

## **Sr. Matthea Husmillo Pronounces Final Vows**

*"Here I am Lord; I come to do your will." (Ps. 40)*

Despite the continuing pandemic and the political turmoil in the country, God still intervenes. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2021, Saturday, a day dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sr. Matthea A. Husmillo, OSB of the Diocese of Legazpi, committed her whole self to God in perpetuity at 9:00 AM at the chapel of St. Scholastica's Formation House, Tagaytay City. The Eucharistic celebration with the rite of final profession was presided by Fr. Anselm Manalastas, OSB.

Because of the government imposed travel restrictions and health risks caused by the pandemic, no guests attended the rites except for M. Mary Thomas Prado, OSB and the Sisters from the Manila and Priory House communities who had liturgical roles. Even Sr. Matthea's family members and friends could not be physically present. Because the whole affair was live streamed via the Facebook page of the Manila Priory all the Sisters in the different communities here and abroad and countless family members and friends were able to witness this grace-filled event.

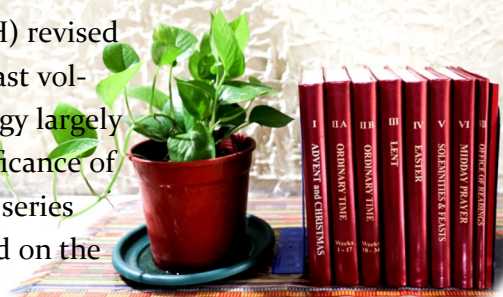
We thank M. Maoro Sye & the General Council, and M. Mary Thomas the Priory Government for welcoming and accepting Sr. Matthea as a full-pledged member of the Congregation. Moreover, we thank the Lord of the harvest for calling Sr. Matthea in our missionary Benedictine way of life in total self-surrender assuring her of our prayers. Her final profession of vows is just the beginning of her journey with God's people as she assumes her new mission assignment in Ormoc City, Leyte.



## **Eight-Volume Revised LOH Completed**

**By: Sr. Pia Lansang, OSB**

The eight-volume Liturgy of the Hours (LOH) revised series was finally completed with the arrival of the last volume last August 25, 2021. Considering how the liturgy largely defines our life as Benedictines, we realize the significance of updating our LOH books at this time. This revised series replaces the previous editions of 1993 and 1995 based on the 1984 original version.



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## **Eight-Volume Revised LOH... From page 1**

The new set generally retains Sr. Mary Placid Abejo's original musical settings of antiphons and tonuses. A few select compositions by our Sisters of the Canticles for solemn Benedictus, Magnificat, and the Nunc Dimittis for Lauds, Vespers, and Compline respectively have likewise been retained. This 8-volume series consists of the following: Volume I - Advent and Christmas; Volume II A - Ordinary Time (Weeks 1 - 17); Volume II B - Ordinary Time (Weeks 18 - 34); Volume III - Lent; Volume IV - Easter; Volume V - Solemnities and Feasts; Volume VI - Midday Prayer; Volume VII - Compline; and Volume VIII - Office of Readings.

Sr. Imelda O. Halili, OSB was commissioned by then Prioress M. Adelaida Ygrubay, OSB to work on the revisions as the former was ending her 3-year term as Priory Procurator in 2016. She began work in August of that same year. Several meetings were conducted with the Priory Liturgy Commission (PLC) to discuss the details and mechanics of the revision. An important mandate was that it should be user-friendly and that it should not be bulky like the current edition. Hence, the importance of using Bible paper (scritta paper). Except for the Compline book, a decision was made to have the rest of the volumes done by Bundo Press of Waegwan Abbey in South Korea which is known for its excellent workmanship.

Sr. Imelda traveled to Seoul to make initial arrangements and to meet with the press staff. Due to the pandemic, she was unable to go back to supervise the printing of subsequent volumes. Thanks to technology, the drafts for these were sent back and forth via email since the press already had the format from the first volume. A series of shipments were made through a forwarding company, and thankfully all the books arrived with no hitches.

Volume I came out of the press in time for Advent 2017. Work for the succeeding volumes was done from 2017 to 2021. The last volume (Volume VIII - Office of Readings) was completed in July 2021 and was received in the Philippines in August, just in time for Foundation Day.

It is with hope that the revised LOH series will serve the next generations. In joy and thanksgiving, we have turned a new page of liturgical history on our Priory. May our voices and hearts echo as one.

### **The PLC would like to acknowledge the help of the following for the completion of this 8-volume work:**

- Members of the PLC from 2016 to the present for their support and for serving as consultants: Sr. Pia Lansang, OSB, Sr. Eugene Amar, OSB, and to Sr. Baptista Busmente, OSB (+), and Sr. Agnella Capili, OSB who proofread the texts;
- Additional proofreading was done by Sr. Regina David, OSB, and Sr. Ellen Marie Bayer, OSB of Norfolk Priory;
- Sr. Gaudia Koh, OSB of Seoul Priory who did the initial legwork with the Waegwan Abbey, and for guiding and interpreting for Sr. Imelda on her Korean trip;
- M. Rosemarie Hwang, OSB, former Prioress, and the Seoul Priory for hosting Sr. Imelda's stay in Korea;
- Sr. Marie Bruno Shin, OSB of Daegu Priory who translated consequent communications for the press via email;
- Sr. Angeline Arceo, OSB who did the communications and sending of drafts to the press; and
- Sr. Jovita Marie Sioson, OSB for troubleshooting with the computer and the Sibelius program.

**Thank you.**

# Communities Hold Candle-lighting Service for Good Governance

## PRIORY HOUSE AND MANILA

On August 2, 2021, the Sisters of the Priory House and Manila Communities together with the Procurator's Office and household staff gathered outside gate 1 of St. Scholastica's College, Manila for a candle-lighting ceremony integrated with Compline. This is to commemorate the 40th day of the death of former President Benigno Simeon Aquino III, as well as the death anniversary of his mother, former President Corazon C. Aquino, whose death anniversary is August 1. As the Aquinos are icons of democracy for Filipinos, the candle-lighting was also offered for peace, good governance and to spark hope for honest and clean elections in the coming year, 2022.

At the Commemoration of the Dead, a moment of silence was observed as each sister offered a lighted candle to honor the two former presidents, as well as to offer personal prayers for their beloved dead. The singing of Salve Regina and the blessing by Mother Prioress Mary Thomas Prado, OSB concluded the Night prayer.



- Sr. Angela Bingan, OSB

## LEGAZPI

The Sisters in Legazpi led the Office and General Services personnel of St. Agnes Academy last June 29, 2021 to start the 40 days of remembering the late President Benigno Simeon "Noy" Aquino, III, who died on June 24. A prayer service at 4 PM was held in front of the Sacred Heart statue at the school lobby. In solidarity with the whole nation, we offered prayers and lighted candles in gratitude to the late President *P*Noy for his legacy of honesty, decency and good governance.



To cap the day's prayer-event, the Sisters, together with their house helper and security guards prayed a simplified Compline and lighted candles outside the SAA gate where President *P*noy's tarpaulin with yellow ribbons hang. After some moments of silence, a hymn to the Blessed Mother was sung and Sr. Celine blessed everyone.



- Sr. Celine Saplala, OSB & Sr. Eligia Cababat, OSB



# Manila Priory Commemorates Foundation Anniversaries

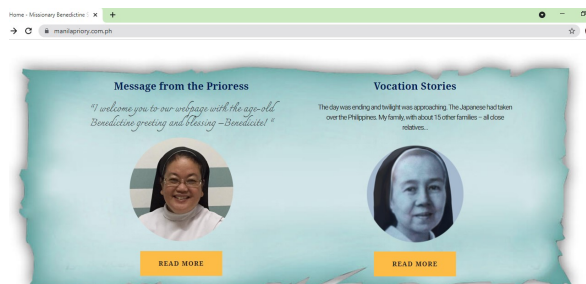
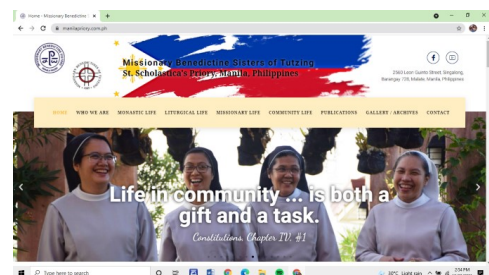
The month of September marks significant historical events for the Manila Priory – the Season of Creation on the 1<sup>st</sup>, the founding of the Manila Priory on 14<sup>th</sup>, and the founding of our Congregation on the 24<sup>th</sup>. In praise and thanksgiving for God's fidelity and mercy throughout our existence for 115 years as a Priory and 136 years as a Congregation in accord with God's plan, several activities unfolded.

Mother Mary Thomas Prado OSB in her letter dated August 31, 2021, invited all the communities to a priory-wide adoration on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of September from 5:00 in the afternoon until 5:30 in the afternoon followed by Vespers. With one praying voice as a Priory, "we went down on bended knees before the altar in adoration" before the Blessed Sacrament trusting that God grant us an increase of good vocations to our Priory and Congregation as well, healing of those afflicted with COVID-19 disease, an end to the pandemic, and for good governance, coupled with hope for clean and honest national elections in 2022.

## PRIORY HOUSE & MANILA COMMUNITY

The Priory House and Manila Communities got together for a festive supper on the 14<sup>th</sup>. After supper, an evening recreation filled our hearts with fun and merriment for the trivia questions about our Priory. Then followed the launching of the new Manila Priory website and the formal introduction of the Benedictine Communications Office or BeneComm. Sr. Mary Peter Mackay OSB, Sr. Angeline Arceo OSB and Sr. Antonia Santiago OSB are the members of the team. As explained by Mother Mary Thomas, the website is still a work-in-progress. Still, we are happy to jumpstart this new online initiative and we look forward to the

contribution of everyone in the Priory.



On the 24<sup>th</sup>, grateful for God's blessings upon our congregation, many of our schools put up community pantries for their employees. Meanwhile, the Priory House Community organized a mobile food distribution of 500 packs of rice, adobo chicken and bottled water for the homeless and street dwellers. Another 500 pieces of Whopper Burgers and bottled water were distributed to doctors and nurses in four hospitals (Gat Andres Bonifacio Memorial Medical Centre, Philippine General Hospital, San Juan De Dios Hospital, and Ospital ng Maynila) in Metro Manila.

**Above:** Screenshots of the Homepage of the newly launched website; **top-left:** Sr. Constance handing ready-to-eat whole chicken to a bank security guard; **Bottom-left:** Sr. Marianne inside the van manning the food distribution to street dwellers.





## PAMBUJAN COMMUNITY



**Right:** Procession going to the tree planting site, each person bearing the flag of the 13 priories and the Congregation banner. **Left:** The SSH personnel and Sisters after planting the coconut trees.

On September 24, 2021, the Community of Benedictines in Pambujan, Northern Samar together with St. Scholastica's Hospital Community commemorated the Foundation day of our congregation with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist with Fr. Walter Cerbito, the hospital chaplain. Earlier in the morning, the staff and personnel of St. Scholastica's Hospital and the Sisters planted 36 coconut trees at the vacant area back of the hospital. Special feature in this tree planting was the representation of the 14 trees of the different countries of our priories and the congregation. Breakfast was served after the tree planting activity.

## WESTGROVE COMMUNITY

Our simple celebration of the Foundation Day of our Congregation started with a short prayer service with our employees. We also showed 2 videos; that of the History of Missionary Benedictine Sisters and the dance video produced by the Vocations Office entitled "High Five kay Maria". This was followed by the community pantry for the Maintenance, Personnel and the guards as recipients.



## LEGAZPI COMMUNITY



The Legazpi Community (St. Agnes Academy) mounted a community pantry for the faculty, school personnel and maintenance staff to commemorate Foundation Day on September 24. This gesture of the pantry was a joyful surprise to them. They expressed their gratitude to the Sisters. In turn, we asked them to pray for our Congregation and the Priory and for more vocations to continue our mission - God's mission!





## COMMUNITY PANTRIES ON FOUNDATION ANNIVERSARIES



**ST. PETER'S COLLEGE - ORMOC  
COMMUNITY PANTRY FOR PERSONNEL**







**ST. SCHOLASTICA'S CONVENT - BAGUIO  
PACKED FOOD FOR FRONTLINERS, PATIENTS & WATCHERS  
@BAGUIO GENERAL HOSPITAL**



**ST. SCHOLASTICA'S FORMATION HOUSE - TAGAYTAY  
COMMUNITY PANTRY FOR HOUSE STAFF**

*....grateful for God's  
blessings upon our  
congregation, many of  
our schools and  
communities put up  
community pantries for  
their employees...*



**ST. SCHOLASTICA'S COLLEGE - WESTGROVE  
COMMUNITY PANTRY TO PERSONNEL**



**ST. SCHOLASTICA'S COLLEGE - MANILA  
COMMUNITY PANTRY FOR PERSONNEL**



# Celebrating Differences, Yet One

By: Sr. Constance Tecson, OSB

On August 1, Statio day, the group led by M. Mary Thomas Prado organized a unique way of celebrating intercultural living at the Priory House, with the Manila community Sisters for the evening recreation. Each member of the group had a particular country to represent and wore the national costume of that country, namely: India, Korea, Germany, Spain, Vietnam and the Philippines. At the entrance of the refectory for supper, the group greeted the community in their native languages and presented specific dishes associated with the 6 countries. The varied international cuisine offered for agape generated a festive intercultural ambiance. The Sisters had a hard time discerning what to choose from the variety of dishes served on the buffet table.



After dinner a short program followed hosted by M. Mary Thomas who wore an Indian sari, while Sr. Constance Tecson was dressed as a German lady. Despite their language differences, they delivered their message well. The group sang an Italian song to greet the community. Indoor games, dances, and the battle of the brains were part of the evening's intercultural celebration. Winners received practical prizes from our sponsors. Indeed, the 'happy hour' was a joy to cherish amid the gloomy pandemic.

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## Manila Priory Blesses Office of Newly-launched Website

By: Sr. Mary Peter Mackay, OSB

Last August 7, 2021, Saturday, after the 6:45 am Mass, Fr. Joselito Buenafe, our parish priest blessed our new Benedictine Communications Office and the newly renovated Priory Government (PG) Meeting Room. These rooms are adjacent to the office of the Prioress.



The main goal of the BeneComm is to promote our Manila Priory, our Congregation (the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzinger), our Benedictine heritage, and to evangelize with the use of social communications and information technology.

The office has been responsible for the live-streaming events and activities of the Priory such as the On-going Formation Webinars, annual retreat, special Eucharistic celebrations, professions and jubilees. It also handles the documentation of special events and the production of web and printed materials for the use of Manila Priory.

**Visit us at our different social media platforms:**



Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/manila.priory>



YouTube

Youtube channel:

Website: <http://manilapriory.com.ph/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPMkJXzHp6wyvKfMoErWYJw/>

## Celebrating differences... From page 6

The evening closed with Compline in the chapel. We thanked God, the source of all goodness and love for the bountiful blessings that come our way knowing that we are DIFFERENT, yet WE ARE ONE walking in the way of Jesus, UNITED IN CHRIST.

A sequel of celebrating interculturality in the Priory House, the evening recreation for September had a different theme: 'Pista sa Nayon' (Town Feast celebration). Group 2 showcased the diverse regional Filipino culture peculiar for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao regions through songs, dances and indoor games. Likewise, traditional Filipino dishes were served at dinner to the delight of everyone including our student-sisters from Korea and Vietnam.

# Milestones

## Two Sisters turn 100!



**Above:** Sr. Maura poses for a formal picture with Marikina City officials;

**Bottom:** Sr. Winfrieda proudly shows off her certificate.



It is rare that one reaches 100 years. The Philippine government grants a cash gift to any Filipino citizen who reaches a century. On August 01, and September 01, a representative from the City Official of Marikina visited St. Benedict's Home and handed over to Sr. Maura Cardines and Sr. Winfrida Bugayong, respectively, the amount of Php 100,000 and a plaque signed by Rodolfo R. Duterte, President of the Philippines. The citation reads:

*My warmest greetings on your 100th Birthday!*

*Turning a century old is the highest milestone a person can achieve. You are very special and honored for all the great experiences and accomplishments that life has given you. May you be surrounded with happy memories from your family.*

*As quoted by Abraham Lincoln, "It is not the years in your life that counts, but the life in your years." May God continue to bless you with more years and good health.*

## ON - GOING FORMATION

### Telling Stories with Photographs

On September 30, 2021, the On-going Formation (OGF) team sponsored the webinar "Photography: How to develop a good eye" conducted by Prof. Joselito Kayaban. Participants were our Sisters from the different communities, our mission partners and some monks from San Beda Abbey. Prof. Kayaban shared essential elements on how to capture great images that tell stories which are informative and entertaining. According to him, good photography makes good use of light and color, captures an interesting moment or scene, and has correct composition at a given situation which is determined by the distance of the person from the subject.

He emphasized that effective photography is simply "writing stories with good pictures".

THE ON-GOING FORMATION TEAM (OGF)  
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO A  
WEBINAR ON PHOTOGRAPHY.

THE JOY OF PHOTOGRAPHY.

**How to develop a  
"good eye" ...**

BY PROF. JOSELITO "JOKAY" KAYABAN

PROF. JOKAY  
Former Chairperson  
of the Dept. of Fine Arts and Interior Design  
St. Scholastica's College, Manila

September 30, 2021 | 2:30 - 5:30 PM | ZOOM MEETING ID:  
Thursday | 870 0730 2467

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## EDUCATIONAL APOSTOLATE

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### New Cardinal Opens the School Year with a Mass

By: Sr. Isabel Orito, OSB

St. Scholastica's College's new Academic Year 2021 – 2022 was opened by two Eucharistic celebrations, both presided over by the new Archbishop of Manila, His Eminence Jose Cardinal Advincula. The first was live-streamed from the Manila Cathedral on August 23, 2021 and was sponsored by RCAMES (Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Manila Educational System and CEAP NCR (Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines, National Capital Region) schools. The second one was held on September 3, 2021 right here in our school chapel itself. It was made possible through the perseverance of Ms Felina “Nette” Ilao, Coordinator of the High School Campus Ministry Office, who this year is also the Coordinator of the Institutional Campus Ministry Team. She was the one who constantly communicated with Fr. Mico Delleria, the Cardinal's secretary. Since the date was within the declaration of MECQ in Manila, it took some time before a decision was made as to whether the Cardinal would personally come to us or stay where he is and celebrate the mass via zoom. Finally it was agreed upon that strict health protocols would be observed: only a few attendees, physical distancing, no close, personal greetings, no offertory procession, no serving of food after the mass. Only then that the secretary gave a green light for the Cardinal to come over to the school.



When the Cardinal entered the chapel together with Fr. Mico and Fr. Pericles Fajardo, both from Capiz also, he spoke briefly to Sr. Christine Pinto, OSB and M. Mary Thomas Prado, OSB who were seated up front. Only Ms Nette Ilao came as commentator, and two AVC personnel to manage the equipment for live-streaming. The members of the Sisters' choir stayed near the organist, Sr. Imelda, OSB at the side, so only a few of the sisters could be seen in the middle of the chapel. The choir sang the Kyrie and Agnus Dei in Gregorian chant in honor of St. Gregory the Great whose feastday we commemorated that day. When



Sr. Christine gave her words of thanksgiving, she called on all the sisters and with proper distancing, were told to bow to the Cardinal who, in turn, bowed to them and waved his hand. After the mass, the Cardinal on his way out, stopped and talked spontaneously about his affinity with St. Scholastica's College and the Priory House Community. He said that in the 1980's he used to celebrate mass in this chapel while he was studying in De La Salle University. He mentioned Ms. Cory del Rosario of the Guidance Department as one of his classmates. The family rented a boarding house near the vicinity and one of his brothers used to play basketball in our old gym. That gesture endeared him to us. It was followed by picture taking again with physical distancing. He left with a promise that he will come back to celebrate the Eucharist with us and have an agape with the Sisters.





## **PANDEMIC LIVING**

### **BREAD Program Helps Needy Survive Pandemic & Disasters**

**By: Sr. Theodora Bilocura, OSB**

Navigating through 2021 amidst the continuing pandemic since January 2020, the Sisters of the Manila Priory devised a more effective program to address the immediate needs for the survival of individuals, families, and communities who experienced serious illnesses and job losses.

Thus, the Priory project entitled **Begetting Relief and Express Assistance for the Deprived (BREAD for short)** was born. This program was made possible through coordination and collaboration with the Sisters of the different communities and lay mission partners of the social centers who spontaneously responded to the call to feed the hungry amid continued outbreaks and lockdowns. The present situation was further complicated by natural calamities like tropical storms which come at an average of 20 to 24 times per year, and earthquakes.



To date, around 150 – 200 + packed meals are being distributed regularly on a weekly basis to the different sectors: slum dwellers, street children, homeless, vendors, public transport drivers, front-liners in hospitals, and security guards, among others. Moreover, truckloads of relief goods, clothes, and food packs consisting of rice, canned goods, coffee, noodles, etc. are readily distributed to typhoon and disaster survivors in Metro Manila, Camarines Sur and other parts of the Bicol region, Rizal Province and Cagayan Valley, and other affected areas. Whenever needed, cash assistance is also extended to the indigenous people (Dumagats) for income-generating projects for daily subsistence.

Faced with challenges as high as Mt. Everest, and with our faith the size of a mustard seed grain, we are spirited with enough strength, enthusiasm and hope to serve the disadvantaged, the neglected, and all those in the fringes of society.

We are ever grateful to our donors and their boundless compassion and generosity. We also thank our partners and volunteers who help us in each activity in serving those in need and feeding the hungry.



**Clockwise from top R:** Preparing food packs for the weekly feeding; a Dumagat recipient; distribution in Bicol; relief & food distribution in Marikina

# Praying the Rosary Daily with the Barangay

By Sr. M. Isabel Orito, OSB

The reality of the pandemic sank into the consciousness of the Sisters of the Manila Community and they opted to show their solidarity with the people of the barangay where they belong during the pandemic. Thus, the praying of the rosary in Filipino with the residents of **Barangay 728, Zone 79** on a daily basis every 5: 00 P.M started March 31, 2020. With the grace of God, it is continuing up to this time of writing in coordination with the local officials.

With the sound systems installed at Gate 6 of St. Scholastica's College ( SSC-M), the people sat down in a line on the other side of the street facing the altar, but later on, because of fear of the virus, they were told to remain in their houses. The rosary was live-streamed for everybody to join in. In the beginning the Sisters prepared everything for praying the rosary daily: fixing the altar table, playing the organ, recitation of the rosary and the different intentions, etc. To date, volunteers from the barangay and from the school itself manage everything, even when the Sisters are unable to attend because of conflict in schedule, the rosary goes on air. On special feasts, the Sisters share rosary beads, St. Benedict medals and simple snack with the people.

While praying the rosary, we notice the people who pass by regularly in bicycles, motorcycles, cars, and those on foot, look in our direction, at the altar and make the sign of the cross. Others would even touch the statue. A few would raise their arm toward the altar as if the gesture, like a magnet, will attract the graces they would need. There are of course those who just pass by hurriedly. Surprisingly, we also noticed that there are more men and boys who make the sign of the cross than women and girls. We gave them food. One day, one of them with his belongings in plastic bags dropped on his knees before the cross and uttered: '*I*

*surrender!*' He was given a chair and later on food and would come regularly. Now he knows how to pray the rosary with his own beads. When he became demanding, we explained to him that he survived before meeting us and that there are other people who also need our help. He understood and comes to pray the rosary not because of the food given to him but also because he has found meaning in it. He appreciates it when we give him food at times.

The daily rosary with our Barangay 728, Zone 79 has accomplished the goal of building solidarity and unity with people outside our walls as symbolized by opening Gate 6 every afternoon and even beyond, to friends who received the link to the daily event.

**Above:** Screenshot of livestream via SSC's Facebook page; **Left:** Barangay residents attending from across the street





## SISTERS' COPING WAYS FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Cognizant of the adverse effect of COVID-19 crisis in the human psyche, Sisters have devised coping mechanisms to alleviate the impact of the on and off lockdown/quarantine, social distancing, travel restrictions, etc. in our daily life as religious. The following are ways by which Sisters find joy, tranquility and continuing sense of wellness and harmony in all aspects -- physical, emotional, social, spiritual and mental amid the uncertainty of the pandemic.

### BAGUIO COMMUNITY

At 4:30 in the afternoon of 21st of August, 2021 the Sisters of St. Scholastica's Convent in Baguio and employees gathered around the bonfire and enjoyed the outdoor dinner in our beautiful garden where the gazebo is located. Dishes consisted of roasted skewered hotdogs and marshmallows combined with grilled chicken and meat barbecue served in banana leaves.

After dinner we played bingo games and everyone happily received candies as prizes. It was a happy evening graced with the blessing of the rain. We thank the Lord for that simple and joy-filled night. Indeed, simple joys from the Lord make the day so life-giving even in the midst of the storms of life.



### LEGAZPI COMMUNITY

On the last Sundays of April, June and August, armed with our packed snacks and lunch we trooped to the farm in Taysan, Legazpi to spend the day, enjoying each other's company, marveling at nature, and relishing on the farm's bounty. We also took the opportunity to plant fruit-bearing seedlings and scatter flower seed along the front garden.

Joining us for fun were the ducks looking for food as well as the mother hen and her chicks foraging for crumbs. With delight we also took time to feed them as well as the dogs "Whitie" and "Blackie", -- who according Ronel, the farmworker -- was named by their fur's color.

Before going home, we took home fruits from the trees which we ourselves picked.

Praise the God of Creation!







## ORMOC COMMUNITY

On September 25, 2021 the community had an outing for self-care management of mental health and wellness and at the same time a *despedida* for Sr. Fatima Celestial who will transfer to Mati community. Baybayon ni Agalon beach resort is a scenic picnic place located in Malitbog, Albueria, Leyte Province, and only 28.9 Km from Ormoc City. We spent time together, prayed, had story-telling and enjoyed the unspoiled beauty of God's creation.

## PRIORY HOUSE COMMUNITY

On July 26, 2021, the Priory House community (15 Sisters) navigated 220 Km. away from Manila for a quick getaway/ bonding to commune with nature for sanity sake at the Poggio Buscone Renewal Center of the Franciscan Friars Minor (OFM) in Botolan, Zambales. Nourished by the Eucharist and delicious meals, the group spent the day either strolling or enjoying the peace and quiet of the place, contemplating the awe-inspiring landscape of the garden, or playing in the sand while dancing with the strong waves of the ocean or swimming in cool and calming waters in the swimming pool.



On the way home the next day, a visit to the shrine of the Nuestra Señora dela Paz de Zambales popularly known as Ina Poon Bato offered us a graced moment of faith of the indigenous people – the Aetas.

With renewed vigor, the community returned home enthusiastic to pick up the work laid behind, to continue the journey of life filled with spiritual vitality in spite of the pandemic and travel restrictions.

## DWH - TACLOBAN COMMUNITY



Despite the pandemic, the Sisters' Community of Divine Word Hospital, Tacloban took a day off from the hospital's daily tasks on August 8, 2021 and travelled to Marabut beach. It was such a wonderful feeling to be out in the beautiful countryside scenery and the view of the Pacific Ocean breathing fresh sea breeze. Some Sisters took a dip in the cool waters, while others went strolling along the sandy seashore collecting nice shells. We also played games while others took a restful nap. At the end of the day, we returned home thanking God for the chance to refresh our tired bodies as we marveled at the beauty of His creation.

**Bale-balayan:  
A Museum for the Poor**  
By: Sr. Mary Ignatius Aquino, OSB

As part of our mental wellness and bonding with each other, the San Fernando community visited **Bale-balayan: A Museum for the Poor**, located at 4022 Araw Malansik Street, Sta. Teresita, Angeles City, and Pampanga for an outing . Peter de Vera, a performing artist and a faculty member of St. Scholastica's Academy, San Fernando, Pampanga is the owner of Bale-Balayan. The museum has an enormous collection of fabric, paintings, and wood carvings. It has also collections of native costumes and musical instruments from the different tribes in the country.

Bale-balayan is a haven for aspiring and talented underprivileged children around Angeles city. Street kids learn indigenous dances and music for free while uplifting their socio-economic status. Because of their training, they get invited to far-flung places to perform, opening the opportunity for them to gain scholarships. Mr. de Vera's advocacy of transforming the youth through the Arts have reaped its fruits when their group won Best in Production in the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) entitled, "Kutitap: Isang Piging ng Kabataang Masining". Three (3) young performers entertained us as they played their indigenous bamboo instruments and a song rendered by Paolo, a nine-year-old boy.

The museum has a meditation room named, 'Bale Panalangin' (House of Prayer) where the images of Asian Religious icons, including an image of Our Lady of Monserrat and Stations of the Cross are displayed. At the end of the tour and socials, the community prayed Midday prayer in the prayer room.

With a gesture of gratitude and appreciation for our visit, the Sisters were given "pabaon" (food for the journey) for lunch and snacks. We thank God for the special blessing from our Lord through our generous and good teacher-friend Peter de Vera.



**Top:** Bale-balayan's logo **Left:** Mr. Peter de Vera, founder/owner gives an orientation to the Sisters;  
**Below:** Sr. Lydia and Sr. Mary Ignatius satisfy their curiosity about a native musical instrument.







To help them cope with the on-going pandemic the Sisters of Westgrove Community take time to practice Shibashi and enjoy the wide expanse of the school grounds through leisurely walks and friendly banter.

## TAGAYTAY COMMUNITY

### ECQ and Mental Wellness in CBS Tagaytay

By: M. Irene Dabalus, OSB

Fr. Orbos penned the lines we quote above. We are thrilled to find them in a chat sent by M. Lumen Gloria Dungca OSB, Vicaress General from Rome because they articulate what we three sisters here in Tagaytay are living in an otherwise boring pandemic lockdown. According to this formula

ECQ once again. Go beyond the dreaded restrictions of quarantine. Instead of enhanced community quarantine, let's see ECQ as a time to Encounter Christ Quietly, and Enhance Charity Quickly to others in the difficult times.

#### **ECQ means Encounter Christ Quietly and Enhance Charity Quickly.**

For three seniors like Sr. Barbara, Sr. Carmel and myself the day is neatly divided into the ideal Ora et Labora. It starts with the daily Eucharist with Fr. Scinti, Focolare priest and our friend for many years, where Sr. Barbara is the organist and Sr. Carmel and I are forever hebdomadarian and chantress. It moves around the daily chores in the house punctuated by simple meals but with highlights of delicious menus on solemnities and feasts. The rest of the hours are taken up by much reading of the daily papers – leisurely - and by siesta. It sounds like the life of “pensionadas” except that we stick to our times of lectio and meditation with youthful zest. Well, there is plenty of intelligent work, too. Sr. Barbara practices at the organ for our daily chant, Sr. Carmel runs the house from top to bottom, and I write the history of the Priory from 2007-2012.

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## NEWS FEATURE

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Fr. Bernhard

### Philberth Brothers Help Educate Filipino Youth

By: Sr. Ana Maria Raca, OSB



Fr. Karl

The Manila Priory has been sponsoring college scholars every school year from financially challenged families all over the country through the Philberth Scholarship Program. In the 35th year of the program this 2021, we would like to pay tribute to its founders, the brothers, Fr. Bernhard Josef Philberth and Fr. Karl Friedrich Philberth.

Fr. Bernhard Philberth (March 26, 1927 – August 8, 2010) was a German physicist and a Catholic priest. Fr. Bernhard, who died at the age of 83, had always looked so ordinary from the outside but so extraordinary from the within. His brother Fr. Karl, also a physicist and a Catholic priest is now 92 years old and lives in Germany.

Both are acclaimed scientists - Fr. Bernhard received international recognition through his project of disposing radioactive waste in ice sheets and Fr. Karl initiated and headed the thermal drilling program of the International Glaciological Greenland Expedition. The proceeds of more than 100 patents of their physical and technical inventions formed the bulk of investments in what is now the **“Philberth Foundation (PhF).”** These brother-priests and acclaimed scientists believe that *“all very important discoveries were not meant to end in themselves but were to lead towards the Lord of creation.”*

From a written account of the late Sr. Soledad Hilado, she narrated that Fr. Bernhard asked her if he could have a scholarship program like in St. Scholastica’s College - Manila because he had big income that he did not know what to do with. That was in 1985 in New Norcia, Western Australia.

A subsequent visit of Fr. Bernhard to the Philippines opened his eyes to the plight of the poor and saw their determination to pursue tertiary education despite all odds. And so, in 1986, Fr. Bernhard and Fr. Karl set up what they called the Philippines Foundation (PhF) to enable the poor to gain a college education and become professionals. The only criteria for the scholarship are “need” and “worthiness”. For them, “this is a most effective means of aid with benefits reaching far into the future.” As time passed by, the PhF was referred to by the sisters and the scholars as **Philberth Foundation (PhF)**. Since then the administration and allocation of funds of the PhF has been managed by the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of the Manila Priory. The Priory established the PhF Foundation Committee that set up guidelines and policies on this scholarship program which has evolved through the years.

From one scholar in 1986, the numbers multiplied, until it reached 500 scholars in school year 2012. At present, there are more than 2,000 scholars who have obtained a college degree, have found decent employment, and have improved the quality of life of their families. A number of them are now working in various Benedictine institutions as teachers, nurses, medical technologists, social workers, office staff, and in other income-earning capacities. Some have found employment abroad. One became a Missionary Benedictine Sister.

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As of this writing, two PhF alumnae have given their contribution to the foundation as their way of paying forward. Below are success stories of two scholars.



I am Mark Benedict Lim, a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Santo Tomas (UST). Currently, I am working as a Senior Technical Services Engineer of one of the country's largest and leading power generation and distribution company, Aboitiz Power Corporation. I was also commissioned as part of the company's special task force, together with Aboitiz executives and foreign management consultants, to streamline and improve business processes. This 2017, I passed my Certified Energy Manager (CEM) examinations in Melbourne, Australia and was awarded a license by the Association of Energy Engineers (AEE) in Atlanta, Georgia. By the grace of God, I'm now one of the only two Certified Energy Managers in the Philippines!

My name is Markley Villanueva. I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics at the University of the Philippines. At present, I am the Business Operations Manager of Pronto Distributor and a faculty of Phinma - University of Pangasinan with the rank of Assistant Professor. My greatest achievement so far: I was a published case writer and trained case teacher of William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan, USA through the STRIDE program of the USAID (United States Agency for International Development).



Markley gives an inspirational talk to other scholars during a PhF Christmas party.

Dear Fr Bernard Josef (RIP) and Fr Karl Friedrich Philberth, thank you very much for your generosity to us your scholars from the Philippines through your Philberth Foundation. To the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing of the Manila Priory, thank you for showing us how "Prayer and Work" matter in life. Thank you for your compassion and being instruments of God. "God never ceases to love us even when our eyes are closed and our faith falters."

Mental health and mental wellness? They are there in our search for a daily equilibrium in mind and body. The body is mostly stooped now, the steps have lost their spring and the voices are cracked for singing, but we have this quiet tryst with the Lord. Most of all there is this "miracle" of the daily Eucharist – purest grace in our house, with a deluge of requests for intercessions.

We really have time to enjoy with a deeper joy what is called aging gracefully. The days of partying and outings are over. The energy of dancing and swinging is gone. The call in this pandemic decade is to soak ourselves in leisure, challenge our fears and frustrations with a luminous wisdom deep down, and wait for the dawn to rise out of this pandemic gloom. Saints are not only those who wear halos, but also those who stay home and obey ECQ lockdown rules. If this is not mental wellness, what is?



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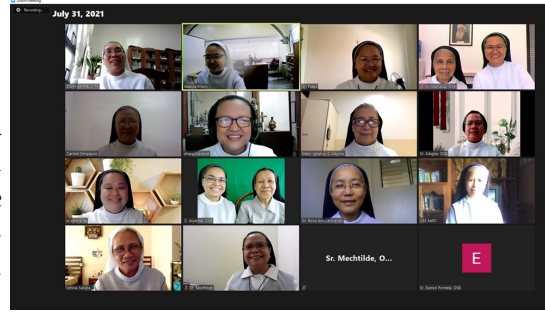
## VOCATION NEWS

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### Vocation Promoters on the Go

By: Sr. Felicity Boy, OSB

In the morning of July 31, 2021, Sr. Antonia Santiago OSB, Vocation Directress, hosted an online national meeting of all the twenty-one Vocation Promoters from across the country, together with M. Mary Thomas Prado OSB to discuss important updates and vocation processes. In addition, the group shared the status of some candidates and prospective aspirants. M. Mary Thomas shared a reflection challenging Promoters to really work for vocation animation. She narrated a story of an Italian congregation whose membership went down and eventually the Sisters had to literally turn over the keys of the convent after the last sister in the community died. M. Mary Thomas said we should not wait for such an experience to happen.



Veritas Legaspi in the radio program “Home Sweet Home,” hosted and facilitated by Mrs. Annie Diño, a faculty member of St. Agnes Academy-Legazpi City.

Sr. Antonia together with the Vocation Team and the Vocation Promoters from the different communities shared their personal vocation stories and experiences of how God called them to Himself and led them to give their total “YES” to love and serve Him all the days of their lives.

With the fire of faith and hope in their hearts, the Vocation Promoters candidly answered the queries of their Facebook “followers” and friends. Little did they know that they were already conquering and evangelizing social media. Fired with the spirit of “Ora et Labora,” the vocation promoters prayed that “parents be given that faith, love, and spirit of sacrifice which will inspire them to offer their children to God’s service and to rejoice when a child of theirs is called to the priestly or religious life”; and that Jesus’ strong and gentle invitation to “Come, follow me” may echo in the hearts of the youth leading them to connect with the Benedictine Sisters and to shout out loud their “Yes” to God’s call to spread the Good News of love and salvation in and through Jesus Christ.

The LDS was an entirely collaborative, dynamic, and intensified effort of asking the Lord of the harvest to send workers into His vineyard for an increase in religious vocation for our Priory and Congregation. May their effort bear fruit and encourage young ladies to discover the pearl of great price and follow suit soon.

### Evangelizing in Cyberspace: A New Way of Vocation Animation

By: Sr. Eligia Cababat, OSB

On Saturday, August 21, 2021, Sr. Antonia Santiago OSB and the vocation promoters gathered for the first-ever virtual vocation animation/Life Direction Session (LDS) activity via Zoom platform. This online event was made possible through the Facebook page of Radio

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## FORMATION NEWS

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### Formation House Welcomes New Aspirant

By: Nov. Anna Margaretha Fondevilla

On 26th June 2021, Saturday, M. Mary Thomas Prado, OSB admitted one candidate, Ms. Joan Perico Bartolome to the Aspirancy. She comes from the province of Isabela, Diocese of Ilagan and a degree holder of the Bachelor of Science in Education major in English.



The Rite of Admission was done at the St. Scholastica's Formation House Chapel, Tagaytay City, Cavite at around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Other Sisters from the Priory House were the current Vocation Directress, Sr. Antonia Santiago, OSB, the former Vocation Directress, Sr. Mary Emmanuel Espera, OSB, Sr. Eugene Amar, OSB, and Sr. Mary Samuelle Formoso, OSB. The rite was delayed by almost an hour due to heavy traffic in the Tagaytay area.

After the rite, the Pre-Novitiate Directress, Sr. Mary Paul Baul, OSB, together with the Formation Team Member, Sr. Marialuz Dungca, OSB, brought Aspirant Joan to the Aspirants' Quarters. She was formally welcomed by the Community during the evening recreation.

**Hearty Welcome, Aspirant Joan!**

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## TRANSITIONS

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### Rest in Peace

*Sr. Esperanza M. Alcazar, OSB*

Born: 02 August 1942

First Profession: 19 May 1970

Called home to God: 26 September 2021



*Welcome back*

Sr. Ma. Agnes Cerina, OSB arrived on September 16, 2021 after almost 13 years of missionary service in Bulgaria. After her homeleave and some weeks of rest, she will proceed to Ormoc for her new assignment.



ST. SCHOLASTICA'S PRIORY MANILA, PHILIPPINES JOINS THE WHOLE COUNTRY IN CELEBRATING  
500 YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE PHILIPPINES (1521 - 2021)

### MANILA PRIORY BULLETIN TEAM

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