

Amihanan

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WELCOME! Marist Youth, Brothers and Guests

in FAITH in JESUS in NEW-LAND
MARIST
Youth Festival 2010
November 27-29, 2010

**“Encountering Christ at the Crib,
Cross and the Altar.”**

ND Kidapawan College - IBED

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Amihan is a publication of the Marist Brothers of the Philippine Sector of East-Asia Province for the dissemination of updates and articles of interest among the Marist Brothers and Lay Mission Partners.

We welcome contributions, comments and suggestions from the readers. Address all inquiries to:

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About the Cover

The cover is a picture collage of our youth in the two most important youth events of the school year : the Marist Youth Festival and the Marist Meet. Pictures of the youth activities at the festival and the meet (athletic and cultural) are at the periphery of the central image of the main event for the Province – the 2nd Provincial Chapter as indicated in the chapter logo at the centre. Below the logo is the chapter theme: "Encountering Christ at the Crib, the Cross and the Altar" which is thoroughly explained in the message of Br. Manny on page 4. The Brothers' images shown are those of our superiors: Brothers Joe McKee and Mike de Waas from Rome, and our own Brothers Manny and John. Brother Manny's pictures are shown addressing the youth in the festival and the meet. Shown in the upper right hand side is Br. Jeffrey Antiquesa, who spearheaded the festival.

Editorial



This year's province news centerpiece is on the Chapter. The Second East Asia Provincial Chapter held at Alfonso, Cavite on December 5 to 8, 2010 was significant for the Philippine sector for three reasons. First is the renewed confidence in Br. Manny de Leon's province leadership and Manny's willingness to take on his second term. Secondly, the surfaced needs came out as an urgent echoing time and again of the modern challenge for religious life, especially in Asia; namely, community life, spiritual deepening and partnership with the lay. Finally, the theme chosen says it all: "Encountering Christ at the CRIB, the CROSS and the ALTAR," which speaks clearly the "centrality of Jesus" in our lives as religious. This is the core of our calling, and we have chosen an endearing Champagnat's "first places for the Brothers to be" in upholding this basic Christian spirituality. "Back to the Basics", is what Br. Manny urges us to do.

The Chapter activities with matching pictures can be seen and downloaded at our website; as well as the message of the Provincial. Each community will receive the detailed account and deliberations as a document. This issue will merely present the highlights for easy reference.

Community and school activities are given by our contributors, and as usual, interesting happenings and different style of writing keep everyone at bay for more news from the communities. This issue however highlights a featured article written by Br. Lindley who gives us a basic understanding and appreciation of "accompaniment" and "being formator". His long and beautiful essay evokes the "novice" in us and makes us realize the need for accompaniment as a lifetime process.

Two senior Brothers are also featured in this issue. The one on Br. Robert McGovern is a write-up taken from New York's popular Catholic News relating Bob's passion for mission and his unrelenting devotion to the people he serves. Bob gave his mission talk in the packed St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan, New York on October 24, 2010.

The other is Br. Columbanus Pratt, an Australian, who spent almost 10 years in the Philippines, totally absorbed in our mission at one time. Brother Col wrote his personal memoir primarily addressed to his Aussie readers. Part of this is his experience in the Philippines with the Filipino students at Marbel. He gave me a personal copy when I joined him for a few days at Adelaide in August last year, not knowing that he would pass away sooner than expected. His stint in the Philippines was memorable, and he would be teary-eyed narrating his experiences with the Filipinos. His narrative is quite lengthy, talking of Marbel and his short stay in Marikina, acting as "project engineer" in building MAPAC, but I could not find a more appropriate time and venue as he has become part of our living history.

Br. Crispin's homily during Marcellin Homes' 20th Anniversary and Br. Pepito's thanksgiving message during his jubilee last December are published as an epilogue to their jubilee year. The "Transition" is a news regular item informing the recent deaths of our Marist Brothers, parents, personnel and retirees.

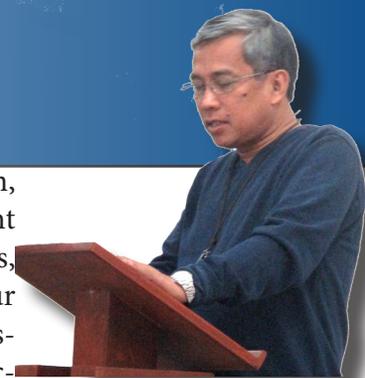
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Message from the Provincial

(His message delivered at the 2nd Provincial Chapter)



Dear Brothers and Friends,

First of all, I would like to thank Br. Joe McKee, Vicar General and Br. Michael de Waas, our link Councilor, for their presence here among us. They represent Br. EmiliTuru and the members of the General Council who are all united with us in thoughts and prayers as we gather together for the 2nd Provincial Chapter of East Asia Province.

Allow me to sincerely congratulate our Chapter delegates. You were elected by the Brothers from your respective sectors because of the trust and confidence in your capacity to represent them in determining the life, mission and future of the Province.

The last three years have been a time of grace and blessings. It was an opportunity for me to know every Brother in the Province. With my conversations with them, I am able to listen to their stories, hopes, joys and struggles. I have slept in every house (except Albert House in Beijing, Marcellin and the Aspirancy House), shared meals and joined them in prayers.

Thank you Brothers for giving me a Council that gets along well without necessarily patronizing each other. I assure you, we had great times together. We made it a point to go around different places for our Council meetings in order for us to be in the know of the realities in the communities, countries and sectors. We had our meetings in Ansan, Jecheon, Hongkong, Sibuy, Petaling Jaya, Marikina, Lagao and Singapore. Hopefully, the next Council can go to Jolo, Beijing, Melaka, Malutok, Cotabato and Kidapawan to have more interactions with the Brothers. To Robert, John, Jacobo, Tom, Pat, and Yohan, a million thanks for your brotherly support and your genuine concern for the life of the Institute.

I would like to acknowledge the role of the lay people sharing our formation, spirituality, life and mission. Both Brothers and lay share the beauty and the limits of human condition at this historical time. We live the same Christian vocation through baptism and we have felt the call of God that drew us to the Marist charism. Each of us works in the same vineyard of the Lord. We treat each other equal in dignity because we are all children of the same Father.

To Christine, Andy, Gelyn, Emma, the drivers that brought us here, all the administrators, teachers, staff, workers in our schools and non-school ministries, alumni, parents, benefactors, you have contributed much to the work of evangelization. Our thanks will not be enough. And so I ask God, the Divine Master to bless you and your loved ones always.

Earlier, Br. Joe McKee read to us the decision of the Superior General and his Council about my second mandate. Accompanying the decision was the letter of encouragement and at the same time stating the challenges and concerns including the expectations of the leadership.

The new re-structured Province of East Asia is barely three years old. The beginning years are usually the crucial moments. If we begin with a misstep, it can mean a lot for the future. Thus, we need to be careful with our decisions. We need to be honest, discerning, incisive and resolute. We can be daring and moving in haste to the “new land”. But the “new land” is really a call to conversion, to have a deeper encounter with Jesus at the Crib, Cross and the Altar.

Encountering Jesus at the Crib is to be in solidarity with the common and suffering people, to GO BACK TO BASICS, to love the children and discover the face of God in their fragility and innocence.

To encounter Jesus at the Cross is to learn the lesson that there is no greater love one can have than to lay down his life for his friend. It is only in taking up the cross that we earn the victory of the Resurrection.

To encounter Jesus at the Altar is to celebrate the feast of life. At the celebration of the Holy Eucharist we are being reconciled with everyone and everything. It is in the breaking of bread and partaking of it that we are nourished spirituality.

I hope the theme we have chosen for the 2nd Provincial Chapter ENCOUNTERING JESUS AT THE CRIB, CROSS AND ALTAR will put greater and deeper meaning to the previous theme of the 1st Provincial Chapter which was MOVING FORWARD IN UNITY AND VITALITY.

The 1st Provincial Chapter provides us with the vision which I believe are still relevant today. Let me identify the significant ones which are consistent with the Fundamental Calls of the 21st General Chapter.

I. MARIST IDENTITY AND SPIRITUALITY -We said, “We are Marist Brothers who are consecrated religious coming from rich cultural and spiritual traditions of Asia. We want to live our life Centered in Christ in the way of Mary and Champagnat. We respond to the calls of the times in a manner that is daring and with a sense of urgency.

The 21st General Chapter in 2009 affirmed it all. It adopted the Fundamental Call “WITH MARY, GO IN HASTE TO A NEW LAND”.

II. RENEWAL OF COMMUNITY LIFE - We said, “Sent forth in mission, we are renewed communities imbued with Marist characteristics, centered in prayer, and under the guidance of the capable Superiors.”

Our communities will only be renewed if we become real Brothers to one another. To be truly prophetic is to love our Brothers unconditionally even if we hate their guts. Didn't Jesus say, LOVE THY ENEMIES? It is only when there is respect, honesty, care, support, forgiveness and reconciliation, joy that we can claim we have achieved our goal in this essential aspect of our life as consecrated religious. We, too, cannot overemphasize the important role of the Superiors in making this happen. Brother Superiors need to take their leadership role more seriously.

III. INITIAL AND ON-GOING FORMATION - We need to invest in the recruitment, formation and on-going formation of our candidates and Brothers. Let us recruit and develop young people with potentials to become excellent Brothers. This does not mean that we only recruit the intelligent, the pious type, the good looking, etc. What we need are young people who have the generosity of heart and not afraid to make personal sacrifices.

If a young person is generous and willing to make sacrifices, he will survive the demands of religious life.

IV. MISSION AND SOLIDARITY – We said, “We envision a Province which is united in its task of evangelizing the young of East Asia especially the poor...” We want to accomplish this through personal and communal witness, education and formation, inculturation, discernment, responsiveness through advocacy. The 21st General Chapter affirms that evangelization is the focus and priority of our ministries, proclaiming Jesus and his message.

V. EVANGELICAL USE OF GOODS – We dream of a Province that commits its resources for its life and mission with the prudent use of temporal goods ensuring sustainability and viability. We embrace the life of simplicity while respecting differences in culture and situations. The 21st General Chapter reiterated the following principles: a) Resources of the Institute serve the life and mission of the Congregation, b) Practice of Transparency and accountability, c) Financial Independence and lasting viability, and d) Presence of the spirit of solidarity among different administrative units.

Brothers and our lay partners present here, I must personally admit that there is much more to do and the expectations are great. For the next three days, we will try to look back on what we wanted to do three years ago; identify what we have accomplished thus far; and how do we move forward in the spirit of the 21st General Chapter. We will also look into our Norms, Rules and Procedures, Statutes/Book of Customs. The Chapter, as part of its deliberative role, is to elect the Councilors to help the Provincial in the animation and governance.



Philippine Sector Delegates with Bros Joseph & Michael

Brother Provincials Schedule

Since we will be electing the members of the Council on the 4th Day, it is my duty to inform you that we need members of the Council who can work together as a team. A Council who will maintain a highest degree of integrity and credibility because they walk their talk. Having said these, I trust that you will give me a Council that will complement me in my weaknesses and limitations.

It is our belief that as a Chapter, the Holy Spirit is with us. In our Mass yesterday, we invoked the Holy Spirit to transform us. This morning during the installation, I asked our Good Mother to inspire me to be faithful in “doing what He orders me to do.” Before I went to bed last night, I asked Jesus to heal me from my anger, selfishness and pride so that I too may become an instrument of his healing power of love through the kindness of my words and the assuring comfort of my touch.

The statue of our Founder, St. Marcellin Champagnat at the external façade of St. Peter’s Basilica presents the young boy on his shoulder. It is an artistic expression how the Founder “raise us up”. Let his vision of “Making Jesus known and loved to young people” be our inspiration to go on. I know for myself, that’s the only reason why I am still a Marist Brother today.

May we have a prayerful, meaningful and fruitful 2nd Provincial Chapter here at the beautiful place of St. Paul Renewal Center, Alfonso, Cavite.

Br. Manuel V. de Leon, FMS
Provincial



The newly elected Councilors with Br. Manny

JANUARY 2011

- 1-8 - in Lagao, GSC
- 4-6- On-going Formation of the Non-Perpetually Professed Brothers in Active Ministries, Davao City
- 5 - 53rd Birthday
- 7-8 - Superiors’ Group Meeting, Lagao, GSC
- 10-12 - Visitation -Kidapawan Community
- 13-14 - Visitation -Cotabato Community
- 15-17 - Visitation - Novitiate Community
- 18 - Marist Province Center, Lagao
- 19 - Opening of the Marist Meet 2011
- 20 - Marikina City
- 21-22 - Visitation - Singapore Community
- 23-30 - Orientation for Newly Appointed Provincials, Rome

FEBRUARY 2011

- 1-6- Orientation for Newly Appointed Provincials, Rome
- 8-9- Marikina City
- 10-12- Marist Province Center, Lagao, GSC
- 13-14- Visitation -Aspirancy Community
- 16 - BOT Meeting – UIC, Davao City
- 17- BOT Meeting - Lourdes College/St. Michael College
- 18-21- Visitation, Jolo Community
- 22-24 - Visitation, Marikina Community
- 25- Trip to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 26-27- Provincial Council Meeting in Petaling Jaya, (Kuala Lumpur) Malaysia
- 28- Visitation -Petaling Jaya Community

MARCH 2011

- 1- Visitation-Petaling Jaya Community
- 2- Visitation - Melaka Community, Malaysia
- 4- Farewell Party for Bro. Desmond Howard, MA-PAC rector
- 5- BOT Meeting – Marist School, Marikina and Sagip Ka 2000 Foundation
- 7- Corporation and BOT Meetings of ND Kidapawan College
- 8- Corporation and BOT Meetings of ND Cotabato, Inc.; BOT Meeting of Marian Hills Memorial Park
- 9- Corporation and BOT Meetings of ND Dadiangas University; EDCOM Meeting
- 10- Corporation and BOT Meetings of ND Marbel University; Marist Development Foundation, Inc BOT Meeting

- 11- Corporation and BOT Meetings of Notre Dame Business Resource Foundation, Inc.
- 11-12- PAASCU Visitation of Notre Dame of Dadiangas University
- 13-15- Visitation – BUDA Community
- 15- Meeting with the Bishop of Malaybalay
- 18-20- Visitation – Lagao Community
- 21- Meeting with the External Auditor of Sagip Ka 2000 Foundation, Inc.
- 22- Board of Directors Meeting - First Metro Asset Management Inc. and Save and Learn Mutual Funds
- 23- Marist Province Center, Lagao, GSC
- 24- NDDU- IBED Graduation
- 25- Graduation of Brothers Ace Fernando, Mark Robert Laurela, Job Tumacas and Francisco Song at NDMU
- 26- NDDU Graduation
- 27-29- Marist Province Center, Lagao, GSC
- 31- Travel to Seoul, Korea



With Br. Emili Turu, Superior General

JUNE 2011

- 6- Death Anniversary of St. Marcellin Champagnat
- 9-11- Provincial Council Meeting, Manila – Philippines

APRIL 2011

- 1-2- Provincial Council Meeting in Seoul, Korea
- 3- Perpetual Profession of Br. Anselmo Kim
- 4-12- Visitation of South Korea Sector Communities
- 13- Marikina City
- 14- Marist Province Center, Lagao, General Santos City
- 16- Davao City to Pick up Br. John Klein and Br. Michael de Waas
- 17-24- ANNUAL RETREAT, Jesuit Retreat House, Malaybalay, Bukidnon
- 25- Beginning of the Visitation of Philippine Sector by Brs. John Klein and Michael de Waas – Councillors General
- 26- Start of the Summer Vocation Workshop, Marist Aspirancy House, GSC

MAY 2011

- 1-9- Summer Vocation Workshop, Marist Aspirancy House, Lagao, GSC
- 6- End of the Visitation of Br. John Klein and Br. Michael de Waas
- 7- Silver Jubilee of Sr. Ma. Theresa Asencio, SPC, Antipolo Rizal
- 11-13- EdCom Planning
- 15- Habit Taking of Novices
- 16-19- Marist Province Center, Lagao, General Santos City
- 20- First Profession, Marist Novitiate, Broce, DOS
- 22-24- MAPAC Executive Board Meeting, Marikina City
- 26-31- On Going Formation of 40-55 Age Group

JULY 2011

- 5-8- AMRSP JOINT CONVENTION
- 7- 11TH Anniversary, SAGIP KA 2000 FOUNDATION. INC.
- 9-14- GENERAL EXTENDED COUNCIL MEETING, BANGKOK, THAILAND

AUGUST 16 to SEPTEMBER 30

- ON-GOING/RENEWAL PROGRAM (Tentative)
- Provincial Council Meeting, SINGAPORE
- Golden Jubilee of Br. John Lek

OCTOBER 2011

- 5-12- MAPAC BOARD MEETING and COMMUNITY VISITATION

NOVEMBER 2011

- 12-20- SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

DECEMBER 2011

- 1-3- PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEETING, HONG KONG
- Diamond Jubilee of Br. Maurice Chang
- Silver Jubilee of Br. Robert Teoh



PROVINCIAL CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

Theme: “Journeying with Jesus at the Crib, Cross and Altar”

Dates: December 5- 8, 2011

Venue: St. Paul Center for Renewal (Managed by the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres) at Alfonso, Cavite.

Participants: 29 official delegates; 2 superiors from Rome; 3 invited as observers, 3 lay volunteers for the secretariat; 1 lay Marist administrator invited to speak in behalf of the mission partners; 1 Brother as translator (English-Korean); 1 Brother in coordinating liturgies; and a Brother for transport management and logistics. (41 in all)

First Day (December 5, 2011) : Arrival at the Center / Mass officiated by Fr. Papa // Welcome.



Second Day (December 6th) : Eucharistic celebration and installation rite of Br. Manny as Provincial / Message from Brother J. Mckee in behalf of Br. Emili / Chapter officially opened / Election of Steering Committee (Br. Briccio as chairman with Brs. John Chang and John Oh as members) / Reports on the 1st Provincial Chapter Resolutions by Br. Manny / Committee Reports: Br. Robert Teoh on Community Life; Formation by Br. John Oh; Ministry by Br. Pat; Finance by Br. John / Sharing of Mr. Andy Magallanes – “Mission with the Brothers in the School Ministry.”

Third Day (December 7th) : Personal and Group Reflections and Sharings on “What important priorities can you bring out for consideration of the Chapter, and what are the means to address them?” / PRESENTATION of Province Norms (discussed, clarified, and recommendations taken), Provincial Council Election Procedures (by Br. Joe McKee), Rules and Procedures for the 3rd Provincial Chapter, consolidated reports on the Priorities and Means and Book of Customs (comments & suggestions)



Fourth Day (December 8th) : Decisions : Approval of Province Norms, Election Procedures for Provincial Council, Rules and Procedures for 3rd Provincial Chapter; Priorities and Means and Recommendations submitted for the new provincial council’s action; and Customs . / Election of Brothers Robert Teoh, Jacobo Song, Paterno Corpus, John Chin, John Oh and John Tan as provincial councilors. Eucharist and Missioning by Fr. O’Leary, OMI / Chapter officially closed by Br. Manny / Departure. ###





Aspirancy House

(My 2nd Sem)

by Raffy James Barnuevo, Postulant

It's been more than a semester since I entered the Marist congregation as an aspirant. Now I have become a postulant. I spent my first semester with the Marists with a lot of activities; and I noticed that time flew without us knowing it. We enjoyed most activities from the start of the semester till the culmination.

Then the second semester started; we were all open to a new set of activities and experiences. The following are the events that took place during my second semester stay at the Marist Aspirancy House:

We had our retreat in Landan at the Trappistine Nuns' Retreat Center before we went home for our semestral break. It was to formally culminate the first semester and prepare us for the start of the second semester. The place, located on the mountainside of the scenic Mt. Matutum, was an ideal place to reflect and to summarize our first semester experiences. The sessions were given to us by our good formator, Br. Dem Calabria, FMS. During the retreat we had the chance to be reconciled with our companions and with God.

The Postulancy Rite was a major event in our community. There were five of us live-in aspirants who were accepted as postulants : John Emil Alada, Rechie Dean Bagsican, Gerex Cabajes, Harry Gullon III, and I, Raffy James Barnuevo.

Personally, the event of becoming a postulant made a major impact in my life. It made me thank God that I am getting nearer to my goal (and that is to become a full-fledged religious).

Becoming a postulant also gave me a new energy to my vocation. Before the event, we made some necessary preparations. We practiced singing for the Mass, prepared the venue and decorated the chapel. Together with the live-out aspirants we worked to make the event memorable. The event was held at the Marist Aspirancy Chapel, in Lagao, General Santos City. It was attended by our friends and families, our neighboring congregations, and the Marist Brothers from Lagao, Marbel and Dadiangas communities. The evening event was a success and I am thankful for God's grace and guidance.

Next, was the Marist Youth Festival (MYF). It was my first time to experience such event. The MYF, held at Notre Dame of Marbel University, IBED campus, lasted for three days. The preparation was not easy. There were lots of things to take care. It was because participants from NDDU were in charge of the second day of the festival.



Br. Dem and the newly proclaimed Postulants

Since I was the president of the NDDU College SMCians, I took the responsibility for the preparations. We had to practice the songs for Mass. Since we were not naturally gifted with good voice, it was hard for us. We were also given the responsibility of facilitating some events in the evening together with the novices. During the first night, we stayed up till morning just to facilitate activities for the students. When I was assigned to facilitate the Bible sharing, I was reprimanded by some group leaders thinking that I was a group member.



Aspirants with participants at the Marist Youth Festival

Continued on page 13



cotabato community's facebook

Greetings to all the Brothers, friends, communities and readers, from the members of Marist Brothers' Cotabato Community namely Brs. Ador, Xyryx, Job and yours truly Br. Niño Mark. Asalamu alaykum warak matula itala wabara katu! "In short Peace be with you all!"

I hope you have read and pronounced that second sentence right. Because if you did not, it would mean differently.

First of all, I would like to share a story I read in the Reader's Digest. This is my version of it.

Once there was an old lady lying on her bed and she was dying. So she called for her lone grand daughter because she wanted to express her last will and testament. The moment the grand daughter arrived, she said to her, "My grandchild, I am about to die. You are my only possession in this world and before I die I have something very important to leave you that is worth treasuring." Upon hearing those words, the grand daughter's eyes widened and she was so delighted thinking of the possible fortune. "What is it grandma?" she asked. Having a hard time breathing, the old lady continued, "In case you did not know I have acquired a mansion, a villa, a farm house, a barn house full of animals, a horse stable, a tractor and a 28x28 hectares of crops with a huge number of fruit trees. This is what I wanted to tell you". "Really? I did know we are that rich!" the girl responded. Then the old lady stretched out her hand to the table beside her bed and took a piece of paper. She handed it to her grand daughter and she started to read:

"What is this grandma?" the grand daughter asked. "Arrggghh... That is my facebook account, I wanted you to have this, my very own FARMVILLE", the grandmother replied with difficulty in breathing. Then she continued, "By the way, you have to update it today otherwise the crops will wither." And she breathed her last.

In case you haven't played Farmville. It is a virtual farm in the Facebook where one plants, fertilizes and harvests crops. After doing so, one earns points and virtual coins to expand and increase one's level in doing farming at Farmville. It's quite easy, that is why many students play this game.

However, it is different in real life farming. In Farmville one doesn't get his hands dirty. He doesn't have to exert much effort and sweat it out. All the user has to do is to click the mouse and spend hours in the computer. I guess students are challenged to be responsible in using it. This is because real farming isn't that easy.

Facebook account: sexy_oldlady@yahoo.com
 Password: BEAUTIFUL



Br. Xyryx and his farmville

This article from Cotabato Community is a sharing of our Farmville. There is a saying, "We work in the vineyard of God", and in our life in Cotabato I would say that life here is like a Farmville, a vineyard. However this is a real-life Farmville. I would say our community is doing our part in working at the vineyard of God in the school and our community. For the past few months, there have been many changes that took place in our community and the school. And we would like to share about that. Here are some glimpses of our real life Farmville.

The community started our simple farm at our backyard. Br. Xyryx, the boss, enjoyed working there. He began last year planting vegetables on plastic containers. Since it did not work well, we decided to create garden plots with the help of our working students. At this moment we are enjoying some of the harvested vegetables like "petchay" and our cook would include it in his cooking. Our string beans and tomatoes are growing pretty well too. Br. Xyryx continues to maintain this garden. Though busy at school where he enjoys being with the young, he still finds time to do gardening. That's love of work!

We have also two pet dogs in the community. One is an adopted female shih tzu named "Sexy". And the other is "Harvey", a male "askal"-not of foreign breed. I assiduously take care of them. I would sometimes take these pets for a run on campus and students would enjoy playing with these friendly dogs. I featured this here because we also want to be known as a community who "care for animals". This is our "Petville," which is another Facebook application where one owns a virtual pet. Only, this is real life, caring for real pets.



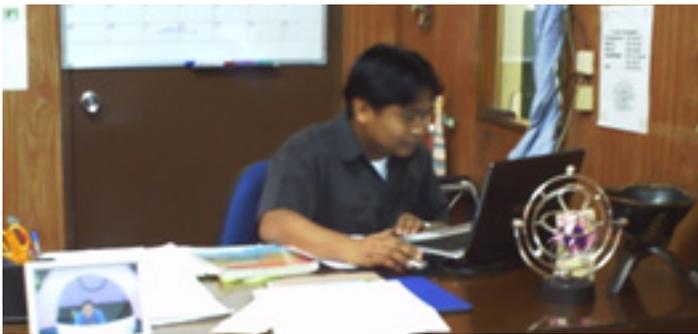
Br. Niño and his petville

Br. Ador has just created his Facebook account. He is now an active user of that site. I guess he really wanted to be updated with the trend of this generation. He would always mention during meals sometime ago that we should *Br. Ador's Facebook feature* add him to our Facebook accounts because Brothers Xyryx, Job and I would always talk about it. Br. Ador would sometimes grin and say, "Did you find my account and my picture there?" Seeing us confused, he would continue, "How will you find it? I do not have one!" Then he would break into a loud laugh. This time however he now shares to the community how he is doing in the Facebook. He enjoys posting comments, tagging photos and must be having a hard time, with all those numerous people inviting him, to be connected with. As a director of the school, he is a good leader. He shows this by being always punctual in important school activities. As a brother in the community he takes the lead and initiates. This encourages the brothers to be present in community schedules such as prayers, Mass and meals. After an out of town trip, Br. Ador is much appreciated because he would always bring "pasalubong" for everyone. That's his Marist family spirit that we enjoy.



Br. Job is the new member of our Community. He arrived last November 2010.

You can see in the photo he is seated in the Director's office when Br. Ador is not around. I guess if that task is real, Job would be so stressed that he'd have stomach ache. That is because every time he is pressured, his stomach aches. Currently he is a practice teacher. Br. Xyryx and I are his mentors. Br. Ador was also his part time mentor; that was when I was not around. I hope he is learning from us.



Br. Job is a source of joy in the community. He is a good person to laugh with. We always enjoy the company of each other during our meals. Our house would vibrate with the spontaniety of our laughter. Nah, I'm just kidding.

Furthermore, the school has an on-going construction. It is an extended building. This is to add more classrooms, including audio visual rooms to cater to the needs of the students. The school is expecting to increase its enrollment this school year. The new building is expected to be ready before the beginning of classes.

The school has a nice environment where students go around and play. Besides, it is also ideal for learning. I feel at home in this place. Even though Cotabato is a Muslim area, I can still feel the Marist presence here. Our mission partners- the faculty, the staff and maintenance always carry with them the name "Marist". Even our students are happy to be part and members of the Marist Community in the school. People here have a high regard of the school because of the quality of education it offers to the students. This can be confirmed because we passed the PAASCU Accreditation last August 2- 3, 2010.

We also attended the Marist Meet held at NDDU, Lagao Campus, at Gen. Santos City last January 19-21, 2011.

Notre Dame of Cotabato was the second runner-up in the over-all score among our Marist high schools. We did well in most of the events. We have not participated in some of the events because we had limited participants. So I think we should work on training harder and hopefully win the next Marist Meet.

February is the month of hearts. The community attended the Juniors Night on February 12, 2011. It was a night of socialization, meal and dancing. This was the first time where the Juniors solely had the their own night together, and the Seniors were not with them. We certainly enjoyed the evening with the school faculty and staff.



Brothers "clowning" at the Juniors' Night

After an exhausting work at school with all its activities and programs, all the stress would be gone if there is a community whom you are comfortable to be with. It is a home where you belong. The house which was newly painted is definitely an attraction when you come and visit us.

Continuation from page 9... "My Second..."

I just smiled and explained to them that I was one of the facilitators. It was a unique experience indeed. I also had the chance to witness the Marist Meet where different Marist schools participated for the event. It was held at Notre Dame of Dadiangas University, IBED Lagao campus. I was lucky to have the personal experience of seeing the different events. During my vacant time, I watched different games especially soccer. In the evening our sessions were canceled in order to watch different competitions. There were also Brothers coming from different schools to coach and support their students; and I had the chance to interact with them. At the end of the event, NDMU IBED was proclaimed as the Champion.

After our mid-term examinations we were given a chance to unwind and relax with an outing at the Coco Beach in Glan. The place was ideal and we really had a great time.

The weekend Workshops, held during the second semester, was done so that the Brothers could choose who among them would be invited for the summer workshop. This workshop is usually done during this summer at the Marist Aspirancy House.

There were only three batches so far that were invited to participate for the weekend workshop in the Aspirancy community. The first batch came from the Notre Dame Schools of Maasim and Glan. The second came from NDDU IBED Lagao and Espina campuses. The third were from Notre Dame of New Iloilo and Buayan National High School. As of this writing, the first and second batches have been accommodated. The participants were given some sessions about the congregation and underwent interviews with our formator, Br. Dem Calabria, FMS. We are happy to be part of this recruitment phase.



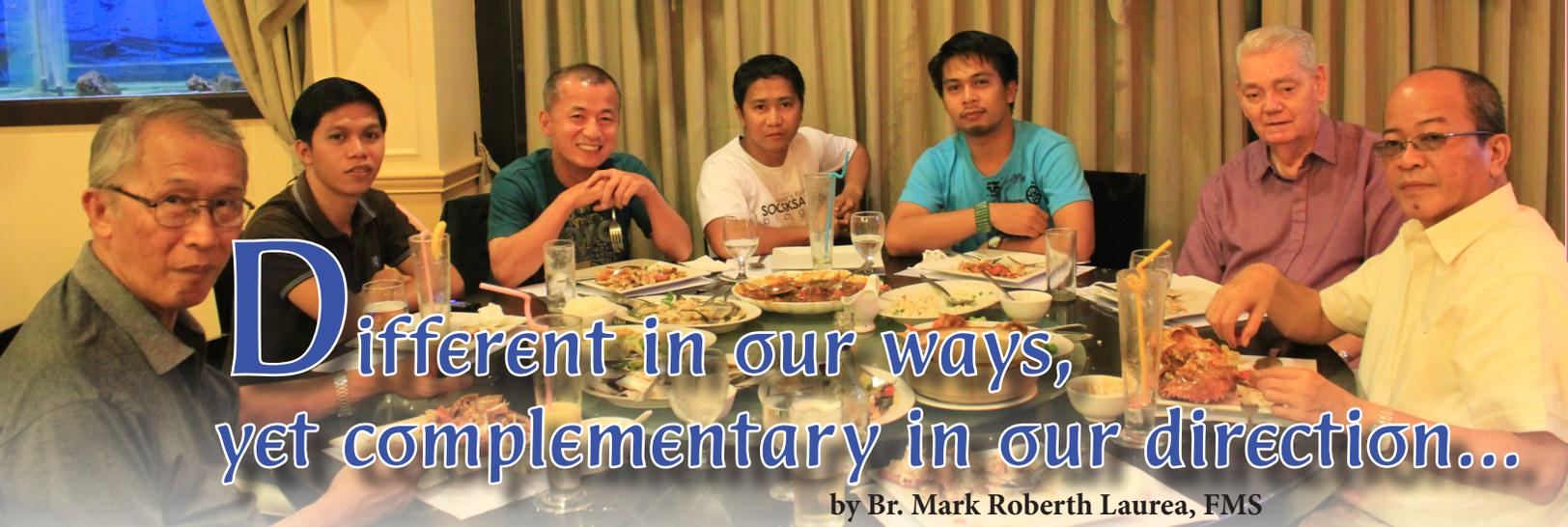
Inside the Cotabato residence

So friends this is the story of our life in Cotabato City. I hope you enjoyed gazing at the photos we added. Our simple Farmville in real life, is our community where we care as brothers to each one. It is where we cultivate and feel the support and encouragement of the community when we have difficulties. It might not be vocally expressed but it is felt in the heart. The school is also our Petville. It is where we facilitate the education of the young people and letting them grow in values and virtues. This is our share of working in the Vineyard of the Lord.

We may not know... God must be enjoying his Facebook Account, posting comments, tagging photos, inviting each one to be connected with him. Ours is the heart of one who lives and journeys in this world with Him. Peace to everyone! ###

A Brother, who, guided by the spirit, makes discernment a daily exercise in seeking the will of God in the world.

Document of 21st General Chapter



Different in our ways, yet complementary in our direction...

by Br. Mark Roberth Laurea, FMS

The internationality of our community is evident in our daily encounters with one another, in our response to different situations, in our interests, and in our gatherings. This diversity widens our horizon and flexibility. We might be different in our ways yet complementary in our direction towards achieving the Marist mission entrusted to us.

We acknowledge that our community is constituted of Brothers who have different ministries. Br. John, our animating community superior, never fails to show his care and initiative in building up a climate of mutual understanding and harmony among us.

Br. Bob never loses his zeal in helping the least favored, making several trips out of town to visit the places and people who are in connection with his work with the BRC.

Br. Crispin remains resilient despite the barrage of concerns of the street children in Katangawan. The spirit of hope never ceases to gleam in his heart and mind especially in the midst of any predicament.

Br. Dominic Won, the supervisor of MTTP - Alabel, always dedicates himself to fulfilling his responsibilities. His difficulty in English communication does not encumber him in relating to people and to his community members.

Br. Vince, the CMRE coordinator of IBED Espina, ensures the spiritual and moral formation of the students through organizing retreats, Eucharistic celebrations, liturgies and many other programs.

Br. Leo, who goes through the rigors of teaching in IBED Espina, never loses his vitality and joy for sharing his knowledge. He teaches Christian Living Education from first to fourth years, and recently he became the adviser of the third year class due to the unexpected loss of a teacher.

Br. Mark Roberth, a practice teacher at IBED Espina, joyfully performs all his demonstration teaching under the supervision of Mrs. Evelyn Demape, the assistant principal. He spends his spare time mingling with the students and listening to their stories. His days, together with the Brothers of the Dadiangas community participating in a range of school and community activities, are for him a time of hope, encouragement and growth. The perseverance of the elderly Brothers, Bob, Crispin, John and Dominic has been for him a sign of the Lord's faithfulness. Their enthusiasm and joy in doing their work creates a hope within him.

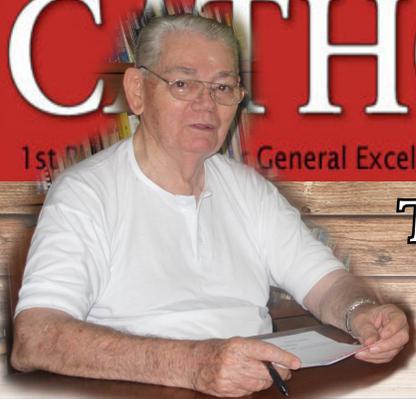


Becoming aware of the reality of the Brothers ministry, you might begin to wonder how we live together and make our community a place of sharing. First and foremost, each of us shows an interest and willingness to know about the life and work of one another by asking "How are you?", sharing about what has been happening in our work or activities and listening attentively to one another. There are life-giving forces that help sustain our community. These are: community prayer which we do faithfully, community recreation or leisure, community recollection, community meetings, extended meal times, and the celebration of birthdays and other significant events. This is how we express our Brotherhood to one another, by trying to make the most of each other's company.

As we move along with our journey as Marist Brothers, may we deliberately choose what is "Life giving" for our community and for our ministry. May we never stop searching for a style of community life that is rooted in our charism and open to the challenges of the culture of young people today. ###

CATHOLIC NEW YORK

1st General Excellence, Catholic Press Association



Today's Missionaries, Like St. Paul, Bring Christ's Gospel Across Globe

By Ron Lajoie

(This article was published in Catholic New York, November 4, 2010 edition)

Some 2,000 years ago, St. Paul, the Church's first missionary, was beheaded for teaching the Gospel of Jesus. Proclaiming the Gospel today is sometimes no less dangerous.

Brother Robert McGovern, F.M.S., takes special care when traveling around Mindanao, the region in the Philippines where he serves. Last October, Father Michael Sinnott, a 79-year-old Irish priest, was kidnapped on the island of Mindanao and held captive for a month. In January, 2008, Father Jesus Reynaldo Roda was killed by armed insurgents during another kidnapping attempt.

"The area where I am working is one of the most challenging," Bro. Robert, an 80-year old Marist missionary who has served in the Philippines in education and development work for 44 years, told CNY. *"There has been conflict for the past 30 years. There have been kidnappings of missionaries, also anybody who is Caucasian. The rebels see that as an opportunity to get ransom money to finance their operations, so I have to be careful where I go."*

Br. Robert was among dozens of missionaries and representatives from mission-sending religious communities in attendance at a packed St. Patrick's Cathedral for a special Mass as the Church celebrated the work of its missionaries on World Mission Sunday, Oct. 24.

Auxiliary Bishop Dennis J. Sullivan, vicar general, celebrated the Mass with Auxiliary Bishop William J. McCormack, retired national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and Msgr. John Kozar, national director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States. Sister Pauline Chirchirillo, P.B.V.M., director of the Archdiocese's Society for the Propagation of Faith, was a lector.

In his homily, Bishop Sullivan made it clear that missions were not a peripheral Church activity but a central tenet of Christian doctrine mandated by Christ himself.

"It was St. Paul who convinced the young Christian Church that in order to be authentic followers of Jesus Christ, it was necessary to be a missionary Church," Bishop Sullivan explained. *"The Church had to be missionary if it wanted to be authentic to Jesus Christ and to his commandment to go to all nations. The missionaries of our Church respond to the Lord's commandment. "On Mission Sunday we are reminded that this mandate to proclaim the Gospel belongs to the entire Church and to each one of the baptized, so that the essential mission of proclaiming the Gospel continues,"* the bishop said.

The mission work Brother Robert has undertaken in the Philippines is a microcosm of the multi-faceted work carried out in more than 1,100 mission dioceses around the world.

Although primarily involved in education – Brother Robert is vice president for external affairs at Notre Dame of Dadiangas University in General Santos City – he also directs a large primary health-care program that serves about 80,000 people a year, micro-enterprise programs for the poor and teacher training for early childhood education programs. *"I've been very interested in development education, both formal and informal education,"* he explained. *"I'm doing a lot of work to coach minorities (including) Muslims, sea gypsies, hill tribe people and the lowland poor. It is very exciting."*

Part of Brother Robert's mission is to bring forward a new generation of evangelists. *"We have just finished training six batches of catechists, putting them through four years of college, with a major in religious education,"* he said proudly. Brother Robert said he gains a lot of rewards from his ministry, which keeps him busy just about every day of the week.

"I was always interested in being a missionary," he acknowledged. *"When I joined the Marist Brothers in 1948 that was kind of at the back of my mind. I knew they were a missionary congregation."*

As to the danger, Brother Robert said, *"I let God worry about taking care of me."* He said, *"I'm doing his work so what happens, happens." ###*

Jolo Community

by Br. Arnel Alfanta, FMS

Assalamu alaikum warah matullahi wabaraka-tu uh! Greetings from this side of our world!

As of this writing, people around Jolo are still trying to clear up things left by the unprecedented heavy flooding in the area after days of torrential rain messed-up household and business infrastructures. The Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Cathedral was not spared by the flooding thus, on the 4th of February, the 14th death anniversary of Bishop Ben De Jesus, the Cathedral workers and some parishioners had to clean-up the whole place before the start of the memorial Mass.

No amount of rainfall and flooding could stop the celebration of the 50th Golden Anniversary of the Carmelite Nuns of Jolo. The celebration on the 6th of February was graced by the Papal Nuncio himself, Rev. Joseph Edward Adams with visiting Bishops, priests, and religious and the local officials and the laity.

Located on a higher ground, our school was spared from the heavy flooding, but the brothers, with some of the school maintenance crew went to the rescue of our sister school in Jolo, the ND of Walled City which was badly damaged by the flood with most of their electronic equipments, school records and documents went swimming overnight. Br. Pius missed all the fun as he went to Tacurong for the Golden Jubilee celebration of Notre Dame of Tacurong City. Br. Pius was honored in that event by virtue of being one of the college's previous presidents.

The flood that surprised Jolo



EdCom visitors with the Jolo Community

The EDCOM team, headed by Br. John Tan, FMS with Dr. Gerry Rigonan (NDKC), and Evelyn Dollete (NDC) came to visit us from February 1 to 3. The team had the chance to observe almost all teachers in action, interviewed the staff and lay administrators, and had a look over the whole campus. I accompanied Br. John, for a courtesy call with Bishop Angelito Lampon, OMI,DD in the afternoon of February 02.

In the first night of their visit, they were served with a luscious dinner with "Kuracha" (local sea crabs) as the main dish for the night. The whole province was in a tight security so their coming had just a simple welcome.

Br. Albert Munoz rejoined the community after spending almost two months in Manila for his thirty day retreat and Christmas vacation. As usual, he has been very active in all school and parish activities. He is now our regular guitar guy at our early morning Masses at the Carmelite Chapel.

Br. Pius, the school director, the Jolo Vicariate Notre Dame Schools superintendent, and ZAMBA-SULTAPS board member has been around attending meetings and seminars. Yes, Pius still has the energy to travel around and work hard for the schools he has been delegated to supervise. When he is around, he busies himself looking after the prefect's office, checking students' attendance and tardiness and even playing hide and seek with our mischievous students, specially the smokers!

Continuation... "Jolo..."



During the EdCom visit

We have been trying to put things back to normal after the calamity and prepare our students for the final examinations. But even before we could settle down again, another holiday (Muslim holidays specifically) was declared... and there were too many of them! Well, that's how things are going on here!

As of this writing, our community is looking forward to meet Br. Manny De Leon for his official visit.



Jolo's specialty: "Kuracha" (deep sea crab)

THE KIDAPAWAN TIMELINE

by BR. MANUEL P. ULUAN, FMS

I am sure the title of this article may intrigue those who will read this. What is a Kidapawan timeline? I guess I am just trying to draw some attention to what I am writing. But let me be. Allow me to express my impression and my experience in my one-and-a-half month here in this cold and rainy place called Kidapawan.



I arrived at this place, precisely at the Notre Dame of Kidapawan College on the evening of February 1, 2011. I was supposed to have arrived earlier; because of the delay caused by some maintenance problem of the Philippine Airlines plane, I ended up arriving in Davao very late in the afternoon of that Tuesday. Furthermore, I had to wait for my luggage for quite some time so the delayed arrival became longer by the minute. I am not stranger to airports both domestic and foreign but my anxiety was high at that time for I did not know who would pick me up. After much waiting and texting, a man approached me and asked if I was Br. Manny Uluan. He said, he was waiting for long outside but since he did not show the sign where my name was written I had no idea who to approach. Anyway, I left that to some kind of unfortunate experience.

The trip from Davao to Kidapawan was a bit rough due road repairs outside the city and some broken roads in Bansalan and Kinuskusan. However, I survived the ordeal. The next time I went to Davao, which was a week later, I no longer cringed at the uneven and ugly roads towards the city. When I arrived there was no one in the house. I found out later that the community, with some guests, were at the school gymnasium to celebrate the golden jubilee of the college department. Luckily there was written on the white board of the Brothers' residence the room where I should be.

Continued on page 34...

Br. Gilbert Bogacia, FMS

The month of October brought many experiences to the Lagao Community. Here are some highlights for the month. It started with Br. Manny's talk to the non-professed brothers in Maitum on October first. This was followed by the important day for Br. Ernie as he pronounced his final vows on October 2nd. His parents and relatives came a day before from Sinayawan, Valencia, Bukidnon.

On the same day, however, the sad news was received that the father of Br. Ador, died. His father Domingo had been bed-ridden for almost a year in their residence in Davao City. The community attended the burial on the 6th of October.

On the 8th, Bro. Manny attended the MAPaC Graduation. The Philippine Sector has three graduating Brothers: Ace Fernando, Mark Roberth Laurea and Job Tumacas. They were given time to be with their families after their graduation in Marikina. Br. Ace is assigned to Lagao community for his practice teaching.

On October 16, some of the Brothers participated in the walk-for-a-cause sponsored by the NDDU-IBED PATA, Lagao.

The late Mr. Richie Yap, owner of the Yellow Bus Line, died that month. The Brothers knew him very well, as a student of NDM Boys in Marbel. Hence, Brothers Pop, George and Nino visited his wake. Two ex-brothers, Benito Braganza and Antonio Vicente arrived from Marbel to see the Brothers. But only Br. Gilbert was home to welcome them.

All the Brothers of Lagao community attended the Association of Religious Brothers of the Philippine Convention in Cebu City. Only Br. Manny did not come because he had to attend to the monitoring of the Barangay Election in General Santos City. He was the PPCRV representative.

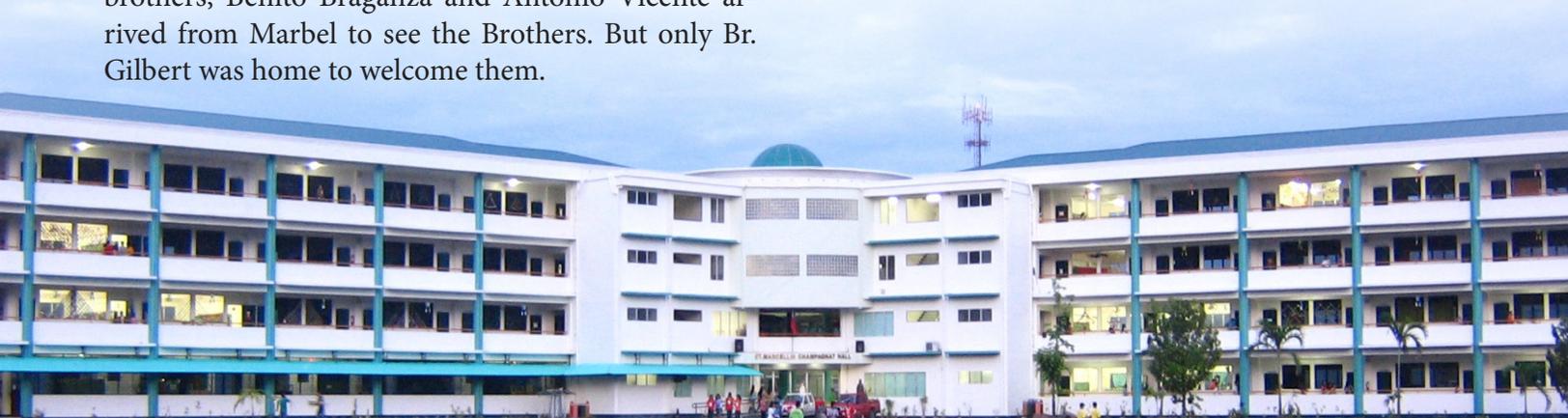
A twin birthday celebration was tendered by the community for Br. Pop (85th) and Br. Nino (33rd). A dinner party was held at the Province Center prepared by Br. Manny and the Province Center staff.

Br. Crispin had his birthday party at the Marcellin Homes. The community attended. Many friends and benefactors of Marcellin Homes also graced the party.

November Highlights:

The celebration of the UNDAS seemed to permeate the lives of Filipinos – especially the older ones. The Brothers started to disperse to their families and communities to honor their loved ones as early as October 30. There were some who had to visit many cemeteries to light candles and / or place flowers to honor their dead.

On the 20th, Brother Manny proclaimed the five new postulants at the anticipated Sunday Mass in the Aspiration Chapel. The ceremony was attended by the parents and relatives of the postulants, as well as the Brothers, Sisters, benefactors and friends of the community. *(Continue reading on page 21)*



Featured Article...

pieces

(The Parable of the Jigsaw Puzzle)
Br. Lindley H. Sionosa, FMS

A few weeks back, one of the novices asked me whether I find accompaniment tiresome. I assumed he was thinking of all the energy I had to spend listening to each of them for forty-five or more minutes. I replied, quite jokingly, “No. For me, each accompaniment session is an episode of a soap opera on TV.”

I did not really think about that answer before I gave it. But as I reflected about it, I realized that indeed each accompaniment session is an episode, a story in itself. It is real life, not dramatized, or sensationalized, as most TV programs do to attract viewers. It is not scripted, not imagined. But it is, at its simplest, human experience, the reality each of our novices has to live every day.

To be an accompagnateur is grace. The formands share to you things they may not have been able to share even with their family, closest friends or companions. Going to the accompaniment is like opening the pages of a novel and reading about joys, about sorrows, about hopes, about despair, about dreams. It is like going deep into the woods and be surprised that you are in a place very few others could reach.

What I cherish most about doing accompaniment is being able to share in the religious experience of the formands. Their encounter with God becomes my encounter too. Their prayer becomes my prayer as well. It is a truly wonderful feeling to leave the accompaniment session saying to myself, “God was here. He came and touched me. He was truly present. How marvelous!”

When I was a novice, I developed an inclination for doing formation work. Why? Simply because my experience of being in formation helped me find direction in my life. In a very profound way, accompaniment enabled me to put the pieces of my life together. Such was the wonder of my journey that I told myself I would like to do the same to others, to accompany them as they too put the pieces of their life together.

Formation is precisely about making the pieces fit. I am myself amazed at how the jigsaw puzzle always fascinated me. My college address way back in 1995 made use of the image of the jigsaw puzzle. In many of my talks at recollections and about vocation, the jigsaw puzzle has provided me with a tool to drive my message across.

What is it with jigsaw puzzles then? Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jigsaw_puzzle) gives us this description:

Jigsaw puzzles were originally created by painting a picture on a flat, rectangular piece of wood, and then cutting that picture into small pieces with a jigsaw, hence the name. John Spilsbury, a London mapmaker and engraver, is credited with commercializing jigsaw puzzles around 1760. Jigsaw puzzles have since come to be made primarily on cardboard.

As I move from one assignment to the next, I carry with me my treasures. Among them are my journals from my initial formation days, my documents (birth certificate, baptismal, transcript of records, etc.), pictures waiting to be arranged in the album (which I have yet to buy), and my comics collection. In the plastic bag containing the pictures is my two-page college address, typewritten (yes, typewritten) on a long-size newsprint. Let me share it with you...



Continuation... "Pieces..."

The other night, I had a dream. I dreamed that I was a little boy once again, coming across the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle which I started to fit together. I worked on until I had the fragments in place – at least, that's how I thought. Proud of my accomplishment, I ran to my mother to show her my work. Seeing what I have done, she turned to me and gently told me that we have to disassemble it because I failed to form the picture. The idea of having my work undone was quite painful for me. My mother, knowing how I felt, hugged me close and assured me that we will solve the puzzle together. And so, we started working, reassembling the pieces until the picture was made. A different sense of joy overwhelmed me. I embraced my mother and gave her a kiss. I turned to the picture and for the first time, I recognized that it was a picture of me.

To the administrators, faculty and staff, parents, fellow graduates, friends...mayo nga hapon.

Life is a jigsaw puzzle which we have to assemble. Without our parents and educators to guide us, we might form a different picture of ourselves. Through our education, we are given direction and the goal which we are to attain is made clear for us.

To acquire education is not easy. We are witnesses to that. Education entails a lot of sacrifices and we have to give up many comforts, taste our share of discomfort, and look forward to the gains that will come to us.

What we are celebrating today is but a completion of only a part of our life's jigsaw puzzle. Somehow, after many years, we were able to make our experiences of joy and sorrow, of ups and downs fall into place. Looking back to all that we've been through, we particularly reminisce the not-so-pleasant things we have encountered. Then, we never fully comprehended why we had to be confronted with difficulties, pains, frustrations; how we wished everything was easy. But as we went along, we came to the realization that we indeed need to struggle in order to grow because without which, our life would never be complete. Just like the jigsaw puzzle...We find pieces which do not have any design at all, plain. Truly we can say they do not make the picture, but they make the entire puzzle. We can never solve the puzzle even with a single piece missing.

As I have mentioned earlier, our life's jigsaw puzzle is not yet complete; there are still pieces that need to be put into place. And that is what we are going to do for the rest of our lives. We have been through failure and success and in the future, we will still face those two contrasting realities – they which make life colorful.

That is a fact we have to live with, for God never promised our life to be a constant bed of roses. Even Jesus himself had to suffer persecution and death on the cross to give us an example.

It still a long way to go, I am sure. But we are not afraid for we know God who accompanied us on our journey will continue to be with us. He whose love never fails.

I strongly urge you, at this point in time, to also remember the example set by our Blessed Mother, who never hesitated when called by God to be the Mother of His Son. Like her, we must learn to submit ourselves completely to God, so that we will be more courageous to face the challenges life offers us, especially as we respond to our respective callings in life.

It is when we depart from this world that our jigsaw puzzle will be perfected. Let us then work that when our time comes, it will be our picture that we will lay on the cardboard and it will be the ultimate offering we could give to our Creator.

God bless us all.

Two months after I delivered that speech, I received my religious habit. That was when I embarked on a journey of disassembling the jigsaw puzzle once again, studying the pieces carefully, and putting them back to form the picture that was meant to be. In my college address, I did the jigsaw puzzle in my dream. In the novitiate, I brought the jigsaw puzzle to the desert.

Now after sixteen years, I am back where I began my religious life. The jigsaw puzzle is still not complete. I am still putting the pieces together as I help the novices put the pieces of theirs in place.

Whenever I sit down with a novice to listen to his story, I see pieces of the jigsaw puzzle being laid on the table, each piece deserving to be examined thoroughly before its rightful place in the picture can be determined. It is not an easy task, for the pieces are many. The plainer they are, the more difficult to see where they belong.

I am not telenovela aficionado, but I know for a fact that each episode continues from the next and as any good story would tell us, there are twists and turns. When the plot becomes predictable, spending time to follow it would be quite a waste.

Continuation from page 18... "Lagao..."

The same is true in accompaniment. You can never tell what the formand would bring to you next. When you find a piece on the table that seems not to belong, you begin to wonder whether the manufacturer made a mistake in packaging. Worse, you discover that the puzzle you have in your hands can never be solved because a piece or two were inadvertently left out.

Life is simply beautiful because it is full of surprises. In much the same way, God is beautiful because He is full of surprises. This is one lesson the second year novices learned after their recent Prayer and Discernment Seminar with Sr. Bet Azarcon, OND.

God indeed never fails to surprise me. At this point in my writing of this article, it suddenly occurred to me that what makes life different from the jigsaw puzzle is the fact that in the jigsaw puzzle, we have all the pieces at hand; our only task is to fit them together.

In life, however, God gives the pieces on installment basis and in an irregular way. By irregular, I mean, that He at one point gives only a piece, at another point a dozen or so – which could prove overwhelming. In some cases, the pieces are not delivered at all. When that happens, we simply have to wait.

Whenever you visit us in the novitiate, expect to see pieces of jigsaw puzzles all over the place. Please do not expect to see beautiful pictures. Not yet. We are all a work in progress. The telenovelas are still running.

This article even is but a piece of a jigsaw puzzle. And what is the jigsaw puzzle about? I could not tell you yet. Let's just put it this way: I will continue working on the pieces and you will know it when I am done. In the meantime, let me go on with watching my soap operas. ###



Br. Lindley Sionosa, FMS

NDMU-IBED sponsored the 3-day Marist Youth Festival which started on November 27th. Br. Nino drove the Marist School delegates to Marbel. Brs. Ernie and Ace also participated in the event with about 100 delegates from Lagao. In the evening, the SMSMs of the GenSan community tendered a *despedida* party for Sr. Tupau, SMSM. The Brothers and lay friends of the Sisters graced the occasion.

The Marbel Association of Religious-Clergy had its annual gathering in Labo Beach on November 30. It actually started in the afternoon the day before the 30th. The Lagao Brothers attended except Gilbert.

December Highlights:

Brother Manny left for Manila on his way to Hong Kong. He was to attend the celebration for the 55th Foundation Anniversary of Saint Francis Xavier College. The actual celebration was on the 3rd of December. He came back to Manila on the 5th to facilitate the opening of the 2nd Provincial Chapter of East Asia. The venue was at the St. Paul Spiritual Center in Alfonso, Cavite. This five-day event was for the delegates/capitulants to envisage the future of the Province for the next three years.

Br. Gilbert received the sad news of the death of his older brother, Agustin. He died at midnight of the 5th. He had been suffering from asthma. Br. Gilbert, together with the family of his niece, Edith Alforque, visited the wake at their residence in San Miguel, Norala. The community later joined him at the Mass and burial.

NDDU-IBED Lagao had its 2-day Music Festival held at the covered court.

The community was invited to a dinner to celebrate the 4th birthday anniversary of Gelyn's daughter, Mary Gayle at their family residence. Gelyn is the provincial secretary at the MPC.

Misa de Gallo ushered in the season of Christmas. The Brothers had the option to select the Mass schedules: 8:00 pm of the previous day, and 4:00 AM of the day.

The Lagao community attended the NDDU Institutional Christmas Party at the college covered court. Gifts were given to all attendees: Brothers, Sisters, and personnel of the school. ###

NOTES FROM MALUTOK



Br. Albert Bolibol, FMS

Manungang aldaw dimu u katanan! Greetings from Malutok Community!

Last April 2010 was the start of the new assignment after the retreat in Malaybalay. When I had the session with Br. Manny, he asked me if I was open to be assigned to Malutok. I told him that I was open to any assignment especially trying a new place and ministry.

To travel going to the new community, I had to take the bus in an eight-hour trip from Puerto Princesa City to Rizal. You have to pass through several municipalities with rough and uneven roads.

I started traveling at 5:00 in the morning and arrived at Ransang, Rizal at around 2:30 p.m. Frank and Enrit were at the highway to fetch me. They welcomed me with joy and after a few minutes of chat, we proceeded to the house in Malutok. From the highway to the community, we walked for at least 45 minutes. The place was scenic with tall trees, greenery and fresh air.

At night time, some people in the village came to welcome me. It was a touching experience. This is part of their culture when strangers from other places visit, they also pay a visit in return. They call it “panumbalay” which means “to visit”.

We started the year with the Operation Head Start (OHS) program for our incoming 1st year high school students and grade one pupils. It was quite hard to teach the children since I didn't know how to speak their language.

In the two months that I taught, I had my translator named Pingping, one of our “para-teachers” in Malutok. She translated what I was saying to the students and again translated back the students' response to me. It was hard since I was not used to have a translator when I teach. That's why I really tried my best to learn the language.

It was a heart-warming experience to live with the people who are poor in material things yet rich in the experiences of the heart. I felt really close to those associated with the poor in Jesus' time since I feel that the people are deprived of the necessities in life and they are even fooled by others in everything: trade, education, and the government. The parents were thankful to the Brothers and the para-teachers that their children are able to have education which they were deprived of when they were growing up.

My community consists of Larry, Frank and myself. I am thankful to both for their help especially when I was attacked by malaria for the first time. Frank took care of me at the hospital and gave me everything that I needed including some tips about malaria control. Larry later, replaced Frank in taking care of me. They were both very helpful and made sure I got well fast.

Despite all the fears and the things that happened to me in Malutok, there were lots of things that went very well with my life.

In addition to that, even the not so good events became part of me too. They add to the experiences that I can treasure in my life experience of how to be with the people in the manner of Marcellin. All the things that has been said about “the poor” made sense in Malutok for me. I had encountered the real poor of the Philippines.

Palawan is a paradise for those who are first timers there. However it is slowly transformed manipulatively by those in power like most of the places in the Philippines. The virgin forest is slowly exploited by the investors who take advantage of the riches of Palawan. The place is rich in copper and other important minerals; so mining is the booming and primary business. The sad part is that Palawan is not benefiting from it. The indigenous people are neglected; their rights to the land which is actually their own is not respected and eventually taken away from them.

“GO IN HASTE TO A NEW LAND... BUYO!”

We are happy to announce that this year we have opened our new mission extension in Palawan. We started last June at the same time when we started the school year in Malutok. We have selected Frank and our three Para-teachers to teach in Buyo. Our three Para-teachers are: Jullieta Busgo, Analia Puntas and Rosalyn Mahali. These women were instrumental in facilitating our mission in Palawan. They helped Br. Frank in teaching our pupils in Buyo.

Buyo is a five-hour walk from the Brothers’ community. The number of hours depends on how fast or slow you walk. There is no other means of transportation. It is located at the foot of Mount Mantalingahan Protected Landscape (MMPL) which was proclaimed as a protected area by the former President Arroyo through the Presidential Proclamation 1815, officially signed last June 23, 2009. The protected area covers nearly 120,000-hectares of land including endangered species of plants and animals.

I was at Buyo once and it was unforgettable. The people were nice. The climate was cool, very cold at night time. There were towering Ipil trees and all kinds of hardwood. You still hear different birds sing while you walk. Br. Frank commented, “it is a natural air condition.” The water is cold and crystal clear, ready to drink.

The brothers’ school made of bamboo and nipa is located on top of a hill. It was built by Lapno, a local expert in building houses. He was helped by the parents of the pupils there. It is a place that you want to visit but be careful of an insect called “tungaw” which is a very tiny insect and bites the most sensitive and hidden part of your body. You have to take a bath to remove it but you would suffer from irritation and itch.

The thing that I like in that place is the simplicity of life. Though people live in poor condition, they are still able to live happily and contented with what they have. Though the face of poverty is visible, they are still able to offer you their greetings of “good day” with a smile. They are amazing people in the way they live their life. Their place is where one can realize that there are greater things in life than material things we own; the things that only the heart can give.

CLOSING CEREMONY 2010

On December 18, 2010 we had our closing ceremony for the non-formal education for levels I and II pupils. The ceremony started at 9:00 AM and ended at around noon. As per required by the Department of Education for the non-formal education, we have completed 75 days of classes more than the required 57 days. This year we were joined by our Buyo extension for the first time. We had 21 students from that place and 30 students from Malutok. Previous to the closing ceremony, our graduating students from Buyo and Malutok had their tree planting led by Br. Larry. The purpose of the tree planting is to let the pupils realize that while they grow up they become aware of the importance of planting trees and its role in the biodiversity.

The ceremony was a great success through the help of the community. Preparations were done before the ceremony. The people helped in constructing the stage; cleaning the surroundings, cooking and making a place for the visitors to stay in case it rained. I observed unity among the people who hardly slept in the preparation.

I felt so excited since it was my first time to witness such a celebration.

I observed our students practice their piece for graduation especially in witnessing their traditional dance called “TAROK”. It is a dance which is accompanied with music by their traditional instruments and the foot sound of the dancers. They are using traditional musical instruments like “agong”, “sanang” and “gimbal”. The beauty of the dance is shown by the sound of the feet in synchrony with the sound of the musical instruments. This dance is done in their traditional house called “Tarokan”, a hut made of bamboo and cogon grass. The elevated flooring is made of sliced bamboo joined by small slices of rattan which they call “Lantay”. “Lantay” doesn’t have nails so that the sound of the feet is distinctly heard. But this time they did it on stage. They improvised the stage so that it fitted the occasion. It was not only our Malutok students who presented. Our students from Buyo also did.

They presented their specialty in music using their traditional musical instruments which I saw for the first time. Musical instruments like “aruding”, “pagang”, and “kudlungan”. “Aruding” is made of a piece of bamboo which they carefully crafted by hand. “Pagang” is a whole body of bamboo with six strings similar to guitars. “Kudlungan” is a two stringed guitar.

Of course, the ceremony is not concluded without the different messages of the people heading our mission there. I sensed a great deal of hope in their messages, hoping that through education, the lives of their children would become better. It was very encouraging to hear their leaders speak highly of the Brothers in their lives and in the lives of those we serve there.

Personally, I am very thankful for the opportunity of being one of the people who became a part of the people’s lives in Malutok. It is a great feeling to touch their lives and be touched by theirs in return. I brought nothing with me when I went there. Grateful and humble, I can say that I will bring so much experience when I leave the place. I have been touched by the way the people there cooperate and do their part in our mission. I have learned that there is nothing more important in the world than helping other people live their life and in return teaching me how to live life to the full. Being with the people there gives me fulfillment and grace. I felt close to those whom Jesus and Marcellin spoke of as “POOR”. Being with them is not heaven but I guess it is one of the ways we can experience heaven on earth.

MINDORO EXPOSURE

After a long December break, it was on January 10, 2011 that we left General Santos City via Manila for an exposure in Mindoro at the mission of the SVDs. This was part of our Community Life Plan to experience and learn from the SVD mission in Mindoro. On January 12 we left for Mindoro from Manila where we stayed for 2 days in Marikina.

We took the bus to Batangas city and from there, a ferry to Calapan City where we were fetched by Fr. Ewald Dinter, SVD He was in-charge of the Manyan Mission in Calapan. After a short chat, we proceeded to their mission house which was a few minutes away from the pier. Their community gladly welcomed us. The following day, he took us to their Manyan mission center and he introduced us to their staff and to our surprise, most of their staff was either from Mindanao and Manyans themselves. It was encouraging that these people are very committed to their work. Shortly after the tour, we had the orientation and sharing by Fr. Dinter. He shared to us his experiences at the Manyan mission and what he learned in the many years working with the Manyans.

There were many things that stuck to my mind., but there were two things I found very striking. First is the idea of mission which is actually learning from the people we serve. He emphasized, “Take off your sandals because you are stepping on a Holy Ground” meaning, that we have to leave ourselves behind before entering a mission. We have to respect the culture of the people. We have no right at all to say “I bring Christ or God to them” because before we stepped into their land, God or Christ was already there.

Second is the idea behind the term “NOMADS”. My idea of mission has been widened by his sharing especially on this term we usually refer to the Indigenous Peoples. We say that they are “NOMADS” but he retorted that the IPs are not nomads; instead, we the lowlanders are the nomads. It is because the lowlanders grab their lands.

Fr. Dinter and Fr. Norbert, both SVDs are the priests working with the IPs in Mindoro. Fr. Norbert took us next the day to the place where he works. It was almost a 2-hour travel from Calapan to reach his place.

TREE PLANTING PRIOR TO THE CLOSING CEREMONY

We were introduced to the staff of their TUGDAAN project, started by the Sisters many years back. It was their project for High School Manyan students.

The next day, we headed back to Calapan where Fr. Dinter took us to the place where he does his missionary work. First stop was Makangas; a place located in the mountains of Naujan.

We took a Bangka to cross and I was frightened because it was like a floating pail, without support on the sides. Knowing that Larry was as well frightened because it was his first, I just kept quiet because we were in the same boat. When we finally reached the place; we had Mass with the people. Later we had a chat with them.

After the Mass, we headed for Grand Vida; a 2-hour travel from Makangas, mostly on a rough road. The place was located on the highest and mountainous place in Mindoro. The place was cold, like any other places in the Philippines where IPs are located. It was a simple place where you could learn a lot. This was where one's love for the poor was tested and refined. The people there preserved their culture and practices. Some of them still wear g-strings. Simple and materially poor, the people, during the Mass, didn't hesitate to put something in the collection box even the single peso they have in their pockets. I was struck by their generosity. They were able to offer what they had even if it meant losing something that was very important because, I believe, they see giving as a value and they value generosity.

I went back to Calapan replete with so many experiences, hoping that I could give flesh to these experiences when I go back to Malutok. I may not have written everything in this article but I do believe that these experiences have made me a better person. ###

We affirm that **EVANGELIZATION** is the focus and priority of our ministries proclaiming Jesus and His message.

Document of 21st General Chapter



Marbel Community

by Br. Ted Fernandez, FMS

Graduating Students' Retreats at Durian Garden. Father Joe Facura facilitated the 7 group retreats of the IBED graduating students (4 sections in high school and 3 in sixth grade). Brothers Wency and Edgar were actively involved in these retreats. The last group had it last February 1st.

PAASCU grants accreditation to Graduate School and IBED. NDMU's quest for accreditation for the graduate school and IBED last August and October paid off when we got news of the accreditation last December. NDMU-IBED is re-accredited by PAASCU with level 2 status for 5 years. The FAAP level I status was granted for graduate school programs during the visit last August of 2010. The initial accreditation of 3 years is for PhD. in Educational Management, MA in Education, MPA and MBA. College programs in Business, Education, liberal Arts and Accountancy were looked into during the interim visit last September, 2010. This was only an evaluation in the areas of faculty and instruction 2 years after the results were released last 2008 of which we have complied majority of the recommendations. The Med Tech consultancy visit last September informed us of the readiness for formal accreditation after one year.

NDMU led in Athletic and Cultural Meets. The NDEA Tertiary Meet in October, Marist High School Meet and NDEA Elementary Meet in January, 2011 put NDMU among the leading contenders for the top Prize. The unexpected championship trophy garnered by our high school athletes during the Marist Meet on January 19 to 21 goes to prove that participation in "all events", as agreed, has its reward.

Brother Willy celebrates his birthday with the NDMU community as a culmination of the October Devotion. On October 28, 2010, the Brothers' community was assigned to receive Mary's statue as a final rest for the October Devotion which brought the image from different offices and faculty lounges of the university during the whole month. It was also the president's birthday. A moving prayer was prepared by the campus ministers and unexpected gifts of food for the "merienda cena" was enjoyed.

Thus, the 57th birthday of Willy was made memorable by the unexpected "agape meal".

Bro. Sen took off for the U.S. and Europe. Sen could not spend Christmas with us due to his visa appointment for France on the 23rd of December. He left in January for the U.S.; and met with the American Brothers who were with us in the past, particularly Brothers Jim Adams, Joseph Teston, Bernard Curtin, Alfred George, Kevin O'Neil, Paul Meuten and Jim McKnight. His 3-months stay enabled him to be connected with the older American monks. He plans to stay in France for a month to be with Bro. Allan. By summer he should be back among us to further his flourish.

The Marist Youth Festival at NDMU-IBED. The Marist Youth Festival was held at NDMU-IBED campus on November 27-28. Three Brothers worked hard in the planning, implementing, supervising and evaluating the festival. The presence of Brothers Edgar, Jeffrey (Cocoy) and Danny as over-all coordinators and the support of the Brothers in attendance from different schools sparked joyful enthusiasm among participants who came from all our Marist schools. We are grateful for the active participation of our novices, postulants and aspirants. Even our postulants with Br. Pepito from Ad Gentes Davao came to participate. An estimated 750 students joined the festival. Bro. Edgar showed his unique skills in facilitating his student leaders to run the show and to ensure a smooth flow of activities in the dizzying but prayerful events. Bro. Wency was the oldest participant; he showed his edifying calmed self for encouragement. Bro. Willy introduced his original BMC members of the old NDDC-HS who were among the founding members of his class some 20 years or so ago.



Br. Wency & some MYF advisers during the Youth Fest

Religious-Clergy Day 2010 held at Labo, Gensan. “MARC : Prophet of Hope Pushing for Corporate Responsibility Towards New Eden” was the theme chosen by the Marbel Association of Religious and Clergy. The gathering was held at the CP Beach resort at Labo, Gensan on November 29. The Marbel community attended along with the Dadiangas, Lagao and Aspirancy communities.

December Festivities for the School: The “Magnificat Festival” was held at the college ground for college students on December 7 and 8 culminating with a dawn Mass in honor of the Immaculate Conception feast after a 24-hour prayer festival. On December 15, a special meal for the house workers was tendered as our Christmas community party. A simple eat-out dinner was given for Brother Cris Sta. Ana for his birthday that evening. The Institutional Party for the NDMU personnel and retirees on December 17th required us to wear the cowboy/cowgirl attire. Someone remarked that the event’s attire was to honor the university mascot, the golden stallion, which was a favorite picture-taking background before the liturgy started. Pepe and Valmie Mariveles celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary last December 21. The community joined the Mariveles children, grandchildren and friends in that joyous affair. Valmie is the current head of NDMU CMMF group. She also assists in vocation promotion and recruitment. The Alumni Homecoming on the 27th, sponsored by Batch ’85, had a very good turn-out in attendance from Batch ’52 to the recent graduates. On the 28th, the community and about 60 personnel and friends of the jubilarians joined in celebrating Brother Crispin’s 50th and Brother Pepito’s 25th years as Marist Brothers at Lagao.

Brother Willy at ACUP Meeting and Celebration of UST’s 400th Year. As a member of the ACUP Board (Association of College and University Presidents), Brother Willy, along with the other board members, was treated by the UST president to attend the 3-day grand celebration of UST’s 400th year on January 26 to 28, 2011.



Signing of commitment from employees & involvement of students

Green University launched. NDMU’s years of aspiration has finally come to reality this year when it launched its Green University tenets along with the following “green schools” in Koronadal City: Green Valley College Foundation, ACLC- AMA, Marbel School of Science and Technology, St. Alexius College, Golden State College, International Cruise Ship College, Inc., City Environment and Natural Resources Office and the Justice and Peace – Social Action Committee of the city government. The launching was held at NDMU gym on February 3, 2011. Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez officiated the Mass along with the priests from the seminary. The local ustadz led the sambayan at the peace center and the protestant minister in another area.

A program followed with Bro. Willy giving an address. Messages of support from the representatives of the local and provincial government were also delivered. Representatives from CENRO and DENR were also present and facilitated the tree-planting activities of the students in the afternoon, covering the areas from the city proper to the Matulas area.

J-S Prom at the Farm: Brother Edgar’s penchant for “settling for the best” is shown in this affair where girls are in their gowns (ranging from the absurd Lady Gaga style to remarkable elegance) and the boys in their tuxedo or coat ‘n tie of various types... and the place at Marbel’s posh “The Farm” convention hall where you feel the Las Vegas ambience for that is what the whole affair is : “An Evening in Las Vegas – JS Prom 2011”. It might have looked like an “excess”, but there were so much education that was imparted that evening of February 11, ranging from the social graces to proper communication skills and the encouraging presence of the faculty and personnel as well as the administrators and Brothers. The transformation of these boys and girls to ladies and gentlemen was a project of Brother Edgar who has been at it for some years now. Congrats, Ed!

**NDMU:
Upholding a vision...
Fulfilling a mission.**

Ed-Com Visit: On February 16 to 18, the Marist Education Committee, led by Brother Brix Baynosa visited the school, both the IBED and College. He was joined by Dr. Gerry Rignonan (NDKC), Dr. Jo-an Solomon (NDKC), Dr. Angie Undar (NDC), Mrs. Angie Francisco (NDDU-IBED), Mrs. Agnes Gandolfo (NDC), Mr. Edwin Doyo (NDDU), and Mr. Joe Nacienceno (Marist Marikina). The group interacted with our community at meals and was accommodated at the school campus and convent.

Theological Updating by Fr. Irvin, OMI. During the University's "Sacred Time" last February 22, all the personnel (college and IBED) came in full force to the Champagnat hall where Fr. Irvin gave his interesting theological updating in the morning and celebrated the Mass in the afternoon. Prayer sharing and reflection by departments followed.

Welcome Brothers from MAPAC. Starting March 14, the young Brothers at MAPAC with their formators stay at NDMU for the summer.###



Like Magellan, I discovered the Philippines

By Bro. Columbanus Pratt, FMS

(This is an early account of his early experiences at NDMU, MAC & MAPAC published in his personal life story and reflections, Down Memory Lane, Part II, Province of Melbourne, September 2000.)

I arrived in Manila early in January 1980. Brother James Adams, a young American Marist (and a Biology major), was the Business Manager at Notre Dame of Marbel College, our largest establishment in the Philippines. NDMC as it was known then, was for me, a rather unique institution for, on its campus located at Koronadal (also called Marbel), some 9,000 students were enrolled – about 5,000 tertiary young men and women (Marist), 1,000 high school and 1,000 primary boys (Marist), 1,000 high school and 1,000 primary girls (Dominican Sisters).. NDMC has since become a university and it is now NDMU and its numbers have increased very significantly.

When the 1980-1981 academic year began in June, I found myself the Development Officer with a working-student secretary. There was no government assistance for private institutions then and financing a huge establishment was a problem. Many of the students came from very poor farming backgrounds and had to work to pay for their own tuition. And before you could sit for an exam at the end of a semester, tuition fees had to be paid. It sounds tough but it was necessary if NDMC was to survive. To help the poor, the Grant-in-Aid scheme had been a going concern for a few years when I arrived. Those young men and women from poor families, after qualifying, were signed on as working students. They would do four hours work per day and for this they were paid. By our standards it was precious little, but it enabled them to pay their tuition and board (most boarded in crummy lodgings nearby). The family would provide a sack of rice per month for their food. These young people lived hard but they knew how to work and had no problems finding employment after graduation. They were always so cheerful and were delightful company. They captured me completely. You could not help loving them.

The teaching method (they were tertiary students but I taught rather than lectured) was new to me. They were used to learning by rote and rarely if ever did they ask questions. Teachers were held in high regard and I could never get them to question me even though I urged them to do so. Outside the classroom you could talk freely with them but it was all one-sided once the lesson began. My classes (Physics, Organic and Physical Chemistry for the Science undergraduates, General Science for the teachers in training and Geology for the engineers) were mostly small (except for the trainee teachers), as few were attracted to Science. Civil Engineering attracted more students for most Filipinos are very gifted handymen and love working with their hands. And interestingly, girls considerably outnumbered the boys in all Departments of the College except Engineering. College classes were conducted morning, afternoon and evening and concluded at 8:30 pm, after which the campus closed down for the night and security guards (with guns) patrolled (or slept if not supervised!).

Filipinos and Filipinas really love singing and dancing, both of which are firmly implanted in their culture. The Christians sing and dance to cheerful, catchy music with smiling faces and bewitching movements. The Muslims are more serious and unsmiling, unmoved faces and slower but very graceful movement. When I arrived at Marbel there was no singing group on campus. My office was under the seating accommodation in the huge gymnasium and there was a piano and plenty of room for a choir to practice. I put the word about the campus and in next to no time, we had some forty eager young men and women all wanting to join our singing group. I was lucky enough to land a most talented (but hard to get on with) lady who knew her music well and was an excellent singing teacher and capable accompanist. She was put on the payroll and we began operations.



With the participants of Religion Institute in the '80s

There was already a well-established and talented “Kariktan” Dance Troupe on campus and the “Tambuli Singers” (as we became known) set out to rival them.

Mary-Jean, the lady in charge of our music, taught part-singing as though it was as easy as pie so that nothing was too hard to attempt, even Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus, That’s the Filipino approach to singing – it’s a cake walk! They sailed through each song and soon the Singers had acquired a substantial repertoire. We sang at a campus Mass each Thursday afternoon and at a Cathedral Mass once a month. We put on a song-and-dance show each semester and raised some finance for the Singers. Their tastes were simple and loved a gallon can of ice cream after hectic rehearsals. Producing our own back drops and stage props gave scope to the artistically talented young people in the group. We planned to stage a full-blown musical and eventually joined forces with the Kariktan Dancers in presenting “The King and I”. This was so successful that we took it to Suralla and General Santos City not far away. With a few keen musical Marist Brothers, we organised for the first time ever a competitive “Marist Songfest”, at which our five Mindanao colleges and high schools competed and enjoyed. This was held annually for three years but folded up after I left Marbel. I left my heart behind with the Tambuli Singers. Fifteen years down the track, I still keep in touch with a number of them.

With the assistance of Brother Wency Calimpon, the NDMC president, the Project Proposal for a huge new Science block was written and forwarded to the funding agency, USAID. Overseas educational establishments founded by Americans and having a quota of Americans still associated with it, were eligible for this assistance. Marbel was eligible and our application was accepted and funding granted to the tune of a few million dollars. The good news came through just before I left Marbel for home in mid-1986. Eighteen months later, on a Sister School visit to Marbel with Notre Dame of Shepparton students, I helped turn the first sod for the building.

Completed, it consists of two parallel four-storeyed wings joined at its western end with a 400 seat theatre and towards the middle of the wings, a second floor flyover. It has given a tremendous boost to campus facilities and to institutional morale. It is one of the showpieces of educational institutions in Mindanao. Mindanao, by the way, is half as big again as Tasmania and has the population of Australia and many tertiary institutions.

Philippine Colleges and Universities remain open in the summer vacation for all sorts of catch-up courses. It also ensures that teachers are able to earn, as there was then no holiday pay for them. I was asked to take over the Religion Summer Institute, a six-week course designed to help high school teachers improve their RE background. The General Council provided US\$5000 each year and sent it one year in advance. I used to deposit it with a Chinese money man, George Lee, an old scholar of the Brothers in Shanghai, and he would invest it for us at around 25%. Interest rates were high then. That meant I had around \$6,000 a year later to fund the course. Teachers were poor and underpaid and with this funding I was able to give free board and lodging to around 36 teachers for those 6 weeks. They came from all over the back blocks of Mindanao on a “first apply/first in” scheme. They had to pay for their own transport and then we would look after their board and lodging. We even had enough to give each one little spending money. They lived in what was the scholasticate building, the scholastics being on their summer break, We employed a few locals – cook, kitchen hand and cleaner – and we all became one big, happy family – Filipinos are very good at that.



With the Tambuli Singers of NDMC

“The Last Fling”

Shopping around the Catholic universities (of which there are many, all run by religious orders), each year I would book well in advance, two or three different lecturers – Doctrine, Church History, Liturgy, Liturgical Singing, Mortal Theology, Scripture, etc. They would join our big family for one, two or three weeks and pass on to the teachers of their expertise. I always made sure we had one of our Australian Marists as a key speaker and they were always so well accepted in the family circle. From memory, these were our visiting guest lecturers: Brothers Des Crowe, Kevin Treston, Tony Clark, Kieran Geaney and Fergus McCann. They gave much and I am sure they received much in return. I was grateful to the two Australian Provincials who footed the transport bill from Australia to Marbel and never charged us for the time the visitors spent with us. One other thing I forgot to mention. I always made sure I had a good friend at the Australian Embassy in Manila and each year I would apply for and receive \$1000 for our “Values Summer Programme”. With this extra money, we could give participants at least one RE text book each to take back with them for most had no means of buying one for themselves. In hindsight, I am sure this was the most fruitful part of my Marbel apostolate. The teachers arrived with hands outstretched for assistance and we were able to give them plenty.

Early in 1986 I wrote to the Provincial, now Brother Des Crowe, and asked if I could return to the Melbourne Province at the end of the local 1985-1986 school year and Summer Classes. He gave his permission and suggested I detour through Korea and visit the Brothers there on my way home. This visit turned out to be very useful as a few years later, I was to meet and live in community with numbers of young Korean Brothers at Marist Asian Centre in Manila and I had some background knowledge of their home land and their culture. I arrived home in August 1986 after nearly seven fulfilling years in the Philippines and joined the community at Sacred Heart College. On returning to my native land after this rather long absence in a Third World country, I experienced a rather severe culture shock.

Br. Col's last photo taken in Adelaide last August, 2010 with Br. Ted and Mrs Jima E. Balchand, an NDMC alumna.



In 1990 I was sent to the newly conceived Marist Asian Center at Marikina on the outskirts of Manila. I did not mind returning to my beloved Philippines.

In February 1991 the General Council decided to set up on that campus, a post-Novitiate training centre for our young Asian Brothers as they had done previously in Nairobi for our African Provinces. The decision had been taken somewhat hastily and a few experienced formation staff were available. I was to be Dean of Studies and as it turned out, Project Supervisor of the multi-million peso construction as well.

In May, just before the commencement of the new academic year, 1991-1992, the young Brothers arrived from Korea, Malaysia Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and the Philippines. There were 25 of them if my memory is correct. We were all jammed into the Brothers two-storeyed house. (The local Brothers community were temporarily housed a few streets away.) Thus commenced the Marist Asian Centre. The actual building began late in 1992 and was not finally completed until late in 1993.

Manila was then having severe electricity supply difficulties and day after day there was no power for long periods. The rainy season seemed to last for eternity, and twice a day I would climb into my gumboots and head across to the building site to check progress. For the uninitiated there were so many problems. It always helped to bribe; I did not hold with that but it got you places! The only outfit that was faithful to contract was the Focolare's furniture factory in a nearby suburb. True to their contract, they supplied the furniture on time and at contract price. The builder turned out to be a crook and walked out on us before completing the construction. And woe is me, when the day came for the Blessing and Opening of the new Marist Asian Centre, so did a typhoon. The ceremonies were carried out indoors, but

everyone was happy as Superior General, Brother Charles Howard, was our Guest of Honour and we (Mittagong Class of '41) celebrated our belated Golden Jubilee as well.

I returned home (Adelaide) in December 1993 and took up residence at Sacred Heart College again, this time as archivist, an assignment I had been hoping to snare for the past decade. (Bro. Col stayed at the nearby retirement residence until his death) ###

In Loving Memory of

Brother Columbanus Pratt F.M.S.
 Born 13 December 1924
 Died 19 February 2011
 A Marist Brother for 69 Years

Second best was never acceptable
 Shared his love for singing with so many
 A man who made friends wherever he taught
 Marist Brothers Somerton Park Community

Mass of Thanksgiving
 25 February 2011
 For the life of

Brother Columbanus Neil Richard Pratt
 Born into this life: 13 December 1924
 Entered eternal life: 19 February 2011
 Marist Brother for 69 years

Sacred Heart College Chapel
 Celebrants:
 Archbishop Leonard Faulkner
 Monsignor Robert Egar

Marikina Community

By Br. Rommel Ocasiones, FMS



The school year is about to end and my task is to try my best to paint a picture of our community for the past ten months. Since I failed to write something about our community in the last issue, I have to cram everything for now. THE MARIKINA COMMUNITY...

We started the school year with five community members: Pat, Arman (a.k.a. Mamay), Chris, Rommel and Joey. It's no secret now what happened to Joey and it seems we are still at a loss explaining what eventually happened. Pointing fingers to who was/were responsible or what finally tipped him to leave without proper communication would surely lead nowhere. We leave it to everyone to formulate their own hypotheses as to what happened. So by middle of August we were less one member.

On the last week of June a novice from Tamontaka graced us with his presence by staying with us for ten weeks. Ismael Catulong (a.k.a. Maeng) had pretty much become a community member, though we're aware that his short stint was just a form of immersion to community and ministry life. He engages everyone, including the house pets, which show his enthusiasm and kind spirit to everyone. We surely missed his presence after he was gone. There were a lot of things that only Maeng manage to do well within the precinct of the house, and that left a dent in our community. Anyway we will see him soon – that's his own words.

Chris is one of the two resident student brothers staying in the community. In previous years he was staying within his school premise at Institute for Consecrated Life in Asia (ICLA) in Quezon City. It was only this year that he stayed for a prolonged period of time in Marikina. Aside from concluding his M.A. thesis he too became engrossed in planting vegetables, which benefitted the community with its produce, and ornamental plants. His vermicasting project eventually led him to plant more. His love for plants does not end in getting his hands dirty but also in getting his hands on the keyboard of the computer.

You could ask him more about plants vs zombies since I believe he is more verse in that popular game. Since the beginning of the year he decided to go back to ICLA to concentrate further on his thesis. At most he visits the community once a week. His absence also left a certain dent in the animation of the community since Chris brings something that only he can provide.

The other student brother, Rommel (a.k.a. Oca), is currently working in the school as a substitute teacher. Well he managed to talk his way in going back to the classroom, suspending his studies. The reason/s is only known to him and the superiors. The departure of Joey gave way to this arrangement. Aside from teaching commitment he engages himself in looking after the house pets. So far the pets consist of: 2 dogs (though for those who have been in the community they will surely notice the favoritism between the dogs), a couple of carnivorous fishes, and a handful of unwelcome cats. The dogs and fishes are something that delights some guests that somehow substitute the presence of the brothers who are busy with something or anything. Anyway, Rommel had somehow understood the cliché take care of animals and you will live long. According to him you are likely to live long because you'll be forced to walk the dogs and clean tanks for hours – in other words you're forced to exercise (as if that will make him healthy with his lifestyle).

Arman, the community assistant superior, was one of the new additions to the community membership from last year. At the beginning of the school year he attended a workshop on Clinical Pastoral Education in Davao for a couple of months. As a former participant I believe it was a good exercise in exorcising the past so as to cleanse the present. I wonder if that led me to that direction.



Continuation... “The Marikina Community...”

Anyhow, since he came back to the community he had managed to keep himself busy, i.e. supervising the community compound. Being his usual self he made alterations of some arrangements that he deem needing improvement and so uses his initiative to make those changes happen. As a person of habit he engages himself to routine exercise, rest, recreation and work. He becomes the community conscience when it comes to the house’s internal affairs.

The last member of the community (as it was known from the start) is Pat. Well, Pat is not only the community superior and school president but also plays different hats for the province and the locality. Given the multiple responsibilities he has he is always the first man out and the last man in, i.e. the first to leave the house and the last one to arrive almost every day. At times when he is not bogged down by his schedule he manages to pull out his personal hats of being a competitive tennis player and creative chef. Aside from that he sometimes play father Christmas for the community members sharing his excess goods that he usual receive as a gift from others. That usually smears a smile in everyone’s face. Lately he’s been following a certain tele-novella that is shown in the evening. It has nothing to do with his changing viewing taste but rather inspecting the locations in the show that uses the school grounds. So far it seems that was only the thing that interests him.

Aside from the names mentioned above we usually receive many transient and long staying visitors that brushes more color to our already vibrant community canvas. Among those who had/have stayed with us for a prolonged period of times are: Santos Garcia [mission ad gentes], Wency Calimpon [preparing for Korea], Rosendo Yee [preparing for Sabbatical leave] and Manuel Uluan [after his MAPAC contract]. I mentioned them since they too made a certain impact in the community bringing with them their charisma.

Manny U was an unexpected addition and had also made an unexpected departure. When he had just transferred all his things from MAPAC to our community he learned that he needs to pack them all again to be shipped out. He has not warmed his seat yet and then...life of a missionary.

Another long staying visitor who is still with us now and stays till March is Francisco Song (a.k.a. Kiko). He joined us last November after his MAPAC studies to do his practice teaching at Marist School. A Korean brother who has proclaimed that he enjoyed his years in the country and hoping to be assigned in it in the near future, Kiko was an animated person from the day he entered the door of the community. Most kids would know him since he is a visible presence on campus talking with everyone and even performing magic tricks for them. He is a reminder, for the rest of us, of the “international face” of the province. From time to time we also get Korean treat from him taking initiatives to prepare his native dishes. He usually says that he has a lot of things to learn from us and his immediate surroundings, but I could attest that we could also say the same thing about him. So we thank him and congratulate him for his graduation at Marbel in March.

The second half of the school year has been busy for all of us in the community as it was at the beginning. Before the year end the community was actively involved in the preparation for the 2nd Provincial Chapter. Everyone in the community had a hand to play, from the preparation to the actual event and even after the affair. It was a welcome distraction from the usual routine in the community though it entails more work.



The flock of visitors during that time was numerous that we have to borrow a housing facility at MAPAC to accommodate everyone. Chris and Arman made sure that those things were ironed out. The rest of it is history now but we took pleasure in that activity.

At the beginning of the New Year everyone seemed to be busier than before. I think it had something to do with the coming end-of-the-school year. Like a marathon runner the final stretch is where all the energy, or what is left of it, is poured. Personnel's Day was another favorable distraction that happened at the end of January. It was a two-day affair in the school where students take care of teaching chores on the first day and on the second day was devoted entirely in honoring personnel who had made certain contribution to the institution.

The following day the newly constructed building and playground was inaugurated. The beautifully constructed hexagonal center contains offices and conference rooms to give more breathing room from the old faculty room. An elegant and restful landscape were planned to complement the structure. Not far from it, a new playground was created. This is new in a sense that the play materials were of new technology, which incorporate safety with fun. Personnel, parents and guests were delighted to see these new arrangements and for the school we are hoping a revitalization of enrollment for the pre-schoolers and lower year levels.

In the middle of February the school celebrated a three-day High School fair. This serves as a final activity for all students and to somehow energize them before the excruciating final projects and exams. The affair was culminated by a family day celebration, which included a bingo games for everyone and a variety show for those who are young at heart. The whole 3 days program was so intense and tiresome that Pat had declared a rest day the following Monday – which drew more cheers to everyone.

For now we are all gazing towards the finish line, though we're still counting weeks, we all know it's just a heartbeat away. Soon school year 2010-2011 will just be a memory of the past, a history in the life of everyone that has something memorable to hold unto.

###

General Councilors' Visit to East Asia Province

Br. John Klein, FMS (JK)
Br. Michael De Waas, FMS (MDW)

Beijing, China:

March 21 to 24 (JK)

Seoul, Korea:

March 23 (MDW)/24 (JK) to April 2

Osaka, Japan:

April 2 to April 4 (JK & MDW)

Hong Kong:

April 4 to April 7 (JK)

Singapore:

April 7 to April 10 (JK)

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia:

April 10 to April 16 (JK & MDW)

Manila, Philippines:

April 16 to April 24 (JK & MDW)

Retreat at Malaybalay

April 24 (JK) to Manila

April 29 (JK) Manila

Departure from Manila:

May 6 (JK & MDW)

We want to see the world through
the eyes of poor children and young people
and thus change our hearts and attitudes
as Mary did.

Document of 21st General Chapter

Continuation from page 17... “The Kidapawan...”

So I parked my luggage inside the room and tried to find some food to eat. I had no breakfast and lunch so I resolved to have my dinner. Dodong, the driver, said that I should go to the gymnasium for there would be a party to celebrate the occasion. Without hesitation I went. When I arrived at the gymnasium, the Mass was still going on.

Br. Joseph Adrian Cagampan, one of the young brothers of our province approached me as well as one of the Oblate Sisters (OND) whom I knew way back in General Santos City, Sr. Esther Rule. She brought me to the place where the Brothers were. But I was hungry and so I told her to bring me where I could scrounge some food. She brought me to the caterer and I happily had my first dinner that night.

After I finished eating I went back to the gymnasium to finish the Mass. Immediately after the Eucharist, a program was started. Fortunately the program did not last long and dinner was announced. Since I was still hungry, I had my second dinner. By the time, the third part of the program came, I was full and satisfied. I was able to endure the awarding ceremony. During the talk of Br. Briccio, I was introduced to the people inside the gymnasium. I do not know if that introduction sunk in. But I was happy not to be a stranger anymore in this place. The brothers who were in the gymnasium were Brothers from Cotabato (Ador, Xyryx and Job) and from the Novitiate (Joe, Rene and John Tan of China Province). It was a memorable first night in Kidapawan.

The following day, I had my first trip to Lake Agco after 1988. Twenty-three years ago, I climbed the famous Mt. Apo with Br. James Adams, Br. Mark Gillogly, the former Br. Elmor Tacogue, Ms. Irene Paterno, Mr. John Humprey of Ford Foundation and Sr. Patricia Leamey, SMSM. One of our stopovers was Lake Agco. At that time, I was still in my late 30s and so I had the stamina to climb. This time, the trip to the Lake was a breeze. We used the Vocation Director’s car to reach it. I was with the Novitiate community and Job in this outing. It was one experience that I would like to repeat in the future. Imagine having to have a spa and a Jacuzzi all for only 30 pesos! Where in the world could one get that cheap?

In just one week of my stay in Kidapawan, I was able to visit places like Davao (twice), Marbel (twice) and Dadiangas (twice). I had been out of circulation from the Marist Philippine main stream that I guess I was just hungry to get connected with the former Philippine Province – now a sector of the East Asia Province. I was amazed of the great developments in NDMU and NDDU as well as that of the city of General Santos. I could just remember this sleepy fishing village in 1965 when I first visited the place. My goodness, I could no longer see the traces of the old Dadiangas except in pictures. In contrast, although there were some improvements in the city of Kidapawan from the first time I saw it in 1965, it remained a quaint and quiet place just like in the good old days. Traces of urbanity are sprouting everywhere but the Kidapawan timeline remains as before – slow pace and unconscious of time limits. This is a nice place to relax and to enjoy life if you want peace and quiet. But of course – the school needs to run efficiently and effectively. Thus, for the school to be at par with the other Marist schools, it needs to fast track its improvements not only in facilities and programs but also in the way people move in this environment.

I am not saying that NDKC is not moving but I guess it needs to be more aggressive in its recruitments of students and in developing its programs to be more attractive to its present clientele. I just have barely less than two months in this place but I am already seeing some needed improvements for the sake of the people and of the congregation. There are a lot of gems of people and resources here and all we need is really to push the stake deeper and the bar higher to fulfill what we envision NDKC to be. ###



The Notre Dame of Kidapawan College



New MAPAC Rector

The official announcement about our new Rector was made by the vicar general himself, Br. Joe McKee, during his last visit in October 2010. He is no other than Br. Peter Rodney, one of the general councilors of the previous general administration. Br. Peter belongs to the Sydney Province. He arrives to MAPAC on March 10, 2011.

Meanwhile our outgoing rector, Br. Desmond Howard (Melbourne Province), leaves MAPAC on April 1, 2011.

MAPAC Brothers' Summer in Mindanao

Every two summers, MAPAC Brothers visit the schools and communities of Philippine Sector of East Asia Province. In 2009, although we were based at the Sacred Heart Brothers Retreat House in Catalunan Grande, Davao City due to unavailable accommodation in Marbel, the student Brothers were able to visit Lagao, Dadiangas, Marbel, Kidapawan and Buda communities.

On March 14, twenty-one student Brothers accompanied by Br. Roshan, arrive in Marbel to stay at the Formation Center formerly known as Marist Scholasticate. The first activity while in Marbel is to spend 8 days of immersion among the T'bolis at the three sites near Lake Sebu. They return to Marbel on time for the college graduation on the 25th.

Community visitation this summer takes on a new form. Instead of going to communities in groups of three or four, we do it as a group. We are visiting Tamontaka, Cotabato, Kidapawan, Lagao, Dadiangas and Katangawan. The visits are just for a day except in Tamontaka where we sleep overnight.

Our annual community outing and retreat are also in Mindanao. Our overnight outings are at Lake Sebu and the other on a family beach in Glan, Sarangani. Our annual retreat is at the Jesuit Retreat House in Malaybalay on April 24-30.

One of the two summer modules is in Marbel. Br. Brix handles the course in Catechetics at NDMU. When we return to MAPAC in May, another module is facilitated by Fr. Edgar Javier, SVD on Inter-Religious Dialogue.

The 18 to 20 incoming first year student Brothers are expected to come on May 23.

New Dean

After months of waiting, finally our new dean of studies, Br. Rustico Lumbo, arrived on January 15, 2011. After his 11 year stint as Master of Novices in Tamontaka Br. Rus spent five months in Euntes program in Zamboanga on Mission Formation and Spirituality from July 3 to November 27, 2010. He was one of the 17 participants coming from Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, Myanmar, Thailand and the Philippines and the first Filipino to be in this program.

Br. Manny Uluan, our outgoing dean, stayed for a while with the Marist School-Marikina community before proceeding to his new assignment in Kidapawan on Feb. 1, 2011.

MAPAC Website

For other stories and happenings at MAPAC, visit us at www.mapac-marist.org. Br. Udara (Sri Lanka) is our webmaster. He is a member of our Communication Committee.



Filipino Brothers at MAPAC

Standing L-R:

Cocoy Gavilan, Roy Arpon, Jong Acosta, Rus Lumbo (Dean of Studies) and Nelson Beltran. **Seated L-R:** Maq-Maq Romero, Noynoy Sisneros, and Raymund Gallardo

Photo taken by: Romy Porras (Bursar)



The Novitiate Community

By Br. Jo-an Legaste, nFMS

We Filipinos are always excited to end the year and face the New Year. If there are special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, fiestas, etc., we always prepare something. No matter how small the preparation is, what is important is that we gather around the same table, sharing our blessings and experiences. Here in the novitiate, this tradition runs in the blood of everyone. Like other communities, we celebrate special events. I would like to give you a rundown of our activities here in the Marian Hills.

Let me start with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8. This is a fiesta in Marian Hills. As you know we are composed of three congregations, all Marian in spirit—the OMI, OND and FMS Communities. Our novitiate community celebrated Mass with the ND Cotabato family in the morning. In the afternoon, we joined the children of Kasiglahan for a simple salu-salo. It was on a Wednesday, the day of our weekly apostolic activity. A simple program and simple merienda was all it took to make the day meaningful.

For the Christmas season, the novices had a Centerpiece Contest (Crib-set making, using indigenous materials). We were divided into six groups of three: Clint, Roel and Jo-an; Pau, Alejandro and Jeff; Ian, Efren and Jojo; Jepoy, Melvin and Fred; Jano, Aldous and Nester; and, Isma, Dolph and Rowell. The centerpiece entries were in by December 17 and the judging was done the next day. Invited to be in the jury were Sr. Rita, OND, Br. Noel, OMI, Kuya Butch of the Grotto, and two OND novices, Sr. Mia and Sr. Leah.

The winners of the Centerpiece contest were declared by Br. Rene on December 22, during our community Christmas party. Isma's triad won the 3rd prize, Clint and company won 2nd prize and Ian's team got the 1st prize.

December 18 was the Marian Hills Mission Partners' Christmas party. The three communities and their respective collaborators gathered at the Marist novitiate for the whole day affair with the theme, "Sa Misyon Tayo'y Iisa, sa Pasko Tayo'y Sama-sama" (In the mission we are one, at Christmas we are together). The celebration started in the morning with a program which featured parlor games and presentations. After the luncheon was the gift-giving to the Mission Partners.

The Marist novitiate community had its Christmas party on December 22. It began in the evening after supper. There was a short program. Our special guests were Mr. and Mrs. Mike and Angie Undar of NDC and KM, our companion in the postulancy. We played games, sang with the videoke and exchanged gifts.

We had a quiet Christmas Day. Only seven of us were left in the novitiate: 5 novices (Jojo was in Davao) and Br. Rene. Br. Joe, Br. Lindley and the second year novices went home for the holidays. While it was a day of rejoicing, we somehow felt lonely because for most of us, it was the first time to celebrate Christmas away from our families. But of course, our Marist family somehow filled that gap.

On January 1, we had a simple salu-salo, the six canonical novices and Br. Rene.





The novices keeping up with the news

January 2 was a very significant day, being the 194th year of our foundation as an Institute. We joined the rest of the Marist world in that celebration. We had a liturgy in the afternoon with our mission partners, some aspirants, the Brothers and some teachers, some visitors from NDC, Br. Joe, Br. Lindley and the second year novices who arrived that same day joined us also. The significant part of the prayer experience was the procession of the picture of St. Marcellin and the statue of Mary from the chapel to the receiving room where the History of the Institute particularly of the Philippine sector was read. Dinner capped the celebration.

We were graced by the presence of Br. Manny from January 14 to the 16th during his official visitation. Each of us had the chance to talk to him individually.

The Marian Hills Formation Community (membership extends to the RNDM's) culminate the year with the Integration Day. Last February 10-11, we all went to Glan, Sarangani Province for this activity. We were very fortunate to have been accommodated by the sister and brother-in-law of Br. Ted in their family resort. It was a very enjoyable time for rest and relaxation, in addition to time spent for reflecting on the experiences of the formation year. ###



The Novices during manual work

Br. Pepito's Jubilee Thanksgiving Message

In behalf of Br. Crispin, my co-jubilarian, Br. Manny de Leon, Superior of East Asia Province and the community present here, I would like to thank you, Most Rev. Orlando Quevedo for presiding our Eucharistic Celebration today. And you, Fr. Larry (SM)... your presence reminds me of the friendship among the members of the Marist Family. Thank you very much.....

To you all: Namaste.... !

With the opportunity to say something, I would like to share with you three short stories.....

1. "The Community Filled What My Family Missed..."

My father was not a Catholic.... my mother was Episcopalian and became a Catholic only when my sister and I joined the religious life... and all of us grew up in a Moslem-dominated province of Lanao del Sur. The Catholic faith was introduced to my family through catechism classes in public schools..... as a consequence, my first three siblings were baptized when they were at the age of 9, 10 and 11...

One day in 2008 on my way to India for mission, I visited Fr. Kevin McHugh, a Columban priest, in Malate. He asked me one disturbing question.... "How come that two of you became religious considering the fact that your parents were not Catholics....?" For Fr. Kevin, it was a question of wonder.... but for me, it was disturbing.... since I could not give him the answer that time. Now that he is with us today, I am ready to answer the question. I hope he will give me a grade to my answer.... later.. with a passing mark...

I started to look beyond those 25 years as a Marist Brother.... and it led me to the place where I was born and grew up..... in Malabang, Lanao del Sur. (Continued on p. 44)



The Jubilarians with other Marist Brothers

MARCELLIN FOUNDATION INC.

(From Br. Crispin's Homily)

20th Foundation Anniversary

THEME CELEBRATE GOD'S GENEROSITY

January 28, 2011

"Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen..." Hebrew 11:1-2)

Anniversary..., it is a time of quiet reflection upon the past and an annual reminder that God has, again, been ever faithful.

It is the time for "Thanksgiving." And thanksgiving prompts the spirit of humility; genuine gratitude to God for his mercy, his abundance, his protection, his smile of favour. At this time we count our blessings, and we run out of time before we exhaust the list.

In old Anglo-Saxon, to be "thankful" meant to be "thankful." Thinking of one's blessings should stir one to gratitude.

Just like Abraham who saw the promised land, but never really get to enjoy it, many children have been seeking a new homeland, something different from what they have experienced, a land of suffering, of hunger, of neglect, of abuse; a land of no hope.

But where and when did hope come to these children? When friends, benefactors through Marcellin came to offer them the opportunity to get into new homeland.

Twenty years ago, Marcellin started on this "accidental" apostolate... and since then it has been one accident after another... Accidents or incidents that manifested God's desire for these children.

We had no funds, no facility, and no sponsors when we agreed to accept the first ten (10) children from CSWDO. It was an act of faith, believing in the goodness of God, and in the benevolence of God's people of General Santos City, believing in God's abundance and protection, and in God's smile of favour on the children.

For, wasn't it Christ himself who said, "Let the children come..."

With Mary, at the time of the finding of the Child Jesus in the temple, we at Marcellin strive to find Jesus in every child.

In the late 1930's the Oblate Fathers were entrusted the mission field of the then empire province of Cotabato and Sulu. They were led by an intrepid and holy man, a man of faith and vision, the late Archbishop Gerard Mongeau. He was the one who invited the Marist Brothers from the US to come and join the Oblate Fathers in their missions. Things were rough then, and funds were minimal. The early settlers and pioneers in this new Land of Promise, as Cotabato was then called, experienced the hardships of establishing themselves here. Many of our parents know this because they have experienced such difficulties. However, Archbishop Mongeau had as a motto "Deus Providebit..." God will provide!

I knew Archbishop Mongeau personally, when I was a young boy growing up in Cotabato City. He was a friend of my parents, a family friend. I admired him then and still do now.

Archbishop Mongeau's faith is manifested in his motto "Deus Providebit." I can certainly say that this is true in the case of Marcellin Foundation... God did provide! We had faith, and our faith that this way was Mary's work, that this was God's work. That faith was awarded with generosity.

There were times when we were wondering where will we get the next meal... and sure enough the answer came in gifts from friends and benefactors...

What you see here today on this campus are all gifts from you, and from many others, from other countries who sympathize with our cause.

When we came to this property of the late Gloria Yumang-Ramos, we lived in an old farm house, and did not have the convenience of electricity, or many other necessities. Today we are blessing a new house which stands on the site of that old farm house... The new house is not yet complete, it is still an on-going project... but we have decided to stick to our schedule of the blessing. We know that Deus Providebit, and our faith tells us it will be completed in time.

Today, then, allow me to thank all of you... friends, benefactors, co-workers, volunteers, mission partners, Marist Brothers and Marist Sisters... for journeying with us, for encouraging us and supporting our mission. You have become part of faith that "Deus Providebit."

Marcellin's Vision is: Children who value life and who strive to live it meaningfully.

Maraming salamat po for helping these Marcelinos achieve this goal...

On January 29, 2011 the celebration of Marcellin Homes' 20th year was highlighted with a Mass, blessing of the new Juan Miguel building and a program prepared by the staff and boys of Marcelin Homes.

Twenty years ago, on January 26, 1991, Br. Crispin started the endeavor to reach out to the street children (children at risk) of General Santos. As president of NDDC, now NDDU, he took the initiative of housing the new occupants at the newly-bought house and lot in block I of Dadiangas Heights. The house and property were later on used by the OND sisters working at the college.

The street children stayed there for a month. The bishop availed of the unused concrete building near the parish church in Dadiangas. This became the "Balay Pasilungan" (safe house for them). That summer their residence moved to Lagao in what was then the Obed Hall, now the canteen of NDDU-IBED. The boys stayed there for a month and a half.

That same year, Mrs. Gloria Yumang Ramos availed of her land in Katangawan for the use of Br. Crispin's project to rehabilitate the street children to a more conducive environment for learning, establishing a family semblance and to introduce them to useful work for their livelihood program. Mrs. Ramos' deal of temporary use became eventually a donation she made to the Marcellin Foundation.



Br. Crispin Betita, FMS



Marcellin Home snapshots





Mission Ad Gentes

Nomoskar.... apnara kemon achen?

These were the first words Bros. Hilario and Pepito learned when they were in their mission countries.... Hilario from Bangladesh and Pepito from West Bengal, India as volunteers of the Asia Mission Ad Gentes Project.

Br. Hilario Schwab hails from the big county of Argentina. He had been the director of novices for many years before joining the first group of the orientation program of the Project in June 2006 in Davao, Philippines. Br. Hilario was commissioned to Bangladesh at the end of the Program that same year.

Br. Pepito L. Mahong was in the third group of volunteers to the Orientation Program in 2007. Prior to this, he was in Malutok Mission, Palawan. He was sent to West Bengal, India and entered the country in February 2008.

Learning the language of the country is the focus of their activities in the first two years. Discerning for ministry may overlap with language learning during the second or third year....both brothers were among the pioneers in the particular mission areas or countries where they were sent...

In December 2009, the Formation Commission of the AMAG Sector (Asia Mission Ad Gentes Sector) had their first meeting in Vietnam. From then on, Philippines had been included in the list of countries as the possible country to open the Postulancy House for the Sector.

On August 24, 2010, the first batch of aspirants arrived in Davao. Savy Touch (Cambodia), Sokly Chhuon (Cambodia) and Quy Van Nguyen (Vietnam) were proclaimed as postulants two days later.

Like the missionaries, their first nine months which is “Phase One” of the Postulancy Program focuses on English Proficiency, the common language in the international communities of Brothers. Though, there may be overlapping of the “Phase One” and “Phase Two” since in the sixth month, the levelling- off may begin for basic catechesis, community life experience, human formation, Marist exposure, among others in English... Their formation in the Philippines as postulants will end in June 2012.

The Marist Sisters in Davao have been very welcoming. One of their houses in Bajada was offered to the Brothers for use through Sr. Vero while they searching for a house in February last year. Sr. Monica of Matina community offered free remedial classes to the postulants. She had been a great help to the postulants in their five months of English Proficiency (EP). She met them four hours in a week and gave them lessons on phonetics and reading. The Brothers' community also had been invited to some of their special Marist feast days and to their outreach programs. Those occasions were the opportunities for the postulants to meet the Marist Family, like the Marist Missionary Sisters, the Marist Fathers and their lay partners.

The Marist Fathers, too have invited the Brothers in their gatherings. The postulants are very fortunate to have such kind of encounter.

To introduce the Marist Brothers in the East Asia Province, the community attended the final profession ceremony of Br. Ernie Sentina in Gen. Santos City, the Marist Youth Festival in Marbel, and the Jubilee Celebrations of Bros. Crispin and Pepito in GenSan. Those were new experiences for the postulants.

Many thanks to the invitations.....

And the visits of the Brothers to the community keep us connected to the East- Asia Province.... among those were Bros. Arman, Nino P., and John (of the Novitiate) stayed with us for some nights.



Filipino Ad Gentes



Formation Commission

Your presence gave life and variation to our life here in Davao.

Br. Hoan Castro, the chairman of Formation Commission, was in Davao last week of February to visit the postulancy community. It was also a good occasion for him to meet the postulants personally and the formation staff.

In the process of knowing more what is it to be Marists, as a community and in active ministries, how the charism of Marcellin is lived, how Mary as a model, mother and Ordinary Resource is experienced, how the love of God is witnessed among the children and the young, expect us in your communities....

Keeping you all in our prayers.....

In Bengali: nomoskar- greetings; kemon achen?- how are you? (polite/ respect)

By Br. Pepito Mahong, FMS

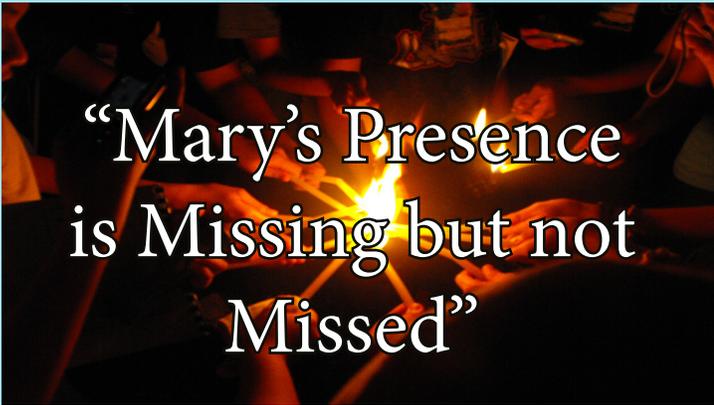


Mission Commission

Bangkok, Thailand. The Marist Brothers and Lay Missionaries who are members of the different Ad Gentes commissions gathered last January 23-28, 2010 for a strategic planning process. The objective of the said gathering was to set in place the goals, objectives and action plans for the Mission Ad Gentes Sector in the areas of Spirituality, Formation, Mission and Finance in the next three years.

It was an opportunity for the Filipino brothers and lay missionaries to meet and be part of the event. Bro. Pepito, the Ad Gentes Postulant Director in Davao, is member of the Formation Committee. Agnes Reyes, lay Marist, is part of the Mission Committee and is designated as the Ad Gentes Sector Project Coordinator. Part of her responsibility is to assist in the mission projects implemented in the Ad Gentes areas: Thailand, Cambodia, India, Vietnam and Bangladesh and to also assist Bro. Luis and the coordinating team at the Central Office in Bangkok. Bro. George was a participant-observer in the said gathering. He was in Bangkok for the follow-up of his Visa for his new assignment in Bangladesh.

By Ms Agnes Reyes



**“Mary’s Presence
is Missing but not
Missed”**



Marist Youth Festival reflection by Br. Jeff Rhey Antiquisa, FMS

Giving opportunities for the youth to become closer to God through Mary” is the gist of my reflection of the recently held biennial Marist Youth Festival in Marbel. Many of our young people today have that great longing to be part of a group that truly listens and accepts them for who they are. They want to be directed, and at the same time, given opportunities to act responsibly. The sense of belongingness is remarkably very evident among them during the festival.

“We want to see the world through the eyes of poor children and young people and thus change our hearts and attitudes as Mary did.”
- General Chapter Document

Facilitating activities that help these young people change their hearts and attitudes are very much within Mary’s ways as she manifested in raising Jesus. Mary shows us the way to a “New Land” by “Living in Faith rooted in Jesus”. I believe that the example of Mary’s faith in Jesus is the spirit that makes this festival successful. She does a lot of hard work quietly- hid and unknown. What makes it touching is that the presence of Mary during the festival is seen in the face of the youth.



Exposure to the community

For a young Marist Brother, like me, who tries to follow the footsteps of Mary, it is indeed a humbling and edifying experience.

Learning from her example opens up opportunities for the youth to rediscover the richness of our Marist identity and traditions. The festival provides a venue for getting to know one another, making friends and share life’s experiences. The participants are given the chance to be evangelized by the poor in the communities they visit. And in the spirit of service, we empower the youth to serve other youths. All these rich experiences were brought before the altar of the Lord in the Eucharist as our way of thanksgiving to God for giving us Mary our Good Mother and Ordinary resource and making us Marists.

Indeed the presence of Mary during the festival is not missed. It is the spirit of Mary that works in us. She seems to be missing physically, but not missed in terms of her spiritual presence. Beyond recognition, hidden from our naked eye, she works quietly. She touches the lives of the young people through her intercession. Her spiritual presence certainly makes this Marist Youth Festival joyful, successfully energizing and life-changing for our young people.



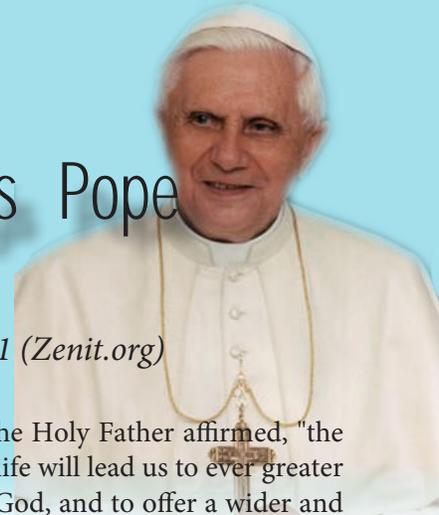
The participants of MYF 2010



Fr. Ervin Morastil, OMI

"Vocations a Sign of Church Vitality", Says Pope (Addresses Vocational Congress in Latin America)

VATICAN CITY, FEB. 1, 2011 (Zenit.org)



One sign of a thriving Church is an abundance of vocations to the religious life, says Benedict XVI. The Pope said this in a message sent to the 2nd Latin American Continental Congress on Vocations, promoted by the Department for Vocations and Ministries of the Latin American Bishops' Council, which is under way in Cartago, Costa Rica, through Saturday. The Vatican press office published the letter today.

The Pontiff stated that "the great task of evangelization requires an ever greater number of persons that respond generously to God's call and give themselves for life to the cause of the Gospel," and that "together with the strengthening of Christian life in general, a more incisive missionary action bears as a valuable Fruit the increase of vocations of special consecration."

"In some way," he asserted, "the abundance of vocations is an eloquent sign of ecclesial vitality, as well as of the intense living of the faith on the part of all the members of the People of God." The Holy Father noted that when the work of promoting vocations is undertaken, results follow: "Experience teaches us that, wherever there is good planning and a constant practice of the vocational pastoral, vocations are not lacking. God is generous, and the vocational pastoral endeavor should be equally generous in all the particular Churches."

Benedict XVI underlined, however, the need to pay special attention to the spiritual life when promoting vocations, as a "vocation is not the fruit of any human project or of a clever organizational strategy. In its deepest reality, it is a gift of God, a mysterious and ineffable initiative of the Lord, who enters the life of a person cultivating it with the beauty of his love, and arousing, consequently, a total and definitive self-giving to that divine love."

"The primacy of the life of the spirit must always be kept present as the basis of all pastoral programming," he continued. "It is necessary to offer the young generations the possibility to open their hearts to a greater reality: to Christ, the only one who can give meaning and fullness to their lives." "We must overcome our self-sufficiency and go to the Lord with humility, begging him to continue calling many."

"But at the same time," the Holy Father affirmed, "the strengthening of our spiritual life will lead us to ever greater identification with the will of God, and to offer a wider and more transparent witness of faith, hope and charity."

The Pope said that the first task of any effort to promote vocations is the "personal and community witness of a life of friendship and intimacy with Christ."

"The faithful and joyful testimony of one's vocation has been and is a privileged means to awaken in young people the desire to follow in Christ's steps," he said. "And, together with this, the courage to propose to them with delicacy and respect the possibility that God will also call them." "Often, a divine vocation gains ground through a human word, or thanks to an environment in which there is a lively faith," he added.

"Today, as ever, young people are sensitive to the call of Christ, who invites them to follow him," he concluded. "The world needs God, and that is why it will always need persons who live for him, and who proclaim him to others."

the Marist Brothers
East Asia Province

You are invited
to be a man of **God**
to be a man of **Love**
to be a **Marist Brother**

Continuation from page 37... “Br. Pepito’s...”

My parents may not be Catholics but at least they tried their best to be good parents to us... they gave us the best they could offer. What they missed in the process of forming us to become good Catholics were filled in by the Christian community... our catechists, Catholic teachers, our priests and pastors in particular the Columban Fathers, our Catholic friends and classmates... Every member of the small Christian community where we grew up became models for us. To live the faith in a Moslem- dominated areas have always been challenging... but every time I remember you, you remind me of your fidelity and witness to the faith... the Church in Malabang was for us a real presence of Christ... a sacred ground for me... for it was there where I first experienced God... with you... with my family... And so I would like to take this moment, a privilege, to thank you.... those who introduced the Catholic faith to my family and helped us in deepening this faith, thank you very much. This jubilee celebration is meant for you... for you sowed the seed...and now we share its fruit....

2. “Praying Quietly” ... October 2009....

My mother got sick, and I was in Sri Lanka processing my Indian visa. My daily conversation with my sister, Lailing, updated me of my mother’s condition. About three weeks later, she shared to me that my mother, who was almost bed-ridden, did not want me and my sister, Sr. Fely (O.P.), who was then in the USA as a Dominican missionary, know her condition. “Do not tell Pipit and Fely that I am not well, “ she would tell my sister. In one of those nights, when my mother was not able to sleep, she requested my sister to teach her how to pray; and so, that same night, my sister prayed the rosary... with her...

Why am I telling this story? Not without reason... my mother did not want us to worry much about her or else it would not be helpful in the works of the mission for which we were sent... and with that intention was her prayer... This is her way of giving me up to the Marist Brothers... and her way of sharing in the works of mission... her quiet presence and prayer...

Most of you here, if not all, are like my mother who in your own simple and small ways have journeyed with us by your presence and prayers... and in many cases, very quietly...like my mother, you did not want to be the hindrance or obstacle to the ministry and mission where we were sent... Your short visits in our communities, words of encouragement and affirmation, invitations to merienda or meals, when you listened to our stories... whatever they may be... or at times when you gave us the privilege to listen to your own story, your dreams and visions of life... when you promised to pray for us and prayed for us quietly... for your friendship... and in your many little ways... those encounters and experiences

have helped us to stay as Marist Brothers... for 25... 50 years... *Busa, sa among mga igsoon diha sa among papa ug mama ug sa among mga igsoon diha kang Kristo, (mga kaparian, religious brothers and sisters, lay partners: administrators, teachers, staff, maintenance, mga mag-uuma ug mga kabus nga among naubanan ug mga natibo nga among naduyugan).... daghang salamat.....*

3. “Uli Na ’ko Sa Balay” (I’m going home)

When my family visit was about to end, I said to my family: “*Ugma, uli na ko sa balay.*” My sister asked me, “*asa nga balay? Kay daghan na man gud ka balay....*” yes, it is true that whichever community I was assigned became a home for me... for 25years, or 50 years in the case of Br. Crispin, every Marist community was and is a home for us... we fight among ourselves, challenge each other, grow together and celebrate there were occasions when I got sick.... in those moments, your presence as my brothers, were very precious to me. When I questioned my response in the process of becoming a Marist Brother, there was always one or two who came to the rescue by listening to my stories, my difficulties...in discernment, accompaniment, interviews... especially during my formation years... when you welcomed me in many different occasions or without any special occasions... even at times, in short notice... and recently, many of you brothers have helped me in confirming the call to mission... and continue to affirm the response I made to the call until now...

My dear Brothers, thank you so much for journeying with us... and helped us find our place as Marist Brothers...

Along this line I would like to extend my gratitude, personally, to the Marist family: the Fathers, Sisters and your lay mission partners for you, too, welcomed us the ad gentes community, and made us feel at home especially in Davao.

And ... to you God? What stories can I share with your people here about us? Ah... many...! In truth, my whole life story is yours... for you have been there even when I did not recognize you... you have been there even when I failed you... oh, God, “I thank you for your faithfulness and love...” and more so... I thank you for your trust by the invitation to share in your mission... and giving me the grace to say yes... *sa imo among Ginoo... onek dhonobad... daghang salamat!*

Let me end in thanking you with this invitation: **For the many blessings you have received during your encounter with us, let us celebrate God’s faithfulness and love... And, for the many blessings we have received in our encounter with you, join us in thanking God...**

T r a n s i t i o n s . . .

We pray for the following who have been part of our Marist Family

- **Domingo Santiago** (Br. Ador's father) died on October 2nd after a bed-ridden year. Of complications. About 10 years ago he successfully underwent a kidney transplant. He was 76.
- **Aileen Guerrero Tiu** ... Marist School's Asst. Principal for Cluster 4. Died on December 28 at age 57. She retired 2 months before her death due to cancer. She served Marist for 22 years
- In Kidapawan ... **Maximino Bacamante**, 66, served as a maintenance at NDKC for 27 years. Retired at 60 and died of lung disease. **Aproniano M. Sayson**, 71, retired after serving NDKC for 21 years. He also studied at NDKC in high school and finished college.
- **Alice O. Montilla**, 61, of kidney failure. She taught at NDDC from 1971 to 78 as a high school teacher and guidance; later she worked part time in the college while working at Department of Labor and Employment. Known for her unique sense of humor , she was constantly invited for workshop on employment and personality development. She died on February 11 of this year. A year before, her sister, **Belinda Montilla Calugay** , also a former NDDC teacher died of heart failure. She taught for 7 years with Alice before she partnered with her siblings in running a review center for teaching licensure exams.
- **Br. Antonio Neric, OMI**, 70, died of complications on February 10. He was among the first Filipino OMI Brothers, active in the retreat center in Kidapawan.
- **Br. Neil (Columbanus) Pratt**, 86 of complications in Adelaide Australia on February 19. See his article on page 30 for more details.

VOCATION UPDATES

Areas Covered:

Cotabato City, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, South Cotabato, Sarangani, Bukidnon, General Santos City, Koronadal City, Malaybalay and Marikina.

Prospects : About 70 applicants : 40 passed and confirmed as attendees to the summer workshop.
Summer Workshop 2011 : April 26 to May 10, 2011.

Summer Workshop Team: Brothers Ernie Sentina (Coordinator), Joe Torrecampo, Job Tumacas, Mark Robert Laurea, and Ace Fernando. Seven Aspirants are helping out...

2011 Graduations...

	College	High School	Elementary	MTTP/ALSS	Kinder
NDDU	March 26	March 23/24	March 24/25	March 12	March 23
NDMU	March 25	March 23	March 23		March 11
NDKC	March 13	March 26	March 25	March 16	March 12/16 (PSDP)
NDC HS	March 19				
Marist School	March 20	March 19			
ND Jolo	March 19				