

SUPERIORS AND FORMATORS MEET AMID PANDEMIC

By Sr. Daniela Romero, OSB

The first in-person Superiors-Formators' Meeting since the onset of COVID 19 finally took place on August 22 – 27, 2022 at St. Scholastica's Formation House, Tagaytay City. In her welcome address, M. Mary Thomas Prado, OSB mentioned that the task at hand for the participants is "to look at the state of our Priory at this moment in our history; to listen to each other, to be attentive to the ways God was present and how God acted in the events, in the movements and trends that have happened or are happening in our Priory". The lines of the opening song on the first day aptly set the tone of the gathering...

"Listen, let your heart keep seeking, listen to its constant speaking, listen to the spirit calling you, listen to his inspiration, listen to his invitation." The synodal process of sharing and listening to the Holy Spirit and to each other in order to discern the path we need to tread as a priory was employed during the entire meeting. It was looking back to what has been and looking ahead to the future as the reports revolved around the blessings, challenges and plans to focus on or ways to move forward. Each participant was given time to share to the whole group her personal reflection after listening to the reports



based on these two questions: What did I hear? What did I feel?

The individual and group *Lectio Divina* on Cassian's eight afflictive thoughts as presented by S. Meg Funk, OSB in her book "Thoughts Matter" and the conference of M. Irene Dabalus, OSB on our Charism as Missionary Benedictine Sisters (delivered by S. Pauline Trivino, OSB on her behalf) deepened the process of listening to the personal and communal call to transformation; the call to be effective Benedictine monastic-missionary witnesses.

Raphael Martin Magno, the Executive Director of Angat Pinas, Incorporated (a Non-Government Organization (NGO) launched by former VP Leni Robredo which aims to continue some of the programs she initiated over the past six years) shared his reflection on the recently concluded national elections. He also presented the programs of Angat Buhay which are dedicated to uplifting the lives of those in the fringes.

Angat Buhay focuses on four key areas: health, education, disaster response and community engagement. The Manila Priory pledged its support to all the initiatives of Angat Buhay. This gave birth to the Priory's collaboration and partnership with Angat Buhay. Initially, the different communities put together all their cash donations to Angat Buhay and expressed participation in and support to the community learning hubs.



Sr. Merceditas Ang, SPC gave an input on "Rethinking the Education Landscape" via Zoom. Her personal sharing on the school system of Paulinian schools was truly inspiring. This made the participants felt more hopeful despite the many challenges confronting our Association of Benedictine Schools (ABS).

What is our vision of the direction that the Priory shall take in the next three years? The synodal process of listening and discernment did not stop in this meeting but it will continue in our communities. In the spirit of communion, participation and mission, we walk together in one direction. As Mother Mary Thomas puts it, "Where this journey as a Priory is going to take us, we can only cast our hope and trust in God".

Rite of Acceptance to Aspirancy

By Aspirant Joni Gail Morales

On Saturday, July 2, 2022 was the appointed time for the entrance of three ladies to St. Scholastica's Formation House in Tagaytay.

Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB together with some Sisters from the Priory House community accompanied the three incoming aspirants, namely: Ms. Joni Gail Morales from Bacolod City, Ms. Joanne Zamudio from La Trinidad, Benguet and Ms. Jonalyn Epe from Leyte. Only the mother and siblings of Joanne were there to send her off. It was a touching moment for the three ladies when the mother of Joanne gave the last hug and embraced her daughter. Mrs. Zamudio also hugged Joni and Joanne on behalf of their mothers who could not be present.



The Vocation Directress, Sr. Antonia Santiago, OSB, presented to us, the three candidates as Aspirant Jonalyn Epe, Aspirant Joni Gail Morales, and Aspirant Ma. Joanne Zamudio to Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB, Prioress. After some interrogation, which we responded wholeheartedly, Mother Mary Thomas accepted us into Aspirancy.

We waved our goodbyes shortly after the Rite of Acceptance to Aspirancy and picture taking. Then Sr. Mary Paul Baul, OSB, Pre-Novitiate directress led each one of us to our respective rooms in silence.

With hearts filled with gratitude, we thank the Sisters for giving us their loving support and encouragement through their presence and prayers for our perseverance. Special thanks to the Priory House community for taking care of our needs during our stay prior to entrance. That in all things God may be glorified!

Manila Priory Celebrates M. Mary Thomas' Feastday: A Whole New World

By Sr. Mary Grace Macatuno, OSB



On Sunday, July 3, 2022, Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB celebrated her feastday with the long - awaited gathering of Sisters from nearby communities in Luzon after two years of virtual program since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Communities from Baguio, Legazpi and from Visayas and Mindanao also joined online. After two years of suspended F2F activities because of lockdown and quarantine period, everyone took part in the shining, shimmering, splendid festive meal and program at the refectory immediately after the Eucharistic celebration at the chapel.

To everyone's surprise, the brilliance of the magic lamp with its phenomenal cosmic power and the super - muscled blue giant came to life with the antics of Sr. Pia Lansang, OSB and Sr. Constance Tecson, OSB. They described "*the morning after*" the lockdown, the typhoon, the counting of votes during the recent Presidential election. What an iconic

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virtual production of Walt Disney's Aladdin featuring Sr. Mary Peter Mackay, OSB playing the lead role of Aladdin with Sr. Rosalina Fajardo, OSB as the enchanting princess, Jasmine. It turned out to be a blockbuster feastday greeting for Mother Prioress over, sideways, and under the virtual magic carpet ride from the Priory House Community to the different stations nationwide. *"Unbelievable sights, indescribable feeling, soaring, tumbling, freewheeling through an endless diamond sky."*

Like a shooting star, all the other communities represented had their own share of virtual creative greeting with improvisations, songs, jokes, and inspiring *"Laudato Si"* earth-friendly snippets of caring for *"our common home."*

Mother Prioress was grateful for the precious gift of presence among the sisters, for their selfless concerted efforts, and the joy of celebrating this year with a new horizon to pursue and a whole new world ahead of us.



New Superior and President of St. Peter's College (SPC) Installed

By Sr. Adela Arabia, OSB

On July 13, 2022, Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB installed Sr. Maria Agnes Cerina, OSB as superior of the community of Sisters in St. Peter's College. It was integrated with Vespers.

The next day, July 14, 2022 was the Installation of Sr. Maureen Cariaga, OSB as the 15th President of St. Peter's College of Ormoc, Inc. We started at 9:30 in the morning with Holy Mass with Rev. Fr. Gerald Alcantara as main celebrant and concelebrating were Rev. Fr. Ronel Taboso, parish priest of St. Peter and Paul Parish and Rev. Fr. Gerald San Gabriel from the same parish.

After a short break the Installation Rites followed. The Prioress, Mother Mary Thomas, OSB read the appointment of Sr. Maureen, OSB as President of SPC for two years, effective July 13, 2022 to July 13, 2024. Then Mother Prioress passed on to Sr. Maureen, OSB the SPC Legacy. The Oath of Office was administered by Dr. Maximo Aljibe, CESO III, CHEDRO VIII, Regional Director of Region 8.

It was a celebration of the SPC school community, the faculty and lay partners and a few guests: four sisters from the Tacloban communities, the Department of Education representative Dr. Marilyn Siao, CESO VI, the Alumni Association Presidents, Board of Trustees and a representative of the Parent-Teachers' Association.

In her Inaugural Address, Sr. Maureen reminded the school community of its role as an institution of higher learning, "With all our gifts combined as Catholic, Filipino and Benedictine educators, we will strive to continue achieving what SPC has aimed for since its beginnings. We shall uphold "the why" of our educational institution but, with rekindled vision, enduring hope and loving passion to truly educate – to draw out the potentials of every learner so that each one may become who he/she is meant to be and become agents of change in our country and church." A festive lunch concluded the event.



That in all things God may be glorified.

Blessing of the Renovated St. Benedict's Guest House

The Manila Priory's newly renovated St. Benedict's guest house was blessed on July 30, 2022 at 9:30 in the morning. The simple blessing rites liturgy, prepared by Sr. Pia Lansang was presided over by Fr. William Padios, MMHC. The year-long renovation was done by Architect Val Angelo Caliwara under the supervision of Sr. Constance Tecson, OSB while Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB took care of the interior design and purchases of furniture and fixtures, did the finishing touches and coordinated their installation in the guest house. Special feature was the carpentry and woodwork of tables and stools of varied shapes which were artistically crafted by our maintenance staff, Mr. Jerry Loway. To show our gratitude, all the construction workers, gardener and house staff who cleaned and prepared the place for the event were invited.



A few meters away, the Water Distillery Station which includes filling machinery, bottled water storage system and equipment was also blessed. The proceeds from the sale of the bottled Bene-Drink purified water will be allocated to build up funds for St. Scholastica's Mission Hospital in Pambujan and other outreach projects of the Priory.



A simple morning snack was served to all the guests. That in all things God may be glorified!



ON-GOING FORMATION NEWS

Flower Arrangement Online Workshop

By: Sr. Caritas Flor, OSB

The On-going Formation Team of the Manila Priory organized an online Basic Flower Arrangement Workshop last August 19-20, 2022 from 2:30 – 5:30 in the afternoon. It was originally scheduled on July 15 – 16, 2022, but was postponed because the resource person tested positive of the COVID 19 virus. There was a possibility of a second postponement, still because of COVID infection, this time among men, women employees and three Sisters in the Priory House, but fortunately it pushed through on the scheduled dates.

The facilitator, Ms Candice April Ong has been the School Administrator and Instructor of the Institute of Philippine Floral Techniques from 2008 up to the present. She came with her mother and a staff member who generously and patiently shared their expertise in the field of flower arrangement with Sr. Leticia Saraza, OSB, from the Formation House – Tagaytay, Sr. Eugene Amar, OSB and Gleica Buyo from the Priory House Community, Sr. Lucila Sardido, OSB from the Manila Community and yours truly as onsite participants.

We learned skills and techniques on flower arrangement while enjoying and having fun during the activity.

In the course of this two-day afternoon workshop, we learned not only basic skills and techniques on flower arrangement but also ways on preserving and handling the flowers with care before, during and after the arrangement. We also learned how to be sensitive enough to the plants' and flowers' needs, the way we attend to the needs of our sisters in the community.

I am very happy and grateful for being chosen as one of the onsite participants. We also thank Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB for planning this workshop together with the former OGF coordinator, Sr. Edna Quiambao, OSB and Sr. Isabel Orito, OSB, the present OGF coordinator for helping in turning this plan into reality.



NEWS FROM STATIONS

PRIORY HOUSE

Manila Priory @116

By Sr. Marissa Piramide, OSB

They left the Motherhouse in Tutzing on August 13, 1906. In Munich, before they boarded the train for Genoa, Mother Birgitta told them with beaming eyes: My dear ones, in spirit I see our Sisters spread out in great numbers over the Philippines, laboring in many houses for the greater honor of God and the salvation of immortal souls.

On the feast of the Assumption of our Lady, August 15, the five Sisters (M. Ferdinanda Hoelzer as Sister Prioress, Sisters Petronella Keller, Crescentia Veser, Winfrieda Mueller and Alexia Ruedenauer, a novice) boarded the German “S.S. Gneisenau” in Genoa. The voyage was exceptionally smooth across the Mediterranean. They had, however, to endure excruciating heat as they went through the Red Sea. Finally, their feet touched the Philippine shores on September 14. Thus, year after year we, Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing celebrate our foundation on September 14.



Through the initial days, each pioneer enjoyed hospitality of different religious houses already existing then. The district was Tondo. Why Tondo? Why Moriones? The Archbishop assigned them missionary work in Tondo. Location was house number 134, on Moriones Street.

The Sisters expressed the desire to do mission among the poor children. They were to open a grade school which was to start on the feastday of St. Francis Xavier, apostle to the Orient.



Sister Petronella’s health was seriously impaired. In Europe, it was thought that the tropical climate would do good to her delicate constitution. After a thorough medical examination, this zealous missionary had to return to the Motherhouse and soon after, the Lord called her to her eternal home (October 18, 1907).

Note: Historical facts were taken from Sr. Caridad Barrion, OSB’s book, “The Missionary Benedictine Sisters in the Philippines, 1906 – 1981.

This year, September 14 – how did the Priory House celebrate the Priory’s 116 years? Just like our daily common prayers (Lauds, Holy Mass, Daytime Prayer, Vespers, Compline) prayed with immense joy, exaltation and thanksgiving. Mass presider was

Rev. Fr. Anselm Manalastas, OSB of the abbey of our Lady of Montserrat, Manila. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament added to the solemnity of the day. Rich and festive food on the table. Our hearts filled with rejoicing in and thanksgiving to the God of Providence.

She greets us as we greet her. She welcomes us as we recognize her. Where she is now becomes holy ground and sacred space. Occasion was:



Blessing Rite of the Statue of St. Scholastica at the Priory House

Last September 14, after the Holy Mass of the 116th anniversary of foundation of the Manila Priory, we gathered before the new statue of St. Scholastica to bless it. The rite consisted in expressive prayers and lively singing. Presider of the rite was Rev. Fr, Anselm Manalastas, OSB. Location is at the center of the garden in front of the Priory House parlor close to the side Entrance to the Chapel. In the introduction, Sr. Pia Lansang, OSB wrote: "St. Scholastica is seated while holding the staff in her hand. Through this representation we wish to recognize her quiet leadership in a monastic- Benedictine community of women through the Service of Authority." It was also observed that there was a soft shower of rain at the start of the blessing.

ST. BENEDICT'S HOME

Oblation Rite

By Sister Hilda Buhay, OSB

On July 11, 2022, Solemnity of St. Benedict, we witnessed the investiture of Novice Oblates: Eddielyn Astronomo, Emma Quilono and May Agsie.

For the first time, St. Benedict's Home community received candidates from among the household staff. When asked about the reason for the candidates' application, they said, "These past years, we have been "lived in" workers here. We have prayed with you and observed you. We like to live up to St. Benedict's "Ora et Labora", that in all things God may be glorified".



September 24, 2022

137th Congregational Foundation Day

By Aspirant Ma. Joanne Zamudio

Ten days after the joyous celebration of our Manila Priory Foundation Day, we were again happily celebrating our congregation foundation on its 137th year, recalling the hard work that our founder, Fr. Andreas Amrhein, OSB, had to go through in order to establish and build the mission that he had just once dreamt of. This solemn celebration was of course centered on praying our Divine Office, Holy Mass, Office of Readings and Adoration.

These made us meditate on the memory of how our Founder and the Pioneers of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing started and which has now spread all over the world because of God's grace and the zeal that all missionary sisters have in their hearts in their resolve to continue the vision of Fr. Amrhein.

The day ended with a program which was organized by the Juniorate with all the formandees ready with their presentation representing a continent on which our community is located. Aligned to the theme: "We are different yet one", Aspirants Jonalyn, Joni and Joanne representing Europe presented a skit; Postulant Belle for Africa did a puppet monologue; and Sr. Caritas for Asia vibrantly rendered a Korean song. The evening was also graced by a beautiful patriotic Bulgarian song rendered by Sr. Leticia Saraza, OSB.

The yearly celebration of our Congregational Foundation day inspires and motivates us to continue the mission of the Benedictine Sisters through our consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, bearing in our minds and in our hearts the call to embrace diversity and proclaim the Gospel to everyone.



ST. SCHOLASTICA'S CONVENT-BAGUIO

St. Scholastica's Retreat Center in Baguio Reopens

With the more relaxed, seemingly COVID-19 - free atmosphere, we, Sr. Benita delos Reyes, OSB and the Sisters in St. Scholastica's Retreat Center in Baguio, reopened our doors in May, 2022.

We started slowly by accepting transient electorate who came home to cast their votes, coupled with vacationers who were finding refuge from the summer heat in the lowlands. Transients were accepted either just for bed accommodation or for bed and breakfast. We charged fairly and the house was full!

As the small - group face to face conferences are allowed by the IATF, the transient accommodation will soon give way to the main activity and apostolate of Baguio Community. The Retreat Center started to receive calls from groups who requested reservations for retreats. We hope and pray that soon the house will be busy again: our house assistants with their hands full and voices filling up our gardens and conference rooms, and groups of retreatants coming in and out of the main gate.



CAYSASAY DEVELOPMENT CENTER –TAAL

Benedictines for Peace for Women and Youth Marks 6 Years

By Sr. Rosalind Tanhueco, OSB and Miss Maria Luisa D. Melo

July 31, 2022 marked the 6th anniversary of Benedictines for Peace for Women and Youth group at Caysasay Development Center, Taal. One hundred thirty (130) participants from different municipalities of Calaca, Lemery, San Luis and Taal graced the celebration.

Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB, Prioress, gave the opening remarks to the assembly through a video clip with these words, *“St. Benedict in his Rule encouraged his followers to seek peace and pursue it. Therefore, peacemaking is very important for us Benedictines and for our mission partners. The*



peace that we seek and pursue is not only the absence of war but, it is mainly a way of life, a peaceful way of life. Today, you are discussing a very important topic in your life how to be at peace with making the right decisions in life. I take this opportunity to thank you for actively partnering with us in this cause of building peace and the culture of peace within

Benedictines for Peace... From page 10

ourselves, in our communities and most of all in our country.”

This was followed by a heart to heart encounter with the theme, “Heart Talk Experiences on Early Pregnancy” with a two-fold aim: raising awareness and knowledge regarding the implications of early teenage pregnancies to adolescents and fostering open communication between parents and teens regarding sex. There were two Philberth scholars and two community leaders who shared their learnings and experiences regarding early marriage and pregnancies. They also gave their advice and reminders to the scholars not to rush into love and prioritize their studies first before anything else. After the discussion, two reactors, namely, Dr. Rico Gabriel Remo and Miss Lolita Vargas emphasized that life is never easy and one has to be responsible for the decision and actions she/he makes.

After the open forum, certificates, tokens, raffle draw and Search for Mr. & Ms. Benedictine for Peace took place. The objectives of the pageant are to build confidence, develop leadership skills and become a role model among scholars.

It was a fun- filled and successful event indeed because everyone showed unity, cooperation and sharing. A sumptuous meal was prepared and everyone gave their share so that everyone could eat and be satisfied.



MATI

First “Taboan” in St .Scholastica’s Enfide, Mati

By Sr. Claudia Sampal, OSB

Last July 23, 2022 we had a post celebration of the Feast of St Benedict held in our training center in St Scholastica ‘s Enfide . The participants came from the People’s Organization of the four barangays.

In the morning we had a short program. Sr .Rosalina Fajardo, OSB our special guest, gave the opening remarks. A short input on Laudato Si was given by Sr.Cecille Ido, OSB .It was followed by a festive lunch. After lunch we opened the Taboan (market day). “Taboan” is a Visayan word which means an open air market place for farm products. The aim of taboan is to serve as a venue for marketing and selling of the farmers’ products especially the organic ones and to promote locally- made goods at a lower price. Everybody was excited and all the products were sold out.



Students Receive Sacrament of Confirmation

By Sr. Nicole Garcia, OSB

On September 7, 2022, Wednesday, a day before the birthday of our Blessed Mother Mary, the best gifts we could offer her are the 49 angelic-looking girls from Grades 3-5 including one Grade 6 and one Grade 7 students who received, for the first time, the Most Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. They were our First Communicants here at St. Scholastica's College-Westgrove.



The parents and the first communicants arrived earlier than expected. Upon entrance to St. Benedict's Church, the parents were instructed to pin a medal of the Blessed Mother on their girl's dress. The First communicants did a performance - level singing of all the Mass songs and they actively participated in all the responses with their cherubim-sounding voices. The parents did their parts too, solemnly and reverently. Some were assigned to do the readings, some to light the candles and some to offer flowers, fruits, bread and wine, and the certificates. Fr. Anselm Manalastas, OSB, our presider, patiently accompanied the girls during the celebration and even during their confession the day before the big event.

It was a perfect example of synodality in our school where everybody showed their willingness to assist and journey with the girls on their most special day. The advisers were remarkable in their hard work because they have to double time with the F2F practices which were interrupted by a shift to online classes on other days due to some positive cases in school and the suspension of classes because of the coming of typhoon Florida. If we are driven to serve in order to give glory to our Triune God I am happy to say: "all's well that ends well." That in all things GOD may be glorified!

Laudato Sí

"Listen to the Voice of Creation" is the theme for this year's celebration of the Season of Creation with the burning bush as the Symbol. This symbol of God's Spirit calls us to listen to the voice of creation.

As Benedictines, we were told to "Listen with the Ear of our Heart." And so, in listening to the voice of creation, we listen with the ear of our heart. We could hear, see and feel that our Mother Earth is groaning yet she still provides us with everything we need. So, it is our obligation to protect her and care for her to the best that we could.

This awareness was highlighted in our Morning Praise last September 5, 2022, Monday. This marked the beginning of the Season of Creation in our school here at St. Scholastica's



College-Westgrove. All the year levels have their own way of participating in the consciousness -raising to safeguard our only planet.

As a school community we respond to the call of our MBST-JPIC national to reflect and act on the Laudato Sí Action Platform, In the Spirit of Integral Ecology, Hope for the Earth and the Poor. Guided by the 7 Laudato Sí Goals, the General Services Personnel started their session on August 27, 2022, Saturday, A Review of Laudato Sí by Pope Francis, followed by the Orientation on Laudato Sí Goals on September 2, 2022, Friday. The last phase which will discuss the Reflection of Archbishop-Emeritus Antonio J Ledesma SJ of Cagayan de Oro on the Ten Challenges After Elections which will be on September 17, 2022, Saturday. The faculty and the office staff will have their separate sessions on the 3 remaining Fridays of September. Let us all help together in saving our only Mother Earth. That in all things GOD may be glorified!



ST. SCHOLASTICA'S ACADEMY- MARIKINA

SSAM'S INITIAL HIGHLIGHTS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2022 -2023

At the outset of the Academic Year 2022 -2023, SSAM has been the recipient of two new gifts: Sr. Edna Quiambao, OSB – our new Superior - Directress and Sr. Josefa Martinez, OSB – our new School and Community Treasurer.

With the new leadership came the setting of the school's Direction for the new Academic Year which came alongside with the setting of the Community Objectives. Specifically, Sr. Edna painstakingly met with the three units plus the auxiliary force of the OS/GSP if only to carefully lay out such Direction...which flowed on to the necessary revision of our Vision- Mission.

Having Dr. Amelia Ronquillo as our facilitator, the faculty members of the three units faced the task with such dedication and commitment so much so that at the end, they came up with a quite satisfactory Vision-Mission statement which they could claim as their own - a real labor of love.

It is in this context that we dared start the new academic year with the new modality we had to set in: The Blended Learning Modality with limited face to face and for each year level, there is one section that is purely online.



To bless all our new endeavors, we had our Votive Mass to the Holy Spirit, presided over by Fr. Pio Hernaez, a Marian priest. Meanwhile, Fr. Anselm Manalastas, OSB took care of the institutional First Friday masses for the first two months. Added to these Eucharistic celebrations were the Benedictine Formation sessions with the new teachers, with focus on OBEDIENCE, as emphasized by Sr. Edna in her institutional orientation. Even the Office Staff & General Services personnel (years 1 - 12) also held their Benedictine /Formation

Sessions, both facilitated by Sr. Bernadette Asuncion, OSB. Sr. Carmelita, on the other hand, has taken care of the re-organization of the new offices and other structures which involved the General Services personnel of which she is in-charge.

One noteworthy highlight was that of our GS department's successful PAASCU Accreditation.. Under the leadership of Sr. Jessica Arante, OSB, they were granted a Level III RE- Accredited Status. HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS to the entire Grade School Unit!



With Sr. Jessica's preparation of the Grade School Unit, Sr. Evangeline's efficient coordination of the SIP concerns with the three units, along with the Tuason Center's Services and Sr. Josefa's careful management of the financial side of SSAM's operations, we do hope – with God's grace – to carry out the Lord's mission with fidelity.

That in all things God may be glorified!

ST. AGNES ACADEMY—LEGAZPI

SAA GRACED BY THE PRESENCE OF ATTY. LENI ROBREDO

by: Sr. Celine Saplala, OSB

Former Vice-President Leni Robredo visited Legazpi City last September 13, 2022, at exactly 1:00 in the afternoon. She was heartily welcomed by the Agnesian community together with the different groups of supporters and volunteers here in Albay. The Solid Leni Bicol spearheaded the *Mabalos, Mapadagos* activity and requested for the use of our SAA gym.

While waiting for her turn to speak, Atty. Leni made herself available to greet other groups for the much awaited photo op in the HS AVR. She was happy to meet the ANGAT BUHAY Community Learning Hub trained volunteer, Ms. Matet Andes and our Barangay 17 Captain, Ms. Lina Chan and her staff. Sr. Celine informed Atty. Leni that SAA is taking the Community Learning Hub as part of our outreach program.

In her much applauded address in the gym, Atty. Leni Robredo thanked her supporters for journeying with her during the campaign period and stressed the need for all to continue helping with her projects that will address the problem of poverty that affects poor educational performance, malnutrition, housing in the province as well as in the whole country.

In her short presence in SAA, everyone expressed a lifting of spirits and enkindling of joy in seeing and hearing our esteemed and gracious Bicolana, Atty. Leni Robredo! We say to you Atty. Leni: God be with you. Dios Mabalos!



SSCS 2022: New Beginnings

By M. Irene Dabalus, OSB

The volcanic ash of Taal of 2019 has been blown away. The pall of fear cast by the pandemic years 2020/21 has waned. And the yellow butterflies have returned to their clean-air sanctuary in our garden. This year 2022 SSCS opens its doors again to the advent of a new spring in its evangelizing ministry. Once more a vibrant air is back after a 2-year “lockdown”, as the community and the Center open their doors to those who seek a time of prayer and reflection in the busy commerce of living.

It was a marvel indeed that the Center could get back to its feet to serve the first retreat course of Benedictine Oblates from Manila in April. Months before, the Center’s chapel had to be spruced up from floor to roofing; pews were cleaned and varnished, and sound systems re-installed. The three buildings and three floors got thorough cleaning, bedrooms and service areas repaired, windows and doors varnished, termite colonies demolished, refectory and kitchen, drinking fountains, water tanks, and electrical systems renewed. The bridge leading from building 2 to building 3 on the second floor was re-enforced. What an endless round of work it was for Sr. Carmel with the help of the “men” of Sr. Constance and a skeleton staff of 8 workers from our pre-pandemic troop. Truly “mission partners” in action.

The Center gradually picked up with the groups of clients which followed. The Leaven of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (LIHM) held their General Chapter with 46 members from June 5-14. The 76 clergy of the Diocese of Novaliches made their retreat from August 22-27. To be sure that the group would be COVID free, they had every participant swabbed before getting their room keys. Luckily, they were all clean.

Other groups – big and small - have booked themselves until December, including our own Priory cluster retreat in October and the LIHM General Chapter Part 2 in December. Challenges are to be expected with the rising inflation, transport problems, and increasing prices of commodities in the country. This is on one level – practical and worrisome. But on another, we in the Center are looking forward to offering our place – in this messed-up and jacked-up world - to those who seek union with God and worship in prayer – the Benedictine way.



OBLATES

“Festival in White”

Annual Gathering of Oblates with the Benedictine Sisters

By Sr. Pia Lansang, OSB

Eighty (80) people attended the Annual Gathering of Oblates with the Benedictine Sisters of the Manila Priory on July 9, 2022. The Rites of Renewal of Oblation were highlighted by the admission of two Candidates (from Marikina and Manila) to Final Oblation by the Prioress, Mother Mary Thomas, OSB. The ceremony took place within the 6:30 a.m. Holy Mass at St. Scholastica's Chapel presided by Fr. Abbot Austin Cadiz, OSB of the Abbey of Our Lady of Montserrat.

The Chapel and the Pergola where the Reception was held turned into a veritable “*Festival in White*” (the dress code for the day). The joyful get-together included the much awaited Address of the Prioress who spoke on Synodality and its challenges to Benedictine Oblates in the Church and in the world today. Camaraderie, singing and dancing, and taking souvenir photos added further to the festivity.

Making the affair even more memorable was the fact that this was the first face-to-face Get-together after more than two years of pandemic lockdowns and limited movement. Indeed, not only did “*absence make the heart grow fonder*”, but, it stirred kindred spirits into a jubilant sense of community in the big Benedictine family. In fact, only a day after this event (July 11) would be the Solemnity of St. Benedict. In his honor, immediately after the Get-together, 50 bags filled with substantial goods were distributed by the Oblates at nearby “Subiaco” to poor families from the surrounding Barangays. May this fire of service continue to burn, and the Oblates’ commitment translate into action, as an outflow of Benedict’s principle of “*love of Christ above all else*”.



Prioress, Mo. Mary Thomas admitting two Candidates as Final Oblation



Annual Gathering of Oblates and Sisters, July 9, 2022

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

Making Organic Fertilizer for Mother Earth

Sr. Rosalind Tanhueco, OSB

In response to the urgent call of Pope Francis for the Care of Creation, a seminar on Stewardship and Care for the Earth on May 28, 2022 was conducted at the Caysasay Development Center (CDC-T), Taal, Batangas. Twenty-two (22) youth and women participated and agreed among themselves to assist in cleaning, gardening, picking ripe mangos and santol from the garden. The ripe mangoes were processed into Fermented Fruit Juice (FFJ) or Organic Foliar Fertilizer (OFF). The usage of OFF is to fertilize the leaves and soil of fruit-bearing trees. These activities enabled them to interact among themselves, share their talents, and have fun working together as a team. In addition, they were able to deepen their awareness and respect for God's Creation and strengthen their commitment to preserve Mother Earth by producing organic fertilizers for trees and plants.



Clean-up drive



Bayanihan Spirit in Gardening



Preparing ripe mangos and santol to process into Fermented Fruit Juice (FFJ) or Organic Foliar Fertilizer (OFF)



Chopping banana trunk to process into Fermented Plant Juice (FPJ) or Organic Fertilizer (OF)



Organic Foliar Fertilizer

ST. SCHOLASTICA'S FARM HOSTS "WeGen #Trees 4Life" TREE PLANTING

By Sr. Aurora Bravo, OSB

St. Scholastica's Farm was given the Certificate of Appreciation by the WeGen Energy Philippines Holdings Corporation and the WeGen Laudato Si Inc. for hosting the "#Trees for Life" -tree planting of over 200 seedlings of assorted fruits on August 26, 2022. It was an activity coordinated by Fr. Rene Cabag, CICM, and an active missionary priest occasionally celebrating mass in our adopted parish near our farm. It was participated in by over 50 staff and management executives of WeGen, its sister company, Apricus, to mark the first death anniversary of its founder and CEO Michael Saalfeld (who himself was a staunch environmentalist), as a show of WeGen employees of their care for the environment.

During the opening rite, our farm workers, Ruby and Dondon demonstrated the steps to be done in transferring the seedlings from the black bag to the ground so as to make the soil intact as they were placed into the hole dug on the ground. These two were also the ones who did the clearing and the digging of holes which greatly facilitated the tree planting activity.

WeGen, short for **We Generation**, is a renewable energy company which harnesses the main source of energy on the earth – the power of the sun and the benefits of solar energy. It envisions a clean and affordable energy anytime, anywhere and for everyone.

It is good to know that we share the same advocacy. They promised to support us in our concerns related to renewable solar energy. As a culminating activity, a mass was officiated by Fr. Rene, CICM held in our farm chapel.



VOCATION ANIMATION

Life Direction Session (LDS)

By Sr. Eligia O. Cababat, OSB

On August 14, 2022, fourteen young ladies (14) attended the online Life Direction Session (LDS) with the theme, “*The Assumption of Our Blessed Virgin Mary.*” Mother Irene Dabalus, OSB, through her talk using power point presentation delivered by Sr. Hildegarde Amboy on her behalf, guided and inspired both the ladies and the Vocation Animator-Facilitators from Bacolod, Ormoc and Tabunok communities. As we ask Mary to intercede for us, we bring to mind these powerful excerpts from Mother Irene’s talk on the Assumption of Mary: “What is the meaning of the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven and its impact in our lives?”



Pope Pius XII’s Apostolic Constitution “*Munificentissimus Deus*” speaks not only about the absence of corruption in Mary’s body but also her triumph over death and the glorification of her body, exactly after the Body of her Son. Now as we meditate on the struggles of our sick sisters and brothers, we have our vision

fixed on the perfect victory over sin and death with Mary as our guiding light. “



After listening to the talk, the participants went to the break-out rooms for group faith sharing-discussion of insights and reflections. Midday prayer concluded the morning session.

With grateful hearts, we thank the 14 participants for their lively and active participation in the discussion. To conclude, we, the Sister-Vocation Animators thank the Lord of the Harvest and rightly give due honor and gratitude

to Mary for her powerful intercession, that in spite of their busy work schedules and classes, we managed to conduct the life direction seminar for vocations. That in all things God maybe glorified!



to Sr Joyce lipakwa, OSB a Namibian from Windhoek Priory, who graduated with a Degree of Bachelor of Science in Education from the Holy Angel University last June 10, 2022.



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