suffering in refugee camps where many women and children are displaced because of hunger and war. It is not enough that we construct beautiful churches and sanctuaries for worship. We should also go beyond our comfort zones and reach out to those in the peripheries of society - breaking bread and sharing Jesus' life in all of creation. **RD**



Always the Filipinos amazed with their grace in dancing.



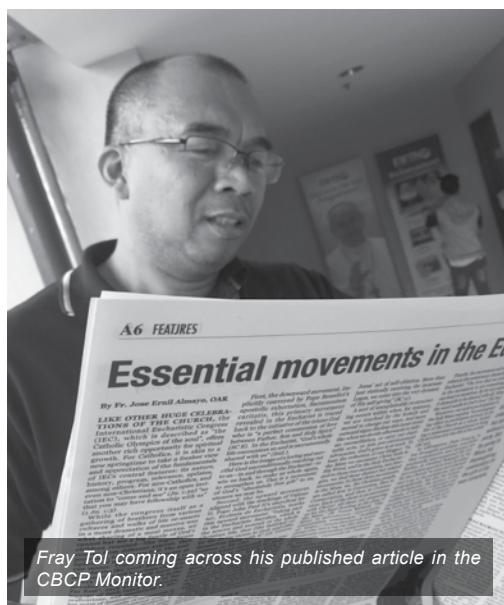
Recoletos Communications in action during the 51st IEC in Cebu



The "lean" Recoletos Communications team in their official press room at the IEC Convention Center courtesy of CBCP Media.



Groupie with Radyo Veritas anchors Angelique Lazo and Fr. Soy Hernando, M.B.



Fray Tol coming across his published article in the CBCP Monitor.



With some Augustinian Recollect delegates in a mandatory pose at the 3D IEC 2016 logo



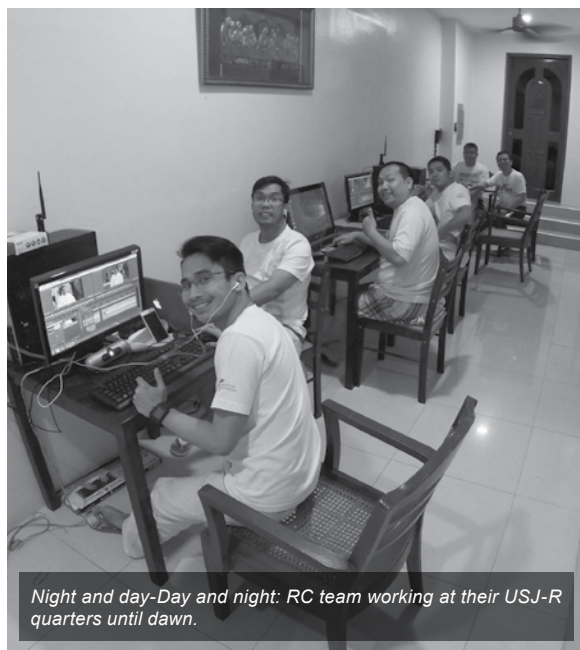
Fray Tagoy and Fray Boyax blending with the crowd of media guys.



Always a blessing to snap a "good" picture.



Posterity picture with Radio TV Malacañang (RTVM) personalities. (L-R) Fr. Ferdinand Hernando, MB, Fray Jose Ernil Almayo, OAR, Fray Robin Ross Plata, OAR, Fray Jessriel Marcha, OAR, Mr. John Ryan Tulio, Ms. Sheridan Narciso Navarro (seated), Fray Kenneth Caligdong, OAR, Fray Reynaldo Jaranilla, OAR, Fray Leander Barrot, OAR



Night and day-Day and night: RC team working at their USJ-R quarters until dawn.



Recoletos Communications was tasked in behalf of CBCP Media to help document the events of the 51st International Eucharistic Congress 2016 in Cebu.



Fray Boyax meets a new media friend and snaps a photo while in active duty.



Recoletos Communications engaging in the daily press conferences. In this photo: the actual press conference with Bishop Robert Barron, D.D., of Wordonfire.org and Archbishop Jose Palma, D.D., archbishop of Cebu.



Tired... but not so tired have a groufie.



General Chapter updates, booklaunch on 17th anniversary of St. Ezekiel Province

BY FRAY LEANDER BARROT, OAR



(Left) Fray Rene Paglinawan, OAR; (Center) A fruit of the IEC 2016 book entitled "Eucharist from the Heart"; (Right) Msgr. Pedro Quitarro III.

PROVINCIAL CURIA — The Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno celebrated its 17th inauguration anniversary in a three-part morning program last February 13, at the Bulwagan Recoletos in Mira-nila, Quezon City.

Dubbed "IEC 2016 in Review: Updates. Echoes. Booklaunch," the activity mainly dealt with "Updates on the 55th General Chapter" given by Fray René Paglinawan; "IEC 2016: Theological Perspectives and Pastoral Challenges" by Msgr. Pedro Quitarro III; and Booklaunch of "Eucharist from the Heart".

Indirectly related to IEC 2016 in Cebu, the Updates which Fray Paglinawan shared oriented the brothers the juridical restructuring that was imminent with the scheduled 55th General Chapter in October 2016.

Fray Paglinawan who is among the 8 appointed members of the PreCapitular Commission was in Rome last January 12-15 for their initial meeting.

Msgr. Pedro Quitarro III, CBCP Media Office Director, was the

handpicked resource speaker to talk about some theological and pastoral lessons from the recently concluded 51st International Eucharistic Congress.

During the book launch proper, Fr. Ferdinand Hernando, MB, introduced the content while Fray Jose Ernil Almayo, OAR, editor of the book, explained the cover design in behalf of Fray Jaazeal Jakosalem, OAR.

Video productions by Recoletos Communications which were aired over national and international TV during the IEC 2016 events preceded the program. Fray Lauro Larlar, OAR and Fray Dionisio Selma, OAR gave the welcome and closing remarks, respectively. The RFC theology seminarians concluded the program with the singing of the IEC 2016 theme song—Christ in us, Our hope of Glory.

Father Provincial received

representatives not only from Metro Manila area but also from each OAR community in the Visayas, Palawan, and Baguio. Important documents for each community were distributed after the program.

The AR Sisters and a maximum of 10 SARF members per chapter were invited to the said event.

More than two months after its creation as the eighth province of the Order on November 28, 1998, the St. Ezekiel Moreno Province was inaugurated on February 10, 1999 by Most Rev. Camilo Gregorio of Bacolod.

On its 17th year, Ash Wednesday, the coincidence re-echoes Pope Francis' Lenten message which is not just about what we can give up but also what we can do. Starting afresh from the Eucharistic Lord will make us go out to perform corporal and spiritual works of mercy. **RD**



Veritas

THE WORD. THE TRUTH.

@ 47

BY FRAY DIONISIO SELMA, OAR

MANILA—On its 47th year of service, Radio Veritas 846 held a thanksgiving program honoring all the “Kapanalig” supporters (business, corporate, and institutional partners) last February 18, 2016 at 5 PM at the Arzobispado de Manila in Intramuros.

His Eminence Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, being the Chairman of the Board, graced the occasion.

In his message, he expounded on the theme: Veritas (Truth) meets Mercy. He then elaborated on the root word “awa” (mercy) which leads us to “pang-unawa” (understanding, compassion) which, in turn, should bring us to “kawanggawa” (charitable acts).

The Recollect Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno was handed a plaque of gratitude by Cardinal Tagle as one of the institutional partners. Frays Dionisio Selma and Henry Santiago received it on behalf of the province. Ms. Angelique Lazo, a radio and TV anchor emceed the occasion. **R**





Villa San Ezekiel, Brgy. Pansol, Calamba City.

Recoletos de Pansol is "Villa San Ezekiel"

The 1,790 sq. m. resort in Brgy. Pansol, Calamba City, Laguna is now called "Villa San Ezekiel". Formerly known by the locals, and even by many of us, as Villa San Miguel, the place has been transformed into a resort conducive for small group conferences, seminars, or weekend bonding. Since the location is remote and tortuous if one starts the trip from Manila, a neophyte to the place needs a map, or a Waze app, and the guts to inquire for the exact direction from the residents who will be willing to give the cue: "Yun po bang sa mga pari?" The new name "Villa San Ezekiel" was presented to the Provincial Council, and it was approved. **RD**



July 17, 2016: Golden anniversary of
priestly ordination of Fray Casiano
"Guapo" Cosmilla, OAR

OTHER IMPORTANT EVENTS

June 13, 2016 Patronal
fiesta of the San Antonio de Padua
Chaplaincy in Brgy. Tagburos, Puerto
Princesa City, Palawan.

June 20, 2016 Official
Launching of the Padre Mauricio
Ferrero Centennial

It started at 8:00AM at
the Bacolod Cathedral with a Caravan
and opening of exhibits. **RD**



June 25, 2016 Installation
of Fray Alden Alipin as the new Team
Ministry Coordinator of the Our Lady
of Lourdes Chaplaincy in Brgy. Tambo,
Ayungon, Negros Oriental. Most. Rev.
Julito Cortes of Dumaguete presided
at the 10 AM holy mass and the rite of
installation. **RD**



June 29-July 3, 2016 The Padres
Recoletos participated in the 3rd
Springrain Mission Cup Basketball
Tournament held in Cebu City.
Composed of more than 20 religious
from 14 communities and apostolate
areas with the consistent special
participation of a ForSOAR, the
team dreamed of making a repeat
performance of what they achieved
three years ago. Deo volente, the
group will have something to support
the scholarship program in our Sierra
Leone mission. **RD**



Ryan Jimenez is bishop-elect of Chalan Kanoa



Bishop Ryan Jimenez of Chalan Kanoa.

After 6 years, the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa had its second bishop. Fr. Ryan Jimenez, apostolic administrator since 2010 after Bishop Camacho had retired, was elevated to the episcopal order to shepherd the ecclesiastical territory that covers the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. He was ordained bishop on August 14, 2016 at the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Cathedral.

Earlier, bishop-elect Jimenez helped facilitate the creation of a Recollect community in Saipan, which, upon the recommendation of the Provincial Council, was approved by the Prior General and his council on March 4, 2016. The Recoletos de Saipan community with Fray Allan Rubett Cabatian as the local prior and parish priest will take charge of the San Roque Parish. He will be ably assisted by Frays Philip Rollon and Leo Neil Bullos.

Last May 11-13, Bishop-elect Jimenez, a true-blooded Visayan, visited and stayed at the Provincial Curia to finalize the MOA with the Prior Provincial and talk to the three future collaborators in his diocese. **RD**

Missionaries off to Panama

Two young OAR religious left for Panama last June 30, 2016. Frays Allan Jacinto, OAR, and Jerik Troy Siozon, OAR, are the pioneering batch to realize the interprovincial collaboration on mission between the Province of St. Ezekiel and the Province of the Our Lady of Consolation. They will be working with the Recollect bishop Anibal Saldaña in the Territorial Prelature of Bocas del Toro.

The said prelate, "a diocese in formation," is a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Panama. The Holy See assigned it to the Recollects since 1964. In 2014, a MOA was entered into and between the Prelature and the Consolation Province in terms of the pastoral administration of the parishes of Santa Isabel de Hungría (in Changuinola), San José (in Almirante), and San Agustín (in Kankintú at the Comarca Ngäbe-Buglé).

Frays AJ and Jerik will be working in this last parish which is predominantly inhabited by the indigenous people. **RD**



Frays Allan Jacinto and Jerik Siozon

400th anniversary of La Encarnación Convent



Real Monasterio de la Encarnación, Madrid

In celebration of the fourth centenary of the Dedication and the Entrance to the cloister of the first community of OAR Nuns of Real Monasterio de la Encarnación in Madrid, a thanksgiving mass was held at the chapel of the said convent on June 30, 2016 at 7PM (or 2AM of July 1, RP time). His Eminence Carlos Osoro Sierra, D.D., archbishop of Madrid, presided the Eucharist. It can be recalled that the first community was under the Servant of God, Mariana de San Jose, as its first prioress. **RD**



WINNERS. The Ten Accomplished Youth Organizations (TAYO) winners during the TAYO 13 National Finals awarding held last Jan. 21 at Heroes Hall, Malacañang Palace. (Contributed photo)

USJ-R SOLACE receives award

CEBU CITY—The USJ-R School Of Law Advocacy and Community Enrichment (SOLACE) was awarded as one of the 10 accomplished youth organizations in the Philippines in a ceremony at the Heroes Hall, Malacañang Palace last January 21.

The award was received by Hope Cesely H. Baquero, the group president.

Palace Communications Sec. Sonny Coloma Jr. delivered the speech of President Benigno Aquino III. Senator Bam Aquino also delivered his speech for the youth during the ceremony hosted by Commissioner Jose Sixto “Dingdong” Dantes of the National Youth Commission.

The search for the Ten Accomplished Youth Organizations (TAYO) is organized annually by the TAYO Awards Foundation Inc., in partnership with Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines and co-organized by the National Youth Commission and the Office of Senator Aquino.

It aims to recognize, reward and

encourage youth organizations all over the country with programs and projects that help their communities and to inspire more young people to find innovative solutions, to challenge the status quo and to make a difference in the lives of the people and in the cause they choose to espouse.

The organizations' projects were judged based on the following criteria: impact of the project, harnessing the spirit of volunteerism and citizenship, creativity and innovation, sustainability, and effective use of resources.

Out of the 362 Filipino youth organizations that have joined this year's search, the USJ-R SOLACE and project entry, Case Follow-up for Jail Decongestion and Inmates Paralegal

Training Program, for the culture and the arts, peace and human development category, was one of the 10 winners for 2016.

The project is an initiative to help decongest and protect the rights of detainees to fair and speedy trial in Mandaue City Jail.

There are two parts of the project: the first part, SOLACE conducts jail visit, interview inmates and follow-up cases with the court where their cases are pending; and the second part is the inmates' paralegal training where the group conducts a series of lectures on the rights of the accused and other laws pertinent to the inmates' cases. They train the inmates paralegal aides, who will also serve as paralegals to their co-inmates.

SOLACE is also the first organization to translate the Rules on Criminal Procedures of the Rules of Court from English to Cebuano.

The project is a continuing one that started last April 2015, in partnership with the Humanitarian Legal Assistance Foundation.

The USJ-R SOLACE is an organization composed of law students of the University of San Jose-Recoletos, with Atty. Elaine T. Bathan as their adviser, who is also the assistant dean of USJ-R School of Law.

The group also received the San Miguel Corp. Better World special award; P50,000 from TAYO Awards Foundation Inc. and Office of Senator Aquino; P20,000 from San Miguel Corp.; and TAYO trophy sculpted by Toym de Leon Imao.

The TAYO 13 winners joining the roster of exemplary youth organizations were USJ-R SOLACE, Cebu City; I Am M.A.D. Inc., Mandaluyong City; Tanay Mountaineers, Rizal; Kanlaon Theater Guild, Bacolod City; Environment and Climate Change Research Institute, DLSU, Malabon City; Keep Hope Alive, Oriental Mindoro; Youth Sports Advocacy, Quezon City; Bayugan National Comprehensive High School-Yecs, Agusan del Sur; Tobog Youth Organization, Albay; UP Alchemes, Quezon City.

The TAYO 13 national finalists were Pinoy Malikhain, Propelling Our Inherited Nation Through Our Youth Inc.; University of San Carlos Chemical Engineering Society; UP Chemical Engineering Society Inc.; TUP Instrumentation and Control Students' Society; Youth Working for Change; Rebirth Outdoor Trekkers and Adventurers Philippines Inc.; Philippine Junior Jaycees Inc.-Tacloban Sinirangan; UP Circle of Industrial Engineering Majors. **RD**

Editor's Note:

This story was first published in Sun.Star Cebu newspaper on February 22, 2016.

Father Provincial visits Recoletos de Tambo

BY FRAY TOL ALMAYO, OAR



Prior Provincial Fray Diony with the Recolect community in Our Lady of Lourdes Chaplaincy.

AYUNGON, Negros Oriental—The Prior Provincial, Fray Dionisio Selma, paid his first visit to the community of Our Lady of Lourdes Chaplaincy in Brgy. Tambo, Ayungon.

As a sidetrip to his destination in Valencia, Negros Oriental where he presided a Board of Trustees meeting for the two OAR schools, Father Provincial managed to squeeze his hectic schedule just so he could see for himself the status of the brothers and their apostolate in this fast-developing inland community.

Currently, this second Recoletos community is mainly engaged in pastoral works. Fray Allan Jacinto is appointed local prior and team leader of the ministry. He is ably assisted by Fray Alden Alipin and Fray Randolph Castulo Castillo, Jr. A newly-assigned deacon, Fray Mark Saludes, is now a member of the community chiefly for his pastoral practice prior to presbyteral ordination.

Father Selma was accompanied by Fray Edgar Tubio, president of the Secretariat of Ministerial and Mission Apostolate, and Fray Henry Santiago, provincial procurator.

It is recalled that the Recoletos de Tambo community, together with Recoletos de Tagburos in Puerto Princesa City and Recoletos de Project 6 in Quezon City, was established on May 13, 2015. **RD**



Fray Loreto's precious mementos of his mission in the Amazons.



Three things to know about the Recollect mission in the Amazon

BY FRAY ABRAHAM LATOZA, OAR

BACOLOD CITY—Fray Loreto Dacanay, OAR, has come home in 2014 from his interrupted mission for about sixteen years in the Amazon. Inspired by the Laudato Si of Pope Francis, he is home with a story to tell. He would like to do that now in this dispatch. After ceaseless prodding, he opened his door. He culled his diaries. He blew the dust on the cover of his notebook and it gave me an image that he will be giving life to every bits and pieces (stories) kept within it.



He found some quotations saying: "The issue is not what God is like. The issue is what kind of people we become when we attached ourselves to God." This sublime input gave me an impression, a glimpse to his interiority which sustained him to be steadfast to life's intricacies and vulnerabilities. Later I learned he kept collecting short insights from different authors of the books he read when he was out there in the woods.

Amazon. One word describes all. One of the world's biggest spring of life. Huge landscape of rainforest. Exotic animals. Sharp teeth of the piranhas. Hungry alligators. Home of several endangered human tribes. Overwhelming distances of riverbanks and settlements. Almost forgotten in the wild for many days and months with no means of communication. What are these to an unquenchable desire to make Christ known in that corner of South American region, in the Amazon? A missionary goes out beyond borders. The Catholic mission is over and above the most difficult agenda--the cost of discipleship.

"Floresta. Povo. Missão Católica."

(The forest. The people. The mission [which is] Catholic.)

Floresta (The Forest)

"When the then Vicar Provincial Fray Victor Lluch, (may he rest in peace), asked for volunteers I enlisted myself, having in mind the beauty of fulfilling my desire to

be in the mission." He continued. "The Amazon, when I first saw it in 1994 was wilder. Wilder in a sense that there was not much concessions going on, to mean illegal loggers loitering or dams being built in the interior. It was a terribly vast forest seeing it from the bird's eye view when I first got the chance to fly the Ticko Ticko Plane from the City of Manaus bound for Acre, another state of Brazil that serves as our entry point to the Municipality of Pauini with at least 17, 000 population at present. Pauini is my destination. As I embarked, I felt closer to the generous creator in which enjoying the sight would take your breath away. My heart groaned in either act of thanksgiving or praise to Him when I saw the grandeur of such sight unveiled before my very eyes. It might be too taxing though, to pull out emotions sixteen years back but the glorious days of solitude, or driving the boat with local companions, most of the time away from my community as part of the so called "Des Obriga" in the bush for more than a week or months to meet the tribesmen, going out to fish, foraging in the woods; that could be my strongest enigmatic mission experience as enigmatic as the dense rainforest of the Amazon."

As he recalled his outlandish memoir, Fray Loreto sighed as if telling me to try going there because not all could be described in words. So he said: "Be patient Abes. I will spare no details being left out in as much as my pictures and stories can."

He beamed with a smile and searched for his prized possession-- a hard bound notebook. Patience yes, I must admit I don't have that. To travel for weeks and months just to visit and to give catechism to the people living along riverbanks, to some he administers the Sacraments, Fray Loreto is really an authority when it comes to the virtue of patience.

"The floresta of the Amazon is a natural habitat of a large semiaquatic constricting snake (Eunectesmurinus) of the boa family of tropical South America that which may reach a length of 30 feet (9.1 meters)--the Anacondas. Piranhas, as they are depicted by the National Geographic magazine and Discovery channel have sharp teeth of a carnivorous type of fish. Brazil has rich reserve of natural resources, the home of alligators, and the Amazon's trees with the genera Hevea and Ficus are potent sources of rubber in the world, the last frontier of our planet."

Consider Fray Loreto's background: he was born in Baguio City and grew up in Aringay, La Union, Northern Philippines, frolicsome and adventurous, he could easily adapt to his new environment as missionary. He's a perfect match to volunteerism and Augustinian Recollect spirit. When he came home, he resembles already the looks of a native Brazilian. Another proof that immersion is an effective means of preparing the soil for evangelization and the Pope's injunction



UNO-R has 10 new lawyers

Ten (10) alumni of the UNO-Recoletos School of Law successfully hurdled the November 2015 Bar examinations.

The ten new lawyers are: Atty. Aiken G. Alagban; Atty. Niño Jandy P. Calitis; Atty. Ericson T. Cepida; Atty. Josephine Ferrer; Atty. Giovanni Christian D.Ladines; Atty. Jimmy Navarro; Atty. Edda Opeña; Atty. Angelica T. Rojas; Atty. Charade Circe Rubica-Sabordo; and Atty. Franz Marie Villanueva



that a shepherd should have immersed on, “to smell like his sheep.” He is an equilibrium, a happy soul in the Floresta to bring about ecological balance of hope and faith among the lovely people who are in the margin.

Povo (The People)

“If I may continue, in the woods, everyone is a friend. They hug a lot. They smile a lot. The fear is imminent about the deadly animals but the providence of God is evident as well. It is Mother Nature providing abundant food for everyone. The people have no hesitation, so certain about their way of life. We drink from the river. Sometimes if I did catch the rain water, it’s tastier. Absolutely I had no worries. The Amazon’s staple food is minced cassava. Seldom they can afford rice. They do barter system with the enterprising businessmen from the town who comes occasionally. Our daily life was foraging. Foraging in the world’s largest warehouse made our daily chores full of adventure. The government? The government cannot provide the basic needs for the minorities. They [government officials] have few concerns on the life of the people in the interior except probably of the under-the-table arrangement to allow illegal loggers to destroy the forest. I also started to think about the NGO’s which sometimes manipulate the weak for their own advantage. I also considered education as part of evangelization in which if there’s greater collaboration between NGO’s and government agencies, the people of that part of the Amazon might benefit from it. I was confronted

with a tedious task. The immediate need was to form basic ecclesial communities. It’s been a long way to bring it to fruition. Time always poses the biggest chunk of the challenge. And besides the people do not ask. They are very humble, the people of the Amazon. They have meager concerns in life, carefree, submissive, but if there is an opportunity, they are also eager to learn to read and write. With their open mindedness, the ground is fertile to sow the seeds of faith. They are fairly well-rounded and pretty, kind-hearted persons God ever created. They have one mind as Brazilians in terms of fast foot work. Young people in the interior has poverty of space for football game. They wait for summer time when the water is down by two to three meters, they cut the bushes to have a playground for them to play. Fantastic! If we could kick the ball off in an uneven ground, that is already playing football.”

“It is not easy to gather them. They live separately as tribesmen do. The local interpreters have key roles in the evangelization project. Before going to the “Des Oبرا” we take with us materials already translated in Portuguese: catechetical materials, Sunday readings, manuscripts, at times poorly printed. Why is this so? It is because only on the following year that we will be able see each other again. It’s the vastness of the land and the overwhelming distances and the handful of human resources (missionaries) that make evangelization like a drop of rain in the ocean.”

“By the way, we have to stop from here. We still have to pray the Midday Prayer.”

He said it calmly. So I said: One last thing. Do you have another insight? I asked. He flipped the pages of his notebook. “So many of you lost everything. I do not know what to tell you. I can only be silent; I accompany you silently with my heart. Many of you looked to Christ and asked: “ Why Lord?” To each of you the Lord responds from his heart. I have no other words to say to you. Let us look to Christ; He is the Lord, and he understands us for he experienced all the troubles we experience.” Pope Francis said that, Abes.” Here’s another: My life is always the result of what I bring to it. When I bring courage and love, these shall hold my soul. When I bring laughter and curiosity, these shall ride my smile. When I bring willingness and honor, these shall grace my heart. My life is the result of what I bring to it... in always. “I took note of that from Robin Kerth’s book.”

Missão Católica

“4th October 1994, the village is festive. They have cut leaves to adorn the facade of the house of prayer. They are gathering all their animals. Everybody is busy about the fiesta. They want to lead their pets and to take them to the Church for the blessing and procession. They were preparing for the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. I prepare for the Mass with a homily being translated by an interpreter. It is a combination of Spanish and Portuguese. The catechist has briefed me though earlier that I have to administer Baptism to one hundred catechumens. There is no brass band. Neither could have fireworks show down outside the Church to signal a momentous day in the woods as customary in some Churches. Under the scorching heat of the sun, the procession culminates in the Church. The Liturgy is in Portuguese. At communion time they will sing Oração de São Francisco de Assis.

*Senhor fazei de mim o
instrumento de Vossa paz
Onde houver ódio
Que eu leve o amor
Onde houver ofensas*



Que eu leve o perdão
 Onde houver discórdia
 Que eu leve a união
 Onde houver trevas
 Que eu leve a luz
 Onde houver erro
 Que eu leve a verdade
 Onde houver desespero
 Que eu leve a esperança
 Onde houver tristeza
 Que eu leve alegria
 Onde houver dúvidas
 Que eu leve a fé

*Mestre, fazei que eu procure mais
 Consolar que ser consolado
 Compreender que ser compreendido
 Amar que ser amado
 Pois é dando que se recebe
 É perdoando que se é perdoado
 E é morrendo que se vive para vida
 eterna*

We have hard time practicing it. I am wearing their native attire. Listening to the simplicity of the canticle of St. Francis, it melted my heart. It was a beautiful liturgy."

"It is time to end this sharing. My mission is not over yet. In fact, I volunteered last year to Panama. In as much as the Augustinian Recollect life and mission project, we do not stop. We renew and revitalize. This is our vocation. My experience in the Amazon created a bulky chapter of my life, something that is an open-ended immersion, simple, tranquil, and enigmatic, a solidarity with the people in the margin, uniting communities, filled with awe in the hand of God's divine providence. The forest, the people and the Catholic mission form the triangle, the sort of equation of faith and doctrine which all of us hold on to. To be able to sing the Creed with the people of the Amazon needs an art of dedication, the fire of perseverance, the simplicity of the message, and a God who unites all human endeavors and plans."

"To the love and praise of the One God!"

fin! **RD**



L-R: Fray Eduardo Celiz, Jr. (UNO-R President), Fray Nemesio Tolentin, OAR (SSC-R Manila President), Fray Christopher Maspara, OAR (USJ-R President), and Fray Ferdinand Fornillos, OAR (SSC-R Manila VP for Academics) who wore the biggest smile as he held a copy of the program.

CHED grants 3 OAR schools autonomous, deregulated status

BY CARLOS LEGASPI, JR.

BACOLOD CITY—The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), through CMO 20 s. 2016, has named 53 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as Autonomous for three years (2016-2019). Among the HEIs granted Autonomous status are University of Negros Occidental –Recoletos, Bacolod, and University of San Jose– Recoletos, Cebu.

In the same CMO, San Sebastian College–Recoletos Manila joined the other 16 HEIs who were granted "Deregulated Status" for three years.

These schools complied with the CHED memorandum order (CMO No. 4): Policy-Standard to Enhance Quality Assurance (QA) in Philippine Higher Education Through an Outcomes-based and Typology-based QA.

In the Negros Island Region, UNO-Recoletos is joined by Silliman University, St. Paul University–Dumaguete and University of St. La Salle, Bacolod. While the Foundation University of Dumaguete was granted "Deregulated Status".

CMO 19 s. 2016 provides the obligations and Duties of Autonomous and Deregulated HEIs. **RD**



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

"Recoletos de Project 6" to serve Cubao till 2018

The "Recoletos de Project 6" (Quezon City) will continue to serve Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish for another two years after the bilateral Memorandum of Agreement was renewed effective July 9, 2016 to July 9, 2018. The said renewal was signed on May 25, 2016 by Most Rev. Honesto Ongtioco, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Cubao, and Rev. Fr. Dionisio Selma, OAR, Prior Provincial. Fr. Ronaldo Macale, Episcopal Vicar for the Clergy and Guest Priests, and Fray Edgar Tubio, OAR, Provincial Councilor, stood as witnesses. **R**

"Recoletos de Cebu" is 395 years old

On June 9, 2016, "Recoletos de Cebu" community celebrated its 395th founding anniversary. According to records, the community was established on June 9, 1621. May the Lord of history bless the brothers of the community of the University of San Jose-Recoletos (USJ-R) and the people they work with in the different apostolate areas. Adelante! **R**

"Recoletos de San Carlos" Community to celebrate its Diamond Jubilee

The community of Santo Tomas de Villanueva-Recoletos in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental turned 75 on June 23, 2016. We pray for a fruitful witnessing of religious life ad intra and ad extra. Ad multos annos! **R**

Recoletos School of Theology: Solemn Investiture 2016

BY FRAY EMIL A. QUILATAN, OAR



MIRA-NILA HOMES, QUEZON CITY—May 28, 2016, seventeen students of Recoletos School of Theology (RST) were invested with the degrees in Bachelor of Sacred Theology and Masters of Arts in Theology. Seven Augustinian Recollects graduated from this batch.

The first part of the program was the Baccalaureate Mass that was held in the parish church of Our Lady of Consolation. The Holy Mass started at 8:30 AM. Fray Lauro V. Larlar, OAR, Rector of RST, was the main celebrant and homilist. Formators and guest

priests from the other congregations concelebrated with the Father Rector.

The second part of the program, "The Commencement Exercises," began at 10:30 AM. Rev. Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa, OP, Dean of the Faculty of Sacred Theology of the Pontifical



and Royal University of Santo Tomas, Manila, conferred on the 17 graduates the decree in Bachelor of Sacred Theology. Fray Robin Ross S. Plata, OAR, graduated with honors, Magna cum laude. Four other Recollect friars — Fray Paul S. Demillones, Fray Jorr S. Rabacal, Fray Kenneth Caligdong and Fray Niel Jarumay — graduated also with honors, Cum laude.

Rev. Fr. Lauro V. Larlar, OAR, conferred on the following OAR candidates the decree in Master of Arts in Theology:

Thesis:

Fray Robin Ross s. Plata, OAR, *Major in Systematic Theology*;

Fray Paul S. Demillones, OAR, *Major in Systematic Theology, Meritus*;

Fray Kenneth S. Caligdong, OAR, *Major in Church History, Meritus*;

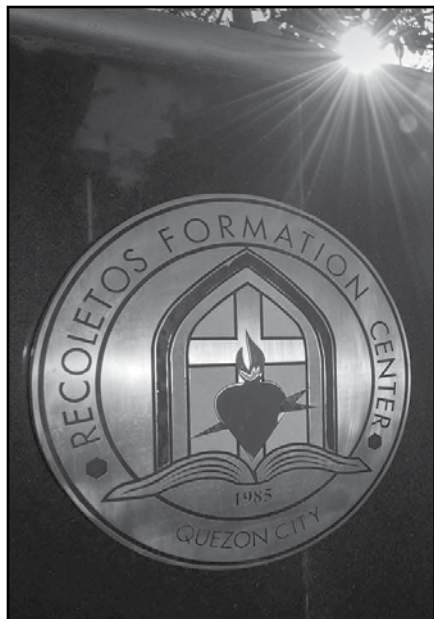
Fray Jorr S. Rabacal, OAR, *Major in Church History*; and

Fray Felipe U. Rollon, OAR, *Major in Church History*

Non-Thesis:

Fray Niel Ryan E. Jarumay, OAR, *Translation, Meritus*; and

Fray Elpedio N. Sarita, Jr., OAR, *Translation, Meritus* **RO**



Consecration of San Carlos City to the Risen Lord

BY FRAY ONZ ANTONIO, OAR



Hon. Gerardo Valmayor, City Mayor of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, thanking the Recollect Community of San Carlos City for its continued missionary/ministerial services to his constituents.

MONTEAGUDO-RECOLETOS, San Carlos City- On Sunday, March 27 – Easter Sunday, the City of San Carlos, Negros Occidental, was consecrated to the Risen Lord. It was an afternoon of prayers and music which climaxed with the prayer of consecration.

In response, Honourable Gerardo P. Valmayor, City Mayor of San Carlos City, praised and acknowledged the efforts of Fr. Rafael Cabarles, OAR, who has given so much and shared so generously for the spiritual upliftment of the people. He also expressed gratitude to the members of the Recollect Community of San Carlos for their continuing service. **RO**



Dr. Romina R. Bacarse discussing the workshop activity regarding Action Research



The Sebastianian Community during the five-day training

The In-Set for the College and SHS faculty started with a Eucharistic celebration presided by Fray James Dexter R. Tanquis, OAR, VP for Academics. Fray Cristituto A. Plaomar, OAR, acknowledged the presence of the resource speakers and the participants of the 5-day training activity. Dr. Romina R. Barcarse, Associate Dean of the College of Allied Medical Sciences of Lyceum of the Philippines University-Cavite led the discussion and workshop about Action Research; Mrs. Maria Soledad T. Tubay, SHS Principal gave updates on the K to 12 program; Mr. Felipe R. Costuna, Jr., Dean of the College of Criminal Justice Education, and OIC of Safety and Security, talked about SSC-RdC's Emergency Plans and Procedures on Fire and Earthquake; Fray Cristituto A. Palomar, OAR conferred about the Augustinian Recollect Values; Mr. Rheyward G. Doneza, Public Relations Officer, re-oriented the participants the SSC-RdC's Vision, Mission, Values, and Objectives, and introduced the Religious and Lay Administrators for S.Y. 2016-2017; Prof. Liezl R. Astudillo, Academic Coordinator of Berkeley School in Baguio gave a seminar-workshop about the Psychology of Learning; Prof. Leonida T. Africa, President of St. Theresa's College-Manila Foundation led the discussion and workshop on Formulation of Test Questions and Improvement of Instruction Through Questioning and Facilitating Skills and Techniques while Dr. Mario B. Hubilla, Jr., a professor at De La Salle University-Dasmariñas concluded the training with his topic Curricular Review and Syllabi Workshop.

SSC-RdC holds In-Set for employees

BY RHEYMARD G. DONEZA

CAVITE CITY—Faculty members of the College and Senior High School departments updated their instructional skills through seminar-workshops from May 31-June 3 and June 6, 2016. The Lower Basic Education Department (LBED) had their own series of trainings from June 1-4 and June 6, 2016.

In the LBED, Atty. Cecilio D. Duka, Ed. D. discussed the topic on Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying, Sexual Harassment, and Violence against Children; Ms. Jade M. Diaz talked about Student-Centered Teaching Strategies in line with Performance Tasks; Ms. Mary Grace Del Rosario talked about Facilitating Learning through Innovative and Student-Centered Teaching Strategies that develop HOTS. Speakers for the LBED were provided by Rex Publishing House and Phoenix Publishing House. **RD**

SSC-RdC holds Institutional Planning

BY RHEYMARD G. DONEZA

CAVITE CITY—The Religious and Lay Administrators of San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite (SSC-RdC) gathered together for a 3-day Institutional Planning Activity, held from April 28-30, 2016 at St. Scholastica's Retreat House, Tagaytay City.

The planning activity was organized by the Accreditation, Planning and Development Office (APDO) headed by Dr. Belinda M. Quinio, Accreditation, Planning and Development Officer and was facilitated by Dr. Rodrigo F. Ponce, Director of the Expanded Tertiary Education, Equivalency and Accreditation Program of San Sebastian College-Recoletos, Manila.

During the planning activity, the participants reviewed the current Vision, Mission, Values and Objectives of SSC-RdC and revisited its 10 point agenda (SSC-RdC Thrusts). The State of the Office Address from the different VP offices were presented by respective representatives, while State of the School address by the President. The consolidated SWOT analysis was also discussed and the existing 5-year development plan was evaluated; a write shop for the formulation of the new Goal and Thrust of the school for the next 5-years and its long-term, short-term objectives and strategies were also in the agenda.

The 3-day planning ended with the finalization of the 5-year Development Plan, formulation of the Annual Operational Plan, and a Eucharistic Celebration presided by Rev. Fr. Cristituto A. Palomar, OAR, President. **RD**



The members of the Sebastianian Administrators during the 2-day Institutional Development Planning



Members of the Academic Cluster during their brain storming about the Institutional Development Plan



UNO-R presents “Our Four Fathers”

BY CALOY LEGASPI



BACOLOD CITY—The UNO-Recoletos Office of External Affairs presented “Our Four Fathers” a photo exhibit by the four religious administrators of the University. It was an exhibit of the beauty of creation captured by the eye of the camera lenses of Rev. Fr. William Villaflor, OAR; Rev. Fr. Loreto Dacanay, OAR; Rev. Fr. Abraham Latoza, OAR and Rev. Fr. Louie Gabinete, OAR. The exhibit ran until March 10 at the Museo Rekoletto de Negros inside the university campus.

The seven masterpieces of Fr. Villaflor were captured using Nikon DSLR. An ordinary digital camera was used by Fr. Dacanay to capture Brazilian landscapes. Fr. Latoza’s pictures of his missionary works in

Africa were shot by a DSLR camera while Fr. Gabinete used the lenses of an iPhone.

There is also an exhibit of the photos of the missionary works in Brazil and Africa at the Paseo

Recoletos and the Founders’ Park in the University. These are captured moments in the life in the missions of Fr. Dacanay, Fr. Latoza, and Fr. Gabinete. **RD**



"Our Four Fathers" Photo-Exhibit



Photo by Fray Loreto Dacanay, OAR



Photo by Fray William Villaflor, OAR



Photo by Fray Abraham Latoza, OAR



Photo by Fray Louie Gabinete, OAR



UNORian, 3rd placer in EE board exams

BY CARLOS LEGASPI, JR.

2015 Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering graduate cum laude, Jun Aron G. Sabo, placed third in the April 2016 Electrical Engineering Board Examinations.

Other graduates who passed included Joseph Freeman E. Diaz, REE; Reagan E. Espinosa, REE; and Alglan A. Jamili, REE.

UNO-R got 50% passing rate for first timers while the over-all passing rate is 35.71% over the national which is 41.29%. **RO**



USJ-R inks deal with Greater Tokyo Initiative

BY USJ-R CORRESPONDENT

CEBU CITY—USJ-R, through its College of Engineering, last February 16, 2016 signed an agreement with an association of Japanese institutions to prepare engineering students for employment in Japanese businesses.

The agreement is in support of the Monozukuri training given to engineering students where they were immersed in Japanese engineering culture and practices, thereby making them ready to work in Japanese companies.

USJ-R President Fray Cristopher Maspara, OAR, signed the agreement with Hideto Okazaki, managing director of Greater Tokyo Initiative, and Jan Vincent Nikura Quintos, HSJ Condat Consultancy president, at the University Conference Room.

“This partnership would help the College of Engineering teach the students skills needed by international industries”, said Fray Maspara during the agreement signing.

The Greater Tokyo Initiative, popularly known as Technology Advanced Metropolitan Area (TAMA) Association, is composed of Japanese industries, universities, financial institution and local governments, among others, located mostly in the Greater Tokyo Region of Japan.

HSJ Condat will act as the local representative of TAMA Association in implementing the project and will be the main coordination office in Cebu.

Also signing as witnesses to the agreement were College of Engineering dean Dr. Virgilio Abellana and Grace Longakit, International Business Department staff of Greater Tokyo Initiative.



From left: Mr. Okazaki, Fr. Maspara, Mr. Quintos and Dr. Abellana

Agreed activities

Under the agreement, TAMA Association and HSJ Condat will introduce technologies, processes, and products of selected member companies to USJ-R students with the goal of imparting knowledge and sharing Japanese business culture.

They will also offer on-the-job positions to select students to provide them with better understanding of the real demands in the workplace.

An important feature of the agreement involves job interviews by Japanese companies of USJ-R engineering students for possible employment. Those who will qualify will be given free lessons on Japanese language, culture and business manner.

Dayle Abapo, who just passed the Mechanical Engineering Licensure Exams, was one of those hired by a Japanese company called Industria based in Saitama, Japan. He is set to begin work in April.

Abapo was a member of the first batch of the HR Monozukuri training in 2014. He was interviewed for employment in Japan last December.

“To work in Japan presents a really good opportunity,” he said. “Other than the good pay, I can also practice my expertise as an engineer there; unlike here in the Philippines where engineers would only be relegated to supervisory positions.”

Two TAMA-member companies, Ichikawa Co., Ltd. and Yamashita Denso Corp., also held final job interviews after the agreement



signing. It was attended by eight engineering students who already passed initial screenings.

In June last year, more than 10 Japanese companies conducted job interviews among over 60 engineering students, Dr. Abellana said.

He added that Phase 1 of the second batch of the Monozukuri trainings was just ended. They were able to graduate 80 students (20 from USC) and 6 faculty members.

“They are work-ready for any Japanese companies,” he said. “But even if they don’t work in Japanese companies, what they’ve learned will also be useful in other companies that need engineers.” **RO**



Mechanical Engineer Dayle Abapo

Former UNO-R dean passes away

BY CARLOS LEGASPI, JR.

BACOLOD CITY—“Like a gentle breeze, he just passed by and left quietly.”

Dr. Jose B. Ferraris passed away last April 4, 2016, at the age of 64. He spent the prime of his years at the University of Negros Occidental –Recoletos. He served the university in various administrative positions. He was hired as Dean of the Teachers’ College (College of Education) in 1984 and in 1986, he was appointed Dean of the UNO-R Graduate School. He served as Director of the UNO-R Guidance Center in 1998 – 2004. In 2003, he was appointed Assistant to the VP-Academics and was later appointed as VP – Academics, a position exclusive for Religious administrators. Concurrent to his position as VP-Academics, he was also the Director of Research Planning and Development Office from May 2005 – May 2006. He also served as interim Dean of the College of Criminology from April to May 2004. Before his early retirement, he was appointed as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. He retired from his services at UNO-R in 2009.



“Like a gentle breeze, he just passed by and left quietly.”

Prior to his employment at UNO-R, he was an instructor of Psychology; College Guidance Counselor; Guidance Director; School Publication Adviser; and School Drama Consultant at University of San Agustin (USA), Iloilo.

He was the one of the founding members of the Philippine Guidance and Personnel Association-Neg. Occ. Chapter. He co-founded the Vanguard of Tagaste, a UNO-R religious organization. He also served as President of Philippine Association for Teacher Education –Region VI (PAFTE) in 1988. He was the adviser of the Most Outstanding Philippine Mental Health School unit in the City of Bacolod (1977-80). He finished his basic education from Notre Dame in Soth Cotabato. He holds a degree in

AB English received from the USA, Iloilo City in 1971 and a degree in Master of Arts in Education, Major in Guidance and Counselling from West Negros College in 1975 and his degree in Doctor of Philosophy –Educational Management from the USA in 1983. (Data from UNO-R HRMDO). **RO**



USJ-R among top performing schools, has 4 CPA topnotchers

BY NICOLAS CHIONG



From left are Dr. Detoya, Anga (3rd), Torres (7th), Goc-ong (8th), Tabiliran (9th) and Fr. Maspara.



Anga answers questions from the media as his fellow topnotchers listen.

CEBU CITY—The University of San Jose-Recoletos once again flexed its muscles and showed why it is one of the leading institutions nationwide when it comes to offering the Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSA) program.

USJ-R has four topnotchers in the May 2016 licensure examinations for Certified Public Accountants (CPA) according to data released by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) in its website last May 24, 2016.

Jayvee Faust Anga landed in third place with a 91.67 percent grade. His classmate Elyzzah Kaye Torres was seventh placer with 90.67 while Shenen Mae Goc-ong came in at eighth place with 90.33. Kenny Ching Tabiliran rounded out the Josenian topnotchers at ninth place with 90.17 percentage points.

"I'm very happy, very proud and very elated because this is the first time the university has produced 4 topnotchers in one CPA board exam," said USJ-R President FrayCristopher Maspara, OAR during an interview with Cebu media.

"But more so I'm so happy because this May 2016 CPA board exam was dominated by Cebuanos," he added,

referring to the exam results that saw 10 graduates of Cebu-based schools landing in the top ten.

Anga graduated summa cum laude from USJ-R while Torres, Goc-ong and Tabiliran all graduated magna cum laude.

"My mother graduated with a degree in accountancy but didn't take the board exams," said the smiling third placer Anga. "She is one of the people who inspire me to be a CPA."

The PRC also recognized USJ-R as one of the three top performing schools nationwide, with DLSU Manila and UST being the other two. However, of the three, USJ-R has most number of passers and examiners.

In its resolution No. 2010-547 series of 2010, PRC qualified that top performing schools are chosen among those with 50 or more examinees and with at least 80% passing percentage.

Of the 133 total Josenian

examinees, 108 passed or a solid 81.20%.

"It's a mixed feeling. I'm happy, I'm proud. There is that high sense of fulfillment that the efforts of our graduates, the efforts of our teachers now pay off," said College of Commerce dean Dr. Edgar Detoya.

The dean revealed that USJ-R and the school's CPA Review Center will give cash rewards to the topnotchers during the Mass of the Holy Spirit, the traditional mass that marks the start of the new school year in June.

Dr. Detoya said Anga, as third placer, will get P100,000 and laptop computer from USJ-R plus P75,000 from the Review Center.

Seventh placer Torres will get P75,000 from USJ-R and a laptop computer plus P10,000 from the Review Center.

Goc-ong and Tabiliran, the eighth and ninth placers respectively, will



get P50,000 and a laptop each from USJ-R and P10,000 from the Review Center.

Torres said she was thankful to the University for laying the “solid foundation” for their degree program. She said having a good foundation helped her overcome challenges along the way to becoming a CPA.

The BSA program has long been one of USJ-R’s flagship programs.

In January this year, the

Commission on Higher Education (CHED) renewed the University’s status as Center of Development in Accountancy.

CHED granted the designation to only three schools all over the country. De La Salle Manila is named Center of Excellence, and University of Mindanao and USJ-R are named Centers of Development.

“That distinction is given to a school on account of its strong performance

in 3 areas: instruction, research and community extension,” Dr. Detoya explained. “Board exam performance is part of instruction.”

Fray Maspara is optimistic about the good showing of Cebu-based schools in the CPA board exam.

“It means Cebu’s universities can match other universities in the country,” he said. “This is a good sign that Cebu can be a good hub for education.” **RD**

Recoletos de Antipolo stages its first “Senakulo”

BY BRO. JAMES EROLD P. GATINAO

St. Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate-Recoletos staged its first ever “Senakulo,” a re-enactment of the Lord’s passion, death and resurrection, last March 23, 2016, 7:00 PM at the Seminary Covered Court. Performers were Novices, Pre-novices, RAY-Antipolo members, and chosen SARF members. This event aims to remind us of the salvific sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ as the greatest sign of his immeasurable love to humanity. **RD**





Former seminarians mull the possibility of joining the Third Order with Fray Emeterio Buñao, OAR.

ForSOAR explores SARF membership

BY FRAY BOYAX JARANILLA, OAR

PANSOL, CALAMBA, LAGUNA—Former Seminarians of the OAR (ForSOAR) from Luzon gathered at Villa San Ezekiel resort in Pansol, Calamba, Laguna last April 30 to May 1, 2016 to discuss matters regarding affiliation with the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity.

This gathering was the fourth leg of meetings where the core group composed of Fray Leander Barrot, OAR, Mr. Richard Burgos and Fray Reynaldo Jaranilla, OAR, meets the brothers to study the possibility of affiliating ForSOAR to SARF. The previous meetings were held in Bacolod, Iloilo and Davao respectively. The gathering in Pansol was graced by the active participation of no less than the prior

provincial himself with two former prior provincials, namely, Fray Emeterio Buñao, OAR, and Fray Lauro Larlar, OAR.

This effort was initiated by the incumbent prior provincial, Fr. Dionisio Selma, OAR, as a response to the manifesto submitted by the delegates of Casiciaco Recoletos' 50th Anniversary as a Formation House in Baguio City. **RD**



(RC Photos/Richard Burgos)



Nicholasians Taekwondo team kicks for the awards!

BY FRAY CHOTE BITANGJOL, OAR

CEBU CITY—After winning the Silver Medal in the Taekwondo Event during the summer Palarong Pambansa, Secondary Division and the Silver Medal during the 2015 Smart National Taekwondo in Manila, Via Veronica Gargar Trocio showed again her prowess last October 2, 2016 in the 2016 Taekwondo Smart National Competition at SM Seaside City, Cebu City with a good comeback winning the Gold Medal.

The much-awarded Ms. Trocio in the Taekwondo, Girl's Division, was joined by the two other Taekwondo Competitors composed of CSNT-R Students, namely, Christian Zen Abellar who garnered the gold medal and Charles Justine Abellar who won the Silver Medal under the tutelage of the NTU Eagle's Owner and Coach, Mr. Yonin Telequido.

The three students will represent the CSNT-R Taekwondo Team during the City Meet of Talisay City on Oct 6-7, 2016 while Ms. Via Veronica Trocio will be part of the group who will bring the torch to light the City Meet Cauldron in the opening ceremonies. **RO**



From left to right: Via Vernica Trocio (gold medalist), Charles Justine Abellar (gold medalist), and Chris tian Zen Abellar (silver medalist)

MILESTONES

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY
of Simple Profession
(April 14, 1969-2016)

FRAY JOAQUIN V. JAMELO, OAR

* * * * *

20th Presbyteral Anniversary
(April 7, 1996-2016)

FRAY SIXTO BITANGJOL, OAR

* * * * *

12th Anniversary
of Simple Profession
(April 25, 2004-2016)

FRAY CHRISTOPHER GASPAR, OAR

FRAY RENIER ALVIOLA, OAR

FRAY BOB CABANAG, OAR

FRAY ARIAN JOSEF OCHEDA, OAR

* * * * *

SILVER ANNIVERSARY
of Simple Profession
(May 4, 1991-2016)

FRAY ANTONIO C. ZABALA, JR., OAR

FRAY SIXTO M. BITANGJOL, OAR

FRAY REYNALDO E. JARANILLA, OAR

* * * * *

40th Presbyteral Anniversary
(1976-2016)

FRAY CEFERINO AÑEZ, OAR

FRAY FEDERICO GREGORIO, OAR

FRAY LAURO LARLAR, OAR

* * * * *

SILVER ANNIVERSARY
of Presbyteral Ordination
(1991-2016)

FRAY EDUARDO CELIZ, JR., OAR

FRAY CARMELO BORGES, OAR

FRAY LEOPOLDO ESTIOKO, OAR

FRAY JOSE FORTUNATO GARCES, OAR

FRAY GAUDENCIO G. DE MESA, OAR

FRAY NEMESIO TOLENTIN, OAR



"Lolo Bert" celebrates birthday with "grand children" Roy, Manny, Popoy, Ken, Gio and Boyax. (RC Photo)

Fray "Lolo Bert" at 75!

WRITTEN BY FRAY EMIL A. QUILATAN, OAR

MIRA-NILA HOMES, QUEZON CITY—February 19, Fray Huberto "Bert" Decena, OAR, celebrated his 75th birthday with the RFC community. The OAR friars of Antipolo, Tondo, and the Provincial Curia came and greeted "Lolo" Bert. The RFC personnel and the employees of the Our Lady of Consolation Parish also came and greeted the birthday celebrator.

"Lolo" Bert Decena, OAR, since after his ordination to the priesthood in 1967, dedicated most of his life in the formation of future Augustinian Recollects. He finished his Licentiate in Pastoral Theology in UST (1971). He took up biblical studies in the Jesuit run "Biblicum" in Rome where he obtained the degree Licentiate in Sacred Scriptures (1984). When

Recoletos Formation Center was opened in 1985, he was its first vice-director. He was dean of studies when RFC was affiliated with UST in 1995. He has been teaching biblical subjects in Recoletos School of Theology. He is also conducting bible studies with some parochial groups. Now "Lolo" Bert is the spiritual director of the OAR formands in RFC and he is giving them



spiritual in-puts every week.

As he reached 75 years of age, Fray Bert Decena reminded the OAR seminarians and young OAR prests: "As long as you are young and strong, give everything to the Lord!"








"Lolo" Bert, may the Lord bless you and strengthen you! **RD**




Fray Jamelo celebrates 50 years of religious life

Simple Profession Of Vows

	Fray James Christopher Rojas y Tan, OAR <i>Baguio City</i>	
	Fray Charlemagne Marin Jr. y Keyser, OAR <i>San Fernando, Rombion</i>	
	Fray Arjey Patagoc y Lacida, OAR <i>Bayawan City, Negros Oriental</i>	
	Fray Stephen Pejano e Angcahan, OAR <i>Catigbian, Bohol</i>	
	Fray John Carlo Malinao y Cane, OAR <i>Kidapawan City, North Cotabato</i>	
	Fray Ramon Bitancor III y Buslon, OAR <i>Tagbilaran City, Bohol</i>	



Very Rev. Fr. Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR
Prior Provincial / Main Celebrant

St. Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate-Recoletos
 Nuestra Señora Dela Paz Subd.,
 Sumulong Highway, Antipolo City, Rizal
 April, 30, 2016
 10:00 am

*RFC lectors and acolytes 2016*

Institution of new OAR lectors and acolytes at OLCP

BY FRAY EMIL A. QUILATAN, OAR

MIRA-NILA HOMES, QUEZON CITY—March 19, 2016, as the Universal Church celebrated the Solemnity of St. Joseph, six first year OAR friars and six second year OAR friars received the ministry of lector and acolyte respectively.

The celebration of the rite of institution of lector and acolyte was held at the parish church of Our Lady of Consolation, Mira-Nila Homes, Quezon City. Rev. Fr. Lauro V. Larlar, OAR, prior of Recoletos Formation Center was the main celebrant and homilist. The Rite of Institution of Lector and Acolytes was done after the homily. Rev. Fr. Larlar, delegated by the prior provincial, Very Rev. Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR, presided the Rite of Institution.

The first year OAR friars who received the Ministry of Lector:

Fray Karl Abello, OAR
Fray Cristito Rey Tepace, OAR
Fray Julius Tinapao, OAR
Fray Ralfh Espiritu, OAR
Fray Virgilio Calalang, OAR
Fray Melvin Recla, OAR

The second year OAR friars who received the Ministry of Acolyte:

Fray Jessriel Marcha, OAR
Fray Tomakatsu Yamaguchi, OAR
Fray Andrie Pugate, OAR
Fray Jovy Gallego, OAR
Fray Maximilian Omem, OAR
Fray Bejamine Edobor, OAR

The Ministry of Lector and Acolyte are preparatory stages required before the reception of Holy Orders. The Lector is tasked to proclaim the Word of God (except the Gospel) at Holy Mass. He may also announce the intentions for the Universal Prayer and, in the absence of a psalmist, recite the Psalm between the readings (GIRM 99), and the Acolyte is tasked to assist the priest at Holy Mass as “Altar Server” and to distribute Holy Communion when necessity demands (cf. GIRM 187-192). **RO**

1st Green Ring awardee honored

BY LORRAINE MITZI AMBRAD

CEBU CITY—The Cebu City Council yesterday recognized Bro. Jaazeal Jakosalem of the Order of the Augustinian Recollects (OAR) for bagging the first Green Ring Award for his “outstanding work toward solving the climate crisis.”

Jakosalem spearheaded various climate change education initiatives at the grassroots level.

Councilor Nida Cabrera, committee on environment chairperson, authored a resolution that recognized Jakosalem’s advocacy and his recent international award.

A brief ceremony was held during the council session yesterday. The recognition also coincided with the celebration of Philippine Earth Month this April.

Out of more than 700 climate change advocates, the Recollect brother based in Cebu was named the first Green Ring awardee, which was given by former United States vice president and Nobel Laureate Al Gore last March 15 in Pasay City.

Jakosalem said he had participated in a training under The Climate Reality Project, an environmental group founded by Gore, to deepen his understanding of the climate crisis.

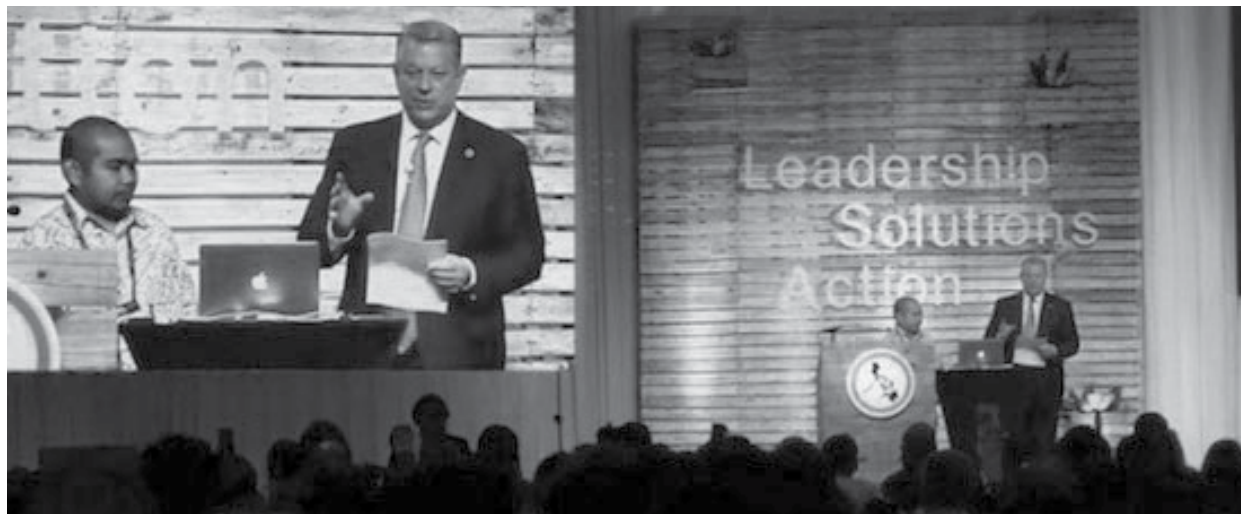
Jakosalem organized the “Balay Kinabuhi” in Negros Occidental and in Bantayan, Cebu where 17 scholars from typhoon devastated areas were given a full sponsorship for their tuition and accommodation. He also convened a visual art exhibit, Art for Earth, to raise ecological awareness.

He was also behind the Tsinelas of Hope, a project that aims to distribute a pair of slippers to every child who had to walk kilometers to learn about climate change. **RO**

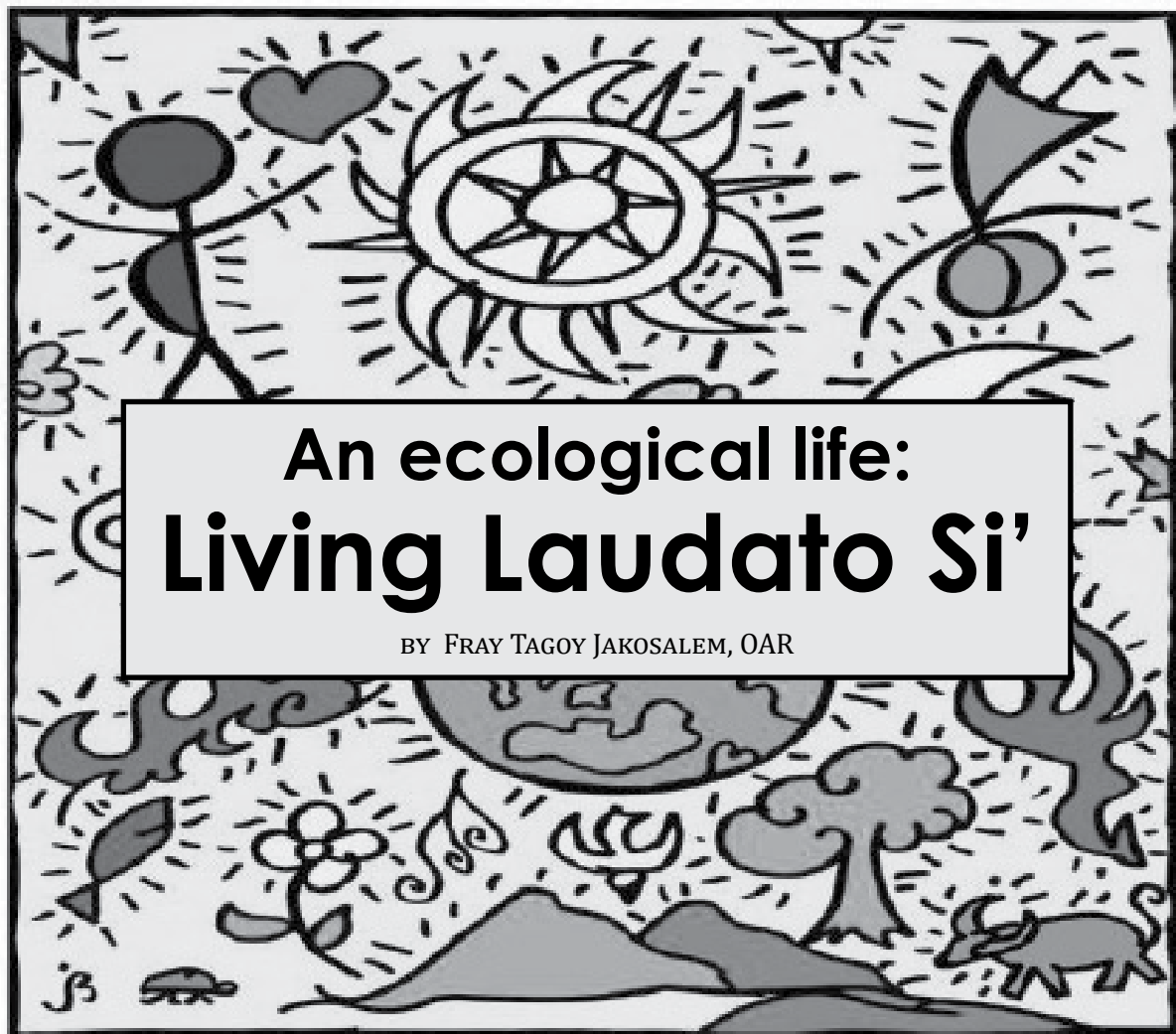
(Published in the Sun.Star Cebu newspaper on April 07, 2016)



Fray Jaazeal Jakosalem, OAR of the University of San Jose-Recoletos receives award from the Cebu City Government for his advocacy on climate change. | via Cyville Florendo (Photo by Ericka Cuizon)



Fray Jaazeal Jakosalem with Al Gore (CBCP Photo)



An ecological life: Living Laudato Si'

BY FRAY TAGOY JAKOALEM, OAR

“**T**his sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.”

(Pope Francis, Laudato Si', no. 2)

Beyond the walls of Vatican

Across the globe, the encyclical Laudato Si' opens an air of freshness beyond the walls of Vatican. Accepted not only by Catholics, but also by other faiths and beliefs, environmental activists, scientists, atheists, among others with an open heart, as Pope Francis encourages. Laudato Si' is a contemporary document revealing and underlining a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our

planet (Pope Francis, Laudato Si', no. 14), valuable than any other resource materials and scientific papers about the climate crisis.

“The encyclical will send a strong message to every Christian to take a collective action in solving the greatest ecological crisis we ever have,” said Lou Arsenio, Program Coordinator of Ministry on Ecology, Archdiocese of Manila.

Straight from the Heart, Defining Climate Change by Understanding the Common Good

In this Encyclical, Pope Francis speaks from the heart, close to the language “in the margins.” An ordinary person can read the encyclical just like reading a novel, a manual or clear instructions; simple words of wisdom from a once doctrinal-laden chair of St. Peter. A pastoral letter with the purpose: «I will point to the



intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet, the conviction that everything in the world is connected, the critique of new paradigms and forms of power derived from technology, the call to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress, the value proper to each creature, the human meaning of ecology, the need for forthright and honest debate, the serious responsibility of international and local policy, the throwaway culture and the proposal of a new lifestyle.» (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 16).

In discerning the unimaginable effects of the climate crisis, Pope Francis re-affirms the assessment of his predecessors that "Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services and protection is very limited." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 15) The end-game is clear and simple, the Church cares for our common home - our common good.

Destroying the Earth, Oppressing the Poor

Ecological stewardship is inseparable with social justice. "We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or

social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 53)

Undeniably, the poor are the victims "we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 49)

He criticized existing political, economic and technological



structures – stop talking, act now! "It is remarkable how weak international political responses have been. The failure of global summits on the environment make it plain that our politics are subject to technology and finance. There are too many special interests, and economic interests easily end up trumping the common good and manipulating information so that their own plans will not be affected." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 54)

The encyclical by itself articulated the vision of a Church of the People, where Liberation Theology failed to communicate, *Laudato Si'* did present a clear understanding - a new manifesto close to the hearts of the

people who made up the 99%.

"We hope this call to action reaches beyond the Catholic Church and into the hearts of everyone who understands the moral obligation we have to protect our resources and those most afflicted by climate change," as manifested by a statement from Al Gore's The Climate Reality Project.

A Gospel of Creation

Pope Francis proposes a new approach of addressing the climate crisis: dialogue of faith & science, where the manifestation of greed in the areas of economics and technology were proven; faith and science thus far proved to conscientize our global citizens.

It is through re-examining our faith-beginnings, from convictions along with the living experience of the gospel of life, lived in the written pages of witnessing. "The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 83) From here, our praxis of caring for our common home is grounded on the formative development of our faith-experience - that values the sacredness of everything that exists. "Love the environment, it is from God and love others because your fellowman is the summit of the Lord's creation," said Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Archbishop of Manila.

Integral Ecology: towards Conversion, Formation & Action

Quality of life in all elements of



ecology: environmental, economic, social, cultural, behavioral, and 'structural.' In each, Pope Francis creatively examined areas of failure and proposed growth that will "seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 139)

Pope Francis highlights our "human ecology" by emphasizing "the relationship between human life and the moral law, which is inscribed in our nature and is necessary for the creation of a more dignified environment." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 155)

"Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world. The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. We need to reflect on our accountability before those who will have to endure the dire consequences." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 161) Thus, Pope Francis demands an ecological transformation:

The need of a global consensus, "Such a consensus could lead, for example, to planning a sustainable and diversified agriculture, developing renewable and less polluting forms of energy, encouraging a more efficient use of energy, promoting a better management of marine and forest resources, and ensuring universal access to drinking water." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 164)

The need of a space for Dialogue for the sake of the Common Good among Believers, Sciences, Ecological movements, "the majority of people living on our planet profess to be believers. This should spur religions to dialogue among themselves for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor, and building networks of respect and fraternity. Dialogue among the various sciences is likewise needed, since each can tend to become enclosed in its own language, while specialization leads to a certain isolation and the absolutization of its own field of knowledge. This prevents us from confronting environmental problems effectively. An open and respectful dialogue is also needed between the various ecological movements, among which ideological conflicts are not infrequently encountered. The gravity of the ecological crisis demands that we all look to the common good, embarking on a path of dialogue which demands patience, self-discipline and

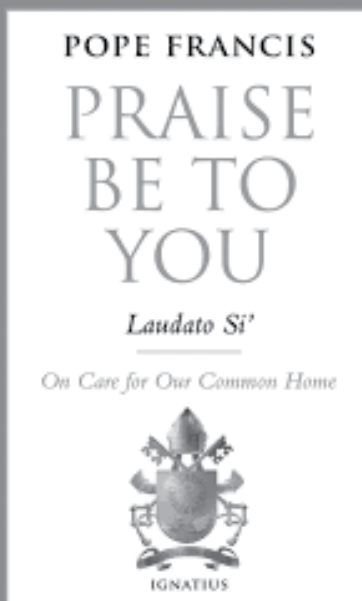
generosity, always keeping in mind that 'realities are greater than ideas.' (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 201)

The need for immediate action: "we believers cannot fail to ask God for a positive outcome to the present discussions, so that future generations will not have to suffer the effects of our ill-advised delays." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 169)

The need for environmental education, for the first time, the Church offers a comprehensive module that is both formative and holistic: "It seeks also to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God. Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 210) Thereby, creating an "ecological citizenship" (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 211)

The need for ecological faith, in the lights and shadows of our climate action "may our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 244) "God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him! (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 245)

This encyclical is for all of us, Praise be to him! **RD**





(L-R) Fray Joy Zabala, Fray Boyax Jaranilla & Fray Chote Bitangiol: "Cheers to the next 25 years!"

25 years of community life

BY FREI BO

"I promise to God, whom I love above all things, chastity, poverty, and obedience, according to the purpose and the Rule of St. Augustine, and the Constitutions of the Order." (Constitutions 37)

PROVINCIALATE—The formula of religious profession is a constant reminder to every professed member of the Order—especially among us celebrating our silver anniversary—that before anything else we are a community of religious brothers bound by our love for God. We are called Augustinian Recollects because we have surrendered ourselves to the ideals of our Father St. Augustine in achieving holiness, i.e., living in one mind and one heart towards God. While St. Augustine desired monastic life, he knew he couldn't close the door to the needs of the Church. So he ushered his community to respond actively where the Church leads them.

The present day communities of St. Augustine are abreast with the signs of the times. Today's Augustinian Recollect is actively engaged in various apostolates relevant to our age. In fact, the overwhelming volume of work can sometimes get the religious entangled with his apostolate in the school, parish or mission. But aware of our identity as disciples of the great Augustine, we should know our apostolate is no excuse to deprive our brothers of our presence and participation in community acts. Our community is still our first apostolate—our first mission.

At the end of the day, we realize that our community can be our source

of strength and consolation in the exercise of the vows and when we are laden with work. But then again, there is no perfect community because there will always be an imperfect religious. I must confess that, in the last 25 years, I have my own share of failures in community living. But thankfully, God's grace kept my chin up especially during those times when I felt everyone else seemed to pull me down. Just when I thought some brothers appear to me like "weeds among wheat," I couldn't help but think they might be looking at me the same way—a weed destined to be thrown and burned in a fiery furnace. The situation can get even worse if we miss out the one important thing

that brought us together—our LOVE for God. For, as Jesus said, "how can you say you love God whom you do not see; and not love your neighbor whom you see?"

Looking forward, I pray that God will bless our Recollect communities with the gift of humility and friendship as we live the evangelical counsels. Humility to accept our own weaknesses and allow God's power to fill our incapacities. Only when we humble ourselves in the sight of God and appreciate our fellow religious who are just like us in many ways can we be friends with each other and strive as a community to reach our eternal aspirations. **RD**



Bacolod holds press conference on centennial of Padre Ferrero's death

BY CARLOS LEGASPI, JR.

BACOLOD CITY—A press conference on the centennial of the death of Padre Mauricio Ferrero, OAR, builder of Bacolod, was held at the conference room of the Bacolod Bishop's House last May 16, 2016. Bishop Vicente Navarra, D.D.; Professor Emmanuel Luis Romanillos; Sir Modesto Sa-onoy; Fr. Ireneo Gordoncillo; Dr. Dennis Madrigal; Dr. Annabee Magbanua; Ms. Butch Gerasmo and Christine Mansinares composed the panel during the press con with Bacolod media.

Padre Mauricio Ferrero, as written in the book of Prof. Romanillos, was born on September 22, 1844 in La Rioja, Spain. He joined the Order of Augustinian Recollects in 1863. In 1868, he was ordained to the priesthood in la Rioja and on the same year together with 20 friars, they set sail for the Philippines. In 1871, he was made Parish Priest of Bacolod City. In 1888, he was made Vicar Forane of Negros and Vicar Provincial of the west coast of the island. 1894, he was transferred to Marcilla, Navarra, Spain. In 1897, he was reassigned as parish priest of Bacolod and in 1898, he was made Vicar Provincial of the whole island. However, his assignment did not last long because of the Negros Revolution. But on February 28, 1902, he was again made for the third time as parish priest of Bacolod. Due to old age, he sought for retirement in 1909. He died on December 8, 1915 at San Nicolas Convent in Intramuros at age 71.

Professor Romanillos and Sa-onoy took turns in recounting the history of the Diocese of Bacolod with



Fr. Segundo Chua; Dr. Magbanua; Bishop Navarra; Prof. Romanillos; Dr. Madrigal; Fr. Gordoncillo; Dr. Legaspi.

Padre Mauricio Ferrero, OAR. Prof. Romanillos corrected the death date of the good priest from January 27, 1916 to December 8, 1915 as recorded in the "Casa Notables de Bacolod".

Sir Sa-onoy, on the other hand, relayed that Padre Ferrero was also the builder of the Bacolod Public Plaza, the old Provincial Jail

(Puerto San Juan), Bacolod Public Cemetery; and the San Sebastian Cathedral.

The two historians also hinted that Bacolod City was the venue of the very first school of the Recoletos – The Colegio de San Jose. The school opened in June 1896 but was closed down at the onset of the Negros Revolution in September 1898. **RD**



Padre Mauricio Ferrero (1844-1915): Augustinian Recollect builder of Bacolod

BY EMMANUEL LUIS A. ROMANILLOS

A native of Arnedo, La Rioja, Spain, Mauricio Ferrero was born on 22 September 1844.¹ He professed the three monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience on 30 June 1863 at the convent of the Augustinian Recollect Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino in Monteagudo, Navarra. He chose Our Lady of Vico, patron saint of his hometown Arnedo as his religious patroness.² Thus, his Marian religious appellation was Fray Mauricio Ferrero de la Virgen de Vico. In the adjoining city of Calahorra, La Rioja, after his theological formation Fray Mauricio received his presbyteral ordination on 19 December 1866. On 23 January 1868 he joined the 59th missionary group of seventeen Augustinian Recollect priests, theology students and three religious brothers. They left the convent of Marcilla, Navarra, where he had finished his theological formation, and headed for the port of Cádiz in southern Spain. The group boarded the frigate *Reina de los Ángeles* at Cádiz on 31 January 1868, which rounded the Cape of Good Hope and finally docked at Manila four and a half months later, on 15 June 1868.

¹ Francisco SÁDABA. *Catálogo de los religiosos agustinos recoletos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Filipinas desde el año 1606, en que llegó la primera misión a Manila, hasta nuestros días* (Madrid 1906) 532-533.

² The Romanesque image of Our Lady of Vico in Arnedo, La Rioja, dates back to the 13th century when it was first mentioned in a manuscript. The image was first enshrined in the Monastery of Our Lady of Vico, located three kilometers away from Arnedo, which suffered from the fire of 1766. The image was transferred to the Church of Saint Cosmas and Saint Damian during the repair of the monastery which suffered the fate of the anti-Church *desamortización* [expropriation] of 1835. The Marian image was moved to the parish church and thereafter remained until today. Source: Minerva Saenz Rodríguez, *La Imagen románica de la Virgen de Vico en Arnedo*, in *Dialnet-LalmagenRomanicaDeLa VirgenDeVicoEnArnedo-555715%20*. Retrieved 29 December 2015.



First pastoral assignments

A month after arrival, on 18 July 1868, Padre Mauricio was assigned to the island-parish of Agutaya, one of the five Augustinian Recollect parishes in the vast Cuyo Archipelago, as *compañero* [companion] of its parish priest. In September 1868-May 1870, he administered the Immaculate Conception Parish in Culion, another island-curacy in the Calamianes group of islands.

On 2 May 1870, to learn the Visayan Hiligaynon language, Padre Mauricio was sent to the parish of Valladolid along the western coast of Negros. Negros was in a state of spiritual and economic stagnation for several decades. The Spanish Ministry of Colonies and the governor general which directly—both ecclesiastically and civilly—governed Negros Island, in consultation with the Dominican bishop Fray Romualdo Jimeno of Cebu, firmed up the decision to hand it over to one of the four religious orders in Manila on 27 May 1848. Two days later, the Recollect prior provincial accepted the offer. Governor General Narciso Clavería then decreed on 20 June 1848 the adjudication of the spiritual administration of Negros Island to the Augustinian Recollects.³

Parish priest of San Sebastian Parish of Bacolod

Padre Mauricio was assigned to the vacant San Sebastian Parish of Bacolod in November 1871 and took official possession of the curacy in

the Negros capital as parish priest on 23 December 1871. The last parish curate Padre Mariano Avila must have resigned due to health reasons.⁴ The eminent Recollect historian of Negros, Ángel Martínez Cuesta, writes in his list of parish priests that the diocesan cleric Padre Juan de Dios was first parish priest of Bacolod and his parochial administration lasted three years: 1754-1757.⁵

Bacolod was founded as a town in 1756.⁶ In 1871, the parish of San Sebastian had a population of 8,872, with 1,922½ tributes. It was the third largest town in terms of population in the whole Negros Island, after Dumaguete with 13,782 residents



The original Parish Church turned into a cathedral in 1932.

and San Enrique with 13,117. Since 1849, Bacolod continued to be the capital of Negros Island until on 1 January 1890 when the Island was split into two provinces: Negros Occidental with Bacolod as capital and Negros Oriental whose capital was Dumaguete.

San Sebastian Parish Church

The crowning glory of Padre Mauricio—doubtless his most lasting legacy to Bacolod—is the magnificent, solid church, made of finely-cut coral stones from Guimaras.⁷ The parish priest commenced the construction of the temple of God in 1876 and it was blest and inaugurated on 20 January 1882 by Bishop Mariano Cuartero.

Padre Mauricio's temple—elegant, grandiose and spacious—turned into the cathedral in 1932 with the erection of Bacolod Diocese which included the islands of Negros and Siquijor. The temple had a gilded retablo, well-lighted interior and thick solid walls with rose-windows. Two galleries of arches are supported by round pillars. Its two sturdy bell-towers loom over the city park.

Calamities and plagues

Bacolod had its share of natural calamities that affected the lives and livelihood of its residents. In 1863, a terrible typhoon destroyed the churches in Murcia, Sum-ag and Vito, Sagay. It caused serious damage in those of Bacolod, San Carlos and Tayasan.⁸ The twin catastrophe—

³ Ángel Martínez Cuesta, *History of Negros* (Manila 1980) 171, footnote 4 of page 211. The governor general approved the papers "entrusting the spiritual administration of Negros to the Recollect Order that they may occupy those parishes or missions that may be vacant and those that as time goes on should become vacant. For this purpose they should come to an understanding with the bishop as to the appointment of a parish priest to see which parishes deserve priority."

⁴ Padre Mariano was admitted to the famed hospital in Minuluan [later known as Talisay] which was administered by its parish priest Padre Fernando Cuenca, known far and wide as an expert in hydrotherapeutic treatment. See Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, *Bishop Ezekiel Moreno, an Augustinian Recollect Saint among Filipinos* (Quezon City 1993) 67-69.

⁵ Ángel Martínez Cuesta, Appendix 3: *Diocesan and Augustinian Recollect Parish Priests of San Sebastian Parish in Bacolod (1754-1909)*, in Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, *Events in Bacolod, Negros Occidental (1871-1909) in the Parish Chronicle of Fr. Mauricio Ferrero, OAR and other Essays* (Quezon City 2016) 45.

⁶ Patricio Marcellán, *Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Agustinos Descalzos de la Congregación de España e Indias* (Manila 1879) 158.

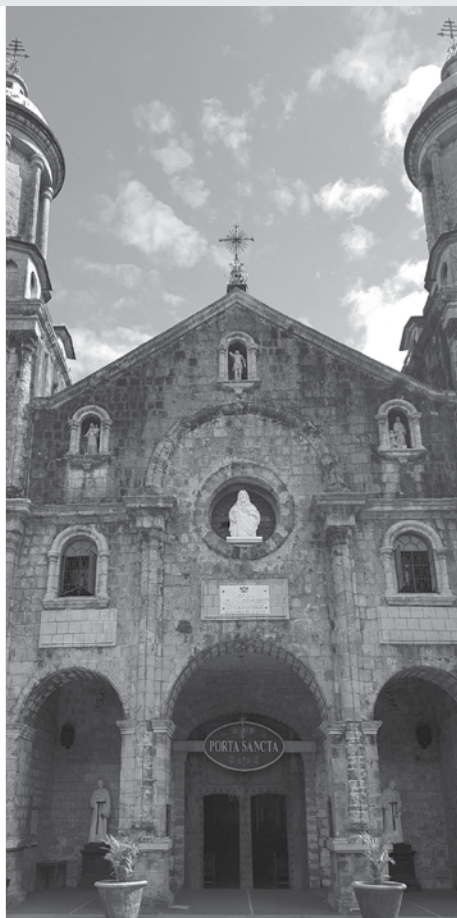
⁷ Pablo Panedas, Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, *Cathedral Churches Constructed by Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines* (Quezon City 2012) 6.

⁸ Ángel Martínez Cuesta, *Historia de los agustinos recoletos II* (Madrid 2015) 800.

typhoon and earthquake—hit the town almost simultaneously. In the evening of 4 April 1872, merciless winds and rains spawned by a typhoon devastated the provincial capital and the towns of northern Negros.

Padre Mauricio graphically recorded those horrifying moments in the parochial Book of Noteworthy Events [*Libro de cosas notables*] “From midnight until one in the morning, a strong earthquake struck Bacolod. The strong tremors were felt accompanied by earth movements and subterranean noise. During those hours the winds abruptly ceased and the complete lull lasted about ten minutes. Then the winds and downpour resumed. More than eighty houses were razed to the ground by the horrendous winds. The church, parish rectory and the municipal building suffered a lot. Such was the torrential downpour that the interior parts of the three edifices were flooded. Several sugar warehouses fell to the ground. The great destruction wrought by the typhoon can be observed in Bacolod and in neighboring towns, especially the houses, crops, harvests, bridges and public roads.”⁹ Typhoons in 1876 and 1896 spared Bacolod but they damaged buildings in southern Negros.¹⁰

Over a decade after, on 25 April 1883, a most terrible typhoon—the strongest in memory according to the elders of the place—took place. Devastated by the storm were the northern towns of Negros. Exactly two years later, that is, on 25 April 1885,



Façade of the cathedral made of finely-cut stones from Guimaras.

a typhoon of similar effects, but not as strong as that of 1883, struck the town. On 2 February 1887, a very strong earthquake and aftershocks hit Bacolod.

In 1878, a famine in 1878 in the wake of protracted drought and locust plague decimated the population in Bacolod, Saravia, Pontevedra, Valladolid, La Carlota, Isabela and Kabankalan. In Himamaylan alone, 590 perished from hunger that year. In 1888, the last catastrophe

on record occurred: a locust plague devastated the farms in Bacolod and in other parts of Negros.

As vicar provincial of southern Negros and vicar forane

On 7 May 1888, Padre Mauricio was appointed as vicar forane by Fray Leandro Arrué, Augustinian Recollect bishop of Jaro. To the vast ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Diocese of Jaro, a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Manila, belonged Negros, Panay, Romblon, Calamianes, Jolo, parts of Mindanao since its creation on 27 May 1865. Due to the rapid growth of Christian population and consequent foundation of more parishes, the sole Recollect Vicariate of Negros and Siquijor was divided in June 1851 into two: West Coast Vicariate and East Coast Vicariate.¹¹ Furthermore, on 20 June 1885, the vicariate of Northern Negros was created, comprising Silay, Saravia, Cadiz, Escalatan, Calatrava, Guyulungan and Tayasan.¹²

The newly-elected Recollect prior provincial Father Fidel de Blas de la Asunción signed on 25 June 1888 the appointment of Padre Mauricio as vicar provincial of Southern Negros which at that time consisted of Talisay, Murcia, Valladolid and all other parishes south of Bacolod.¹³ Padre Mauricio headed the extensive vicariate composed of Recollect parishes established in the southern and western parts of the Island of Negros. As vicar provincial of that territorial jurisdiction of Negros, he was mandated by the Recollect Constitutions, among

⁹ Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, *Events in Bacolod*, 2.

¹⁰ Martínez Cuesta, *Historia de los agustinos recoletos II*, 800.

¹¹ Manuel Carceller, *Historia general de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos XII: 1867-1891* (Madrid 1974) 222.

¹² Martínez Cuesta, *Historia de los agustinos recoletos II*, 804. Padre Angel Belaza de los Dolores was named vicar provincial of the new vicariate named Cádiz Viejo Vicariate after the curate's parish. See Manuel Carceller, *Historia general XII*, 547. In 1888, it would be Vicariate of Negros Occidental, cf. Carceller, *Historia general XIII*, 656.

¹³ General Chronicler Manuel Carceller states that Padre Mauricio was appointed by Father Fidel de Blas as vicar provincial of Negros Occidental on 28 April 1888, as well as other vicars provincial in the Philippines. The *Cosas notables del Provincialato* points out what the new prior provincial says: “... that the parish priests approach the father vicar provincial everytime matters of some gravity may arise, [...] I judged it convenient to condense and redact in an abridged form all the faculties which are granted to such vicar provincial mandated by our holy Constitutions and ordinances.” He further wished to increase the vicar provincial's responsibilities as well as his rights, prerogatives and functions so these may be perfectly known by all the religious of the respective vicariates.” Cf. *Historia general XII*, 656-658.



other myriad responsibilities, “to monitor the behavior of the parish priests, to foment among them the communitarian spirit, to relay the orders of the superiors, to channel the dossiers.”¹⁴

Construction of the new “kumbento”

Padre Mauricio began the construction of the new “kumbento” of Bacolod in 1891. He finished the “kumbento” in 1894. In the provincial chapter of 1894, the fifty-year-old religious curate of Bacolod was elected prior of the Augustinian Recollect community of priests and brothers and rector of the theology school at Marcilla, Navarra.

Rector of the Recollect convent and theologate of Marcilla, Navarra

Obedient to the will of the superiors, as he had vowed to be when he professed the evangelical counsels in 1863, he left his beloved San Sebastian Parish of Bacolod and travelled to far-off Spain for his new assignment. His confrere Padre Florencio Aranda received the parochial reins.

At the end of his 1894-1897 term as rector of Marcilla, Padre Mauricio returned to Bacolod as parish priest. He headed the 98th Recollect missionary expedition of eighteen priests and two religious brothers, who boarded the steamer *Isla de Luzón* at Barcelona on 11 September 1897 and reached Manila exactly a month after on 10 October.

Vigan Seminary (1882-1895); Colegio de San José in Bacolod (1896-1898)

The Recollects administered the Diocesan Seminary of Vigan, in Ilocos Sur, from 1882 to 1895.¹⁵ Recollect Bishop Mariano Cuartero Sierra requested his confreres to manage the seminary which Prior Provincial Juan Cruz Gómez and his provincial council accepted on 19

June 1882. After his death in 1887, the archbishop of Manila, administrator of Vigan sede vacante, and the successor Bishop José Hevia Campomanes in 1890 were satisfied with their performance and management and wanted them to continue in the seminary which had 513 students, among whose 69 interns was Gregorio Aglipay, founder of the future Iglesia Filipina Independiente. In 1892, it became a secondary school, the only such school in the Ilocos Sur capital. started to offer In 1895, however, the apostolic commissary in Madrid who was the Recollect superior general, ordered them to leave the seminary, for “the religious



cannot live outside the Order [...] without authorization from Rome.”¹⁶

In the wake of that Vigan Seminary experience, it was no longer unexpected for the Recollects to foresee the establishment of a formal school.¹⁷

Revolution in Negros

Padre Mauricio was again named vicar provincial of Southern Negros Occidental on 26 March 1898 and vicar forane on 1 April. During the Philippine Revolution in Negros, he was confined to the kumbento and could not leave town, not unlike his

confrere Fr. Fernando Cuenca in Talisay. He was later moved to Himamaylan and joined his imprisoned confreres in jail in Bacolod. They boarded *S/S Montserrat* and left for Manila where they arrived on 7 February 1899.

Post-Revolutionary situation

In February 1902, Padre Mauricio was back in Bacolod and stayed in his beloved town until 30 December 1909 when he turned over the parish to his successor and townmate Fr. Francisco Vega de la Virgen de Vico. Padre Mauricio served the parish of the capital of Negros Island and later of Negros Occidental for a total of 33 years, long enough to be rightly deemed as the “Father of Bacolod City” on account of his missionary zeal, evangelization efforts and various infrastructure projects that live on till today.

Epilogue

His arrival in 1871 signalled great portents to come in Bacolod. Under his direction, the cathedral (1882) and the “kumbento” (1894) which turned into the Bishop’s house in 1941 were constructed. The cemetery, mortuary chapel, Puerto San Juan [headquarters of the *Guardia Civil* and the provincial jail], *kumbento* [the old building of La Consolacion College now demolished] were likewise completed during his term. Deservedly, the concrete statues of Fr. Mauricio and Fr. Fernando Cuenca stand at the entrance of San Sebastian Cathedral, doubtless in recognition of and gratitude to the Recollect priests’ contributions to the whole Negros Island. At age 71, Fr. Mauricio passed away at San Nicolás Convent, Intramuros, Manila on 8 December 1915. **RD**

¹⁴ Martínez Cuesta, *Historia de los agustinos recoletos II*, 804.

¹⁵ Manuel Carceller, *Historia general de los agustinos recoletos XII: 1867-1891* (Madrid 1974) 440-442, 673-674.

¹⁶ Letter of Fr. Inigo Narro to Fr. Enrique Pérez, 28 September 1894, in the Archives of the Order of Augustinian Recollects, Caja A65, legajo 5, OAR General Curia, Rome, as cited in Martínez Cuesta, *Historia de los agustinos recoletos II*, 884.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 885-886.

Launching of the centennial of Padre Ferrero

BY CARLOS LEGASPI, JR.

BACOLOD CITY—The Diocese of Bacolod, with the OAR Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, launched the year-long commemoration of the 100th Death Anniversary of Fray Mauricio Ferrero, OAR on June 20, 2016.

The launching activity began with a short talk and Eucharistic celebration at 8 am at the San Sebastian Cathedral followed by the opening of exhibits at the Diocesan Museum. Lay administrators, religious education and senior high school students were the official delegates to the said launching.

Fray Ferrero is known as “the Builder of Bacolod”. He planned the layout of the City. He renovated the San Sebastian Cathedral and built the old provincial jail. Professor Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos launched his book entitled, “Significant Events in Bacolod, Negros Occidental (1871-1909) in the Parish Chronicle of Fr. Mauricio Ferrero, OAR and other essays.” **RD**



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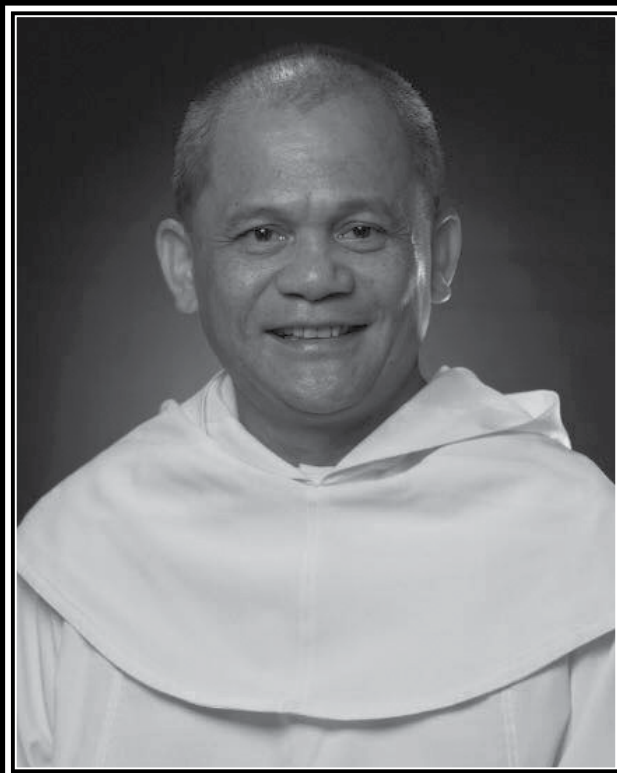
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FRAY LORETO CEASAR H. DACANAY, OAR 1962-2016

We relay to you this notification that, in the early hours of July 4, 2016, after more than two weeks of lapsing in a coma, FRAY LORETO CEASAR HUFANA DACANAY, OAR died of brainstem failure due to cerebral toxoplasmosis at Dr. Pablo O. Torre Memorial Hospital (or Riverside Medical Center) in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental. He was 54 years old.

It all started with acute pneumonia in March this year. The sickness lingered for more than a month and took a heavy toll on him. He had to be confined at the Riverside hospital and, later, transferred to St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City for further treatment. When he had recovered from the identically-diagnosed illness, he went back to Bacolod. On June 17, just three weeks since his release from St. Luke's, he was again rushed to the ICU of the Riverside hospital where he fell into a deep sleep for more than two weeks. Despite the intensive care, his body system just

stopped functioning. At 1:28 A.M. of the 4th of July, Fray Loreto returned home to his Creator.

As with his younger brother, Fray Paulino who is also a Recollect priest, Fray Loreto is fondly called by his confreres as "Dacs," the clipped form of his surname. Born on February 10, 1962 in Baguio City, he together with his family would later transfer to their paternal hometown in Aringay, La Union. Just when he decided to enter the CICM seminary in Baguio because he had chosen to become a missionary, he met somebody who introduced to

him the Recoletos. The combination of mission and community life emphasized in the latter was more appealing to him. So, he applied and was eventually accepted at the erstwhile Seminario Mayor-Recoletos (now Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary) in Baguio where he finished his philosophical studies and postulancy in 1983. It was also in that same seminary where he went through the yearlong novitiate program and, together with eight other candidates, he pronounced his simple profession of vows on June 10, 1984. Belonging to the last group of simple professed from



Baguio to be sent to Spain, Fray Loreto finished his theological formation in Marcilla, Navarra, Spain. He made his solemn profession of vows on October 24, 1987 in the same seminary. The following month, on the birthday of St. Augustine, November 13, he was ordained deacon there. And in 1988, when the former Vicariate of the Philippines and China was preparing for the Fourth Centenary of the birth of the Augustinian Recollection, and specifically on August 28, the solemnity of St. Augustine, he was ordained a priest at San Sebastian Basilica, Manila.

After his priestly ordination, the silent type and soft-spoken Fray Loreto reported to his first assignment: the University of San Jose-Recoletos in Cebu City. But while he was still acclimatizing for more than a month, he had to respond immediately to the call to work at Sto. Tomas de Villanueva-Recoletos Formation House in San Carlos City. Aside from being the Spiritual Director of the seminary, he also held other capacities in the educational apostolate of the community: as school chaplain, athletic moderator, treasurer, and Religion teacher at Colegio de Santo Tomas - Recoletos, San Carlos City, Negros Occidental from the later part of 1988 to 1992.

The last quarter of 1992 was relatively more favorable for Fray Loreto as his newly-ordained brother, Fray Paulino (called, the younger "Dacs"), was assigned in Valencia, Negros Oriental. When things did not go well in San Carlos, he would travel southwards to Valencia to bond with his younger brother who would call him "Masar," short for "Manong Cesar." Both could speak the same language—about religious-priestly life, in Ilocano. Both brothers, Loreto (elder) and Paulino (younger), are conversant in Cebuano, the dominant language in the Visayas region.

However, in late November of 1992,

his superiors assigned him to Cebu, this time, at the Our Lady of Consolation Parish-Recoletos in Laray, Talisay City, as the parochial vicar of the pioneering and longest-serving parish priest, Fray Faustino Paglinawan, OAR. But just like his first assignment four years earlier, he did not stay long. In December of 1992, the Vicar Provincial, acting upon the request of the Recollect Community in Tondo (Manila), directed him to transfer to the Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage Parish in Tondo (Manila), where he was appointed local prior and parish priest mainly to restore community life and attend to the pressing pastoral



needs of the parish. By his good example of religious observance, prayerfulness, humility, and simplicity, Fray Loreto worked hard with constancy of spirit and faithfully discharged his religious and priestly duties up to 1994, when he was told by the Vicar Provincial, Rev. Fr. Victor Lluch, OAR, to prepare his travel documents for a more challenging and daring mission in Brazil.

Taking the apostolic work to a higher level of dedication, the ever-unassuming Fray Loreto accepted the challenge of going to the Amazon. Like the disciples who were sent in pairs, Fray Loreto was accompanied by his

classmate, Fray Domingo Saladaga Jr. OAR, and together they turned the risks and opportunities into positive results in evangelizing the natives. Fray Loreto was stationed in Pauini from 1995 to 1999. Referring to that assignment a few years after, on February 3, 2008, when he gave a conference to our Recollect seminarians in Baguio, Fray Loreto recalled how hard and exacting life had been in the missions. He said that a missionary should not only be physically but also spiritually healthy, and by "spiritual health" he meant "to be in love with God."

When the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno was established in 1998, Fray Loreto expressed his desire to belong to the new province instead of remaining in the Province of San Nicolás to which the Amazonian missions belonged. Upon his request, he was allowed to extend for one more year so he could finish his mission work before coming home for re-integration. When he returned to the Philippines, he was assigned to the community of St. Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate - Recoletos in Antipolo City as Pre-Novitiate Director to work and serve during the triennium of 2000-2003, with the provision, "unless subsequently changed by the proper authorities."

The provision in his patente must have prognosticated the abbreviation of his stint, because in 2002, he had to leave and work again in the missions of Brazil as part of the interprovincial collaboration. In this second period of working in the Amazon, he registered a total of seven years in two major outstations: in Canutama from 2002 to 2004, and in Tapauá from 2005 to 2009. In these peripheries connected by the long and winding Purus River, Fray Loreto informed us that "the people here are very rich in presence, smile and togetherness." No wonder he survived and even enjoyed being in the mission because he saw something extraordinary even in what was humdrum and commonplace.



When he came back to the Philippines in 2009, it was timely for him to celebrate the silver anniversary of his simple profession. But he did so by participating in the month-long Course of Renewal in Granada, Spain. Being re-incorporated in the Province this time, he was assigned in the Parish of the Our Lady of the Abandoned in Valencia, Negros Oriental. It was a good break for him, although he was given so much work load before the new school year could start, serving in various capacities as school treasurer of the San Pedro Academy in Valencia, and in San Pedro Academy - Recoletos in Caidiocan (a barangay of Valencia); assistant principal and chaplain of San Pedro Academy - Recoletos; chaplain of the St. Ezekiel Moreno Chaplaincy in Caidiocan, and convent librarian of the Recollect Community. As if these were not enough, he also served as extraordinary confessor of the high school seminarians in Sto. Tomas de Villanueva -Recoletos in San Carlos City (Negros Occidental), and a member of the Secretariat of Spirituality and Liturgy. But, then, before he could really enjoy the art of multi-tasking, he was again tapped to go back to Brazil. Like the Prophet Isaiah, he was always ready to say: "Here I am. Send me" (Isa. 6:8).

Thus, from 2010 to 2013, Fray Loreto made his third—and actually his last—missionary journey to Brazil, ministering particularly to the natives dwelling in riverbank communities. When he returned after his fruitful assignment, the then Prior Provincial, Fray Lauro Larlar, OAR, explicitly thanked him and all other brother missionaries, and eventually assigned him to the community of the University of Negros Occidental - Recoletos (UNO-R), Bacolod City, starting on May 19, 2014, and as a member of the Team-Servant of Prayer created by the Prior Provincial. "I am confident that through you in our midst, the Holy Spirit will awaken in all of us the missionary spirit of the pioneering Augustinian Recollects," Fray Larlar

encouraged him.

At the turn of the new administration in 2015, Fray Loreto remained in the University of Negros Occidental - Recoletos (UNO-R), Bacolod City. He was appointed Vice-Prior of the community and elected as Director of the RESOURCE-Handumanan Foundation, Inc. His hobbies while at UNO-R included hiking and camping. In 2015, he walked the entire 66-kilometer stretch from Bacolod City via Salvador Benedicto town to San Carlos City in three days, registering a record of being the second Recollect religious of recent memory to have done so. Was



not this reserved for those who were physically fit? His next plan, though, to conquer Canlaon, around 71 kilometers away from Bacolod City, would never be realized.

But above all these, he was more known as a religious, who was consistent in the observance of common acts such as prayers, meals, and recreation. His docility, simplicity, and availability to where he is sent, were among his personal trademarks. When the news about the need for volunteers to work in the missions of Bocas del Toro, Panama was disseminated, Fray Loreto sent word by electronic mail on July 3, 2015, signifying his intention to go and serve

there.

The Provincial Council approved his petition. Fray Loreto was issued a patente, on March 21, 2016, which would turn out to be his last, giving him the green light to prepare for another interprovincial collaboration with the Province of Our Lady of Consolation. He would have been the mentor of his companion—a younger religious and neophyte missionary who was among those Casiciaco seminarians in 2008 who listened to his talk about the missions. The planned missionary journey to Panama was already in place, as far as we were concerned. But God re-arranged our plans and projects so that, in the end, His own design would prevail.

A true-bloodied missionary from the beginning of his vocation up to the end, Fray Loreto gave these poetic words a human face when he himself wrote for The Recoletos Observer eight years ago (2008):

I heard the sound of daybreak and
the birds singing their morning praise...

[...] At the closing of the day the sun
would slowly hide its face...

as the birds welcomed the night by
mumbling their prayers

and went to their night rest.

A man of few words, Fray Loreto offers us just a glimpse of his long journeys for "desobriga" (Portuguese for missionary visits) to riverbank communities. In these phrases he seems to tell us what he used to say quite poignantly: "Every stage of life is a mission." Even at his passing away, he still inspires us to bring and preach Christ to everyone. Like those birds that closed their day with their version of gratefulness, Fray Loreto can now say, "Thank God, it's mission accomplished!"

May God in his divine mercy grant Fray Loreto the eternal life reserved for those who are faithful, simple, and humble of heart as Jesus is. Amen. **RO**



Fr. Provincial with Filipino Recollect missionaries and their mission community (RC Photo/Fray Tol, OAR)

Father Provincial visits Recollect Africa

BY FRAY TOL ALMAYO, OAR

PROVINCIAL CURIA—For the first time, Fray Dionisio Selma, OAR, Prior Provincial of the St. Ezekiel Moreno Province, stepped into the African soil to visit the two Recollect communities in Sierra Leone, West Africa, from July 29 to August 2, 2016 and the OAR contemplative nuns in Makueni County, Kenya (East Africa), from August 3-4.

Thereneualvisittothethecommunities of Kamabai and Kamalo was partly dictated by the Constitutions of the Order which directs the major superior “to know..., to re-affirm..., and to correct...” anything related to the religious life and the conduct of the mission. Also, it was partly meant to collect relevant data that will form part of the Prior Provincial's Report

during the 55th General Chapter in October in Rome. On his way back to the Philippines, he took advantage of the opportunity to drop by the Recollect nuns' Monastery of Our Lady of Consolation in Wote, Makueni County.

After the 9- or 10-day journey, many lessons were learned and some plans, framed.

An arduous trip

The 39-hour trip from Quezon City to Kamabai began on July 27, 2016. The Father Provincial accompanied by the Provincial Secretary, Fray Jose Ernil Almayo, OAR, checked in at the NAIA 2 Terminal for the Manila-Bangkok flight at 2:15 in the afternoon via Philippine Airlines PR736. After three hours and a nine-hour lay-over at Suvarnabhumi



fraternal visit: sierra leone

International Airport, the two braved again, this time, the longest of the 5 installment flights to the final destination: an eight-hour-plus haul from Bangkok to Nairobi. On board KQ887, they arrived in Kenya the following day at 7:10 AM local time.

The foggy morning of July 28 as seen from Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport augured a bumpy ride to the next landing stations. Taking the KQ504 flight en route to Accra (Ghana), the two Filipino passengers confirmed the earlier hypothesis in their five-hour flight to the southwest, and later touched down at Kotoka's Terminal 1 at 11:30 AM. (Note that Ghana, as well as Sierra Leone, is three hours behind Kenya's time zone which is, in turn, five hours behind that of the Philippines.)

After the unloading and loading of passengers and cargoes, the same plane with newly-labeled flight number, KQ5595, left at 1215H for Freetown

(Sierra Leone). More turbulence was expectedly felt within the 1476-km arial distance and at an altitude of 38K feet above sea level. Thankfully, at 2:40 PM, Father Provi arrived safe and sound at Lungi International Airport. The plane was on time. Frays Russell Lapidez and Enrico Nacorda, both of Kamabai community, welcomed the new arrivals who had their first dose of "something for the big boss" at the customs. When they had gone through all the usual procedures and were able to get through the crowd, they traced their way to Kamabai with Fray Russell on the steering wheel. It was almost a 3-hour drive along asphalted Lungi Hi-way that snakes towards Luser town and connects to the road to Makeni city up to Kamabai.

Welcome to the headquarters

The brothers of Recoletos de Kamabai community warmly accorded the Father Provincial the usual Filipino hospitality. After settling

down, the visitors who were total strangers to the place enjoyed the exchange of pleasantries with the missionaries. The convent which has been considered the Recollect headquarters of the Sierra Leone mission, and chronologically older than the one in Kamalo, is home to four brothers with Fray Lapidez as the prior and head of the Mission, Fray Vincent Cadeliña as parish priest, Fray Mark Prado, and Fray Enrico "Bradex" Nacorda. The last two who were new additions to the community after its third member went back to the Philippines due to an aggravating illness have already contracted malaria, the cost of discipleship in this part of the globe. In fact, Fray Mark complained again of a fluctuating fever indicative of the early stage of plasmodium parasite attack, his second since he came 5 months ago.

July 29, at 6:00AM. While it was still dark and drizzling, the community with





its visitors went to the parish church where, as practiced during weekdays, they opened the cool morning with the praying of the holy rosary, while allowing the mass-goers to trickle in, in time for the start of the holy mass. This day, Fray Enrico presided the mass, a lively one through the full participation of the people. The singing of the songs which may be in English or Limba (local language) with the favorite reggae tempo was like an incense rising up to God's throne. Before the final blessing, the so-called "white men" who have just arrived (especially, of course, the Big Man, referring to Father Provi) were introduced to the parishioners who welcomed them with their thunderous applause.

Arriving home, the Fathers proceeded to the convent chapel for the Liturgy of the Hours (i.e., Office of Readings and Lauds). Then, to the "la mesa" for the first "lutong kumbento" breakfast, compliments of Fray Vincent "Enteng" Cadelina's culinary skill. (From the kitchen, Fr. Enteng hopped to the pastoral center for his speaking engagement with the linguistically mixed group of Limba- and Loko-speaking parish catechists.)

At midmorning, Father Provi gave

an inspirational talk to the assembly of catechists who listened attentively both to the English and the Krio-interpreted version of his message. Shortly after, the catechists had photo-op with the Big Man from the Philippines.

Meanwhile, at the backyard of the convent, a smoke was billowing from a sort of "dirty kitchen". The lady cook was preparing the Sierra Leonean national dish called "plasas", consisting basically of cassava leaves (or kring-kring leaves, better known as saluyot/ tugabang/ tagabang in RP), fish or meat, and palm oil. It would be served with rice during lunch for the catechists.

Visit to the bishop

Before heading for Makeni, the local prior brought Fr. Provincial to an edifice originally intended as a vocational school for local students. It is equipped with high-end facilities donated by a Spanish agency. He also showed him the Recollect-built St. Thomas de Villanova Junior Secondary School near the parish church. (By the way, Sierra Leone has 13 years of Basic Education: 6 for Elementary, 3 for Junior High, and 4 for Senior High). And a brief detour to Kamabai town proper was good enough to catch sight of its usual quotidian scenario. Then, off the four—Father Provincial, Fathers

Tol, Bradex and Russell—went to the Bishop's House for a courtesy call on the newly-installed local ordinary, the Italian Bishop Natale Paganelli, SX (Society of the Xaverians).

The cheerful bishop welcomed the Recollects to his humble office. They talked about the state of the mission in the diocese, the contributions of the OAR missionaries, the challenges and problems encountered, and some plans for the future. The bishop switched from English to Italian when talking to the Father Provincial whom he knew studied in Rome. He later showed and described to the visiting Fathers the other structures in the premises.

Arrival in Kamalo

Right after the private audience with the bishop, the group moved northwestwards, from Makeni to a silent town named Kamalo which, like Kamabai, belongs also to the Bombali District (one of the 14 districts in the country). More rustic views, with the ever-present palm trees studding almost everywhere, as the car rolled for an hour and a half. Bafas (those uniquely designed houses thatched with palm leaves) and "poda podas" (or public transports similar to a V-hire in the Philippines) added local color to the sight and experience. (And, yes, what used to be a 4-hour trip from





the city to Kamalo is now significantly reduced to 90 minutes, thanks to SLRA, equivalent to the Philippine DPWH, which prioritized the road improvement project. It is common knowledge that one major reason for this was that it's the way to the President's residence and the SLRA officer's home.) At the arrival station, namely at the convent garage, the welcoming party under the tutelage of Fray Jamers rendered their well-rehearsed song-and-dance number... One could not be mistaken to guess: Sierra Leone got talent!

At 2:30PM, it was indeed a late lunch already, with the emblematic "plasas" partaken with much gusto... The table was obviously filled with joy with the presence of the brothers meeting each other again. More so, because it was the father of the Province visiting the community! The seemingly endless conversation continued at the garden area where a 7-foot tall tomato "tree" stood. The happy community of Recoletos de Kamalo is composed of Fray Dominador "Patik" Mercado Jr. (prior,

Fray Jose Prudencio "Dennis" Castillo (parish priest), Fray Jess Marco Sanchez (school manager), and Fray Jonathan "Jamers" Jamero (project/ social action in-charge).

Fray Jamers who is a religious brother attends to the environmental management of the community. He has what one would rather call a mini-zoo, a "collection" of exotic animals at the backyard like the 4 monkeys and a pair of boa constrictors in addition to dogs, cats, fowls and a different breed of sheep. His vegetable garden (composed of plots of taro, mung beans, corn, ginger, corchorus or saluyot among others) is well taken care of. It is worth noting that the altar servers, during vacation, would come and help clean the convent premises. And the girls/ladies who would come to also help or play, would feel at home in this neutral ground where they can really feel they are co-equal with other people. Sadly, when they go home, they go back to submit to the socially imposed understanding that they are simply "second class citizens." But the Fathers continue to work on these

in their homilies and catechetical instructions.

At 6PM, the customary Friday holy hour at the parish church attended by a handful of parishioners, mostly children and teenagers, was officiated by Fr. Jess Marco, the school director of 45 RC schools in the entire St. Paul the Apostle Parish. (RC stands for Roman Catholic to distinguish those that are Wesleyan which are also mushrooming everywhere.) Afterwards, the religious proceeded to the convent chapel for the vespers and complines prior to dinner. At the other side of the convent chapel were some children who, after joining the holy hour, were excitedly waiting to watch a movie. One might curiously ask whether they had already taken their dinner. Well, ordinary Sierra Leoneans take their meals once a day only, usually between 2 and 3PM.

Visit of renewal in Kamalo

July 30. Actually, the original schedule of renewal visit should have started in Kamabai. But in order to accommodate some unforeseen



commitments, the brothers who had known better the situation suggested an enhanced version of the schedule to the Father Provincial who favorably approved it.

And as a fitting way to jump-start, a concelebrated mass was held at 6AM at the parish church with Father Provincial himself as the presiding minister and homilist. A pose for posterity and interaction with the parishioners followed after the mass. The Office of readings and lauds were prayed at the convent chapel during which the opening rite of the renewal visit was integrated.

Breakfast at 7:30AM. Two hours later, Father Provi made an individual dialogue with the brothers. Meanwhile, the Provincial Secretary checked the official books of the community as well as those of the parish, seeing to it that they were ready for the final checking and signing by Father Provi.

Lunch at noontime. Thanks again for the new taste of plasas partnered with organic chicken. Siesta. Then, at 3PM, resumption of the dialogue. The community consolidated themselves

at 4PM in the sala de recreo for the final conference. In the evening, during vespers, the closing rite of the visit took place. Dinner at 7PM, and preparations for the Sunday masses to the outstations.

The school apostolate

Adjacent to the convent of Kamalo is the parish church of St. Paul the Apostle. And a stone throw away is its eponymous primary school under the directorship of Fray Jess Marco who boasts of its having passed the national government standards namely: aside from having classrooms, library and admin office, it also has a water well, and toilets for girls and boys. Interestingly, it also has a canteen, a light structure with palm leaf roofs. Nonetheless, the said primary school with 6 classrooms and home to 600 pupils is still, in the words of Fr. Jess, "top of the line", for being recognized by the government as "center" for national examinations. Not all schools can have that distinction!

To have a reference for that phrase "top of the line," the Provincial Secretary joined Fray Jess to an

ocular visit to Kamaranka town where other RC schools were located. Initial assessment results in Rowuli school around 2 kms away from the town proper for instance revealed that: Fifty pupils belonging to two grade levels are being crammed in a classroom of 6m x 4m! Only 5 or 6 wooden benches measuring about 1.5m long x 1' wide were there inside. More interestingly, in the town proper, there were bigger classrooms but those were meant for three grade levels. Two blackboards were mounted at the opposing sides of the rectangular room while the third at the center; no walls divide them. Basing on the current Philippine standards, at least (cognizant, though, of some worse situations somewhere in the archipelago), one cannot help but say a little prayer for these children.

Sunday adventures

July 31 was a Sunday, a good day for adventure. Father Provi dared to explore the interior of the parish by agreeing to preside a mass in Laminaya chapel which is located some 27 kms from Kamalo proper.





Fray Dennis and Fray Jamers, the driver, and a platoon of altar servers accompanied him. The father of the Province saw for himself the kind of terrain where his missionaries are deployed. The notoriously inhospitable paths required patience and dexterity and a good quality of vehicle. Rocky roads and winding slopes characterized the area renowned for black diamonds (remember di Caprio's movie? The place belongs to our parochial jurisdiction.) Going back, they stopped at Makale chapel where Fray Dennis presided the mass. All in all, the experience was unforgettable: Father Provi got to meet the section chief who invited them for lunch. He tried, for the first time, how a monkey afitada tastes like. During the offertory procession, those brought to the altar included: a buck (male goat), 6 chickens, 1 bunch of banana, and a gallon of puyo (the equivalent of tuba but this one is harvested from palm trees). And how can the group ever forget being stuck up for more than half an hour in the brook down the slope, that was made even more complicated by the endless drizzle? It could have been worse if it were of lower grade than the Land cruiser!

Meanwhile up north, Fray Jess Marco coached Fray Tol in the nitty-gritty of the celebration at St Peter's Church in Kamakwei: a stand-up interpreter in the Krio language would interpret the homily, and at times the interpretation was much, much longer than the original; the typical dance moves of the offerers, literally inch-by-inch, during offertory procession would take them longer time to reach the altar... But the whole liturgy was alive; the mass-goers' participation exceeded 100%!

Similar ambience in Katiri chapel which is 12 kms away from Kamakwei, to the interior towards the border of Guinea. The rugged road

was friendlier, though, by comparison than that of the first group. Fray Jess, who had a lot of fans here, young and old, presided the equally lively mass. The two took lunch with the people, enjoying the specially-prepared plasas and puyo. Going home, they brought a cauldron of cooked rice and a canister of stewed beef given by a Lebanese friend. As in other occasions, the snap (short for "snapshots") was always part of the program.

Transit to Kamabai & Renewal visit

About 4:00 in the afternoon. After a brief rest from their rendezvous in

record!)

The following day, August 1, the scheduled renewal visit took place.

As in the first day Father Provi arrived here, the day commenced at 6:00 AM with the usual hyperdulia to Mama Mary at the parish church, and followed by the Eucharistic sacrifice. Fray Lapidez presided the concelebrated mass. After which, the community went home for the Office of Readings and lauds at the convent chapel. The rite of the renewal visit was integrated in the morning prayers. Breakfast ensued.



the outstations, and having put their luggage in the car and posing for a community picture, Father Provi and companions sped up to Kamabai, next stop of the official visit. Fray Patik steered the car, and in an hour and twenty minutes, despite the patchy drizzle, they reached the convent. (Somebody has yet to beat that

At 9:00 AM, Father Provi dialogued with the brothers individually. The Provincial Secretary took charge of checking the official books of the convent and the parish. They were later checked also by the Prior Provincial himself. Both affixed their signatures in those books.

At 4:40 PM, the brothers gathered



at the sala de recreo for the final conference with Father Provi. During vespers, the closing rite of the visit was inserted. It was hoped that, like in the other community, there would be authentic revitalization in the Life and Mission Project of the community, starting from each person of the missionary.

Sidetrip to Bawbaw

At 4:00AM of August 2, the visitors together with the 3 friars of the Kamabai community left the convent for Bawbaw Village in Freetown. The more than 220-km distance was a

breakfast. Father Provi inquired from the brothers about the background of the place and the 4-room edifice furnished with a kitchen, dining hall, sala and other basic amenities per room—enough to accommodate a three-member community, just in case. The caretakers, Timô and Bobô, were ready to help for some errands.

After breakfast—around 9:00AM already, Fray Russel together with Father Provincial and the Provincial Secretary headed to the airport. Despite a detour at Port Loko to have a glimpse of the “city center”, they reached the airport at 12:35PM, three

at 5:40 AM of August 3. With the intention to visit the Recollect nuns in Makueni, he applied for transit visa which only cost \$20. The mother superior of the monastery, Mo. Ma. Jose Vila, OAR and Sr. Judith de Quiros, OAR, the lone Filipina in the community, welcomed the two friars. But they took their breakfast first in a resto along the highway as it was already past 8 in the morning.

What a happy encounter it was of brothers and sisters in the spirit of St. Augustine’s *cor unum et anima una in Deo*! The conversation continued as they traversed the 134-km countryside from the capital. For Father Provi, it was like a refresher course on the Recollect presence in Kenya—for example: that the OAR contemplatives of the Our Lady of Consolation Monastery in Wote, Makueni County belongs to the Spanish Federation whereas the St. Augustine Monastery in Lodwar, in the northern part of Kenya, belongs to the Mexican Federation. The latter has yet to have Kenyan aspirants.

On the one hand, Mo. Ma. Jose is a nurse by profession and also expert in various technical fields such as architecture, engineering, computer science, music, etc... The Antipolo-born Sr. Judith, the designated formator of the 14 sisters under formation (3 aspirants, 2 postulants and 9 novices—all Kenyans) is a BS Foreign Service graduate; now, she serves in a foreign land as God’s ambassadress of “sequela Christi”.

Thanks to the safe driving of Francis, the monastery driver, they reached home whole and entire. At the tolling of the bell, the Kenyan sisters including the 4 solemn professed, readied their welcome spiels. (With the permission from the mother superior to take pictures of the cloister and to later post them in the Facebook, the Father Secretary took



three- and-a-half hour run for the two cars: one driven by Fray Russel and where the visitors were boarded, the other by Fray Mark with Fray Bradex as his companion. The latter brought seedlings of fruit trees to be planted in the 6-acre lot in Bawbaw.

Upon arrival, Fr. Mark dominated the kitchen in preparing the

hours earlier than the scheduled 3:45PM flight to Nairobi via Monrovia (Liberia) and Accra (Ghana).

Touchdown in Nairobi and a road trip to Wote

After a total of ten hours of travel from Sierra Leone to Kenya, Father Provi touched down in Nairobi



shots of those precious moments and corners inside the off-limits area very rarely seen by the “outside world.” (That was purposely granted if only to ignite inspiration to some Filipino ladies out there to join the OAR contemplative family. No need to go to Kenya; they have a monastery in Bacolod.) Canela and Pancho, those two white Japanese Spitz, made some noise and wagging of tails to manifest their canine version of welcoming the new faces in their territory. After some short introduction, they all gathered inside the refectory for lunch.

Monastic world

In the afternoon after siesta, Father Provi was toured around the backyard of the monastery which is ensconced at a 5-hectare lot. It was a walk to remember and to see the dirty jobs the nuns were doing: that they live by working with their hands. In the livestock department, there were federations of chickens, pigs, rabbits and cows...The first three provide meat; the chickens also lay eggs—5 trays per diem; and the cows give 3-5

liters of fresh milk a day. The vegetable garden was another laborious area to maintain. The sisters had to fetch water from a catch basin some 15 meters away.

Fray Edgar Tubio who once spent a week here to give conferences to the nuns could surely remember that spot where the sisters used to play football, and he was then the referee... Speaking of a balanced life inside the monastic world.

Tenke, Africa!

August 4 was the appointed time to say “Tenke, Africa!” (Tenke is the Krio term for Thank you.) On this last day in the continent, Father Provi presided the holy mass in honor of St. John Marie Vianney who is the patron of priests, at the monastery chapel. The usual mass-goers, less than ten in number, were present.

The morning schedule was finalized: after breakfast, the sisters had to attend to their manual chores, and at 10AM, the formands together with the younger solemn professed

would have their conference with the Provincial Secretary and the Prior Provincial.

Lunch was served at 1:00PM. After some preparations for departure, the visiting friars posed one more time with the OAR nuns. Father Provi gave a blessing to the community and bid them goodbye. At 2PM, Francis drove the visitors to Nairobi airport.

Father Provi's visit to Recollect Africa gave him the chance to see first-hand the ACTIVE face of the charism, particularly in Sierra Leone, West Africa) and the CONTEMPLATIVE face of the same charism in Kenya, East Africa. Two faces of the same path to sanctity. They complement one another just as in the symbolisms of Martha and Mary.

On August 5, despite some delays and hassles, Father Provi and the Provincial Secretary arrived safe in Manila via Bangkok. Though tired, they heaved with gratitude to God and to all who had prayed for the success of the visit. Tenke boku. **PO**



A tree growing inside the church

BY FRAY TOL ALMAYO, OAR

“A tree inside the church? I thought it was made of plastic material bought from a mall,” a first-timer in this chapel-turned-quasi-parish said with surprise upon learning that it was real.

In an age when “sustainable architecture” is fast becoming a vogue, some creative minds have found ways to blend architecture and nature. And so today, we can see houses and buildings incorporating trees in their interiors, instead of getting rid of them. No wonder, the tree standing solo inside St. Augustine of Hippo Quasi-Parish-Recoletos has spontaneously provoked amazement.

At this newly-created quasi-parish at Sitio Tunob Lapok in Inayawan, Cebu City, a “kamansili” (*Pithecolobium dulce*) continues to grow inside the structure. Strategically standing at the main aisle near the entrance of the church, the 20-foot tall, well-trimmed tree gives a unique ambiance to this house of prayer.

“It’s guarding the blessed sacrament 24/7,” pointed out one mass-goer.

In an informal conversation after the fiesta mass last August 28, 2016, a staunch supporter of the pro-parish group of this once “lowly” chapel and who wanted to remain anonymous said that the tree’s fate was decidedly purposive. “Not just for aesthetic reason, but also as a statement of the signs of the times,” he pointed out, referring to its alignment to the challenge of Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si’*.

Located within the 2,000 sq. m. area previously teeming with bushes and plants, the three-year-old building was constructed through the bayanihan spirit of the people in the area. But the invasion, so to speak, of architectural science spared this single tree from elimination (or annihilation?) and granted it a special role in the over-all design of what used to be a chapel eponymously named after the older one, reportedly more than a century old and privately-owned, along F. Jaca Street.

“If that tree would spark curiosity and people begin to stream towards this church,



RC Photo/Fray Tol Almayo, OAR

that would be far better off a reason than when they would rather go to this church just to catch Pokémon species,” another churchgoer remarked with a bit of scoff against the negative (or dark?) side of this latest gaming craze that tends to desecrate sacred places.

While Google provides instant data about trees growing inside church ruins, somebody has yet to know of other churches with this ecological feature. For now, seeing the tree inside the church as one enters and prays, he is reminded of a poem, “Isang Punong Kahoy”, by a Filipino poet, Jose Corazon de Jesus (1896-1932).

Kung tatanawin mo sa malayong pook
Ako’y tila isang nakadipang krus;
Sa napakatagal na pagkakaluhod
Parang hinahagkan ang paa ng Diyos. **RO**



Recoletos de Cavite: 400 years of continuing evangelization

BY EVENGELINE RABINO ENRIQUEZ



The image of St. Ezekiel Moreno was brought to the Imus Cathedral through a traditional caracol performed by selected students from San Sebastian College – Recoletos de Cavite. Administrators, Faculty members, and Non-Teaching Personnel as well as members of the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity, Parents-Teachers Association, and Alumni Federation officers also joined the motorcade from the Cañacao Campus of SSC-R de Cavite. The Bishop of the Diocese of Imus, His Excellency Rev. Reynaldo G. Evangelista was the Main Celebrant, assisted by the Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR and the President of SSC-R de Cavite, Fray Cristituto A. Palomar, OAR. Theologians from the Recoletos Formation Center in Quezon City participated as Altar Servers. Diocesan as well as Recollect priests also participated in the Mass.

Prior to the Eucharistic celebration, Fray Emilio Edgardo A. Quilatan, OAR gave a brief history of the Recollect presence in Cavite province, followed by the official declaration by the Prior Provincial of the opening of the Quadricentenary celebration. With the objective of propagating and deepening a devotion to saintly Recollects who have worked in Cavite province, the occasion was highlighted with a donation of a 5-foot wooden image of St. Ezekiel Moreno by the Augustinian Recollects to the Parish of Our Lady of the Pillar. The Vicar General of the Imus Cathedral, Most Rev. Msgr. George A. Morales received the image on behalf of the Parish. The end of the Quadricentenary commemoration will be celebrated on August 19, 2017 at the St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Bacoar City. Viva San Ezekiel Moreno! **RD**

CAVITE CITY—This year's celebration of the Solemnity of St. Ezekiel Moreno took a deeper significance for the entire Province. Commencing the opening of the celebration of the Quadricentenary in Cavite, the Solemn Feast of St. Ezekiel Moreno was marked with a concelebrated Mass last August 19, 2016 at Our Lady of the Pillar Parish. The theme of the celebration is "Recoletos de Cavite: 400 years of continuing evangelization" (1616 – 2016).

Conference on Fr. Mauricio Ferrero

BACOLOD CITY—On the feast of St. Monica, the pious mother of St. Augustine, August 27, the 2nd round of the lecture series on the Life and works of Padre Mauricio Ferrero, OAR, whose centennial death anniversary we celebrate, was held at the UNO-R President's Hall at 8 am. to 12 noon.

A Conference of Padre Mauricio Ferrero, Recollect Builder of Bacolod City, had Prof. Emmanuel Luis Romanillos and Rev. Fr. Emilio Quilatan, OAR, HED as speakers. Prof.



Prof. Romanillos with the organizers of the conference on Fr. Mauricio Ferrero. (UNO-R Photo)

Romanillos talked about the life, ministry, and works of Padre Ferrero, OAR while Fr. Quilatan, spoke about the "Augustinian Recollects in Bacolod since 1871."

Dr. Carlos Legaspi, Jr. gave the opening remarks while Prof. Modesto Sa-onoy delivered the rationale of the affair. After the talks, an open forum followed. **RD**



Fray Tagoy Jakosalem, OAR

SYMBOLS IN THE LOGO

The Bamboo Cross - The mark of our Filipino Catholic Faith, from our Christianization to a lively inculturation of our faith.

The Flaming Heart - The Augustinian Recollect identity of a heart from God and a love for humanity.

The Island of Cebu - where the heart of Philippine Christianity is, our island is the first witness of the planting of the Cross of faith in our country.

The Circles of Continuing Presence:

The image of the Immaculate Conception - Remembering... in the year 1621, the Recoletos was entrusted and established the first community in the island of Cebu in the Hermitage of Immaculate Conception; from then on, shared the Recoletos spirit of mission among the poor in Cebu.

The image of San Jose - Transforming... in the year 1947 Colegio de San Jose was established, the Recoletos' evangelizing mission bears into fruition the "educational apostolate" in the hearts of the Visayan populace and beyond. In the year 1984, the school was granted the University status - becoming the University of San Jose - Recoletos.



Artist's perspective of the new St. Augustine of Hippo Quasi Parish-Recoletos



Fray Anthony Morillo, OAR

Fray Morillo installed chaplain

BY FRAY TOL ALMAYO, OAR

LARAY, TALISAY CITY, CEBU—Fray Anthony A. Morillo, OAR was installed first chaplain of the St. Augustine of Hippo Quasi Parish-Recoletos in Inayawan, Cebu City by Most Rev. Oscar Florencio, D.D., auxiliary bishop of Cebu last, August 27. The rite of installation was integrated within the 6:30 P.M. mass.

Fray Morillo is the sixth and incumbent parish priest of the Our Lady of Consolation Parish-Recoletos under which the erstwhile St. Augustine of Hippo Chapel belonged.

The said chapel was officially elevated to a quasi parish by Archbishop Jose Palma, D.D. of Cebu on August 18, 2016, although the announcement about the new status was made earlier i.e., during the founding anniversary celebration of the parish last August 6, 2016.

Fray Domingo Saladaga, OAR, parish priest here from 2006-2012, recalled how the makeshift existence of the chapel began sometime in 2009 when it was put up adjacent

to an eponymous and older chapel owned by a renowned family in the barangay.



“Who would have thought that those years of dramatic transition, like the pangs of birth, would one day give way to a moment of celebration?” a former Recollect priest assigned here marveled with gratitude.

When Fray Morillo succeeded Fray Saladaga in 2012, the purchase of the lot was made. People were mobilized to help build the temple of God. Gradually, with its brand new structure, thanks to the faithful's collaborative efforts, the quasi parish located at Sitio Tunob Lapok stands as a veritable witness to the unyielding and dynamic faith of the people in this portion of the parish.

Congratulations! **RD**

Recoletos Eco-Park blessing

BY USJ-R CORRESPONDENT

DANAO CITY—The newly constructed pavilion at the heart of the ten-hectare Recoletos Eco-pilgrimage Park in Maslog, Danao City was blessed earlier today and the holy mass was celebrated there for the first time.

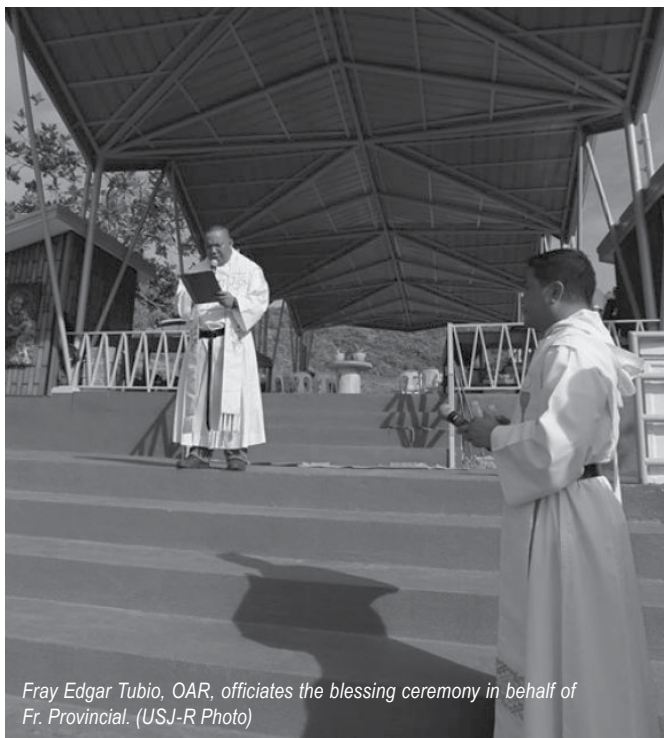
The Ecopark is also dedicated to the Our Lady of Health (Nuestra Señora de la Salud) on the day when the Feast of the Queenship of Mary is celebrated.

The mass was officiated by Rev. Fr. Edgar Tubio, OAR, and concelebrated by the religious administrators of USJ-R. Members of the Josenian Community and the local community of Brgy. Maslog attended the solemn rites.

The Ecopark is intended as a place for physical and spiritual renewal as well as for the greening efforts of USJ-R in response to Pope Francis' call to ecological conversion. **RO**



Fray Tubio officiating first mass at Eco-Park. (USJ-R Photo)



Fray Edgar Tubio, OAR, officiates the blessing ceremony in behalf of Fr. Provincial. (USJ-R Photo)



Blessing of the 10-hectare Eco-Park.



OAR community of Cebu with guest priests before the image of La Salud.



Recoletos de Cebu Community in front of the statue of the Nuestra Señora de la Salud at the Recoletos Ecopark. (USJ-R Photo/Yoland Yap)

Recolects dedicate first ecopark to Mary

BY IOANNES P. ARONG

DANAO CITY—The Recoletos de Cebu Community blessed and inaugurated the Recoletos Eco-pilgrimage Park in Danao City northern Cebu and dedicated it to Mary under the title Nuestra Señora de la Salud (Our Lady of Health) during the feast of the Queenship of Mary.

Fray Edgar Tubio, OAR officiated the first mass at the newly constructed pavilion there, concelebrated by the Recoletos de Cebu Community priests who are mostly religious administrators of USJ-R.

In his homily, Fray Tubio told members of the Josenian Community and the local community of Sitio Lucob, Brgy. Maslog in Danao that the ecopark is a reminder of God's blessings and man's stewardship.

"God blessed us with a very beautiful creation as you can see all

around you, and as stewards, we have to take good care of it," he said.

The pavilion is located at the heart of the ten-hectare ecopark, on a valley or a flat area surrounded by hills. Right above the pavilion on slightly elevated ground is perched the small statue of the Nuestra Señora de la Salud.

The eco-pilgrimage park is the first and only ecopark of the Order of the Augustinian Recollect (OAR), said USJ-R President Fray Cristopher Maspara, OAR after the mass.

It was first launched in August

28, 2015, feast of St. Augustine, in time for the opening ceremony of the international year of educational apostolate of the Order.

Fray Maspara said the Order chose to place the ecopark under the protection of the Nuestra Señora de la Salud because the first Recollect missionaries who arrived in the country in 1606 also placed themselves under her protection.

"The inauguration and the dedication of this eco-pilgrimage park is a highlight of two important



occasions,” Fray Maspara said.

“First is the closing of the international year of educational apostolate which will soon close on September 2, and our five-year preparation for the 400th foundation anniversary of the Recoletos de Cebu Community in the year 2021.”

He said the first Recollect missionaries first arrived in Cebu in May 1606, but they didn’t establish a community here. Instead, three weeks after their arrival, they went to Manila and established their first house in Bagumbayan (now Intramuros).

They returned to Cebu 15 years later or in 1621, and it was only then that they established the Recoletos de Cebu Community.

“From then on, the presence of the Augustinian Recollects in Cebu remains uninterrupted. Therefore in 2021, we will celebrate the 400th year of continuing presence and apostolic work of the Recollects here,” he said.

Bro. Jaazeal Jakosalem, OAR, Property Administrator of USJ-R and

a staunch environmental advocate, said that aside from propagating the devotion to the Nuestra Señora de la Salud, the ecopark would also serve as the site for forestation efforts of USJ-R.

“USJ-R has always been known as a ‘green university,’” Bro. Jakosalem said, citing the university’s Win on Waste program, its materials recovery facility, and the countless tree-planting initiatives on various private and public places.

“We do not know what happened to what we planted because we don’t own the lot,” he said. “But now that we have this ecopark, we can now monitor our greening efforts.”

He revealed that the university has already planted around 1,400 fruit-bearing trees in the ecopark since it was first launched in August last year, but that only 800 trees survived.

USJ-R is looking to plant 75,000 fruit-bearing native trees like mangoes and guyabano for the next seven years in time for the University’s 75th

founding anniversary in 2022.

Recoletos de Cebu Community, with members of the Josenian Community, would also hold at the pavilion daily rosary, catechism classes for children, tutorial classes for students, environmental awareness campaigns, and livelihood programs initiative for residents of the nearby Sitio Lucob.

They would also facilitate the establishment of basic ecclesiastical communities in the area.

Celestina Alao, a 65-year-old resident of Sitio Lucob, said she is glad that the ecopark is located in their very community, a concrete reminder of God’s presence in their midst.

“Usahay man gud malimot kog simba ug pangadye tungod sa trabaho diris bukid,” she said. “Pinaagi aning inyong gitukod, mahinumdom nako pirmi sa Ginoo.”

(Sometimes I would forget to hear mass or pray because of the work here in the farm. Through this pavilion, I would remember God always.) **RD**



Brothers wearing the T-shirt emblazoned with the Virgen de la Salud image stand before the image of the Our Lady at the eco-pilgrimage park.



Fray Celiz celebrates silver sacerdotal anniversary

BY CARLOS LEGASPI, JR.

BACOLOD CITY—Fray Eduardo Celiz, Jr. OAR celebrated his 25th sacerdotal jubilee on August 25, 2016. He concelebrated the Thanksgiving Mass with his co-jubilarians at the Our Lady of Consolation Parish in Mira-nila, Quezon City that same day.

August 28, feast of St. Augustine, Fr. President celebrated “Paghili-ugyon” in his home parish of St. Michael the Archangel, San Miguel, Iloilo. The program for the day started with a volleyball match for women between UNO-R and Central Philippine University at 9 am and a Basketball match between UNO-R and University of San Agustin at 10:30 am at the San Miguel Gym. Thanksgiving Mass was at 4 pm at the parish Church and Dinner-for-a-cause with OKM (original Kinaray-a music) concert at 6 pm.

On August 30, a Thanksgiving Mass was celebrated with the UNO-R community at the Oratory of St. Nicholas of Tolentino. Silver Anniversary program and fellowship follow at the President’s Hall.

Proceeds from the celebration went to the on-going reconstruction project of the St. Michael the archangel parish in San Miguel, Iloilo.

Joining the Fr. President in celebrating their silver jubilee in the Holy Order of Priesthood were: Fray Leopoldo Estioko, OAR (former UNO-R Treasurer and alumnus of UNO-R); Fray Carmelo Borces, OAR; Fray Gaudencio De Mesa, Jr., OAR; Fray Jose Fortunato Garces, OAR; and Fray Nemesio Tolentin, OAR (SSC-R, Manila President). They were ordained by His Excellency Gian Vincenzo Morini, D.D., Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, in Our Lady of Consolation Parish Church, August 25, 1991. **RO**



UNO-R celebrates St. Ezekiel and St. Augustine

BY CARLOS LEGASPI, JR.

BACOLOD CITY—The community of the University of Negros Occidental – Recoletos celebrated the feast of St. Ezekiel Moreno last August 19. The day opened with a walk for healing from the Provincial Capitol Lagoon to the university gym. The walk for healing was started as a tradition by Fray Antonio Limchaypo, OAR in 2007.

The Eucharistic celebration in honor of Saint Ezekiel Moreno started after all the faithful have entered the gym. Rev. Fr. Nitodel Soriano, Chaplain of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal was the main celebrant. Anointing of the sick and veneration of the relic of the saint followed after the Mass.

Meanwhile, the university starts the celebration of the Solemnity of St. Augustine with Triduum Masses from August 23 – 25, 2016 at the Oratory of St. Nicholas of Tolentino. Fray Enrico Silab, OAR and Fray Albert Pellazar, OAR will be the celebrants during the 7 am and 4:30 pm Masses on the first day and second day of the triduum masses. On the last day, Fray Eduardo Celiz, OAR for the 7am Mass and Fray Louie Gabinete, OAR for the 4:30 pm Mass. On the 26th, the Solemnity of St. Augustine, Vice Prior



Members of the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity joined the walk for healing.

of Recoletos de Bacolod, Fray Ronel Gealon, OAR was the Main celebrant during the 8 am Mass. Family Day 2016 followed after the Mass. It was capped by a shared lunch at the Main lobby. Bowling Tournament was held in the afternoon.

VIVA St. Ezekiel Moreno and St. Augustine. **RO**





Romanillos, elected president of the Filipino Academy of the Spanish Language

BY FRAY PABLO PANEDAS, OAR

UP DILIMAN—In the meeting convened for the purpose on Monday 22 August and by a unanimous vote, Professor Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos was elected Director of the Filipino Academy of the Spanish Language, corresponding to the Royal Spanish Academy. He has been a member since 2005 and until today he belongs to the Board of Trustees as coordinator.

Professor Romanillos who hails from San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, holds a Licentiate in Church History from the Jesuit-owned Gregorian University in Rome and took up doctoral courses in Hispanic Literature at the University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City. He was a professor of Spanish, Italian and Latin in UP Department of European Languages for twenty-nine years (1986-2015). He had likewise taught at the Lyceum of the Philippines University, Far Eastern University, University of Negros

Occidental-Recoletos, San Sebastian College Manila, Magsaysay Institute of Shipping, Carlos P. Romulo School of Diplomacy of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Colegio San Agustín in Valladolid, Spain.

As translator and researcher, his fields of expertise focus on the religious history of the Philippines and the Philippine Creole Spanish called Chabacano. Specially, significant in this area of research is his Chabacano Studies. Essays on Cavite's Chabacano Language and Literature, published



in 2006, whose second volume in bilingual edition is set for publication very soon. He is working on the *Diccionario Chabacano-Español, Español-Chabacano-Español*, which shall doubtless serve as reference material or research tool.

In 2008, the local government of his native city of San Carlos awarded with a certificate of recognition for his “known works and excellent achievement in the world of education, language and culture.” In May 2016, Chancellor Michael Tan awarded with the plaque of distinction for twenty-nine years of service to the University of the Philippines Diliman.

Augustinian Recollect historian

The great passion of Romanillos is Augustinian Recollect history, especially related to the Philippines. It is evidenced by a long list of his published and unpublished works, books as well as articles. A proof of this is the new book on the history of Bohol with 600 pages, a dedicated labor of forty years.

His other expertise is in the field of translation of English and Spanish works. Without any trace of a doubt, Romanillos holds the distinction as chief promoter of Recollect history and spirituality in a country like the Philippines whose vast majority no longer understand Spanish. His latest contribution is the book which was published in June this year on the occasion of the ongoing Padre Mauricio Ferrero Centennial. For that book he translated a good part of the *Book of Noteworthy Events of the parish of Bacolod*.

For many decades now, Romanillos is busy trying to recover the Augustinian Recollect memory in the whole archipelago. In not a few of the historical landmarks and commemorative markers he has collaborated with the National Historical Commission of the

Philippines in their installation in Luneta, Intramuros and Puerto Princesa. His academic effort has been exhaustive and untiring. He has been a much-sought for speaker in conferences and symposia in countless historic events.

He has not ceased collaborating especially in the field of formation. For many years now he has been a masteral thesis adviser or panelist of young Recollect religious in their specialization of Church History like those dealing with iconic personalities, places and events in Recollect history.

Doubtless, among his favorites is his research on Saint Ezequiel Moreno. He has published several books on the Recollect saint, even as he disseminated Tagalog testimonies on this Servant of God. He did not stop his research in places where Saint Ezekiel lived for fifteen years in the Philippines, highlighting his holy figure and fomenting devotion to him.

Philippines and the Spanish language

The Filipino Academy of the Spanish Languages is one of the

twenty-two sister academies in the same number of Spanish-speaking countries. Founded in 1924, the academy belonged to the Association of Academies of the Spanish Language since 1951. Its great writers in Philippine-Spanish literature: Claro M. Recto, Manuel Bernabé, Fernando María Guerrero, Francisco Zaragoza and Antonio Abád were academy members. So were the Spanish-speaking former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Jaime Cardinal Sin.

The Spanish language has a glorious past in the Philippines. For centuries, it was the language of a minority. But it was the language in which the Fathers of the Revolution wrote, like the poet and novelist José Rizal. The first Constitution was drafted in Spanish and it was the language of the Philippine press in the first half of the twentieth century.

Today less than a million speak Spanish. Around 800,000 Filipinos speak the Chabacano language, whether in its Tagalog variant in Cavite City and Ternate or in its Visayan variant in Zamboanga in Mindanao. **RO**



Retired UP Prof. Emmanuel Luis Apuhin Romanillos, a.k.a. Luigi Roma is an avid fan and a die-hard promoter of AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECT history, hagiography and cultural heritage.



ForSOAR Cebu at USJ-R convent © Photos by Chito Sy

ForSOAR Cebu meet

BY FR. CELSO MAGBANUA, JR.

CEBU CITY—September 12, 2016, a Monday and national holiday, was a historic day that would be forever etched in the history of the organization, Former Seminarians of the Order of Augustinian Recollects (ForSOAR), Cebu Chapter. It was on this day that the members of the said organization gathered together for a day of meeting that started at the University of San Jose – Recoletos (USJR), Cebu City and ended at the posh and private resort in Punta Engano, Lapu-Lapu City owned by Atty. Pete Flores, a ForSOAR member himself. Attended by twenty one members belonging to different batches, the whole day was spent in prayer (*bene orare*), community life (*bene vivere*) and study (*bene studere*) – indeed, a way of re-living the Augustinian Recollect spirit which all these men had learned and experienced when they were in their years of formation in the different houses of formation of the Order.



BENE ORARE

There could be no better way to start the gathering than to celebrate the highest form of prayer, the Holy Eucharist. It was held at the chapel of USJR at exactly eleven o'clock in the morning. Fr. Celso Magbanua Jr. was the main celebrant and Fray Leander Barrot, OAR was the homilist. Fray Reynaldo "Boyax" Jaranilla, OAR also concelebrated. Together with Mr. Richard Burgos, ForSOAR President, Frays Barrot and Jaranilla initiated and spearheaded the gathering.

In his homily, Fray Barrot reminded the brothers to touch base with the Eucharist for just as it gave life and strength to the early Christians, as proclaimed in the first reading of the day, then, it would be for us today. A Scripturist, Fray Barrot also thanked the brothers for their presence on this gathering even the invitation was given on a short notice. By the way, Fray Barrot was celebrating his 24th sacerdotal anniversary on this day. He was ordained to the priesthood with three others in 1992 at Our Lady of Consolation Parish, Mira-Nila, Tandang Sora, Quezon City.



BENE VIVIRE

After the Mass, the brothers proceeded to the Recollect fathers' refectory at the fourth floor of the

university for a lunch. They were welcomed warmly by the community headed by Fray Vicente Ramon, OAR, the prior of the community. Mr. Chito Sy, who solely organized this gathering, delivered some words of gratitude to the fathers before the blessing of the meal. While relishing the delicious foods prepared by Bro. Jaazeal "Tagoy" Jakosalem, OAR, the community's procurator, the brothers were heard sharing stories and laughs. From the scene, it could be seen that everyone was glad for the presence of each one and that everyone was interested to know the updates of each of the brothers. Truly, the Recollect spirit of community life filled the hall! The meal closed with a prayer immediately after Fray Ramon assured ForSOAR Cebu of the fathers' continuous spiritual support.



Carried by the university's mini bus, courtesy of Bro. Jakosalem, property custodian of the university, and some cars in convoy, the brothers headed to Punta Engaño for the main purpose of the gathering, the meeting. They arrived at the place a little bit past the hour of three in the afternoon. The meeting did not immediately happen. Instead, the sharing of stories and laughter, that started at the convent of the fathers at the university, continued. Healthy beverages and finger foods added more fun to the already high-spirited mood of the brothers. Nevertheless, this was put into suspension since the brothers were called upstairs for the start of the meeting.



BENE STUDERE

The meeting commenced with everyone introducing himself to the group, for, although they have been together for almost six hours, yet some were still complete strangers to others. This was understandable because the group was composed of members from different batches, spanning from 1967 to 2015 by last year of presence at Seminario Mayor – Recoletos, now Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary, in Baguio City.

Afterwards, Mr. Richard Burgos took up the cudgels. He told the brothers at once that this meeting was called to inform the brothers that the Order is inviting them to a more and deeper spiritual relationship, i.e., by becoming members of the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity (SARF). Mr. Burgos then proceeded by presenting to the brothers the bird's eye view of the SARF, with emphasis on the possibility of crafting a special formation program for ForSOAR while still keeping the number of years of formation as stipulated in the constitution and by-laws of the SARF.



When the presentation was over, open forum ensued. There was a common concern about the tedious process of formation, specifically the



regular meetings for study, reflection and discussion on the different topics on Catholic doctrines and important things about the Order. There was a feeling of “fear” for many because they might not fulfill the demands of formation due to their responsibilities with their family and job. To all of these, Mr. Burgos, Fray Barrot and Fray

Jaranilla were saying in unison that this should not cause a worry for the ForSOAR members because it could be tailored-fit to their situation. In the end, it was agreed upon by the group that, for now, they would strengthen their group by meeting regularly with the intention that some of them would eventually respond to the call

of becoming full-fledged members of the SARF.

The gathering ended with a sumptuous dinner and a plunging into the cold swimming pool of the luxurious villa. Thanks to Atty. Pete Flores who made all this possible.

HISTORY CONTINUES

Like the Order who continues to unfold her history and continues to grow in grace and number, ForSOAR Cebu and the rest of the organization in the entire country will continue to live, hopefully into a new direction, namely, its members becoming professed members of the SARF. Certainly, it is in this way that all members of this prestigious organization would fulfill their dreams of becoming an Augustinian Recollect which they all had when they first step on the doors of the Order. **RD**



Book about Padre Mauricio Ferrero, OAR, launched

BY PROF. EMMANUEL LUIS ROMANILLOS

BACOLOD CITY - Augustinian Recollect Prior Provincial Father Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR, wrote in his message for an earlier book on Padre Mauricio Ferrero: “Anniversaries are an important part of life. They remind us of important events, both personal and cultural. [...] Whatever the anniversary, it gives us a chance to look back over the years since the event we’re marking, and reflect on how it has shaped us. Remembering the past can be an important part of understanding who we are.”

Fray Selma further informs us: “In Bacolod City, there are four anniversaries marked in 2015-2017: the Centennial (1915-2015) of





Fr. Mauricio Ferrero, OAR; the 145th Anniversary of the Arrival of Fr. Mauricio Ferrero in Bacolod (1871-2016); the 135th Anniversary (1882-2017) of San Sebastian Cathedral; and the 85th Foundation Anniversary (1932-2017) of the Diocese of Bacolod. These are glorious pages in the annals of history of the Diocese and the City of Bacolod as well as of the Augustinian Recollects. [...] we must look back on those early Augustinian Recollects who touched the lives of thousands of ancestors, nurturing their Christians beliefs, bringing material progress to the vast Island of Negros as well and bequeathing to us indelible legacies of faith and culture.”

The Padre Mauricio Ferrero Centennial was conceived in January of this year. During a celebration at the Provincial Curia, I informed Father Selma that I was preparing a book on Padre Mauricio Ferrero. The provincial was pleasantly surprised. You see, I was the thesis adviser of a student of M.A. in Theology Major in Church History, in Mira-Nila and customarily I assisted my advisees in translating Spanish manuscripts into English. I had the good fortune of discovering Padre Francisco Vega's manuscript about his predecessor's death. He wrote that Padre Mauricio passed away peacefully in Intramuros on 8 December 1915. The official catalogue had indicated 29 January 1916. But this was the day Padre Mauricio's obituary reached the general curia. Father Provincial then approved my book and recommended the Padre Mauricio Ferrero Centennial to the local prior Fray William Villaflor. Fray Abe Latoza heads the Centennial Committee. And, as it is often said, the rest is history.

This highly informative book was conceived at Yellow Cab in SM Bacolod after the long interview by my co-author Doc Dennis's *Calle Ferrero* radio programme over DYAF Radyo Veritas. Many other book collaboration



projects were hatched.

Now, what does the new book has to offer? Well, for one, there are the enriched, updated chronicles of the Augustinian Recollects in Negros used by Doc Dennis as background of the life, works and ministry of Padre Mauricio Ferrero. Then there is the transcript of the juicy interview broadcast on DYAF-Radyo Veritas on two Saturdays. Added to that is the lecture on Padre Mauricio I delivered at the President's Hall on 27 August 2016. I availed myself of the *Cosas notables de Bacolod* scanned manuscripts from the Archivo Recoleta in Mira-Nila. The renowned Recollect historian of Negros Father Angel Martínez Cuesta emailed to me over thirty Spanish archival manuscripts he himself had encoded and in mid-June he even sent through Father René Paglinawan more manuscripts from Rome, including letters written to and by Padre Mauricio.

A section of eight pages called *Recoletos Trivia* has been included for students of Religious Education, History and Tourism and enthusiasts to test their knowledge of Recollect and Negros cultural heritage and history.

The book is replete with over 100 illustrations, photographs and

maps. All are meticulously chosen, unpublished and in amazingly viewable quality and definition, thanks to Doc Dennis.

Furthermore, I included the chronicles of the Padre Mauricio Ferrero Centennial with a personal interview with Father President Eduardo Celiz, OAR, and words of Bishop Emeritus Vicente Navarra.

It is then our pride and privilege to present this book on Padre Mauricio Ferrero de la Virgen de Vico to the leaders and people of Bacolod City and Negros Island as well as to lovers of cultural heritage and history in our country. It is our ardent wish that we continue to give deserved tribute to this indefatigable Augustinian Recollect missionary who devoted nearly half of his lifetime to the continued evangelization of the People of God in this part of the world.

Above all, as again may I quote Prior Provincial Fray Selma, “we acknowledge Father Mauricio Ferrero, OAR, builder of that sturdy citadel of Faith so it may endure for years to come, a veritable symbol of the steadfast faith of the People of God. May the Almighty God the Lord of history illumine our path at all times!” Thank you and good day! **RD**



The new statue at the church facade costs Php 320,000. (Photo by Ioannes Patigdas Arong)

New façade for Lady of Mt. Carmel church in Cebu

BY IAN REY PABLEO

CEBU CITY -Dating its roots in the Province of Cebu as early as June 1621, the Parish of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel - Recoletos has been one of the pillars of Christian faith in the province. The parish, canonically established on January 1, 1971, centralized the devotion to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel from the rest of the province.

The church is physically attached to the main architecture of the University of San Jose Recoletos (USJ-R), which, by association, led the non-parishioners to name it as St. Joseph's Church. The non-association of the church to the patroness continued up to the present.

Together with the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), the present Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Joseph Granada, OAR, planned to install a large image of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel at the anterior part

of the church. The image will serve as a landmark and a patronal identification of the parish. The project also includes the installation of a large Clock.

On February 28 this year, the parish held a fundraising activity by means of a raffle draw. From the amount raised, the project was realized through the procurement of the image of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. The image, 12 feet by 12 feet in dimension and costing Php 320,000, was installed at the church's façade on July 30, 2016.

By November 2016, a Php 2 Million large clock is expected to be installed.

The Recollects' mission of attending to the spiritual needs of their parishioners continues with the Lord's guidance and the intercession of our Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. The support of the parishioners and the devotees of the Blessed Mother will invite more faith-oriented projects for the growth and development of the local church. **RD**



SSC-RdC welcomes Miss Earth 2016

BY KENSHEEN SAMPILO

Seven candidates of Miss Earth 2016 visited San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite, October 10, to promote their advocacy on environmental awareness.

“We are Earth Warriors; we are the first one to conserve Mother Earth. It is just not one of our responsibilities, but it has been part of life,” Miss Nepal 2016 said.

Miss Earth candidates who visited the school were: Ms. Chantae Guy, Belize; Ms. Klaudia Parsberg, Denmark; Ms. Eszter Oczella, Hungary; Ms. Carole Kahwagi, Lebanon; Ms. Amber Korimdon, Mauritius; Ms. Roshani Khatri, Nepal, and; Ms. Natali Rantisi, Palestine.

Mr. Rheyward G. Doneza, SSC-RdC Public Relations Officer, organized the whole activity in coordination with the Recoletos Community Outreach Program headed by Mrs. Juvy B. De La Rosa.

Tree-planting was the main agenda of the visit conducted at SSC-RdC garden wherein they were also assisted by the Supreme Student Government Officers of the Senior High School and College Departments.

Rev. Fr. Cristituto A. Palomar, OAR, College President, welcomed the candidates in a courtesy call. “We look up to you not only for your beauty, but more especially for your inspiring examples,” said Fr. Palomar.

Carousel Production Inc., chose SSC-RdC to make the software that will be used for judging in the pageant. **RD**



Miss Mauritius, Amber Korimdon and Stephanie Luise I. Rosadiño, P.R.O. Senior High School Supreme Student Government, planting a fire tree at the SSC-RdC garden. (SSC-RdC photo/Robert Bardon)



Miss Denmark, Klaudia Parsberg, taking selfies and having fun with the Basic Education Students before the tree-planting seminar at the Cañacao Campus. (SSC-RdC photo/BasteTV)



(Bottom) Rev. Fr. Cristituto A. Palomar, OAR, Rev. Fr. James C. Castelo, OAR, Rev. James Dexter R. Tanquis, OAR together with the candidates of the Miss Earth 2016 strike a pose after the tree-planting activity at the SSC-RdC garden. (SSC-RdC photo/BasteTV)



The image of St. Ezekiel was carried in a fluvial procession along the whole stretch of Inagawan River. (Photo by Fray Raul Buhay, OAR)

Recoletos de Inagawan is alive and kicking

BY FRAY TOL ALMAYO, OAR

INAGAWAN, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan—The month of August brewed something more in the pastoral kettle of Recoletos de Inagawan. Something more to show that not only the community but also the parish is alive and kicking!

With Fray Raul Buhay, OAR, parish priest of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, on the lead, the implementation of the pastoral programs and activities of the parish continued to heat up. Working “in solidum” as the Life and Mission Project of the Province underscores, the present 5-member team of the community ably supported and assisted him in carrying out the ministerial tasks.

Solemn Feast of St. Ezekiel

As an instance of “divide and conquer,” the brothers were assigned to different areas during the fiesta celebrations. At the parish church of Inagawan, the high mass in honor of St. Ezekiel Moreno on August 19 started at 9:00 in the morning, with Fray Raul as the presider and homilist.

Fray Lounal Jarumay, OAR, took charge of the mass at St. Ezekiel Moreno Parish church in Macarascas, one of the 66 barangays of Puerto Princesa City and is about 26 kms off the city proper. Fray Regino Bangcaya, OAR, the local prior, together with Fray Joel Villaruel, OAR, and Fray John Paul Tanquiz, OAR, a deacon, joined in the celebration at the St. Ezekiel Moreno Spirituality and Development Center in Brgy. San Jose of this city.

In Inagawan, the post-missam activities included a procession of the image of St. Ezekiel from the parish church to a chapel in Tagbarungis, a riverside sitio. Twenty-six motorbikes and motorcycles participated in this year’s ceremony. Parishioners and devotees came for the vigil



inside the chapel which started in the afternoon and lasted up to midnight.

Early in the morning of the following day, September 20, the festival resumed with the incensing of the image officiated by the parish priest. Men-volunteers carried the image from the chapel to the riverbank where around 16 boats were awaiting and set for the 7:00AM fluvial procession. The image of St. Ezekiel was comfortably placed at the boat owned by the Gimeno family.

After 40 minutes of navigating in prayerful mood that whole stretch of the Inagawan River towards the open sea, they all debarked at the beach near the endpoint of the St. Ezekiel Moreno Street. From that terminus a quo, they walked praying the rosary towards the Balon-Pari which is around a kilometer in distance and where the midmorning mass was presided by Fr. Albert Sanchez, parish priest of the San Pedro Parish of Puerto Princesa. Then, to culminate the two-day celebration before they dispersed to each one's home, everybody gathered for an early lunch.

Second Bible Workshop

The Inagawan parish confidently hosted the Second Palawan Regional Bible Workshop last August 11-12, 2016. The theme for this year's workshop was "The Word of God is the Life and Mission of the Church" which is inspired by Pope Benedict XVI's post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Verbum*

Domini.

With Stella Maris Bible Center of the parish as the venue, this year's two-day live-in event registered a total of 72 participants from 25 parishes of the Apostolic Vicariates of Puerto Princesa and Taytay.

Fray Buhay, a Rome-trained Biblical theologian, was the brain behind the hosting. He said that the workshop was a good prelude to the forthcoming National Bible Congress to be held in October 3-5 in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte. "The theme in this congress will be the same with that of the bible workshop," Fray Buhay added.

BEC Orientation

Immediately after the bible workshop, an orientation on the Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC) was held on the same venue on August 13-14. The two-day seminar gathered 41 participants representing, this time, the different chapel areas of the parish.

Fray Buhay gave a brief rationale: "The BEC is a program we have started long time ago, but it somehow mothballed. So, now, we try to revive it and cover the whole parish." He continued saying that before the participants came from the center, but this year there were representatives coming from the outstations.

Sr. Hilda Romero, MSLT, a Mensa Domini sister and the Vicariate in-charge of the BEC, was at the forefront

of the said orientation program.

With the orientation and re-orientation of MSKs (or Munting Simbahang Kristyano), the parish priest remains optimistic to proceed to the next level. "Very soon, there will be follow-up, a scheduled formation program."

Feast of St. Augustine in Tacduan

"Tacduan is a new community. It is the first settlement of the parish coming from the city proper (of Puerto Princesa to Inagawan)," Fray Buhay briefly described this one-year old portion of his parish territory where he celebrated the fiesta mass of St. Augustine last August 28. It was the chapel's second patronal fiesta.

One of the 10 chapels in the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, the St. Augustine chapel has cooperative members, noted Fray Buhay. Although at the beginning people were hesitant to celebrate a feast in the month of August as it is a lean month for them, the father of the parish was able to convince them: "Don't worry, St. Augustine will pray for you. He will take charge."

With a faith that can move mountains, the people simply believed. And Fray Buhay enthusiastically reported that during mealtime after the fiesta mass, there was abundance of food brought and shared by everybody. Viva San Agustin! **RD**





Two bishops grace UNO-R Catholic Faith Festival

BY CARLOS LEGASPI, JR.

BACOLOD CITY — The Religious Education Department celebrated the annual UNO-R Catholic Faith Festival, Sept. 23 – 24 at the university campus. It opened with a Sending-off liturgy at 7:30 with the REED walk for the Family from the university grandstand to the gym. Bacolod Bishop Most Rev. Patricio Buzon, SDB, DD and Bishop Emeritus Most Rev. Vicente Navarra, DD will grace the occasion.

The opening Eucharistic celebration was led by Bishop Emeritus Vicente with the re-launching of the Padre Mauricio Ferrero at 9:30. Cosplay of Bible characters and saints closed the morning activities. Church-building contest, Brain challenge, On-the-spot Poster making contest, essay writing contest capped the 1st day activities.

On the second day, the Eucharistic celebration with the sacrament of Confirmation was administered by Bishop



Bishop Buzon and Bishop Navarra

Patricio. Morning activities was capped with para-liturgy at the covered court; Clean-up drive at the university grounds and trees profiling at the Greenheart hermitage. The afternoon activities include registration and Praise and worship; film showing; dance interpretation, cultural show and closing liturgy at the gymnasium. (data from REED). **RO**



Dr. Carmenda Leonoras, SARF President

SARF UNO-R: new set of officers

BY CARLOS LEGASPI, JR.

BACOLOD CITY—Dr. Carmenda Leonoras leads the new set of 2016 officers of the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity – UNO-R chapter.

The other officers are: Christopher Taclobos – Vice President; Rodelio Gasparillo – 1st Councilor; Lino Sumbillo, Jr. – 2nd Councilor; Arabella Ananoria – 3rd Councilor; Diana Concepcion – Secretary; Jesusa Escalona – Treasurer; and Mary Jane Eranista – Formation Director. Rev. Fr. William Villafior is the SARF – UNO-R Spiritual Director. **RO**



Recoletos friars and seminarians in an audience with Bishop Soc Villegas (RC Photo/Fray Mhadz)

Recoletos, invited to return to Pangasinan

BY FRAY TOL ALMAYO, OAR

DAGUPAN CITY, Pangasinan—"I brought forth my wish that the Recoletos open again a mission in Pangasinan," wrote Most Rev. Socrates Villegas, D.D., archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan, to the Prior Provincial after the fraternal visit of the Recollect religious and seminarians to the archbishop last September 1, 2016.

The invitation

The visit stemmed from an invitation in early August on the part of the archbishop himself to Fray Rafael Pecson, OAR who is currently the Dean of Studies of Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary in Baguio City.

The archbishop ordained Fray Pecson and 9 others to the priesthood last December 5, 2015.

"When he knew that I am assigned in Baguio and in a formation house, the idea of a friendship game surfaced. I asked the permission of the rector

(Fray Bernard Amparado, OAR) and he approved it," recalled Fray Pecson.

But Archbp. Soc, as he is more familiarly called, later realized: "What about a basketball match between my priests and the OAR?" The invitation, thus, was extended to the Recollect religious.

The game

At midmorning of September 1, the basketball game between the college seminarians of Recoletos de Baguio and those of the archdiocese was played at the gym of Mary Help

of Christians High School Seminary in Binmaley. Casiciaco's best took home the better part.

Towards noon, the clergy of the archdiocese met the Padres Recoletos captained by Fray Amadeo Lucero. The Recolects not only won the match; they also gained stronger ties with the diocesan priests in this part of the Pangasinense-speaking province.

Although the volleyball varsity of CARES was not able to meet with its counterpart due to a flooded court, the players just cheered for their teams



during the basketball tournament.

There were 16 OAR religious who composed the team: Frays Leonardo Pauligue, Virgilio Paredes, Bob Cabanag, Rafael Pecson, Raymund Rueann Alcedo (Baguio); Frays Amadeo Lucero, Edgar Tubio, Teodulo Hayahay, Henry Santiago (Provincialate, Quezon City); Glynn Ortega, Gideon Antolin Lagrimas (Manila); Manuel Lipardo, Roland Cepe (Antipolo); James Dexter Tanquis (Cavite); Joseph Dexter Palagtiosa, Renier Alviola (Talisay, Negros Occidental).

The fellowship

Off they went to the Arzobispado de Lingayen in Dagupan City after the games for lunch. The chancellor also mingled with them at the refectory.

And when they already had rested

in chorus "A song for you" composed by Fray Leander Barrot.

In his conversation to an exclusively-Recollect audience, the archbishop intimated his desire for the Recollects to come back to this portion of Luzon where former Recoletos missionaries had worked. Sincere to his heart's yearning, he echoed it in his letter to the Prior Provincial: "we can offer an already established parish with modest rectory."

Referring to this parish, he said: "Admittedly, it is an economically poor area but the Catholic faith is strong and the Catholic faithful are athirst."

The need

Among the very first things he inquired about when he was transferred to this archdiocese was

"The Augustinian Recollects, as you know," he said in his letter to the Father Provincial, "were the first missionaries to introduce the Christian faith in Bolinao. Although that presence was mainly in the present Diocese of Alaminos, we in Pangasinan remember gratefully those pioneering years of the Recoletos," the bishop continued.

According to the Recollect historian, Fray Angel Martínez Cuesta, Bolinao was founded in 1609, three years after the first arrival of the Recollects in the archipelago.

The reply

The Prior Provincial, Fray Dionisio Selma, OAR was happy to receive the invitation from the archbishop who also heads the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).

It was among other invitations including those from local ordinaries abroad that Fray Selma received and responded.

To that from Lingayen-Dagupan, he said he was thankful "for the warm welcome and hospitality you accorded to my brothers and seminarians during their visit to your archdiocese. It was, indeed, a refreshing visit to that area where our predecessors used to do mission works," he wrote in reply.

In the same tenor of sincerity, Fray Selma also expressed gratefulness "for the invitation to collaborate with you in the pastoral works of the archdiocese. Actually, this is part of what we call Life and Mission Project (LAMP) of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno."

But he briefly informed Archbp. Soc that the upcoming 55th General Chapter of the Order will already be next month, on October 2, in Rome, ergo: "The Provincial Council deems it more opportune to decide after the said chapter when the expected restructuring shall take place." **RD**



Archbishop Soc Villegas, D.D., with Augustinian Recollect priests (Photo by Fray Mhadz)

awhile, they celebrated the holy mass at the cathedral with Archbp. Soc as the presider and homilist. "His sharing focused on a challenge particularly to the seminarians," said Fray Henry Santiago, OAR who was among the friars present. Frays Edgar Tubio and Leonardo Pauligue stood as altar concelebrants.

The meal as vehicle for fellowship was palpably felt since after the holy mass, snacks was served at the recibidor. There, socialization continued. The seminarians rendered a Marian song and the ever-favorite "Magpapari" while the religious, with Fray Glynn Ortega on the guitar, sang

whether there are religious working in the area. Although the Catholic Directory of the Philippines listed 12 male and 11 female religious institutes present in the entire archdiocese, still he needs more, especially the Recoletos, to come and collaborate.

"As a matter of conviction in Church administration, we, in Lingayen-Dagupan, do not distinguish between diocesan and religious clergy. The diocese is enriched by the charisms of our religious confreres as we hope to also contribute to the growth of their vowed lives," Archbp. Soc pointed out.

The special invitation for the Recoletos had basis in local history:



Investiture
MMXVI

anguards

Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary
Our Lady of the Pillar Chapel, Baguio City
Mass Presider and Homilist:
Rev. Fr. Ian Espartero, OAR
October 12, 2016
Wednesday 9:00 A.M.

Mark Anthony Licup y Muñoz
Quezon City

Mark Joseph Quirante y Fabuna
Quezon City

John Dave Dacayana y Obeso
Minglanilla, Cebu

Joseph Neil Baygan y Enclonar
Jagna, Bohol

Earl Vincent Blaza y Sarmiento
Quezon City

Neil Victor Catacutan y Grafil
Apalit, Pampanga

Lemuel Eltanal y Cuba
Caidiocan, Negros Oriental

James Esplanada y Geollegue
Cainta, Rizal

Juvany Delmo y Valdez
Apo Island, Negros Oriental

Peter John Opu-an y Flores
Talisay City, Negros Occidental

Judd Galinato y Casocot
Guindulman, Bohol

Charles Darwin Lindo y Malijao
Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur

Lord Zeus Vaño y Granada
Guindulman, Bohol

Emmanuel Montances
Quezon City

Mc Airel Capinpin y Sadang
Brooke's Point, Palawan

Resty Aldeon y Surmeon
Apo Island, Negros Oriental

John Carlo Velasquez y Posadas
Arayat, Pampanga

*"It was pride that turned Angels into devils; it is humility that makes men as Angels."
-St. Augustine*





USJ-R breaks ground on 6-story SHS Building

BY IOANNES P. ARONG

CEBU CITY — In response to the influx of more senior high school students choosing to study at USJ-R, the university will be building a 6-story edifice to address the growing demand for classrooms.

USJ-R religious administrators headed by University President Fray Cristopher Maspara, OAR led the blessing, ceremonial groundbreaking and laying of time capsule at the Basak Campus.

“Today’s groundbreaking is an expression of optimism, hope for the future and a celebration of another accomplishment,” said Fray Maspara. “This ceremony also symbolizes the institution’s growth and commitment to provide quality education and holistic formation to our students.”

The six-story SHS building will rise on an area of 1,700 square meters, said Campus Planning head Engr. Neil Rom. It is located between the Our Lady of Consolation building and St. Ezekiel Moreno building or what used to be the old canteen area in Basak Campus.

Also present during the ceremony were the lay administrators, faculty members and representatives of Vios Architects and EGI Construction, the building designer and contractor respectively.

Engr. Rom said the building is expected to be completed in nine months, or in time for the opening of classes in June 2017.

It would have a canteen at the ground floor, library and offices at the second floor, laboratories at the third floor and classrooms from the fourth to the sixth floors.

Each floor, from the fourth to the sixth, would have ten classrooms, bringing the total number of classrooms in the building to 30. Its roof deck would be reserved for gymnastics and physical education.

The construction of the building is in anticipation of the rising number of senior high school enrollees at USJ-R, said the SHS principal Mrs. Nila Garcia.

She said that as of the moment, Grade 11 students occupy classrooms in Basak and main campus on Magallanes St, but that they really needed their own building.

She said USJ-R admitted over 900 grade 11 students this year who are spread over 14 sections taking up Accountancy, Business

and Management (ABM); Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS); Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) tracks.

She said with the anticipated doubling of senior high school population, the logical step is to construct their own building.

Fray Maspara thanked the Provincialate of the Order of the Augustinian Recollect (OAR) and the members of the Board of Trustees of the University for giving their stamp of approval to the project. V

“With your support, we are fired up to carry out the mission of this institution in the spirit of true Recollect service,” he said. **RO**



Ground breaking for the 6-story building. (USJ-R Photo/Yoland Yap)



Fray Maspara conferring NC II certificates to inmates and lady guard. (USJ-R Photo/Ioannes P. Arong)

USJ-R's Oplan Tokhay (Toktok Kabuhayan)

BY IOANNES P. ARONG

CEBU CITY - In order to make good use of their time behind bars, lady inmates in Cebu underwent technical-vocational (tech-voc) training provided by USJ-R and successfully passed the government accreditation.

Thirty inmates and a lady guard of the Cebu City Jail Female Dormitory were conferred their national certification (NC II) for Bread and Pastry Production by USJ-R President Fray Christopher Maspara, OAR in a "graduation ceremony" yesterday at the jail grounds.

"Deservingkaayo moi-congratulate kay bisan kamo naa diri sa sulod sa bilanggoan, naa moy na-achieve sa inyong kinabuhi (You deserved to be congratulated because even if you're behind bars, you have achieved something)," Fray Maspara told the inmates during the mass held before

the awarding of certificates.

"Ang inyong nakat-onan kay para ra pod sa inyong personal nga kalamboan ug para sa kalamboan sa inyong pamilya ug myembro sa inyong kumunidad dinhi (What you have learned will be for your own good and the good of your family and members of your community)," he added, as he urged them to use what they have learned to do good.

The lady inmates and Jail Officer 2 Marcia Sayson had undergone 141 hours of training conducted by Miss Grace Barnido, an instructor of the

Recoletos Industrial and Technological Training Center (RITTC), the tech-voc arm of USJ-R.

Of the 356 total population of the facility, 30 "willingly" signed up for the program, said Sayson.

Dr. Mary Ann Roble, RITTC director, said the inmates demonstrated competence and skill during the Sept. 22 Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) accreditation, registering a 100% passing rate.

The inmates wore their apron and toque blanche, or the pleated,



starched white hat worn by chefs as they walked up the mini stage and get their certificates.

They also received a livelihood package consisting of baking wares and ingredients from USJ-R as “graduation gift.”

Second chances

Bro. Jaazeal Jakosalem, OAR, director of the university’s Institute of Non-Formal Education and Community Outreach Program (INFECOP), said the initiative is anchored on the university’s community apostolate.

He said that USJ-R looks after the spiritual and livelihood concerns of the inmates as Recollect priests attend to the inmates’ spiritual needs by saying mass for them every Sunday, hearing their confessions and giving counsel; and by providing them with the tech-voc training.

“You are already empowered through the skills you acquired,” he said. “Bisag diri sa sulod makakwarta namo pinaagi sa inyong mga lutoon ug crafts nga baligya (Even behind bars, you already earn money through baking and selling hand-made crafts).”

Bro. Jakosalem revealed that during the 51st International Eucharistic Congress, crafts made by the inmates were the first to sell out in the booth set by USJ-R at the IEC Pavilion as they became the favorite of IEC delegates.

Community Prior Fray Vicente Ramon Jr., OAR encouraged the inmates to never give up even if life seemed bleak behind bars as he told them the humble beginnings and success story of Mrs. Julia Gandionco, owner of Julie’s Bakeshop

“Kung naa lang unta ang atong mahal nga Presidente Duterte aron mo-witness sa inyong graduation,” Fr. Ramon said, “makakita sab unta siya nga dili diay kinahanglan nga katong

mga tawo nga nakasala sa gobyerno nga ato lang pamusilon diha sa daplin. Naa pa gyod diay second ug third ug fourth chances.”

(If our beloved President Rodrigo Duterte could only witness your graduation, he would have seen that we don’t have to just shoot erring individuals, that there are second and third and fourth chances.)

How it began

JO2 Saycon and inmates Geraldine Espiritu and Gessa Figueras were awarded for their excellent performance during the training. They were given medals and certificates.

In a speech, the jail officer thanked USJ-R for its contributions to the rehabilitation efforts of the inmates.

She revealed that the initiative started with the same 30 inmates who are fond of making yema, pastillas and munchkin. Soon enough, they started planning about opening a bakery store to also augment their income.

It was then that INFECOP supervisor Dr. Joan de Catalina learned about their bakery plan and offered them training on Bread and Pastry Production, which they readily grabbed.

Dr. de Catalina frequents the jail facility as it is one of the beneficiary area of the university’s community outreach programs.

“Dako nakong pasalamat sa Ginoo nga kung kita kinasingkasing ka nga manangandoy, daghan kaayong motabang (I thank the Lord because if you heartily dream, many will extend help),” Saycon said.

Figueras, 27, was arrested for drug peddling. She is awaiting the resolution of her case in court for 1 year and 7 months already.

She said she joined the program because she would want to learn something useful when she would be

released from jail.

She said the training was really fun and it helped her divert her attention toward more meaningful things. “Ako gyod ning gamiton akong nakat-onan kay magbagong buhay na gyod ko (I would use what I learned to start a new life),” she said.

Next batch

Espiritu, 49, was convicted of illegal recruitment and has been doing time inside the facility since June 2011. She gladly revealed that she has one more year to go inside the facility.

“Timely kaayo ni nga training kay hapit nako molaya,” she said. “Magtukog kog coffee shop inag gawas nako.”

(This training is very timely because I will be released soon. I would open a coffee shop when I get out.)

She said she joined the trainings because she found it helpful. She said as a mother of four, she had no time to cook for her family because she was “always on the go.”

“I didn’t have time for things like this,” she said. She thanked USJ-R for its help and for not giving up on them.

“Kung unsa may inyong gitudlo namo, amo gyod gamiton sa pagbuhay og maayo (Whatever you taught us, we would use them to do good),” she said.

Fray Maspara also invited the other inmates to also signup for future tech-voc trainings to be provided by USJ-R.

“Sa sunod namong balik, kamo na sad unta ang mo-graduate kay ang USJ-R dili mohunong pagtabang ninyo (I hope the next time we come back here, may you be the ones who will graduate because USJ-R will not stop helping you),” he told them.

Dr. de Catalina said the tech-voc trainings to be offered to the inmates would continue with the inclusion of the next batches of willing trainees.



Native food baking lesson with Mr. Solanoy. (CSNDT Photo)



Rosary-making activity with Mr. Parra and Ms. Mamon. (CSNDT Photo)

Nicholasians visit Sagrado 3 Area

BY FRAY CHOTE BITANGJOL, OAR

TALISAY CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL—For the bigger schools, it might be a common act to have an Outreach Program with a sense of sustainability. The Administration, Faculty, Staff and students share this vision by adopting a barangay in Talisay City, an area apostolate of the Parish in Sagrado 3.

The Director and Principal, Fray Sixto M. Bitangjol, OAR, laid down the project during the planning session last summer to adopt a barangay that will have a sustainable development among the residents of a certain barangay in Talisay City. The Campus Ministry Office through Fray John Zachary Haguisan, OAR, identified Sagrado 3 Apostolate as the viable place for the Outreach Program and Livelihood Project. The identified programs were rosary making and native food baking lesson. On October

9, 2016, the selected group of faculty members and students joined by Fray Haguisan started the Outreach Program through a Mass followed by a catechism given by the teachers. It was very timely to have the Rosary Making Project as October is dedicated for the month of the Rosary. Mr. John Rovic Solanoy handled the native food baking lesson by selecting some parents who were interested to learn how to start a business through native food. Mr. Kenneth Parra and Ms. Rosario Mamon spearheaded the

Rosary Making Project.

Winding down the outreach program was a short program featuring spiritual songs led by the teachers. The activities were so remarkable for the residents of Barangay Sagrado 3, knowing that the skills acquired and spiritual exercises done would somehow add meaning to their lives.

Vamos San Nicholas! Vamos Recoletos! **RO**



The 55th General Chapter Capitulars in Rome, Italy. (Photo by Fray Antonio Carrón, OAR)

Six Filipino Recollects among members of 55th General Chapter

BY FRAY TOL ALMAYO, OAR

ROME—Fray Dionisio Selma, Prior Provincial of the St. Ezekiel Moreno Province, leads the group of Filipino Recollects who are participating in the sexennial General Chapter to be held at Casa di Esercizi Spirituali Nostra Signora Madre della Misericordia in Via di Monte Cucco, Rome, starting October 2, 2016.

The other Filipinos in the list are Fray Lauro Larlar, former prior provincial and elected delegate of the province during the 6th Provincial Chapter on February 2015; Fray Julius Marcos, vicar of the province and president of the Recoletos



Educational Apostolate in the Province (REAP); Fray Raul Buhay, parish priest of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Brgy. Inagawan, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan; and Fray Samson Silloriquiez, Fourth General Councilor, General Procurator, and General Postulator for the Causes of Saints.

Frays Marcos and Buhay were elected by the voting religious of the St. Ezekiel Moreno Province to represent this eighth youngest province of the Order.

In the light of the OAR Constitutions 335, Frays Selma and Silloriquiez

are “a iure” members of the said chapter while the other three are “elected” members, or properly called “delegates”.

The sixth Filipino in the roster is Fray Marlon Beof, an elected representative of the Province of St. Augustine where he is the first provincial councilor.

Highest authority

“The General Chapter is the Order’s highest authority and must be a sign of unity in charity,” says the OAR Constitutions 331.

For the incumbent Prior General, Miguel Miró, in his on-line blog: “The Chapter is a time of grace and discernment, not only for those taking part, but also for all the religious of the Order.” And he adds, “It is a call to communion, and disposing ourselves to have a plan for life and mission which stirs up hope and permits us to go forward together on the same path.”

The slogan

Considering the wind of revitalization and restructuring that has swept the entire OAR during the



previous sexennium since 2010, the catchy slogan for the 55th General Chapter “springs from the heart of Augustine and touches our life and mission today,” according to Father Miró. The Spanish text reads: ‘Toda nuestra esperanza está en tu gran misericordia. Da lo que manda and manda lo que quieras.’ (‘All our hope is in your great mercy. Give us Lord what you command, and command what you will’).

The quotation is taken from St. Augustine’s Confessions 10.29.40.

The carefully chosen motto is accompanied by an ideographic representation of four religious with

General Councilor and President of the General Secretariat of Spirituality; Fray Jairo Alberto Gordillo, Fifth General Councilor and President of the General Secretariat of Ministerial and Mission Apostolate; and Fray Francisco Javier Tello, Sixth General Councilor and General Secretary. (Please note that Fray Silloriquéz was already counted earlier.)

Pursuant to the OAR Constitutions 336, the former Prior General, Fray Desiderio Guerra, is also an “a iure” member of the chapter.

The other 7 Priors Provincial belong to the same category: Fray Sergio Sánchez (St. Nicholas), Fray

Lady of Candelaria—Fray Jose David Niño; Province of St. Joseph—Fray Pedro Merino; Province of St. Rita of Cascia—Fray Ademir João Garcia; Province of Our Lady of Consolation—Fray Gabriel Antonio Robles; and St. Augustine Province—Fray Beof who was mentioned earlier.

Two delegates representing the Province of St. Thomas of Villanueva: Frays Miguel Angel Hernández and Julio Amezua.

Three religious brothers elected to join the assembly are Frays Enrique Gómez, Sebastián Ibañez, and Wesley Silva.

Plus, the remaining 7 more—one each from the other 7 provinces—who were elected by their respective provincial chapters, in accordance with OAR Constitutions 337. However, we are yet to get their names to complete the list.

All in all, there are 40 religious taking part in this life-changing event of the Recoletos.

Role of the Spirit

In the language of Scholastic philosophy, the abovementioned Capitulars possess “the proximate ground of possibility” for change to take place in the Order. But “the ultimate ground” lies in God’s hands.

As Father General rightly puts it: “Change is possible, given that the Spirit drives us towards a conversion that is personal, community-based, and pastoral. Only in this way will we be able to act hand-in-hand with a Church reaching out to the poor of our days: those who are poor through lacking the necessities of life, and those who are poor through having their hearts empty of love and distant from God.”

May the triune God, through the intercession of our saints and blessed, continue to bless and guide the Order of Augustinian Recollects and the 55th General Chapter. Amen. **RO**



(Top L-R) Fray Samson Silloriquéz, OAR, Fray Dionisio Selma, OAR, Fray Lauro Larlar, OAR (Bottom L-R) Fray Marlon Beof, OAR, Fray Julius Marcos, OAR, Fray Raul Buhay, OAR

colors blue, orange, red and green, and whose bodies are heart-shaped. The entire figure portrays diversity united in and by charity.

Other members

Here are the other members of the historic chapter of this millennium: The General Council members—Fray Miguel Miró, Prior General; Fray José Ramón Pérez, Vicar General and President of the General Secretariat of Formation; Fray José Ma. Sánchez, Second General Councilor and President of the General Secretariat of Educational Apostolate and Youth Ministry; Fray Pablo Pandeas, Third

Carlos Ma. Dominguez (St. Thomas de Villanueva), Fray Albeiro de Jesus Arenas (Candelaria), Fray José Ma. Aguerri (Consolation), Fray Michael Rafferty (St. Augustine), Fray Nicolás Pérez-Aradros Rubio (St. Rita), and Fray Daniel Ayala (St. Joseph).

Furthermore, the delegates elected by their respective province are: from the Province of St. Nicholas of Tolentino—Fray Rafael Mediavilla, Fray Francisco Javier Acero, Fray Angel Martinez Cuesta, and Fray Alfonso Ma. de Ligorio.

One delegate each from the following provinces: Province of Our



The 55th General Chapter delegates in session.

General Councilors elected

BY FRAY TOL ALMAYO, OAR

ROME – The last session of the 55th General Chapter on October 26, 2016 moved forward with the election of the General Councilors in accordance with the OAR Constitutions 345: “...the members of the general council are to be elected by absolute majority of votes.”

The provision continues: “Six councilors are to be elected, the first of these being the Vicar General. For the elections of each of them, having listened to the priors provincial, the Prior General may put forward three names, respecting always the freedom of the members of the chapter to elect the particular religious of the Order whom they believe most suitable.”

Here are the elected religious who comprise the new members of the General Council:

Fr. José Ramón Pérez Sáenz, OAR

First General Councilor and Vicar General

Birthdate/year: 1960

Birthplace: Manjarrés (La Rioja, España)

Solemn Profession: 1979

Presbyteral Ordination: 1983

Assignments: Venezuela (16 years); Monasterio de San Millán de la Cogolla; Prior Provincial of the Province of San José (for 2 triennia); Vicar General of the Order (2010-2016)

Studies: Licentiate in Theology (University of Salamanca, Spain); Licentiate in Theology and Patristic Sciences (Istituto Patristico Augustinianum, Rome)

Fr. Raúl Buhay Murillo, OAR

Second General Councilor

Birthdate/year: June 1, 1962

Birthplace: San Miguel (Surigao del Sur, Philippines)

Solemn Profession: 1987

Presbyteral Ordination: 1988

Assignments: Master of the Professed at Recoletos Formation Center in Quezon City; Councilor of then Vicariate of the Philippines and China; a missionary to Sierra Leone (3 years); VP for Administration at USJ-R, Cebu; VP for Academics at UNO-R Bacolod; Third Provincial Councilor of the Province of St. Ezekiel (2009-2012); Prior of the community of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Inagawan, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan (2012-15); Parish Priest of OLMC Parish, Inagawan (since 2012 to date).

Studies: Licentiate in Biblical Theology (Gregorian Pontifical University, Rome); MA in Educational Management and PhD in Educational Management (USJ-R, Cebu)



Fr. Juan Pablo Martínez Peláez, OAR

Third General Councilor

Birthday/year: 1983

Birthplace: Medellín (Antioquia, Colombia)

Solemn Profession: 2004

Presbyteral Ordination: 2008

Assignments: Santuario de Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de Manare (Casanare) as Parochial vicar, then as Prior and Parish Priest until July 2013; Master of the Professed (Colombia)

Studies: Licentiate in Theology (Universidad San Buenaventura, Bogotá); Licentiate in Sacred Liturgy (St. Anselm Pontifical Institute, Rome)

Fr. Francisco Javier Monroy Rodríguez, OAR

Fourth General Councilor

Birthday/year: 1970

Birthplace: Valladolid (España)

Solemn Profession: 1994

Presbyteral Ordination: 1995

Assignments: Councilor of the Vicariate (2012-16); Parochial Vicar in Lodosa, Zaragoza and Madrid; Formator since 1998 in Zaragoza, Madrid, and from 2009 at the St. Augustine Postulancy.

Studies: Licentiate in Biblical Theology (Gregorian Pontifical University, Rome); Máster de acompañamiento espiritual y discernimiento vocacional. Máster Terapeuta Councillor.

Fr. Gabriel Antonio Robles Alonso, OAR

Fifth General Councilor

Birthday/year: 1962

Birthplace: Panama

Solemn Profession: 1985

Presbyteral Ordination: 1989

Assignments: General Councilor (1992-2004); General Procurator before the Holy See (1998-2004); Vicar of Panama of the Consolation Province (2010-2013); Vicar of the Province (since 2013)

Studies: Licentiate in Theology (Gregorian Pontifical University, Rome)

Fr. Antonio Carrón de la Torre, OAR

Sixth General Councilor

Birthday/year: 1980

Birthplace: Madrid (España)

Solemn Profession: 2004

Presbyteral Ordination: 2005

Assignments: Professor, Tutor and Coordinator of Pastoral Ministry at Colegio Santo Tomás de Villanueva in Granada, Spain; Director of the Colegio Santo Tomás de Villanueva (Granada, since 2010 to date); Provincial Councilor of the Province of Sto. Tomas and in-charge of the Secretariat of Educational Apostolate; Haren Alde Delegate in Andalucía

Studies: Licentiate in Pastoral Theology (Universidad de Granada); MA in Contemporary Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy (Universidad de Granada)

At the very first meeting of the newly-constituted General Council, the election of the office of the General Secretary was made. It resulted to the re-election of Fray Tello.

Fr. Francisco Javier Tello Vegas, OAR

General Secretary

Birthday/year: 1972

Birthplace: Cáceres (España)

Solemn Profession: 1996

Presbyteral Ordination: 1999

Assignments: Formator at Seminario Menor de Santo Tomás de Villanueva; School administrator in Cristo Rey (Caracas, Venezuela); Councilor of the Vicariate of Venezuela (2003-2006); Formator of Postulants (Seminario Nuestra Señora del Buen Consejo in Palmira, Táchira); Vicar Provincial (from 2011-2013); General Secretary of the Order (2013-2016)

Studies: Catechetics (Instituto San Pío X of the Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, Madrid)



The newly elected General Council.



Fr. Tagoy offering the framed artwork to Pope Francis.

Pope Francis receives an artwork on the refugee crisis

BY FRAY TAGOY JAKOALEM, OAR

VATICAN CITY—Pope Francis personally received the framed artwork “Embracing Mercy” from a Filipino liturgical artist at the Sala Clementina, Vatican City, Rome after the special papal audience granted to the Augustinian Recollects who are participating in the 55th General Chapter last October 20, 2016.

The canvas shows Pope Francis embracing the Christ-child (after the image of Alan Kurdi, the three-year old Syrian refugee who died at sea and was washed ashore along with his deceased mother and brother in the Mediterranean Sea. His iconic image brought about increased attention and concern for the massive European refugee crisis). “Embracing Mercy” symbolizes the Church’s “motherly” attitude on the plight of refugees and

Pope Francis personally lived it as his own advocacy. In the face of the global crisis, the Church embraces the many faces of injustice brought about by poverty, neglect and indifference of rich nations.

“Beautiful, I like it. Please pray for me, young man.” Pope Francis said to Brother Jaazeal “Tagoy” Dineros Jakosalem, OAR upon receiving the artwork. In a message intended for the 2017 World Day Message of Migrants

and Refugees, Pope Francis said: “I feel compelled to draw attention to the reality of child migrants, especially the ones who are alone. In doing so I ask everyone to take care of the young, who in a threefold way are defenceless: they are children, they are foreigners, and they have no means to protect themselves. I ask everyone to help those who, for various reasons, are forced to live far from their homeland and are separated from



their families.” (Pope Francis, “Child Migrants, the Vulnerable and the Voiceless,” September 8, 2016). Much fitted to the concluding celebration of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, the artwork shows a deliberate message of the Church’s utmost care for migrant children “Furthermore, far-sighted perspectives are called for, capable of offering adequate programmes for areas struck by the worst injustice and instability, in order that access to authentic development can be guaranteed for all. This development

should promote the good of boys and girls, who are humanity’s hope.” (Pope Francis, “Child Migrants, the Vulnerable and the Voiceless,” September 8, 2016).

Exactly a month ago, Fray Jaazeal Jakosalem, OAR was commissioned by Fray Miguel Miro, OAR, Prior General of the Order of Augustinian Recollects to create a work of art to be given to Pope Francis on the scheduled special audience. With the able help of his art mentee, Melvin Lañas, a

Recoletos scholar studying at the University of San Jose - Recoletos, Cebu City; they were able to finish this socially-conscious “beautiful” artwork. Brother Jakosalem has been promoting community art projects with young people. This artwork is the third piece of Brother Jakosalem’s art team to be presented to Pope Francis - during his January 2015 papal visit to the Philippines he blessed the “pilgrim” art of Jesus of the Poor; and the “Laudato Si” icon was given to him last September 2016. **PO**



Photo: The Capitulars of the recently concluded 55th General Chapter of the Order of Augustinian Recollects during their audience with Pope Francis got featured in the October 21, 2016 publication of the Vatican paper, L'Osservatore Romano



Essere «uomini di speranza» e «creatori di comunione» per vivere come fratelli con «una sola anima e un sol cuore»: è questo «il sogno di sant'Agostino» riproposto da loro incontro e che le guardiamo con quella tenerezza che abbiamo sperimentato e ricevuto dal nostro rapporto con Dio. È questo il potere che abbiamo, non quello dei



Re-elected Prior General, Fray Miguel Miró, OAR.

Fray Miguel Miró re-elected OAR Prior General

BY FRAY TOL ALMAYO, OAR

ROME—Fray Miguel Miró Miró, OAR, was elected for the second term as Prior General of the Order of Augustinian Recollects on October 25, 2016 by the 55th General Chapter in Rome.

Garnering an absolute majority of the 40 Capitulars, Fray Miró received the vote of confidence to serve the 428-year old Recoletos and to be at the forefront of the Order for the next sexennium (2016-2022).

Father Miguel was born in Vinebre (Tarragona, Spain). He entered the Order at age 23, in 1972, after having obtained a degree in architecture from the University of Barcelona. Having finished his philosophical studies and completed his novitiate in Monteagudo (Navarra), he proceeded to study theology in the Augustinian

Recollect Theological Seminary in Marcilla (Navarra).

Bishop José María Cirarda, archbishop of Pamplona, ordained him a priest on August 28, 1978 in Lodosa (Navarra) where he began to serve in the formation apostolate and where he would remain for seventeen years while working in different formation houses: Lodosa, Fuenterrabía (Guipúzcoa) and Valladolid, as in-charge of the postulants; Monteagudo, as Novice Master for three years; and Marcilla where he worked as Master of the Professed for four years.

In 1995, he was sent to Rome where he obtained his Licentiate in Spiritual Theology from the Gregorian Pontifical University.

In the Provincial Chapter of 1997 convoked in Marcilla, he was elected Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Nicholas of Tolentino. (NOTE: At this time, he was among those who prepared for the birth in 1998 of the youngest province of the Order—the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno.) He dispensed his office for six years, upon his reelection in the Provincial Chapter of 2000.



As his mandate as Prior Provincial, two goals prompted his action: the promotion-formation of vocations and the intensification of spiritual life.

Among the appointments made by the newly-elected Provincial Council in 2003 was that of Father Miguel who was assigned as the local prior of the theology house in Marcilla. But he carried this out for only a year since in the General Chapter of 2004 in which he was a delegate, he was elected Vicar General and First General Councilor.

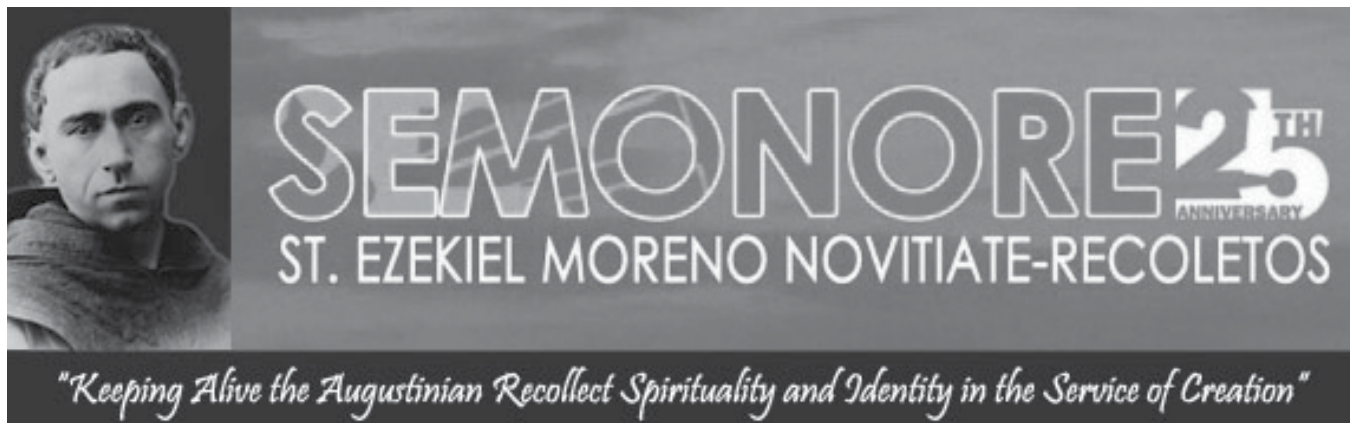
During the distribution of responsibilities within the Order's team of governance, he was assigned to take charge of the General

Secretariat of Spirituality and Prior of the Generalate House in Rome, aside from other tasks. As President of the said general secretariat, he was able to expand his knowledge of the Order and establish fraternal rapport with a lot of religious in the entire geography in which the Augustinian Recollects are present.

Furthermore, he was also given the task by the previous General Council to take charge of the publications such as the publication of the newsletter Notitiae OAR. He was also responsible for making the Order present through social media communications. Through his initiative, an institutional website was created for the whole

Order which, aside from offering relevant news items, it also serves the religious and the lay people with documents, exchange of ideas, responses to questions, etc.

The 54th General Chapter elected him Chapter President, an index of trust which the former Vicar General had inspired the Capitulars. The same Chapter elected him Prior General. During this six-year term, Fray Miguel was among the great proponents of the process of revitalization and restructuring of the Order. His reelection for this function in the general government is a sign of confidence that the religious have in him. **RO**



Musica Sacra

BY FRAY RELLY DELOS SANTOS, OAR

MANILA — The Recoletos Friars showcased again their “Tatak Recoleta” singing talents last August 12, 2016 in the Basilica of San Sebastian.

It was a big challenge for the performers to play with the acoustics of the all-steel church and to go against the banging of the very strong rain passing the metropolis. But the concert pushed through and also with an outpour of people supporting both Sacred Music and the restoration and preservation of the Basilica which is now celebrating its 125th anniversary of foundation.



The concert was spearheaded by the Recoletos de Manila community who invited OAR singing priests all around the Philippines. They are accompanied by the Recoletos Coristas of Mira-nila, as well as some distinguished guests such as the Rosa Mystica Choir and Mr. John Laseca. **RO**



The 55th General Chapter in Pictures





The solemn candlelight procession at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, Portugal: an experience every pilgrim remembers with nostalgia. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)

Our pilgrimage, our renewal in the Year of Mercy: 25 years of journey in the religious life

BY FRAY CHOTE BITANGJOL, OAR

EDITED BY FRAY BOYAX, OAR

"The life I live now is not my own, but Christ who lives in me." (Gal. 2:20)

Looking back twenty-five years ago, seven brave men made a vow to follow the Lord in the consecrated religious life on May 4, 1991. We differed in spoken dialects and lived with cultural differences yet there was one purpose—to follow and serve Christ in the Augustinian Recollect way of life.

Two from Luzon, Fray Antonio C. Zabala, Jr., OAR, and Fray Raymundo D. Cometa, OAR, two from the province of Cebu, Fray Eugene David R. Tancinco, OAR, and Fray Hernan A. Cañete, OAR. Fray Reynaldo E. Jaranilla, OAR, a product of Colegio de Sto. Tomas-Recoletos in Negros Occidental, a lone candidate from Bohol, Fray Jose Florizel A. Dabalos, OAR, and yours truly, a Leyteño, Fray Sixto Ciriaco M. Bitangjol, OAR. Biblically speaking, seven is a perfect number. After a quarter of a century, only three remained in the religious life. It does not mean we are the most worthy. We are just "fighting



The Silver Jubilarians: Fray Joy, Fray Boyax & Fray Chote

the good fight of faith." We might not understand the reason why the Lord chose us. Perhaps, there is a mission for each one of us.

It is not mere coincidence that after 25 years, we came back to the place where we made our Simple Profession of Vows. Fray Antonio C. Zabala, OAR, Fray Reynaldo E. Jaranilla, OAR, and I decided to render an act of gratitude to the Lord—to the place and people who formed us through a Thanksgiving Mass at Our Lady of Consolation Parish, Mira-Nila Homes, Quezon City on May 4, 2016. Fray Huberto Dunstan Decena, OAR, inspired us in his homily by recalling

his own experiences as a religious—to introspect and live the life as St. Paul says in his letter to the Galatians, “the life I live now is not my own, but Christ who lives in me.”

Although it was not a practice to celebrate the silver jubilee of the simple profession in our hometown, we proposed to do this as part of our thanksgiving and campaign for more vocations to the Augustinian Recollect life. The Mary Queen of the Apostles Church, San Antonio Village 6, Parañaque City was the first venue of our Thanksgiving Mass where Fray Antonio C. Zabala, OAR saw the seed of vocation planted in his heart. Six days later, on May 13, 2016, I held my Thanksgiving Mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Our Lord's Transfiguration, Palo, Leyte. Last stop was the place of Fray Reynaldo Jaranilla, OAR, in San Carlos City on May 26, 2016 where he celebrated his Thanksgiving Mass at San Carlos Borromeo Cathedral. Our journey in our Silver Jubilee did not end with the thanksgiving masses. We were given the opportunity to make a Marian Pilgrimage covering the five countries in Europe, namely, Portugal, France, Spain, Italy and the Vatican. Fray Antonio C. Zabala, OAR, however, opted not to join the Marian and Mystical Journey because he decided to channel the funds for his mother's dialysis instead. And so the spiritual journey to Europe began for me and Fray Boyax.

The Pilgrimage and the Journey of Faith

To write about our pilgrimage would be a challenge as it is difficult to



October 2016 Batch of Marian pilgrims. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)

capture every detail. But allow me in my best recollection to share with you our “pilgrimage-renewal” experience with our Blessed Mother and the mystics.

On October 24, 2016, 26 pilgrims from all over the Philippines gathered at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. We were pleasantly surprised to see familiar faces from St. Vincent Ferrer Parish, Baguio City—the parish where our seminary in Baguio belongs. We boarded Emirates flight EK225 which signaled the start of our journey. After almost nine hours we landed at the Dubai International Airport.

Dubai-Portugal: Opening Days of Pilgrimage



(left to right) Fray Chote, Zarah, Betty, Fray Boyax & Fr. Melvin

We were welcomed at the airport by Ms. Betty Timbal, a former Joseonian, now working with Emirates Airline. After a four-hour layover at the huge Dubai International Airport, we boarded Emirates flight EK191 bound for Lisbon, Portugal. We enjoyed the comfortable seats, movies and meals so much, that it felt like it was a short 8-hour trip. The excitement grew as we landed at the Humberto Delgado Airport or Aeroporto de Lisboa in the afternoon of October 25.

Airport to Fatima

At Lisbon, a bus that became like our little home throughout the journey in Europe, fetched us. It was chauffeured by a big and “not-so-friendly” gentleman named Benjamin who guaranteed our safety on the road nonetheless. After touring around the place, we proceeded to Fatima. We



Fray Chote presiding the morning Mass at the Chapel of Apparition.

stayed in the Cinquentenario Hotel, just 700 meters away from the Plaza of the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima. The exhaustion from our long travel vanished when we joined the solemn procession in the evening. Someone from our group was given the chance to lead one mystery of the Rosary as it was recited in different languages. The aura of holiness was palpable during the praying of the Rosary and the singing of hymns to Mother Mary.

The following day, we welcomed the dawn with a Eucharistic Celebration which I presided in the Chapel of Apparition. While we were in the chapel, our chaplain, Fr. Melvin Castro, shared with us that the image of Our Lady of Fatima was attacked by a non-believer. He rammed his car to the white stone fencing and sledge hammered the bullet proof casing of the blessed image. Miraculously, it was not shattered to pieces.

After a sumptuous breakfast, we went back to the shrine of our Lady to explore the enormous beauty of the place as well as relish the air of sanctity. We entered the Museum of Light which displayed all the precious gifts given to Our Lady by those who received healing—rosary beads and crowns for Mama Mary in gold, silver and bronze, and unique memorabilia from their country of origin. It is interesting to see there a golden crown and a silver rosary beads offered by former president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. There were also photos of the popes who visited our Mother Mary in Fatima.



Priests from different countries lead the candlelight procession at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)

We also visited the homes of Francisco, Jacinta and Lucia in Aljustrel, Valinhos and Loca do Cabeço. We were blessed to be in the exact place where the apparitions of Our Lady and the angels occurred. That evening we joined the candlelight rosary procession and I felt the deep respect and devotion by the pilgrims to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Salamanca – Avila: Bienvenido a España

En route to Avila, we stopped at the famous plaza real and university town of Salamanca. Fray Boyax and I ended up eating at the usual McDonald's place where one can get cheap food. After lunch, we visited the nearby University of Salamanca and the Cathedral of Salamanca.

In Avila, we felt historical nostalgia as we were reminded of Intramuros, Manila. Avila is enclosed by a tall city wall built in the 11th and 12th centuries by the Romans and later by the Muslims. Avila is a city of mysticism, history, art and heroic chivalry. The most valuable spiritual gift to the Church from this place are the two mystics—St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. We visited the birthplace of St. Teresa of Jesus and the Monastery of the Dominicans. We also explored the Gothic Cathedral of Avila, which reminded us of the prayer of St. Teresa of Avila taught to

us by our Novice Master, the late Fr. Crisostomo Garnica, OAR:

*“Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things.
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.”*

- Teresa of Ávila

Later in the evening, Fray Boyax and I sneaked out of the hotel to enjoy the cold breeze of Avila. We went outside the walled city to take photos of the beautiful sceneries into the wee hours of the night. Outside the walled city, people were enjoying the night life with beer, songs and laughter. As we went back inside the walled city, silence enveloped the place that befits a good night rest. We stayed in a hotel just a stone's throw away from the Cathedral named Palacio de los Veladas which literally was an old palace where kings and princes lived. In a way, we actually experienced sleeping in a palace like the royalties of old.



One of the nine gates of the medieval walls of Ávila. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)

Avila – Madrid

Thick fog and biting cold covered the walled city of Avila that early morning as we walked to catch the bus bound for Madrid and Zaragoza. During the long ride to Madrid, we prayed the Rosary and listened to the daily readings provided by our chaplain. Finally, we arrived in Madrid safely where we visited the majestic Palacio Real and the nearby beautiful garden. We got acquainted with the historical significance of the Royal Palace and the different Kings and Queens who resided there.

After the guided tour, we went to Catedral de Santa Maria la Real de la Almudena where we celebrated the Eucharist.

We managed to meet Fray Mark Rochelle Renacia, OAR, who was in Madrid for his doctoral studies during our free time. He brought us to the



Fray Chote and Fray Mark caught loitering at the Paseo de Recoletos in Madrid.

Real Monasterio de la Encarnación, a convent of our OAR cloistered nuns. In this convent is found the miraculous blood of San Pantaleon which liquifies once a year on his feast day. We continued our tour to Paseo de Recoletos, formerly owned by the Order but turned over to the government and converted into a plaza. We had lunch together while Fray Mark shared his stories and experiences in Spain. Even though it was a quick get-together, it was all worth it and we were happy to reunite with our brother in that foreign place.

From Madrid, we travelled to Zaragoza. It was already late in the evening when we reached our



destination. After dinner, we had “café con leche” at the lounge of Melia Hotel while talking about Madrid and how the place will be etched beautifully in our memory.

Zaragoza – Barbastro – Torreciudad – Lourdes, France

We left Melia Hotel early the following day to visit the Cathedral-Basilica of Our Lady of Pillar. We were overwhelmed by its grandeur and intricate carved statues of this antique church. To complete our visit, we offered some prayers and did not miss to kiss the “pillars” where the statue of Our Lady stands. It was raining then, hence, we did not have the chance to visit other places in the vicinity.

We then proceeded to the birthplace of Jose Maria Escrivá de Balaguer, founder of the Opus Dei. We walked the narrow pavements of Barbastro leading to the house of St. Jose Maria. It was a simple house with an elaborate depiction of his holy life. The caretaker told us that St. Jose Maria Escrivá did not want that his house to be preserved as he wanted to be a great person in the eyes of God rather than be remembered as a “big man” in the eyes of the people. This did not happen. Instead, a portion of his house was renovated where a chapel was built in order to give honor and praise to the Lord. As we knelt in front of the altar, we saw a distinctive painting of a pregnant Mother Mary.

As related to us by the caretaker, the painting is significant to those who want to have children and to the anti-abortion advocates. We left the place inspired by the life of St. Jose Maria Escrivá.

From Zaragoza, we travelled long hours through the steep mountain range of Spain to France. We made a stop-over in the beautiful and scenic Torreciudad, a Marian Shrine built by St. Maria Jose Escrivá de Balaguer as a pilgrim place and a retreat house in Aragón, Spain. It was consecrated on July 7, 1975 in honor of Our Lady of Torreciudad. According to our tour guide, St. Jose Maria de Escrivá started its construction but did not live to see the completion of the gigantic and magnificent building. We felt the solemnity of the place as the location is conducive for those who want to encounter the Lord through a spiritual renewal. We were awed by the intricate “retablo”, a work of art that sends a message to every pilgrim about the life of Mary.

It was dusk when we arrived in Lourdes, France. We stayed at the Panorama Hotel just a stone's throw away from Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes. While having dinner, we were amazed by a waiter who closely resembled Carl Fredricksen, the old man in the movie animation, “Up”.

After dinner, Fray Boyax and I joined the torch light Marian Procession at the Shrine of Lourdes together with



Candles offered to Our Lady of Lourdes. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)

thousands of Pilgrims that flocked the Shrine. A group of horse-riding men looking like knights in their chivalric regalia devoted to our Mother Mary, caught our attention. Candle lights enveloped the place as prayers were recited in different languages. The multitude of pilgrims joining the procession to express their love to our Blessed Mother felt like looking for a needle in a haystack.

After the solemn prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, we went back to our hotel and had a good night sleep under her mantle of protection.

October 30, 2016: We woke up early, had breakfast in the hotel and then walked to the Grotto where Our Lady appeared to St. Bernadette. We joined the celebration of the Holy Eucharist together with the other pilgrims. The pilgrimage to Lourdes would not be complete without the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We took time to meditate on the Lord's goodness and mercy in our life. We then lined up for the much anticipated “bath” in the miraculous waters of Lourdes since everyone we met there insisted that we should not leave Lourdes without experiencing this “bath.”

We did not make it to the cut-off in the morning but we got lucky in the afternoon and managed to be among the first to enter the bath. Now



Wacky shot at the grounds of Santuario de Torreciudad, Aragón, Spain. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)



we understood why this experience should not be missed. It was like feeling in the flesh the remission of the sins we confessed. We went to the “Door of Mercy” and visited the Cathedral of Lourdes and the Christian burial place in the upper level of the Cathedral. Since we had more than enough time to spend in the shrine, we parted ways to make the best out of our stay. For the last time, we joined the evening Marian Procession not knowing that it would be the last organized procession as the winter season has begun. After the procession, we arrived at the hotel bringing with us the elation for the bountiful graces we received. Before we retired for the night, we reviewed the day full of wonderful stories to tell. It was the best experience being with our Beloved Mother. I now appreciate that my mother, Lourdes, is named after our Lady of Lourdes.

It's hard to say “au revoir” to a place like Lourdes but we had to go! It was a dream come true!



Celebrating the Sunday Mass at Lourdes. (Photo by Zarah Onglao)

Rocamadour – Nevers – Paris

Rocamadour is a relatively new destination for the pilgrims. It has been a pilgrim site about 1000 years ago until the Calvinists pillaged this predominantly Catholic village. The Catholic faithful were almost wiped out but few were able to hide. Now that its back as a pilgrim site after so many years, it was fortunate for us to visit

an abandoned Benedictine Monastery on a clifftop. Literally, it clings on a hill while some part of the building hangs on the cliff of the mountain. It shrines the Black Madonna of Rocamadour and known to be a stop-over spot for the pilgrims going to Santiago de Compostela.



Consecration “ad orientem” at the Chapel of the Black Madonna of Rocamadour with Fray Boyax as main celebrant. (Photo by Zarah Onglao)

We celebrated our Mass inside the Chapel of the Black Madonna. After feeding ourselves with historical information, we took our dinner and spent overnight at Hotel Beau Site.

Winter Season was harsh as we battled the cold breeze in the morning. Leaving the mountain slopes, we saw the beauty of the mountain ranges in a vantage point. The sun was smiling at us as we moved to Nevers, France. At Nevers, we had a quick visit to the Convent of St. Gildard and celebrated our Mass in honor of All the Saints (November 1) right beside the incorruptible body of St. Bernadette Soubirous. There she spent her entire life as a nun, after leaving Lourdes. In the homily, I preached with emphasis on the *church militant*; that as pilgrims here on earth we are engaged in a battle against the forces of evil with urgency to pray for the *church penitent* (souls in purgatory). Eventually, we hope to share the joys of heavenly gift—*church triumphant*. After some prayers, we left Nevers to Paris to stay in Mercure La Defense 5 Hotel.

Paris – Paray Le Monial

While in the heart of Paris, we visited the Shrine of the Miraculous Medal in Rue de Bac. We were supposed to celebrate our Mass there but we could not be accommodated so we went directly to Notre Dame Cathedral. The huge edifice displays the historical beginnings of the Cathedral. It is claimed that the crown of thorns of Jesus was brought to the Cathedral for safekeeping. As we proceeded our tour guide brought our attention to the bridge which was full of padlocks. The padlocks symbolize undying commitment between the lovers, with its keys thrown into the water.

Along the way, we passed through the Arc de Triumphe of Bonaparte. We also saw the legislative building and the Christmas Village of Paris which reminded us that Christmas was in the air!

To be able to visit the famous Eiffel Tower was another dream come true! We were so excited that, while still in the bus, we were already taking pictures of the sky-high, massive Eiffel Tower. Soon after, we took the elevator that brought us to top of the tower. We savored every moment of our stay in the tower. Paris was a sight to behold from the tower. that the fear of heights did not deter us from relishing such a beautiful experience. Paris is indeed a beauty to behold especially from the top of the Eiffel Tower. I can now say that “I came, I saw, I conquered!”

We then moved to Paray Le Monial. It was November 2 and we celebrated All Soul's Day Eucharistic Celebration in the hotel. Fr. Melvin explained in his homily the real meaning of Halloween. It started with a pagan notion that was adopted by the Church not for spooky and evil purposes but to go back to the word, ‘hallow’ (which means holy) in which we give honor to the saints in heaven. Hotel Trois Pigeon gave us a good night rest!



Paray Le Monial – Milan

We celebrated the Holy Mass in the morning of November 3 at the Chapel of the Visitation Convent, the cradle of devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Most of the apparitions of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary of Alacoque took place in this convent. After being spiritually nourished by the Holy Eucharist, we visited the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This basilica was built with a Cluniac architectural design in the 10th and 11th Centuries. After the morning activities, we embarked in another long journey to Milan, Italy.



Posterity photo at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

It is not surprising to be greeted by a Filipino in Milan. As we stepped down from the bus, we heard a Filipino greeting, “Magandang Gabi po, kabayan!” Truly, we are already in Italy as there are lots of Filipinos working in Milan. We spent the night at the Hotel Doubletree ran by Hilton in Milan. After dinner, Fray Boyax and I did not fail to miss the taste of Capuccino in the bar. We sipped freshly brewed coffee with satisfying aroma while watching television. We were recollecting and reflecting on our experiences as we were nearing the end of the pilgrimage. After that caffeine fix with the best Italian coffee, we called it a night.

The next day, November 4 (feast of



“Groufie” at the Duomo Cathedral in Milan, Italy. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)

St. Charles of Borromeo), our pilgrim group headed to the Duomo Cathedral or the Church of the Holy Family. Unfortunately, we were not able to enter the Church because of an exclusive occasion where dignitaries were expected. We took time roaming around the plaza, the galleria and the nearby places. Since nobody was familiar in Milan, we got lost looking for the St. Charles de Borromeo Church. Was it coincidence or was it by God’s grace that we celebrated our mass in the Church of St. Charles Borromeo on his feast day? Fray Boyax, a son of the Diocese of San Carlos de Borromeo, celebrated his hometown’s fiesta in the very church of their Patron Saint. What a grace-filled occasion to celebrate *fiesta*. After the mass, we were caught up in an organized rally of workers. Our bus could not enter the city because of the crowd. We walked almost two miles in order to catch our bus to bring us to Rome. While we were on our way to Rome, a frightening news of an earthquake gave us second thoughts on our safety. But our new conductor, Jose, assured us that our destination was far from the place affected by the tremor.

Rome, Italy

On the final days of the pilgrimage, our organizers proposed a change of plan to maximize our limited time in Rome and stay away from after shocks at the same time. The trip to Asisi—the place of St. Francis and St. Claire—which would take a whole day just for the bus ride was cancelled. Instead, we took more time to explore

the “Eternal” city. We stayed in the outskirts of Rome, at Novotel Roma Est.

The first in the list was to visit the Vatican Museum. It was my second time to visit this museum yet the feeling of admiration of the different paintings on the ceiling was still in me. While walking through the aisles of the Vatican Museum, one could not help but to look up the ceiling with admiration and the walls with large embroidered tapestries catechizing each person about the life story of Jesus. It was, indeed, a historical and a religious tour. The artworks of great personalities were so alive inside the most adorable museum. The intricate carvings made of marble were jaw-dropping. Anyone would be mesmerized at the beauty and elegance of the pieces of art preserved with care and passion. Following a long cue of pilgrims, we entered the Sistine Chapel. Silence was strictly imposed in the place where conclaves for the election of Popes were traditionally held. In the garden beside the Vatican Museum, I heard a familiar voice calling me, “pais.” To my surprise, it was Fray Fortunato Garces, OAR, who was with the other group of pilgrims from the Philippines. We exchanged pleasantries and news. From the museum, we proceeded to St. Peter’s Basilica. Every moment inside the Basilica was a recollection of my first visit to the place. However, the incorrupt body of Pope John Paul II made a difference. Through him, I prayed for my personal intentions.



Pilgrims flock to St. Peter’s Square on a regular day. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)



On the following day, we visited the edifying Colosseo where we recall the sacrifices of many Christian martyrs. We remember the brave and gallant gladiators who fought with pride before thousands of spectators. The Colosseo stands as a witness of events both good and bad.

Then we proceeded to pay a visit the “Mother” of all churches—the Basilica of St. John Lateran. At the façade of the basilica is a Latin inscription, “*omnium urbis et orbis ecclesiarum mater et caput*” which signifies her title as the “mother and head of all the churches on earth.” Inside the Lateran basilica are gigantic statues of the apostles.



At the Basilica of St. John Lateran. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)

Across the street was another important spiritual destination, the Pontifical Sanctuary of the Holy Stairs or simply known as “Scala Sancta”. It was believed to be the stairs used in the Praetorium where Jesus was interrogated by Pilate. The pilgrims ascend the 28-step wooden staircase on their knees. In the past, the “scala sancta” showed a practice of real repentance as it was used after confession or Holy Communion.

Among other places in the list that we visited were the Spanish Steps, the Church of St. Paul outside the wall, the Pantheon, the Trevi Fountain known for its “three coins in the fountain” and the Immaculate Conception pedestal.

To complete our stay in Rome, we waited for the Papal Blessing at St. Peter’s Square after the “Pope’s Angelus.” It is customary that when the Pope is in Rome, he appears from

the window of his apartment to give a short exhortation to the pilgrims and lead the praying of the Angelus. After which, the Pope imparts the Papal Blessing. With thousands of people listening to him, Pope Francis announced the importance of justice, mercy and peace. It was a message for Rome as it celebrated the day of the prisoners. After receiving the Papal Blessing, we walked going to the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore. Otherwise known as St. Mary Major Basilica is one of the only four that hold the title of “major basilica”. The other three are the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, the St. Peter’s Basilica, and the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. Fray Boyax was blessed to be our main celebrant of the Holy Eucharist inside one of the chapels of St. Mary Major Basilica. After the mass was supposed to be our chance to roam around Rome but the heavy downpour of rain cut short the opportunity that we scampered for shelter in the nearby stores. After the rain, we walked about three kilometers to reach our bus. The long walk was compensated by probably the best dinner we had in Rome.

Rome – Lanciano – San Giovanni Rotondo

Enroute to San Giovanni Rotondo, we visited the first Eucharistic Miracle in a small old town called Lanciano. The stone footpath reveals the century old existence of the place. We walked through the narrow road into the church where a host physically turned into Flesh and wine turned into Blood of Christ.

As we entered the Church, we could see the Eucharistic Miracle in a silhouette through thin white cloth. We walked closer behind the curtain to have a closer encounter with the sacred presence of Christ. The Body and Blood of Christ was cradled in a uniquely designed monstrance. I went back to the pews and prayed.

Literally, my tears fell to see Christ’s great revelation. The odor of sanctity inside the church was immense that one could reflect of the “Emmanuel—God is with us!” After praying, we went down to the place where the miracle actually occurred. It was a small and simple underground chapel that could accommodate around 20 people. It seemed like a catacomb where light hardly gets through and the altar was made of solid rock. Seemingly, there’s an eerie feeling as we walked through the dimly lit chapel that we entered with prudence not to disturb those who were praying reverently. Before leaving the place, I kissed the altar in a way every priest kisses the altar during Mass.



The Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)

After taking our lunch in a nearby restaurant, we hit the road uphill to Monte Sant’Angelo on the southern slopes of Monte Gargano where a heavy downpour of rain greeted us with exceptionally cold breeze. We walked carefully through the slippery road towards the Sanctuary of St. Michael the Archangel. The tour guide told us that there were many stories attributed to the sanctuary especially about how this place became a pilgrim site since the middle ages. St. Francis of Assisi made a pilgrimage to this sanctuary, however, feeling unworthy, he did not enter the cave, instead he carved on the stones the letter “T” or *tau* symbolizing his presence in the place. Pope John Paul II also made a pilgrimage to this place.



Eucharistic celebration at the Sanctuary of St. Michael (RC Photo/Frei Bo)

The Sanctuary of St. Michael is located in the bowel of the earth. We had to take the stairs going down to enter the cave. Entering the sanctuary, there was an image of St. Michael in a gesture of welcoming the pilgrims. It was told that St. Michael appeared in that exact location where we celebrated the Holy Mass. The three priests upon entering the sacristy were astounded by the various well-kept chasubles used by many Bishops and Popes who visited the sacred place. The silence observed throughout the mass was deafening which made the celebration even more solemn. After the mass, we brought some stones from the miraculous grotto of St. Michael for our memorabilia. From Monte Sant'Angelo we journeyed to our last destination—San Giovanni Rotondo.

San Giovanni Rotondo: Shrine of Padre Pio

The sunrise greeted us on a clear blue sky! We hopped in small vans going to the Shrine of Padre Pio. We started our tour in the original convent where St. Padre Pio stayed most of his life. The old chapel where he usually celebrated mass with his religious and personal paraphernalia were preserved. Our group toured around the convent of Santa Maria della Grazie. All over the place was the odor of sanctity of the holy saint, Padre Pio. There was a large pile of prayer requests from all over the world sent to Padre Pio. Adjacent to the Convent of Santa Maria della Grazie was the huge chapel dedicated to Padre Pio formed like a shell. Underneath the

chapel was the saint's uncorrupted body. Walking down the stairs to the crypt, one cannot help but notice the colorful mosaics made from various tiles on the walls by a Russian artist. Our tour guide said all this gallery of mosaics was donated by a Filipino devotee. After spending some time in prayer, we went out of the Chapel towards the open area that was so large that it could fit four soccer fields.

A story was shared to us that the stigmata of Padre Pio vanished in the later part of his life when he was suffering from sickness. The stigmata that were given to him were a symbol and his share of Christ's suffering. However, during his last years of sickness, the symbol of Christ's suffering in him slowly faded away in order for him to experience his own suffering.

As a Friar, he experienced rejection from his confrere that he was not allowed to go out of the convent so as not to disturb the community and his priestly life. In obedience, he stayed in the convent for several months. However, people were convinced of his healing power that they continued to visit the friar. He was known for his bi-location as witnessed by some of his devotees.



The incorrupt body of Padre Pio. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)

St. Pio Pietrelcina, Pray for us!

This was almost goodbye. Travelling back to Rome took three hours. We shared our personal encounters and experiences and expressed our gratitude to one another. Some pilgrims including Fray Boyax rendered some songs including Christmas

carols. I believe that the pilgrims were not only spiritually renewed making us all closer to God and Mama Mary but we were also culturally refined with the experience. We arrived at the Da Vinci Airport with nostalgic feelings, it was hard to say goodbye.

Inside the airport, we were surprised especially the Kath-Niel fans in the group. Kathryn Bernardo, Daniel Padilla, Pooh and Enchong Dee were also there lining up for tax refund. We took advantage and had photo-ops with our kababayan-celebrities. It's not very often that we get the opportunity to encounter them face to face



The sight before our final take off at the Dubai Int'l Airport. (RC Photo/Frei Bo)

Finally, our Emirates flight took off. We flew the skies with mixed feelings of happiness, inspiration, renewal, contentment and nostalgia. We had a long layover in Dubai and landed safely in Manila in the afternoon of November 10. We bade farewell to our new-found family. There was a feeling of sadness but we had to say goodbye for now.

With gratitude to our Father Provincial and his council, we can truly say that our pilgrimage was an experience of renewal and revitalization. A renewal of faith and commitment to our religious vocation. To all who made our silver anniversary celebration extra meaningful, we are most grateful! From Portugal, *muito obrigado!* From France, *merci beaucoup!* From Spain, *muchas gracias!* From Italy, *tanti grazie!* And from the Philippines, *maraming salamat po!* **RO**



Fr. Provincial's message on the occasion of the 18th Anniversary of the Province



Prot. No. 0114/16
25 November 2016

TO ALL THE BROTHERS OF THE PROVINCE OF ST. EZEKIEL MORENO

On November 28, we, as a Province, will turn 18.

How amazingly God's grace is working in us all these years! And how deeply we have trusted in the Lord of history, in Jesus who pours forth his Spirit in our hearts¹ so that, despite the vagaries of time, place, and culture, we are able to live and work in the Augustinian climate of "anima una et cor unum in Deum."²

Growing vitality

"In the beginning we were few, but we were [made] impassioned by Jesus Christ. We... were filled with the zeal to evangelize."³ The Report of the then newly created Province had shown that "as of December 1998" the number of religious was 128.⁴ Fast forward to the present: as of November 24, 2016, the number rises to 172. Which means, with an increase of 44 within these periods, at least two religious, on average, are added to the family each year.

We are cognizant, however, that there is more to reckon with than what these figures project. The oft-repeated preference for quality over quantity particularly in the religious realm brings this snippet of wisdom to the fore: "what is required of [us] is not success, but commitment to faithfulness."⁵

With a median age of 46, the Province is the youngest in the Order. While it indicates vitality in the youthfulness of the members, it spurs us on to rather draw strength from our daily encounter with the Author of our consecrated life. Such personal encounter, if we delve further into Pope Benedict XVI's *Deus caritas est* 1, "refers to Jesus as a person, and not only the teachings drawn from the example of his life or the historical consequences of his work."⁶ This transformative encounter which finds its "culmen et fons"⁷ in the Eucharist is the very reason why we remain relevant in the parishes/chaplaincies, mission areas, and schools. This is the selfsame reason why we get involved in social and ecological concerns, history and cultural heritage, communications media, resource mobilization, among others.

This encounter is the lynchpin to our growing vitality as a Province. Never should we ever miss this life-giving opportunity for which, as Augustinian Recollects deployed in the Philippines, Taiwan, Sierra Leone, Saipan (CNMI), Panama, Italy, Spain, and the USA, we strive to shape up according to our primary objective of this triennium: to become "missionary disciples and prophetic witnesses of the Joy of the Gospel among the poor."⁸

Together we have dared to expand the terrain of our pastoral ministry, either as part of our interprovincial collaboration or as response to the Life and Mission Project (LAMP) of the Province. This was among the lofty aspirations determined by the previous provincial chapters, for instance: "to become



‘a leaven of communion at the service of the universal Church’;⁹ and “to emulate [the] life and example” of St. Ezekiel Moreno, a model evangelizer, religious and pastor.¹⁰ These will definitely continue to be our program of life “in season and out of season”¹¹ since we are “permanently in a state of Mission”.¹² And right now, we have pending invitations from different overseas and local dioceses to collaborate with them. But we have to take as a criterion of apostolic action not only where the Church needs us, but also where the Church sends us. We beg, then, for divine enlightenment in our collective discernment and decision-making in this regard

Turning Points

The 55th General Chapter convened on October 2-26, 2016 in Rome marked a major turning point in the life of the Order in general, and of our Province in particular. The repercussions of the approved Life and Mission Project of the Order which includes the juridical restructuring of the eight provinces into four usher in a higher level of awareness about our own vocation, identity, and mission. And this occurs in time for our 18th founding anniversary few days from now!

One small detail that I would like to mention has something to do with a milestone 395 years ago: the first General Chapter of the Recoletos as a Congregation on November 1621 in Madrid. In that historic Chapter, the 28 convents in Spain and in the Philippines were divided into **four provinces**, namely: Castille (St. Augustine), Aragon (Our Lady of the Pillar), Andalucia (Bld. Thomas of Villanova), and the Philippines (St. Nicholas of Tolentine).

Based on this, allow me to note some curious items for juxtaposition: In 1621, “four” provinces were created and that the Philippines, the fourth one, remained as a separate province. After almost “four” centuries, the number of provinces doubled. But this year, 2016, these eight provinces underwent the needed restructuring process; they were reduced to “four” provinces in which the fourth one, where the Philippines belongs, remained intact. This latter scenario which “burns with the inspiring fire of the Holy Spirit”¹³ spawned greater responsibilities and tasks for our Province to accomplish in the next sexennium. Probably the twist to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s quote is true: “The prize of a job well done is another job to be done.”¹⁴

On this eighteenth year of the Province, the turning points are aplenty. We just need to review the LAMP of the Order, especially those sections that treat the various aspects of our religious life as a community or as individual religious.

The Spirit leads

Adelante! There is no better alternative than to move forward. Pope Francis, in his address to us, Capitulars of the 55th General Chapter, on November 20, 2016, at the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace, said:

“The grateful memory of [Christ’s] love in the past impels us to live in the present with passion and greater courage. Thus we can ask him to *command whatever he wishes*, for to ask this implies freedom of spirit and availability. [...] Neither failures nor other evils matter, because it is he who stands at the centre, it is he who guides us.”¹⁵

We must not be afraid, then, to march on and, in compliance with the demands of the proper authorities, even explore uncharted waters. The Holy Spirit will lead us. He will take charge all throughout our journey for another 18 years and beyond. Ours must be an active trust and docility in His never-failing guidance in all our plans and endeavors.

If we leaf through the pages of our OAR Constitutions and history books, we will see how the Holy Spirit works every step of the way. Our OAR Constitutions begin with “The Holy Spirit provides...,”¹⁶ noting that every gift comes from this “Lord, the Giver of life.”¹⁷ And was it



by coincidence that, on February 22, 1606, in the last phase of their voyage, from Mexico to the Philippines, the pioneering Recollect missionaries boarded the galleon named *Espíritu Santo*?

A week after we shall have celebrated the “debut”, so to speak, of the Province, we shall proceed with yet another bigger celebration—the 428th anniversary of the Order on December 5. Again, this will be another occasion to refresh ourselves about how in 1588 the Capitulars of the Chapter of Toledo (Spain) were “aware of this divine inspiration and unwilling to oppose the work of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁸

Just like our forefathers, let us also be led by the same Spirit as we respond with joy and promptness to the calls and challenges of our time. To cite some of these:

- The universal Church calls us “to promote a culture of mercy”¹⁹ and “to unleash the creativity of mercy” so that it may be “an eloquent expression of the fruitfulness of the love of Christ”²⁰;
- The LAMP of the Order (2016-22) asks of us to be “creators of communion” by “being *disciples of the one Lord, builders of community, lovers of interiority, searchers of the Truth, servants of the Church, and prophets of the Kingdom*”²¹;
- The Philippine Church, through the CBCP, urges us to focus on 2017 as the Year of the Parish as Communion of Communities. This jibes very well with who we are as Recollects;
- The LAMP of our Province (2015-18) prods us to implement and to assess what has been implemented so far, but always in accordance with the criteria of the Order.²²

Let us celebrate

With highest praise and gratitude to God, let us celebrate the 18th birthday of our Province. May I enjoin every community to make its own version of thanksgiving for this wonderful gift. The brothers may gather for a renewal input, celebrate a votive mass in honor of St. Ezekiel Moreno, and share lunch or dinner together.

Finally, let me own the words of Pope Francis during our audience with him: “Dear brothers, I invite you to hold fast to the dream of Saint Augustine to live as brothers with ‘one soul and one heart’ (*Rule* 1, 2) with a renewed spirit that reflects the ideal of the first Christians and becomes a prophetic sign of communion in our world so that we may rid ourselves of divisions, conflicts and exclusion, and allow harmony and dialogue to reign.”²³

Through the intercession of *Nuestra Señora de la Salud*²⁴ and our patron, St. Ezekiel Moreno, may God bless each of us, our collaborators, our ministries, our activities and projects.

Congratulations and Happy Anniversary!



In St. Ezekiel Moreno,


Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR
Prior Provincial


Fray Jose Erni F. Almayo, OAR
Provincial Secretary



ENDNOTES

¹ Cf. Rom 5:5

² Rule 1, 2

³ Eliás Royón, *Discurso inaugural de la Asamblea de CONFER 2012*, 17, quoted in: *Document 7* of the Process of Revitalization and Restructuring of the Order, Rome, 2012, 9.

⁴ Cf. *Keeping the fire ablaze. Directory of Religious and Communities. Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno*, 2008, 29.

⁵ *Vita consecrata*, 63

⁶ *Document 4* of the Process of Revitalization and Restructuring of the Order, Rome, 2012, 13.

⁷ *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 10

⁸ *Primary Objective* of the Province for the Triennium 2015-18.

⁹ *Message*, First Provincial Chapter, November 8-21, 1999, 1.

¹⁰ Cf. John Paul II Homily, Canonization of St. Ezekiel Moreno, October 11, 1992; *Message*, Third Provincial Chapter, February 13-25, 2006, 4.

¹¹ 2 Tim 4:2

¹² Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, *Aparecida Document*, 29 June 2007, 201; Quoted in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 25.

¹³ Cf. Fray Miguel Miro, *Prot. N. 211/2016*, dated

November 1, 2016; *ibid.*, *Prot. N. 1-6/14.5*, dated December 5, 2014.

¹⁴ Actually the above quote is equivalent to Jonas Edward Salk's "The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more." The quote attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson goes: "The reward of a thing well done is having done it."

¹⁵ *Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants in the General Chapter of the Order of Augustinian Recollects* at <https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/>

[documents/papa-francesco_20161020_agostiniani-recolletti.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161020_agostiniani-recolletti.html). Accessed on 11/22/16.

¹⁶ *Const.* 1

¹⁷ Cf. The Nicene Creed

¹⁸ *Const.* 4

¹⁹ *Misericordia et misera*, 20

²⁰ *Misericordia et misera*, 17

²¹ *Message* of the 55th General Chapter.

²² Cf. Fray Miguel Miró, *Prot. N. 1-6/14.3*, dated June 8, 2014.

²³ *Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants in the General Chapter of the Order of Augustinian Recollects*.

²⁴ The image was brought to the Philippines by the 7th batch of Recollect missionaries who arrived





OAR Family commemorates All Souls Day

BY FRAY RELLY DELOS SANTOS, OAR

QUEZON CITY- The newly risen sun is just starting to dry the drenched grass of the Himlayang Filipino when members of the OAR family trooped to the Recoletos Musoleo to commemorate All Souls' Day with a mass led by the Prior Provincial himself, Fray Dionisio Selma. It was well represented by priests, religious brothers, Coristas, novices and prenovices, members of the Third Order and some parishioners.

Before starting, the Provincial enumerated all the dead Filipino members of the Province, asking everyone to pray for them, as they pray for us, emphasizing Church unity, members that we are, Triumphant, Suffering and Militant. The newly elected General Councillor, Fray Raul Buhay gave

the homily calling all to 'memento mori' (remember death). He asked Fray Hubert Decena to share his memoirs about the friars buried in the Musoleo. Before the final blessing, Fray Emilio Larlar led the prayers for the departed brethren while everyone joined the Coristas in singing the 'Libera me.' All 'gave-

a-share-got-a-share' of a AGAPE breakfast before parting for home praying...

Eternal rest grant unto the faithful departed O Lord! And let perpetual light shine on them. May they rest in peace. Amen. **RO**

Venerable Alfonso Gallegos

**Augustinian Recollect
Auxiliary Bishop of Sacramento**



Biography

Alfonso Gallegos was born during hard times. The Great Depression of the 1930's was worldwide. It was made more excruciating in the United States of America when the dry spell, the longest in modern American history, struck the Great Plains, affecting mainly the Midwest and the Southwest, the states of Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico. These areas became known as the Dust Bowl.

The lack of economic stability and the fear of starvation led people to flee their homelands in search of better opportunities. Thousands fled to California, which itself was reeling from high unemployment and low wages. This economic situation led to social unrest, worsened by the government's default on spending that adversely affected all public services including education.

It was then during this time in a place not far from California, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, that the baby boy Alfonso was born. It was February 20, 1931. At the age of 7, the little boy and his family took the lead of the many others and moved to Watts, Los Angeles, California hoping for the better. Watts was a home to a growing community of Mexicans and Mexican American migrants. It was among them that Alfonso grew up until

he left his home in 1950 to enter in the seminary of the Order of Augustinian Recollects in Kansas City. He was ordained priest in 1958.

Four years after his priestly ordination, he was assigned as pastor in his home parish in Watts. Here he dedicated his primary attention to the out-of-school youth who were prone to drugs and criminal activities. But the young Father Alfonso did not judge them, must less evaded them. Rather he spent time with them and encouraged and even helped them to go back to school and obtain university degree. This move brought about a change of life to many who heeded his encouragement. His pastoral care improved the environment of the area. Church attendance increased, crime rates dropped and people felt safe to

go around. He infused hope into the community.

Aware of the growing population of the Hispanic migrants in California, in 1979 the California Bishops Conference named Alfonso Gallegos as the first Director of the Hispanic Affairs, California Catholic Conference. Its main objective was to organize and implement programs for the benefit of the Spanish-speaking migrants coming to the United States. In these Hispanic Affairs, Gallegos kept up with legislation and issues affecting the Hispanic community and provided this information to the Bishops. His appointment in 1981 as Auxiliary Bishop of Sacramento was a recognition of the new demographics and a response to the need for ecclesiastical leadership for this rapidly growing Hispanic



population. Gallegos was the first Mexican-American Bishop to serve the Church in Sacramento since 1861.

He visited and stayed with the migrants in the labour camps, spoke out for them before the government legislators and assured them of the welcoming embrace of the Church. He would spend various nights during the week with the youth in the parks, befriended gang members by talking to them, encouraging them to leave behind drugs and criminal activities and strive for a better future. He blessed the cars of the “low riders” and rode with them. He championed the right of the unborn children. Everyone had a place in his agenda, the poor, the sick, the aged and those in prisons regardless of their creed, colour and culture. He was a Bishop always on the move, spending most of his time with his flock. As one witness during the diocesan process testified, “Bishop Gallegos was always trying to be there for every one, that at times, he would forget to take care of himself”.

Now a day, the world needs shepherds whose life is configured to Christ; shepherds who do not ask for what they stand to gain but what they can give to others; shepherds who do not seek to win people for themselves but to lose themselves for others. People want to see a joyful zeal in the ministers of Christ, ministers who carry out their task with enthusiasm, thus, giving credible witness to the Gospel message. Bishop Gallegos’ life is a response to these noble aspirations. Although throughout his life he had to bear the serious effects of his myopic eye problem, never for an instance did he lose his optimism. His wide smile was a constant mark of his personality. “What a beautiful day!” was his usual expression. He was not a scholar nor considered an intellectual but his preaching touched people’s hearts because God had first touched his own. He chose as motto for his episcopal coat of arms “Love one another”.

Asked how he wanted to be remembered, Bishop Gallegos said, “I would like to be remembered as having helped the young people how to appreciate who they are and to value the life God has given them. I would also like to be remembered as having appreciated people and all that they have to offer in making the world a better place to live in” (The Sacramento Bee Magazine, January 18, 1987).

A vehicular accident in the evening of October 6, 1991 claimed the life of this Hispanic Bishop at the age of 60. Earlier during the day, he joined a march against abortion, visited a young AIDS patient and finally administered the sacrament of confirmation to 71 candidates. His funeral claims the record attendance of grieving people in the diocese of Sacramento up to now.

A year after his death, a street connecting the State Capitol Building and the Cathedral of Sacramento was named “Bishop Gallegos Square”. It serves as bridge to bring the

teaching of Jesus to the lawmakers, reminding them that one of their important and sacred duties is to help the migrants find a better place for themselves and for their families. His bronze statue stands in this same place. On March 27, 2010, his mortal remains were transferred to a new tomb in Our Lady of Guadalupe National Shrine.

Considering his saintly life and his intercessory prayers before the Lord, the diocesan process for his Cause of beatification and canonization was opened on December 4, 2005 at the Cathedral of Sacramento. After interviewing 130 witnesses and gathering the pertinent available documents, the process was concluded on November 5, 2006. The Congregation of the Causes of Saints in Vatican approved the validity of the diocesan process on July 4, 2008. The Positio on his life, virtues and fame of sanctity was submitted to the same Congregation on June 27, 2014. The Theologians approved his heroic virtues on March 17, 2016. The Congress of the Cardinals and Bishops gave their affirmative votes on July 5, 2016. Finally, on July 8, 2016, Pope Francis authorized the Congregation of the Causes of Saints to promulgate the decree attesting to his sanctity of life and the heroic practice of virtues.

With a miracle attributed to his intercession he can be declared blessed and with one more he will be due for canonization. For now we rejoice and content ourselves with the assurance of his sanctity as the Church recognizes the Bishop of the Barrio as Venerable Alfonso Gallegos. *R*



Launching of La Salud Devotion

November 26, 2016
6:30 PM
Opening Mass
Venue: Our Lady of Consolation Parish, Mira-Nila Homes, Q.C.
Ribbon Cutting and Blessing of Marian Exhibit (Bahagang Recoletos)
(Exhibit runs from November 26, 2016 to December 5, 2016)

December 4, 2016
1:00 PM
Grand Marian Procession
(with the maiden participation of our very own La Salud)
Venue: Intramuros, Manila

December 5, 2016
9:00 AM
Day of the Order
Venue: Mira-Nila, Quezon City
Enthronement of Nuestra Señora de la Salud
Holy Mass
Book Launching
“La Salud: the Black Virgin of Health”
Conference
Viewing of Marian Exhibit
Lunch



Bacolod Bishop Buzon with the OAR Community of Bacolod, SARF - UNO-R and representatives of the OAR Contemplative Nuns community External Affairs Office

UNO-R celebrates Day of the Order

BY CARLOS LEGASPI, JR.

The University celebrated the 428th day of the Order last Dec. 5, 2016. The day started with the vocation talk at the auditorium at 7:30 am. It was attended by Religious Education students. It was followed by a concelebrated Thanksgiving Mass led by Bishop Patricio Buzon, SDB, DD., Bishop of Bacolod.

The Bishop reminded everyone to be in communion with God. It is through loving and sharing to one another that makes Christmas a memorable event. The Bishop also asked everyone to be in contemplation with the Blessed Trinity. He encouraged everyone to see the Triune God in each one.

The OAR community with the OAR contemplative nuns had the renewal of vows before Recoletos de Bacolod House Prior, Fray William Villaflor, OAR. The Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity also recited their

promises before Fr. Prior and the Bishop. An agape was prepared by the administration for the faculty, staff, and students.

At 2:30 pm, a book launching program at the Main Lobby was held. Prof. Romanillos and Dr. Dennis Madrigal, authors of the book about Padre Mauricio Ferrero, discussed the content of the book in the presence of the students, the Fr. President, the Fr. VP-Religious Affairs, UNORAAFI President Vicente Omarrementeria, and Prof. Modesto Sa-onoy.

Christmas carols singing presentation was done by the REED students at the Main Lobby while cocktails were held. At around 5 pm, a Christmas Cultural Show was held at the Gym. This was participated by the university community. The highlight of the show was the gift -giving to the adopted families of the different colleges and departments. This was followed by the lighting of the trees and Christmas village in the campus and the launching of the UNO-R Christmas jingle. **RO**

RECOLETOS



*going to where
the Church sends us*

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Philippines • Taiwan • Sierra Leone

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RADYO REKOLETO
ka-ONLINE mo!

*"... I promise to God, whom I love above all things, chastity, poverty, and obedience,
 according to the purpose and the Rule of St. Augustine, and the Constitutions of our Order."
 (Formula of Simple Profession, Constitutions 37)*



25 Years
of Augustinian Recollect
Religious Profession

Fray Sixto Bitangjol, OAR • Fray Antonio Zabala, Jr., OAR • Fray Reynaldo Jaranilla, OAR

May 4, 2016 • 6:30 PM • Our Lady of Consolation Parish • Mira-nila Homes, Quezon City



Pointless Points to Ponder Not...

BY FRAY ONZ, OAR

We keep buying more and more stuff, we keep ourselves busy eating, drinking, entertaining and getting wasted on alcohol in order to avoid dealing with life. We can deny it for as long as we like, but in the end it is us who suffer and regardless of how we try to suppress things—the reality of horrifying emptiness will not go away (...take it from me!).

How many of us have bought stuff, yet in reality we don't really have space for any more stuff in our life?

St. Augustine realized this late in his life when he said: "You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." The words of St. Augustine express a central insight into the nature of true happiness: only possession and being possessed by God can truly satisfy our deep longings!

Every preacher has experienced it. It usually occurs at the door of the church where people are speaking to the preacher as they leave the church. It goes like this: "That was a fine lesson you gave in your homily. I know certain people have a problem with that," he/she says while nodding toward a brother/sister in Christ. Some take the lesson and use it to hammer someone else. It makes me sad to know that the message means so little to the hearers and that they can so quickly brush it off and point it at someone else. Whatever motive they attach to it, it is still a gossip. A good way to put a stop to gossips: Just let people know you will not be a party to gossip....

There are times when I have observed lay persons manifest more concern for the health or well-being of a fellow religious than was shown by his brothers in the community. I have even been amazed at the charitable attention given to ailing confreres by the hired help in a religious house compared to the seeming indifference of other confreres. Does this indicate an absence of Christian love on the part of fellow religious?

It is not that charity does not prevail within the walls of our religious houses. But what I see is that our zeal is too often turned outward toward other people who need our help without at the same time turned inward toward our own religious brothers. Is it not that charity should begin at home?

**** *

There rings in my memory a word used by Gabriel Marcel—availability, the state of being unoccupied for the sake of others. Availability is the key word. We must show ourselves to be free to attend to the presence of our brothers with whom we live our daily lives.

**** *



I just wonder why at times our troubled confrere doesn't reveal his problem to others. Is it because he does not think his confreres could help? Is it even because he did not trust that his confreres would help? Or is it that he does not discern in others openness to the disclosure of his pain, a disposition to listen to what he wished to say, an interest in what was at the moment the greatest concern of himself?

**** *

It is possible for two persons sitting beside one another to be there like two blocks of stone, mute and impervious to what goes on inside each. Think of two airline passengers sitting together in the waiting room, each absorbed in his own concerns, completely oblivious of one another. **RO**



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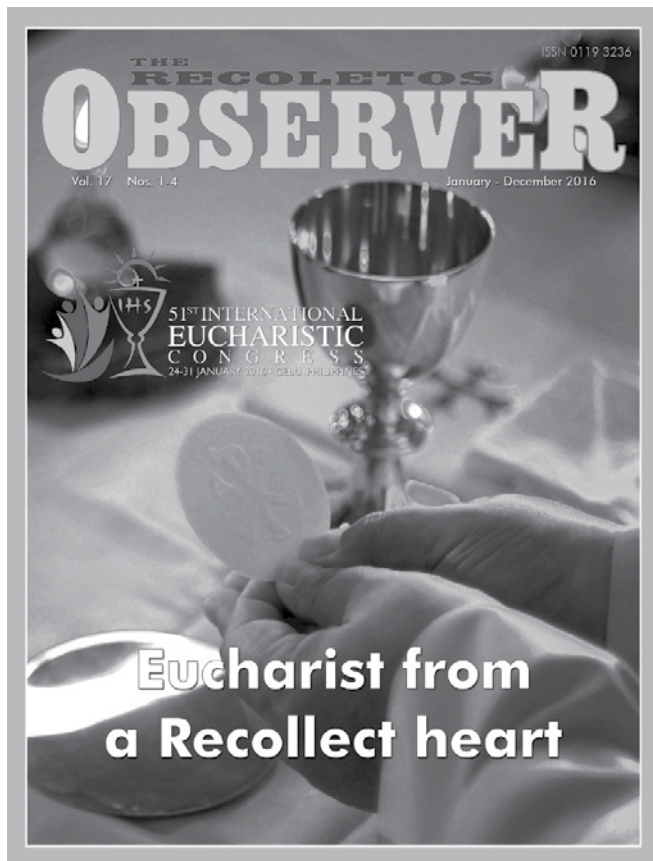
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The Cover: The 51st International Eucharistic Congress which was held in Cebu gave a new fervor to every Augustinian Recollect—an extraordinary opportunity of Recoletos Communications to serve through CBCP Media.

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THE RECOLETO OAR



Embracing Mercy: 55th OAR General Chapter

(STORY ON PAGE 92)



Recoletos Communications