

Manila Priory Bulletin

Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing
St. Scholastica's Priory Manila, Philippines

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October - December 2021



A Christmas of Hope and Good Cheer:

Manila Priory Stages First-ever Online Concert

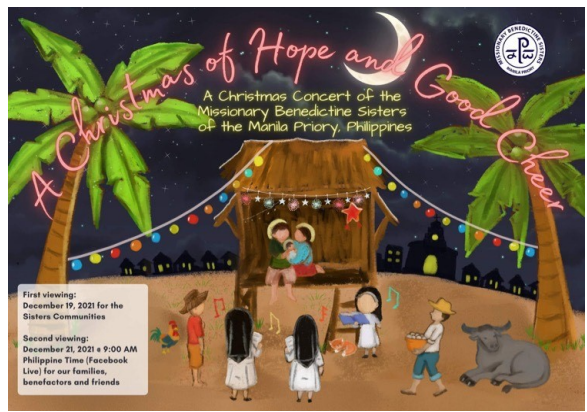
By: Sr. Rosalina Fajardo, OSB

For many Filipinos, the “-ber” months signal the start of the Christmas season. So in September, M. Mary Thomas Prado, OSB, Sr. Agnella Capili, OSB and Sr. Carmelita Lazaro, OSB envisioned a presentation that would convey peace, joy, love, and hope amidst the continuing pandemic. Consequently, it was also thought that the project would be an opportunity to raise funds for the various apostolates of the Priory. Thus, “A Christmas of Hope and Good Cheer” was conceived.

As in every beginning, the process of birthing was daunting. Initial plans were slow in taking flight because of other activities. But with determination, enthusiasm for the dream project caught on. Practices were scheduled and recordings were arranged. Since this was a priory-wide endeavor, the participation and cooperation of the Sisters from all the communities were sought through the magic of digital technology. Much of the work was done in collaboration with St. Scholastica's College, School of Music.

The production team was composed of M. Mary Thomas, Sr. Agnella, Sr. Carmelita, and one or two Sisters were tapped to coordinate assigned tasks for their respective communities. SSC School of Music student Louie Angelo Oca was brought on board as arranger and musical director. He was assisted by Jay Nan Mendoza, a schoolmate. The Benedictine Communications (BeneComm) office served as technical support.

Christmas carols, namely: *Simbang Gabi*, *Mary Did you Know?*, *Christmas in Our Hearts*, *Do you Hear What I Hear?*, *Twelve days of Christmas*, and *Hark the Heralds Angels Sing* were assigned to the various communities. In turn, the Sisters devoted their best effort and extra time, despite the regular workload, to learn, sing and record the assigned Christmas carols. For variety's sake, the song, *Feliz Navidad* was creatively choreographed by Ms. Ingrid Delfino for Sisters across generations to dance or wave hands. It was delightful to see that our senior and elderly Sisters caroled and danced with cheerfulness and gaiety.



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Online Christmas Concert

Production Team

M. Mary Thomas Prado, OSB
Sr. Agnella Capili, OSB
Sr. Carmelita Lazaro, OSB
Benedictine Communications Office

Musical Director and Arranger

Louie Angelo Oca
Assistant
Jay Nan Mendoza

Video Editors

Sr. Mary Peter Mackay, OSB
Sr. Antonia Santiago, OSB
Sr. Florence Lañas, OSB
Louie Angelo Oca
Jay Nan Mendoza

Videographers

Sr. Angeline Arceo, OSB
Sr. Antonia Santiago, OSB
Sr. Mary Peter Mackay, OSB
St. Scholastica's College, Manila AVC

Feliz Navidad Choreographer

Mrs. Ingrid Carranza-Delfino

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Lito Comia

Director

John Paolo Anorico

Conductor

Sr. Imelda Halili, OSB

Pianist

Sr. Baptista Battig Chamber Orchestra

Violin 1 Jay Nan Mendoza
Violin 1 Karl Daniel De Leon
Violin 2 Ralph Benedict DelaRosa
Violin 2 Gerard Secillano
Viola John Paolo Imperial
Viola Restine Imee Alibudbud
Cello Hannah Isaga
Cello Liezel Ann Del Rosario
Flute Joshua Agapito
Trumpet Luke Aldon Manuel
Timpany Julian Veronica Garcia

Over-all Coordinator

Sr. Agnella Capili, OSB

Special Thanks

Steffi Marata
Nicole Pugeda
Divine Word Hospital Tacloban City



Manila Priory stages first-ever... From page 1

Likewise, the Sisters assigned for the *Twelve Days of Christmas* ingeniously acted out the song with candidness. Another challenge hurdled was for the SSC Sr. Baptista Battig Chamber Orchestra to play for the finale, *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*. As the saying goes, “If there is a will, there is a way.” So it happened.

As the days and months unfolded, the dream became a reality. On December 19, 2021, the Manila Priory premiered this priory-wide online Christmas concert via Zoom to all the communities as part of the Christmas virtual get-together. The celebration concluded with the reading of the Christmas letter of M. Mary Thomas. Eleven showings were scheduled thereafter, from December 19 – 27, 2021 for the benefit of other Priors, the Battig Foundation, alumni, the Sisters’ family members, benefactors, and friends in different parts of the world. A special showing was also arranged for the benefit of the Casa community in Rome on December 27.

Everything went well without glitches. It was simply an amazing grace, a gift from the Christ-child. With heartfelt gratitude, the Manila Priory wishes to thank all our benefactors and donors, and all the people behind the scenes who turned nights into days to fine-tune the production. A million thank you for the selfless service that made this first virtual Christmas concert 2021 a resounding success that brought hope and good cheer with one voice and one heart to all the people around the world.

A reflection: From “Hiddenness” to Joy by Sr. Carmelita Lazaro OSB

The choice of the Sacro Speco as venue for the song *Mary Did You Know?* was more than a touch of genius in our recently-held virtual concert, A Christmas of Hope and Good Cheer. Like in a regal garment, it was the bedazzling gem, the sanctified piece de resistance, that clasped the entire concert, preparations and all, together as an integral blessing during the time of pandemic.

Why? In the first layer, for us Benedictines, it is the glaring reminder where we came from—an empty cave, yet, we have everything because God “has” St. Benedict there, he lacked nothing. Yet, more so, there is a primordial layer to it. Another cave in Bethlehem, like the Sacro Speco, is the hallowed ground where God “shattered” and “shook” the expectations of the powers-that-be in the world: the beyond-genius plan of God of entering the world as a helpless babe in the manger to “be Love” and be with us.

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From “Hiddenness” to Joy... From page 2

The concert - from preparation to its repeated showings - may, for some, be only a shadow of what the Benedictines can accomplish under “normal” circumstances. We may be tempted to think that with our funds, reach and connections, we can surely do more! Yet, we stop. God has never taken us out of the caves, the Sacro Speco! Bethlehem! The pandemic wakes us up to the reality that we are called in the humility of the caves not as slaves forced by dark and limiting circumstances but as unworthy adorers of the Humble One who “reversed” the order of the world there in the hush of night.



These “hidden” truths, I think, is the source of boundless joy, undying hope and good cheer for all of us! Reality is not what it seems to be when God “has us”! With the gift of technology, we sang our songs and danced our dances from our “caves”, yet, we came together to form one voice and one life in the concert as communities humbled and united by the Humblest One, Jesus Christ.

Typhoon *Odette* Victims Receive Aid through Relief Operations

Super Typhoon Rai (locally named Odette) made landfall on 16 December 2021 in Surigao del Norte Province before crossing central-southern Philippines, specifically the Visayas and Mindanao islands, with maximum sustained winds of 195km/h and gustiness of 260km/h. Intensifying from a tropical storm to a super typhoon within hours, Rai brought torrential rains, violent winds, landslides and storm surges, making nine landfalls in seven provinces. (Source: <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/philippines-consolidated-rapid-assessment-report-super-typhoon-rai-odette>)

A number of these provinces are where some of our communities are located. As soon as conditions permitted, the Sisters embarked on relief operations to reach out to areas where assistance was most needed. These are their accounts:

Divine Word Hospital Community, Tacloban, Leyte

By: Sr. Consorcia Rodela, OSB

On December 23, 2021 the Divine Word Hospital Community, Tacloban, Leyte had a relief operation for the survivors of Typhoon “Odette” in Pacu, Maasin, Southern Leyte headed by Sister-Superior Celeste Licas, OSB, Sr. Eloisa David, OSB and Sr. Sarah Gocela, OSB. They were assisted by some business office, dietary and maintenance staff. The distribution of goods was held at the grounds of Assumption Parish, Pacu, Maasin in coordination with the parish priest, Fr. Garnet Gan Quirong who was assisted by the nieces of Sister Carmela Mitaran, OSB and the youth of the parish.

There were nine vehicles that made a convoy to the area: 2 Army trucks, one in front and one at the end and seven vans. These were loaded with 600 big containers of 6 gallons of mineral water, 600 bags of groceries and essential items containing the following: 3 kilos of rice, dressed chicken, a box of cheese, powdered milk, 10 packs of powdered coffee, packets of medicines (Vitamin C and paracetamol), etc.



Queue of survivors waiting to be handed relief goods.

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Communities Respond... From page 3

Families of our Benedictine sisters: +Sr. Anselma Paler OSB, +Sr. Mary Joseph Rodas OSB, Sr. Marissa Piramide OSB, Sr. Consorcia Rodela OSB, Sr. Isabel Orito OSB, and Sr. Carmela; Miss Cleofe Arayan (former Aspirant), Miss Monica Dizon, parish staff and youth were also recipients of these relief goods. Sacks of clothing were also entrusted to the parish priest for distribution to the survivors.

The teary-eyed residents expressed their great thanks for the unexpected joyful surprise of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters' gesture of generosity and solidarity.



L - R: Sr. Celeste, Sr. Eloisa, Sr. Sarah and persons-in-charge before distribution.

St. Scholastica's College Tacloban Community, Leyte

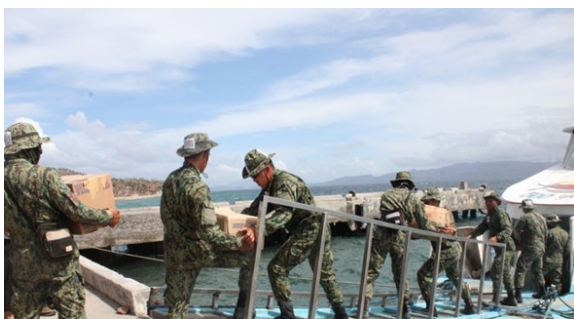
By: Sr. Fides Ablen, OSB

On December 24, 2021, the Sisters and some volunteers of St. Scholastica's College, Tacloban organized relief operations for victims of typhoon Odette. The bulk of the relief goods was earmarked for a parish in Limasawa, Southern Leyte. The activity was carried out in coordination with the parish priest, Fr. Arthur, an alumnus of St. Peter's College, Ormoc.

To reach the place, volunteers had to travel first by land to the town of Padre Burgos, and from there, take the ferry that will carry the relief goods to Limasawa Island. While at the port, the Sisters met young girls who were interested in religious life. The Sisters grabbed this opportunity for vocation promotions and spiritual ministry.

While waiting for passengers to disembark, the group realized the challenge of loading the sacks and heavy boxes due to strong waves. Fortunately, men in uniform from the municipality of Sogod, who were disembarking, came to the rescue. They were on their way out of the island from accomplishing their five-day clearing mission.

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Clockwise from top L: Relief Operations Team at Padre Burgos Port; Reaching out to the hearts of the young in the midst of typhoon devastation; Men in uniform helping transport relief goods.



SSC Tacloban... From page 4

Relief goods were also given to the parish of Mary Mediatrix of All Grace in Ichon, Diocese of Maasin through the parish priest, Fr. Gerald.

Sr. Fides and Sr. Rose Ann and members of the Relief Operations Team pose with Fr. Gerald and donated goods.

St. Agnes Academy Community, Legazpi, Albay

By: Sr. Celine Saplala, OSB

The Sisters and some of the personnel of St. Agnes Academy, Legazpi City donated relief goods last December 28, 2021 and January 5, 2022 to the families in places affected by typhoon Odette. The goods were brought to the Legazpi headquarters of the SOLID BICOL FOR LENI, some members of whom are SAA Alumni. The relief goods will be brought to Southern Leyte, Bohol and other affected provinces. As of press time the headquarters is still open for donations as they foresee relief operations to be long haul.



St. Peter's College Community, Ormoc City, Leyte

By: Sr. Leticia Saraza, OSB

On December 30, 2021 some teachers of the Basic Education Unit with two non-teaching staff of St Peter's College, Ormoc City and Sr. Leticia Saraza, OSB traveled to Barangay Guadalupe, Macrohon, Southern Leyte to meet and share the Christmas spirit of joy to survivors rendered homeless by Typhoon Odette. About 170 households received bags containing rice, coffee, milk, canned goods, etc. Despite their loss, word of thanks and smiles were apparent as they got hold of their food stuff.



Communities Organize Simultaneous *Lugawan**

**Lugaw*, also spelled *lugao*, is a Filipino glutinous rice or porridge widely regarded as comfort food in the Philippines. The term is also interchangeably translated as “congee”.



*Manila Priory continues to reach out to people greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic particularly from vulnerable communities who lost jobs, consequently losing their source of income, causing more hunger. During the Superiors - Formators' Meeting last November 2021, M. Mary Thomas called for a priory-wide **lugawan** or porridge feeding on Gaudete Sunday, December 12, 2021 as an Advent practice and also as a call to action for more involvement in working for good governance.*



SSC Westgrove: LugawOne **By: Sr. Daniela Romero OSB**

St. Scholastica's College - Westgrove (SSCW) shared the joy and hope that Gaudete Sunday brings to the people of Sitio Banaba by having “LugawOne” on December 11, 2021 in front of the community chapel. The office and maintenance staff helped in distributing lugaw to the households in the area.



Marikina Communities: Sharing with Love **By: Sr. Evangeline Madayag OSB**

Answering the challenge to give more, the Communities of St. Scholastica's Academy Marikina and St. Benedict's Home in coordination with the St. Benedict Oblates, school employees and the staff of Tuason Community Center and friends joined the Priory-Wide *Lugawan* on Gaudete Sunday. The activity was held in three venues: Bonanza Phases I & II in Barangay Fortune, and Freedom Park in Marikina Heights. Approximately 250 tricycle drivers, street cleaners, and families enjoyed the rice porridge with *puto* (rice cake) and *pandesal* (salt bread) served by the Sisters and volunteers.

St. Scholastica's Bacolod: Feeding those who Feed Us **By: Sr. Edigna Jumangit OSB**

The Sisters of St. Scholastica's Bacolod cooked and packed *lugaw* in individual containers and shared these among the farm workers of Silay and Murcia.



Lugawan... From page 6



Far Left:
Bacolod community out in full-force;
Left:
Sr. Josefa & Sr. Edigna having fun packing the rice porridge in individual containers.

St. Scholastica's Tabunok: Lugaw + Voter's Education
By: Sr. Maureen Cariaga OSB

On December 12, 2021 we had a simultaneous *lugaw* feeding in three different sites: SSA-T covered court with about 170 tricycle drivers organized by Sr. Mechilde Juntado OSB; whereas Sr. Hildegarde Amboy, OSB organized the feeding in our partner communities in Anadol and in Mananga with 140 children. Voter's education was conducted to tricycle drivers and each one received a bag containing 5 kilos of rice and groceries.



Sr. Hildegard at Mananga, a partner community.



Distribution at the SSA-T covered court.

St. Agnes Legazpi: Lugawan "With" Leni & Kiko
By: Sr. Celine Saplala OSB

The SAA Legazpi *Lugawan* on Gaudete Sunday was held at the OSB farmhouse in Barangay Taysan. The Alumni Board of Officers co-sponsored the activity and donated pink parols, Leni-Kiko calendars and *komiks*. In addition, bags of goods for Noche Buena were given to each family. The Office and General Services



Personnel took care of the games and prizes for the children. Ms. Ana Marie Ongjoco gave the major prizes to the delight of the winners. Leni and Kiko were able to "join" us, through their life size standees compliments the Alumni Officers, some of whom are members of Solid Leni - Bicol, a volunteer movement of Bicolanos supporting the presidential bid of VP Leni Robredo, a native of the province.



Marihatag Community: A Sharing of Time, Talent & Treasure

By: Sr. Joyanne Morales OSB



The Sisters continued the series of *lugaw* feedings on Gaudete Sunday with the Gamay Kristohanong Katilingban or GKK (Basic Ecclesial Community) of Miramar I, Poblacion, Marihatag, Surigao del Sur. Previous feedings were held with GKK's in Mabog and Anonang where those present were served *lugaw* and pink colored *puto* (rice cake). Parents and the youth, the mission partners of the Sisters in the respective areas, were greatly involved in the planning and preparation, as well as the implementation phases of the program. It was stressed to them that happiness at Christmas was not only in giving away material things, but by sharing their time and talents with their neighbors like simply talking and interacting with them as they served the food.



Priory House: Lugaw and More

By: Sr. Angela Bingan OSB

The *lugaw* mobile feeding of the Priory House Community started in November. Every week, a group of Sisters and some volunteers would go around in a van along the streets of Metro Manila to serve between 250- 500 individuals, mostly homeless and street-dwellers.

The first feeding held on November 17, 2021, was a joint endeavor with the Daughters of Charity Sisters. Aside from *lugaw*, residents of Barangays 733 & 745 were also served ice cream and *tahô*, a Filipino snack made with soft/silken tofu, syrup, and sago pearls, usually peddled in the streets. Materials campaigning for good governance were also distributed. The second feeding was held on November 24, 2021 in San Andres Bukid. This time the Sisters of the Religious of the Good Shepherd also joined. For the mobile feeding on December 1, approximately 250 residents of Barangay 737 and street dwellers along Osmeña Highway benefitted.

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Priory House: Lugaw... From page 8

The last *Lugawan* for 2021 was held on Gaudete Sunday, which was in response to the Priory-wide feeding for December 12, 2021. Stationed in front of the chapel, the Sisters offered hot *lugaw*, hard-boiled egg, pink *puto* and pink ice cream to street people along Leon Guinto and Singalong Streets. After the feeding, six Sisters proceeded to Onyx Street, San Andres Bukid and distributed groceries and clothes to 197 families whose houses were destroyed in a big fire the previous day.



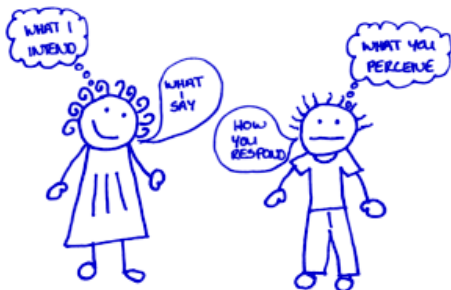
Left to Right: Sr. Imelda preparing brown paper bags with boiled egg and pink *puto*; A mother and child receiving *lugaw* from Sr. Angela; M. Mary Thomas and Sr. Mary Nicole handing out cups of ice cream.

***Difficult Conversations:* Sessions on Conflict Resolution**

By: Sr. Edna Quiambao, OSB

In 2001, Mother Mary Thomas Prado, Mother Adelaida Ygrubay and Sr. Pauline Triviño went to our different communities because of the request of Sisters to have sessions on Conflict Resolution. This request came up again this year 2021, but due to the pandemic it was difficult to visit one community after another. Hence, the On-Going Formation (OGF) Team organized and conducted three webinars on October 9, November 6 and December 4, 2021 according to the assigned chapters per month to a team member. All the Sisters of the Priory were given a copy of the book, *Difficult Conversations* by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen for personal reading and study.

We all know how important communication is in all our undertakings. As a Benedictine community we put premium on community living. As such we often communicate with one another. It is vital therefore, that we know how to convey knowledge or impart information, feelings, ideas, etc. Otherwise we fall into difficult conversations. The three authors provided samples and techniques to have more productive conversations. We pray that these conferences will help us to be adept in addressing our conversations if we want to continue improving our work or relationships.

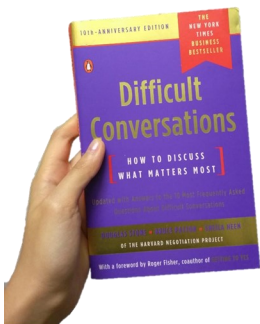


<https://classicrecruitment.net.au>

The authors of *Difficult Conversations* presented the three levels of conversations namely: first, the **What Happened** (or what should have happened) **conversation** which focuses on 3 main areas which are: understanding each other's stories; sorting out the contributions; and disentangling the intent from the impact.

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Difficult Conversations... From page 9



The second is the **Feeling** (emotional) **conversation** which involves the feelings – mine and the other person’s. Feelings matter because they are part of that which makes a good relationship rich and satisfying; they let us know that we are fully alive and are normal. Yet there are times when one is unable to deal openly and well with his/ her feelings which can undermine the quality and health of one’s relationship.

The 3rd is the **Identity conversation** which involves one’s own self-image and that of the other. The authors define the Identity Conversation as an internal conversation about who one thinks she/he is and how others see themselves. It’s what one is saying to herself *about* herself. This is probably the most difficult of the “What Happened” components because this threatens one’s identity. One also feels anxious when she/he thinks about approaching difficult conversations because these can shake one’s idea of the self.

The authors suggest **shifting into and adopting the “and stance”**, meaning that both stories have validity and should start from the **Third Story**. This involves telling the story, not from one’s own perspective, but from the perspective of an outside observer. One can say the Third Story by saying, ‘I sense that you and I see this situation differently. I’d like to share how I’m seeing it, and learn more about how you’re seeing it.’ The main purpose of this and any difficult conversation is **mutual understanding** which doesn’t mean mutual agreement. The authors claim that difficult conversations are about working to understand each other’s stories for better decision-making.

We learned from the book that another important aspect of difficult conversations is that a learning conversation requires us to be interested about the other person, **by means of reframing our purpose from persuading the other person to learning about the other person**. The book emphasizes the need to listen to the other person’s contributions and translating them into more helpful ones. We need to ask questions to better understand the other person and acknowledge the other person’s feelings. This is very important because we have to express ourselves clearly even before an authority. Views, ideas and thoughts are as important as the other person.

After unpacking the **“what happened” conversation** and how it makes both parties feel, this leads to understanding each other’s stories better. However, both still have to work together to solve the issue, and parties may still disagree on how best to go about it. This is the problem-solving stage. **Problem-solving is essentially collecting the information just received and coming up with some best options that might help solve both sides of the issues.**

The OGF thanks the conference speakers: Sr. Pauline Triviño, OSB & Sr. Edna Quiambao, OSB (Session 1); Sr. Mary Paul Baul, OSB & Sr. Isabel Orito, OSB (Session 2); and M. Mary Thomas Prado, OSB (Session 3).



M. Mary Thomas



Sr. Isabel



Sr. Mary Paul



Sr. Edna



Sr. Pauline

Creating Sacred Spaces to Interior Silence (Virtual Priory-wide Annual Retreat)

By Sr. Rose Ann Leonardo OSB

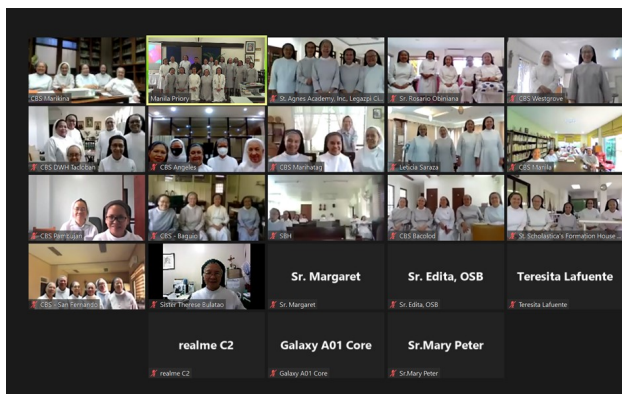
"One Foot Grounded, One Foot Forward: The Call to New Mission in Times of Pandemic" was the theme of our priory-wide online annual retreat last October 12 – 19, 2021. Our retreat facilitator was Fr. Wilfredo M. Samson, SJ, who is currently assigned at the Jesuit Mission in the Diocese of Kalookan, living with the poor of Kalookan City.



Fr. Willy, SJ preaching from the Jesuit Mission convent in Kalookan.

During the eight-day-retreat, we had a one-hour conference in the morning and we were provided with a daily handout to guide us during the day with four prayer periods, and an hour of activity in the afternoon. Each day followed a particular theme laden with Scriptural texts from the Old and New Testaments: Day 1: "One Foot Grounded: Sacred Space"; Day 2: "Shake It Off, Eat, Sleep, and Listen"; Day 3: "I Want to See Jesus"; Day 4: "Journeying with Vision and the Call to Mutate (Transformation)"; Day 5: "Crossing to the Other Side"; Day 6: "The Call to *Magis* and Audacity to the Mission"; Day 7: "The Sacrament of Proclaiming"; and Day 8: "An Awareness *Examen* to Close a Retreat". Fr. Willy strongly encouraged us to spend the days in silence and solitude so as to discern the will of God for each of us and for the Priory during this time of pandemic. From the 4th day to the last, Fr. Willy invited three sisters from three communities to share their personal prayer experiences and reflections before the start of the conference which were very enriching and inspiring to hear.

The virtual annual retreat enabled us to create our sacred spaces leading to interior silence, to look deeply and seriously at our relationship with God, with oneself, and others. Where are we now during this time of the pandemic? Knowing where we are in the journey is important in "crossing over" to the next journey of faith and life. Fr. Willy also highlighted the importance of accompanying Jesus in his passion and death because it was there that the redeeming act of love happened. As a true follower of Christ, we too will go to Jerusalem to accomplish the will of God. It means dying in whatever form it will take so as to be resurrected during this time of pandemic and to respond to the challenges of emerging mission in the new normal. While we are waiting for the pandemic to end, we are told to wait... to wait actively so we can cross over to the *new*, new normal. Indeed, the 8-day spiritual inner journey has deepened and strengthened our relationship with God making us aware of where we are now in the journey -- one foot grounded, another foot forward to respond to the call of renewed mission of our Priory and to proclaim the gospel of joy according to our own story with Jesus Christ as King.



Fr. Willy arrived at the Priory House for the final conference and closing Mass. Priory House and Manila Community Sisters pose for a souvenir photo (Left) while Sisters from the stations have a screen shot taken. (Right)

Superiors and Formators Hold First Virtual Meeting

By Sr. M. Rosario R. Obiniana OSB

Amidst the continuing coronavirus pandemic, the Superiors and Formators had its first online meeting from November 11 to 13, 2021 with the theme, “INTO THE FUTURE: THE PRIORY’S RENEWED OR EMERGING MISSION IN THE NEW NORMAL”. There were 29 participants composed of M. Mary Thomas Prado, OSB, Prioress and her council, Superiors, Formators, and members of the implementing arms of the Manila Priory.

The first day of the meeting began with a prayer led by M. Irene Dabalus, OSB followed by a welcome address by the Prioress. In her message she led the participants to think, see and get the realistic picture of Manila Priory after 2 years of pandemic. This was followed by a short reflection session on an RB verse of choice to guide the projection and planning for the future of the Priory. Afterwards each Superior read her report in response to the two guide questions: 1) What were the challenges that your community and apostolate have faced in these past 2 years of the pandemic? and 2) How will your community’s mission/ apostolate be renewed in the new normal? In what way will your community and apostolate be transformed?

In the afternoon of the first day was the continuation of the Superiors’ reports. The last part of the activity was a talk on “Cyber Trafficking” by M. Mary John Mananzan, OSB. At the end of the sharing she suggested to make this issue on cybercrime involving women, children, and people in poverty particularly vulnerable to coerced internet sex, a priory-wide advocacy.

The reporting of Superiors continued on the second day in between the two conferences. Sr. Pauline Triviño, OSB facilitator of the day, introduced the speaker, Br. Armin Luistro, FSC. The recorded video conference was about “The Future of Catholic Education in the Philippines.” Some of the topics discussed were the following: Financial Challenges, Post- Pandemic Future of Education, Students’ Predicament, Teachers’ Predicament, Parents’ Predicament and Post-Pandemic Opportunities: Reimagine, Revitalize and Reform. For the question-and-answer portion he joined the Sisters online. For his parting words, Br. Armin said, “The education of the young is in our hands. We have to take on the challenge.” He also challenged the sisters to “think out of the box” and to move on for a better education for the young.



Br. Armin Luistro FSC

Resource Speakers



Prof. Solita Monsod

A well-known professor of Economics and a columnist was invited for the afternoon session. Sr. Rosalina Fajardo, OSB introduced the guest speaker, Prof. Solita “Winnie” Monsod. Her topic was on “2022 Elections and Post-election Scenarios”. She showed to the participants the present situation of the country in terms of Income Loss (GDP), the Poverty Incidence 2006-2023, Education Loss, Health Losses and its impact on the economy. She presented the different presidential candidates for May 2022 elections and the coalition of candidates. After her sharing and responding to the questions raised by the sisters, she ended the session by reminding the participants to be creative and inspire people to elect a transformative leader.

M. Mary Thomas, gave a summary report on the status of the Manila Priory on the last day of the Superiors-Formators’ meeting. Business meeting was done in the afternoon. The day was full and the Sisters participated actively especially during the group sharing. The last on the agenda were reminders to superiors.

Superiors - Formators' Meet... From page 12

As the meeting came to a close, M. Mary Thomas invited the superiors and formators to revisit their chosen RB verse and reflect on whether they found this verse speaking of the process they went through the past 3 days.

Truly the first virtual Superiors – Formators' Meeting was a success and a meaningful experience for all the Sisters. Crossing-over, moving onward and continuing the journey towards the emerging future of the Manila Priory present a daunting challenge.



Above: At the Priory Government Room;
Right: Superiors-Formators' Meeting attendees



ON - GOING FORMATION

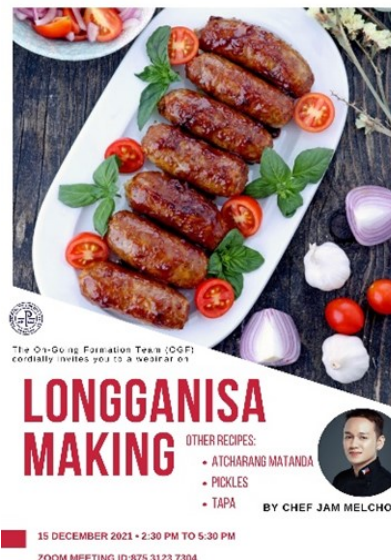
Learning How to Prepare Filipino Cuisine

By Sr. Juana Maria Rivera OSB

Chef Jam Melchor, an internationally known professor of Filipino (especially *Kapampangan*) cuisine at St. Scholastica's College, Manila and an alumnus of Holy Family Academy, Angeles City was invited by the On-Going Formation (OGF) team to conduct a webinar last December 15, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. Held at the Food Laboratory of St. Scholastica's College, Manila, Chef Melchor taught the Sisters and their staff and friends how to prepare and cook three heirloom recipes known to everybody namely the homemade *tapa* (dried beef), skinless *longganisa* (pork sausage) and the *atsarang matanda* (traditional vegetable appetizer).

He started by saying that he prepares food for healthy living so much so that he does not use *salitre* (saltpeter) and sees to it that he uses gloves whenever he would mix sirloin or lean meat to make classic beef *tapa* or home made *longganisa*. He reminded everyone that food has to be prepared very well and with clean hands to avoid stomach trouble. The ingredients were prepared before hand with the help of his four students from the Hotel and Restaurant Management Department. He entertained questions during his demonstration lesson. The *atsarang matanda*, a sweet-sour appetizer, was prepared by mixing boiled eggs with eggplants, *ampalaya*, carrots, red onions, and green chili that can last for six months.

Sr. Edna Quiambao, OSB, Sr. Isabel Orito, OSB and Sr. Nicole Garcia, OSB had the chance to savor the taste of the homemade traditional *longganisa*, *tapa* and *atsarang matanda*. We thank the OGF, specially Sr. Edna for organizing this skills training.



VOCATION NEWS

Vocation Promoters Sponsor Monthly Online Life-Direction Sessions

By Sr. Claudia Sampal OSB & Sr. Leticia Saraza OSB

“God Calls you... Experience life as a Gift,” was the theme of the second Life-Direction Session (LDS) Zoom meeting held last October 31, 2021 organized by Legazpi, Mati and Marihatag communities. Sr. Eunice Pornela, OSB led the prayer to the Holy Spirit at the start of the session.

Sr. Lydia Villegas, OSB, Superior-Directress of St. Scholastica’s Academy, San Fernando, Pampanga, shared her vocation story and her experiences of God’s call in the daily events of her life starting with her First Communion at St. Scholastica’s College, Manila and how she obediently and trustingly responded to it. In return, she has received blessings to follow God’s call to the religious life.

Reflection questions were then given to the lady-searchers after Sr. Lydia’s input-sharing. The ladies then openly shared their reflections at the break out rooms created by Sr. Antonia Santiago, OSB, our Vocation Directress, and facilitated by the vocation promoters. Sr. Eligia Cababat, OSB handled the Question- and-Answer portion. At the plenum, Sr. Lydia gave a synthesis and concluded with a prayer led by Sr. Judith Diaz, OSB. Sr. Aurora Bravo, OSB, superior of Mati community, thanked Sr. Lydia for facilitating the Search-in for the month of October.

On Sunday, the 21st of November, the 3rd Life Direction Seminar (LDS) Zoom meeting with a theme, “The God who calls us to Self-knowledge”, was organized by the three communities in the Visayas: Bacolod, Ormoc and Tabunok. Seventeen ladies, mostly first timers, joined the session together with 16 Sisters.

Sr. Edigna Jumangit, OSB opened the session with a prayer and welcomed all the participants. Sr. Mechtilde Juntado, OSB presented on power point the mysterious ways God molds us in the womb of our mother as reflected in Psalm 139. For personal reflection, Sr. Matthea Husmillo, OSB gave two guide questions: What are my shadows and light? What grace/s do I need to achieve my full potential in life?” In silent meditation, each one was asked to look deep into herself to see her strengths and weaknesses.

The participants were divided into groups for the sharing in the Zoom chat room. Sr. Leticia Saraza, OSB summarized the sharing during the plenum. The ladies discovered that



they are loved most of all by God and they have their family to support them. Weaknesses were also mentioned. They also recognized the importance of time, wisdom, confidence and trust in God’s loving care and providence. Sr. Leticia underlined the essence of creating a sacred space and time in our daily life for reflection, prayer and silence.

The Search-in ended with a video presentation on “Service” and the prayer of Thomas Merton.

Discerning God's Invitation through the Vocation Retreat

By Sr. Antonia Santiago OSB

On December 28-29 2021, a virtual vocation retreat was held for one and 1/2-days with the theme, "Listen with the Ear of your Heart... Discerning God's Invitation". Sr. Pauline Triviño, OSB facilitated this retreat in Baguio via Zoom platform. The set-up of the retreat was different from the previous vocation retreats. This time, the retreat participants stayed in our communities. The ladies were guided face to face by our assigned station vocation promoters. The vocation promoters provided the ladies a quiet and prayerful atmosphere where they could listen to the inner stirrings of their hearts.

Seven retreatants attended, 2 from Bacolod with Sr. Edigna Jumangit, OSB, 1 from Baguio with Sr. Zita Jamisola, OSB, 2 from Ormoc with Sr. Leticia Saraza, OSB and Sr. Matthea Husmillo, OSB and 2 from Legazpi with Sr. Eligia Cababat, OSB.

Sr. Pauline had three sessions during the retreat. On the first day, the themes were: "Quieting and Understanding the Self and Relationship with God", "Call to the Religious Life: Part 1, The Call; and Part 2, Discerning the Call". On the second day, the topic was "Let go and trust God." An activity followed after each session. The retreatants separated into groups for the sharing. Those who have plans of entering this May 2022 were grouped with Sr. Pauline in the breakout room. The rest of the participants had their reflection sharings with their vocation promoters. After each session, the retreatants moved to the breakout room or in a one-on-one session with a Sister-companion for sharing. These sharing sessions gave the retreatants opportunities to meet and share with Sisters at different levels.

The lectures, time of reflection and prayers, and sharing with Sisters guided the participants to dig deeper into their inner self and listen to God's call. They were able to get in touch with their convictions, capabilities, and motivations in their discernment and to draw a plan for their lives to answer the will of God in whatever state of life.



Sr. Pauline Triviño OSB, the retreat facilitator and Vocation Promoters with this year's participants to the year-end Vocation Retreat.

In the final session, the retreatants composed a "Prayer of Surrender to the Lord" and submitted it to the Vocation Directress. The ladies shared that the retreat brought further affirmation of their decision and it gave them opportunities to go deeper and become connected with their inner self. It was also an opportunity to know more about the Sisters and the Missionary Benedictine way of life even for a short period. Some expressed their joy to see familiar faces of Sisters from previous experiences. Sisters who participated in the retreat also felt enriched, affirmed, and inspired, through the inputs, sharing, openness of the retreatants, and the richness of the short program.

FORMATION NEWS

“A little goes a long way...”

Community Pantry

The Formation House Community Tagaytay City carried out its Advent Community pantry on Thursday, December 9, 2021. The beneficiaries were 300 families from Barangay Kaybagal South, Tagaytay City. The activity began with an opening prayer led by Sr. Marialuz Dungca, OSB. The families received rice, vegetables, canned goods, *malunggay* from our own trees, and other food items, clothes, and toys for the children. They gratefully told us that even the little they received was already a big help, “*dahil sa hirap ng buhay ngayon*” (life is difficult).

- Novice Anna Margaretha Fondevilla



Lugaw Feeding

On the eve of Gaudete Sunday, the formation house kitchen was in full force where we, formandeas, together with the house staff, headed by Sr. Marialuz Dungca, OSB and Sr. Mary Paul Baul, OSB, got ready to peel, chop and crush an entire sack of garlic. The cooking and the packing of “*lugaw*” was done the next morning. At around 1 pm, we delivered the 600 containers of “*lugaw*” to the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) Tagaytay City through Ms. Rina Paña, Lourdes’ parish prison ministry coordinator. As soon as we arrived at the station, we were informed that the place is on hard lockdown due to the pandemic. Thus, only the car loaded with food was allowed entry while the rest of us remained outside. We were however able to meet JO2 Charmaine Tarra Amcay, the contact person for religious activities. Currently, BJMP consists of 39 personnel, 455 male inmates and 51 female inmates.

From this activity, we witnessed how our mere experience of chopping, assembling and packing



together emits a kind of energy that unites and makes us stir to action. Our “*Lugaw for Leni*” may seem small and insignificant for such a contribution but our goal is to come together, to find a common ground and to unify all our little efforts in order to bring about a much greater impact that will not only change our current national situation but will also change us in the process. Thus, we ask ourselves this question, “Are we first of all willing to be changed in order to contribute to the change we envision for our country?” For change to happen, it must first come from within.

- Novice Kathleen Mae De Guzman

NEWS FROM THE STATIONS

SPC Ormoc Spearheads Tree Planting and Coastal Clean-up Drive

By Sr. Leticia Sazara OSB



Early morning of the 22nd of October, forty-one volunteers consisting of faculty members, high school and college students together with the Sisters of St. Peter's College travelled to Purok Naungan for an institutional tree planting of mangroves and coastal clean-up. A short prayer was said before the group dispersed into two groups for said activities. The Sisters joined the coastal cleanup group. After working for two hours, the group took refreshments and headed back to school filled with joy for extracting plastic and other ocean pollutants. This ocean clean-up project helps improve the quality of life for both animals and people all around the world.

Thank you... until we meet again

Sr. Anna Mary Adikini OSB returned to Jinja, Uganda on October 2021 after her four-year missionary assignment. We thank Sr. Anna Mary for her generosity and assistance in St. Scholastica's Hospital and the Pambujan Community, Northern Samar.

God be with you, Sister!



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500 YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

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500 YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE PHILIPPINES (1521 - 2021)

MANILA PRIORY BULLETIN TEAM

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