

MANILA PRIORY CELEBRATES CHRISTMAS

By Sr. Gabrielle Costumbrado, OSB



The traditional Christmas celebration of the Sisters and formandees of the Manila Priory took place on the fourth Sunday of Advent, December 18th, with the theme “Feliz Navidad! Tayo ang Ligaya ng Isa’t Isa” (*Merry Christmas! We are Each Other’s Joy*). This yearly coming together was held at the improved Stations of the Cross area after the mid-morning prayer at the Priory chapel. Those from communities that could not come joined the celebration via zoom platform.

All the communities or clusters were encouraged to come up with a one-minute presentation, using the popular yuletide song, “Feliz Navidad” as background music. Those who were at the Priory House presented what they had prepared at the mini stage provided for the occasion. This was followed by the video presentation of those from other regions. It was amazing how the communities came up with creative performances which gave joy to everyone. Some showed a glimpse of their ministries, others did a choreographed song and dance interpretation wearing colorful yuletide accents, while others did their own version of the song – a cappella or accompanied by guitar or a youth band.

When all the presentations were done, Mother Prioress Mary Thomas Prado was called by the

emcees, Sr. Isabel and Sr. Emmanuel, for her Christmas message. This was contained in her Common Letter which she read before the assembly. Taking the canticle of Zechariah as her context, she said: “With the present situation of increasing poverty, inflation, proliferation of fake news and untruths, red tagging and violation of human rights, preponderance of greed in government offices, corruption of national funds and many others, we ask if we can truly break into a song of praise and gratitude.” Her wish is that PRAISE and GRATITUDE will mark our experience of the birth of Jesus.

Afterwards, Sr. Rosalina Fajardo led the prayer before meals. The Sisters, formandees and some lay mission partners helped themselves to the sumptuous food served and simply enjoyed the presence of one another, having been deprived of this activity for the past two years due to the pandemic.



Sisters of the Manila Priory Go on Retreat

By Sr. M. Isabel Orito, OSB

Three groups of Sisters went on three separate retreats to give a chance for the “**taong bahay**” (a **Filipino term** for one who stays at home, taking responsibilities in the absence of the rest) to go on retreat themselves, to cut down on costs and to have the same facilitator for two groups at least. The biggest group was composed of Sisters assigned in Luzon from eleven communities with a sprinkling of “**taong bahay**” from Visayas and Mindanao who had to come three days earlier for the required quarantine for those who travel by plane. The venue was St. Scholastica’s Center of Spirituality, Tagaytay City from the afternoon of October 1 to after lunch of October 9, 2022. The retreat facilitator was Fr. Eugene Cañete, MJ.



The communities of Bacolod and Tabunok, the smallest group, gathered at Tabunok community on September 29-30 for their private retreat days and then went to Don Bosco Retreat Formation Center, Lawaan, Talisay City, Cebu for the retreat proper on October 1- 6, 2022. Fr. Vince Michael Sabal, SDB was their retreat facilitator.





The last group, comprising the communities of Tacloban Hospital, Tacloban School, Pambujan, Ormoc, Mati, Marihatag plus the “taong bahay” from the Luzon communities held theirs at Schoenstatt Spirituality Center, Brgy. Lawaan, Talisay City, Cebu from October 15 to 22, 2022 with the same facilitator as that of the Luzon group.

Fr. Eugene Cañete, MJ took the Church’s theme for this year: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission as a pattern for his development of points that he shared with the Sisters from the Luzon communities. Using power point presentations in his once- a –day conferences, he gave them the context of our changing contemporary world, of the Church that has not perfectly lived up to the ideal of being a discerning, relational and inclusive Church before launching them into the difficult journey to the heart where each sister came face to face with who she is as a religious before the ideal: **the heart of Jesus.**



Each conference ended with the distribution of a page of “searing” (as one Sister described it) reflection questions and a meaningful prayer. Halfway through the retreat however, one Sister tested positive of Covid 19 and so changes had to be made. Discontinued was the one-hour consultation with the facilitator as well as the awaited faith sharing by communities. The chapel had to make way to the conference room which is more ventilated and confession was heard by two additional younger priests who were not afraid because it was held where there was good air circulation, for example on a bridge joining the Administration Bldg. to Bldg. 3. Taking meals at the refectory was by two batches, so that we could follow the one person - per table policy. Despite the challenges, the



goals for the retreat were somehow all met by the **grace of God** mediated through the calm guidance of the facilitator, the collaborative efforts of those assigned with tasks, the tireless supervision of Sr. Carmel of her dedicated lay staff and the prayers of the Sisters for us to **become the heart of Christ in the world.** The other two groups also had good feedback about their experiences. How long the glow of Christ’s Spirit remain in us would largely depend on our hearts’ hospitality and willed faithfulness.

Sister Mary John's Cup Runneth Over: Two Awards and an 85th Birthday Celebration

By Sr. Therese Bulatao, OSB



The Cyber Guardians of the Philippines, Incorporated sent this congratulatory message to its Chairperson, Sister Mary John Mananzan, OSB, “who will be receiving another international recognition. The Pontifical Mission Society has invited her to personally receive the **Pauline Jaricot Award** in

Germany, this October, which will also coincide with the international celebration of the WORLD DAY OF PRAYER. Sr. Mary John is being honored for exemplifying the qualities of St. Pauline Jaricot: ‘living joyfully the vocation that God gave her, teaching a spirit of prayer and loving sacrifice, and bringing mission into every moment.’ Cyber Guardians PH is so proud of you, Sister Mary John.”



The event was an extraordinarily significant one because even if she was already in Germany, she could not receive it in person but via online because she tested Covid positive. But for Sister Mary John, this was one stroke of Divine Pedagogy.

Her acceptance speech which she delivered in Deutsch was given a standing ovation. The awarding was held at Monchengladbach on October 23, 2022. Fr. Bingener, President of Missio handed over the glass plaque to Sister Mary John.



On October 26, 2022, The Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines, committed to the promotion of love of God and love of country and recognizing the noble and significant contributions of lay and consecrated people through fidelity to the values and teachings of the Catholic Church and the promotion of democracy, concern and respect for human dignity conferred the 2022 **PRO DEO ET PATRIA AWARD** upon SISTER

MARY JOHN MANANZAN, OSB, Social Activist, Leader, Educator, Theologian. Again this awarding was done online because Sister Mary John was still in Germany and could only return to the Philippines on October 30, 2022 return to the Philippines on October 30, 2022 after

Sister Mary John... From page 5

a hurdle with Covid 19 and a flight diverted to Cebu because of Typhoon Paeng. Representing her to receive the award was Sister Agnella Capili, OSB, the Superior's Representative and Dean of the College of Music and Sr. Christine Pinto, OSB, SSC President.

“Behold how good and pleasant it is when Sisters live in unity....” Psalm 133

Indeed how can November 6, 2022 not be a cause for the Manila Community to gather in unity? It was a milestone for Sister Mary John –her 85th Birthday. It was a special First Sunday for the month of November, 2022. The Sisters' Community gave her an “unbelievable” (Sister Mary John's own word to describe it) surprise in the evening.... a simple dinner which was held at the SSC Social Hall.



Invited guests were Mother Prioress Mary Thomas Prado, OSB and the Priory House Community, the only sister of Sister Mary John, Josie Elicaño and her husband, their three daughters and an only son, the President's Council and other former school officials/faculty who are close friends of Sister Mary John. The Battig choir/orchestra greeted her with the Happy Birthday song. It was a

celebration of thanksgiving and praise to God, for the many wonders done in the life of Sister Mary John.

An AVP presentation was shown, a repeat of what was shown for the CEAP awarding ceremony. A game on trivia notes about Sister Mary John's significant life-experiences as teacher, theologian, administrator, as Superior of the Sisters' community, as a social activist, was engagingly participated in by both the audience and the players. The ambience was elegantly simple but exuding a warm welcome. The food was a mix of all that Sister Mary John considers a favourite. There was also the dance-for-all number where everyone danced the Twist and the ever all-time favourite Dancing Queen of the ABBA. All guests got a token of a potted plant. Sister Mary John's response was a simple: “Thank you”.... Compline wrapped up the night's memorable event.



Farmers' Tiangge Launch

By Sr. Theodora Bilocura, OSB and Ms. Bernaliza Lablabong

October is *Peasant and Indigenous Peoples' Month* in the country. Our local farmers, many of whom are indigenous peoples, form the backbone of our agricultural economy and society. They are the ones providing food on our table, but they are also the most impoverished sector in our country due



to continuing threats of land conversion, deforestation, mining, building of large dams on their ancestral lands, extreme militarization, displacement, disasters and calamities, and climate change.

To show our support and to honor our farmers, the Socio-Pastoral Apostolate-Mission with the Indigenous People (SPA-MIP) and BeneFarms-Manila Priory, in partnership with St. Scholastica's College Manila, the Tuason Community Center, and local IP farmers of Pampanga, Tanauan, Batangas, Tanay, and Antipolo, Rizal launched the "**Farmers' Tiangge**" last October 15, 2022 at the St. Scholastica's Archives Museum, Subiaco Garden. The Farmers' Tiangge is our direct missionary work among the indigenous peoples. Our Aeta farmers from Porac and Floridablanca in Pampanga, and Dumagat farmers in Tanay and Antipolo, Rizal are the main partners of this program.



The launch started with an opening liturgy led by Sr. Theodora Bilocura, OSB (SPA Chairperson), followed by the blessing of participants and crops by Sr. Pia Lansang, OSB. The main purpose of the Farmers' Tiangge is to help our local IP farmers continue tilling and utilizing their ancestral lands, improving agricultural productivity, achieving food security by providing the people access to healthy

food at affordable prices, and increasing their income by providing them with a venue to market their harvested crops and products.

Farmers' Tiangge... From page 7

The Tiangge showcased the organic harvest of our partners and the Benefarms (Tanauan, Batangas and Tanay Rizal), with crops and products such as eggplants, string beans, squash, sweet potatoes, papayas, bananas, calamansi, ginger, and gabi, among others. St. Scholastica's College employees/staff, parents, friends, oblates, people from nearby communities, and passersby were our main customers during the launch.



We express our sincere thanks to the student-volunteers from St. Scholastica's Marikina and Manila, who assisted our farmers and sisters in selling, entertaining, and inviting our customers and buyers to the Tiangge. The energy at the venue was positively palpable, rendering warmth, joy, and a merry ambience throughout the duration of the launch. We are also grateful to our Benedictine sisters, led by Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB (Prioress), who gave their full support to our IP farmers in their plight, and for opening a venue for them to reach more people and promote and sell their crops and produce. The launch is just the beginning of our efforts to provide better opportunities for our farmers— which will only be sustained if we continue supporting and promoting their crops and local produce. The Farmers' Tiangge will be held every second and fourth Thursday and Friday of the month. May we continue supporting and promoting healthy, organic food and produce of our local IP farmers.

That in all things God may be glorified!

SSCS TAGAYTAY — NOVEMBER in FOCUS

Momentum In Evangelization

By M. Irene Dabalus, OSB

When tropical storm Paeng rained down on us in October, SSCS lived under a cloud of fog for days. The grounds were littered with broken branches, twigs and leaves and roofs leaked where the winds had torn down gutters and windows. However, the skies lifted up on All Saints and All Souls and we could clean the debris away. Then the November courses gained momentum.

The November month was a like a preview of good days ahead, so to say, with a full occupancy of the Center. The visitors consisted of roughly four different retreatant groups. First, the big group of 92 clergy with their bishop from the Maasin Diocese came for their regular yearly

retreat after the confining years of the pandemic. They discovered an old friend in Sr. Carmela who gave them the orientation on the evening of their arrival. The priests turned their retreat into a combination of prayer, bonding and relaxation. Their rigid schedule included a two-hour recreation daily which afforded some younger priests time to play basketball and badminton on the seminary grounds



of the Tahanan ng Mabuting Pastol. Then there were two big groups of Marriage Encounter couples who came for their own weekend programs of talks, liturgy and musical ministry to renew their marriage bonds. Also, the overnight stints of our college students from Manila and the high school



students from Westgrove occupied the Center with their recollections under the guidance of their CMO sisters. Lastly, there were new clientele, such as the Sisters and employees of SSC

Vineyard (SOLV), the Paco Church lay ministers, the Light of Christ Healing Ministry, and the Resurrection Parish lay group, mostly on weekends.

These guests and visitors were invariably delighted with the hospitality and services they found in SSCS and ever grateful for the church services, the delicious meals, and the neat rooms and grounds. They requested for reservations in advance for 2023 so as to secure a slot in the Center.



Plans at St. Benedict's Formation Institute 2023

We look forward to the re-opening of our St. Benedict's Formation Institute in 2023. Presuming that the face-to-face courses can resume next year, plans are underway to offer our own courses at SBRC, taking our cue from friends who express their interest in our Benedictine spirituality in particular. Our planned events for the first half of the year for mixed groups include:

February 3-5: **Music and Contemplation** c/o Sr. Agnella Capili, OSB

March 17-19: **Lenten Retreat** (mixed group) c/o Sr. Pia Lansang, OSB

July 1-3: **A Seminar for the Elderly** c/o Sr. Agnella Capili, OSB

3rd Saturday of every month 9 - 11.30 am

Contemplative Morning c/o Sr. Pauline Trivino, OSB

It has been a bumpy ride as are all beginnings but it is all worth the effort, knowing that the seedlings we plant on all types of soil will yield a harvest of a 30, a 50, and a hundredfold as the Holy Spirit infuses life into them – where She wills.

ON-GOING FORMATION

OGF Team Offers Online Glass Painting Workshop

By Sr. Juana Maria Rivera, OSB

Last Saturday, November 26 at 2: 00 – 5: 00 PM, we were all excited to paint different colors on glass. Brushes were on the table covered with newspapers. Our instructor, Ms. Liesl Chua showed us first some video clips about how to paint on glass. She also presented to us the different types of brushes as well as the paints such as acrylic and enamel which are used for glass. She gave each one of us an A4 black cardboard paper for practicing with the acrylic paints. “Do as you wish in using the brush and creating your design,” she instructed us.

Our instructor is a Scholastican from Grade School up to College, taking up Visual Arts and Design. She is a grandniece of the late Sr. Soledad Hilado, OSB. She became a missionary volunteer to Tanzania in 2014. She taught in our mission school there together with Sr. Maureen Cariaga, OSB. When she came back to the Philippines, she took a full time job in the Human Resources Department at a bank. Recently she resigned to move abroad to be with her husband.

Sr. Isabel mentioned in her introductory remarks that this glass painting workshop is what we need for our well-being, as it will help us shed off the gloom of the pandemic as well as alleviate the pain of helplessness which we feel for the sorry state of our country today.

For me, the activity is also a way of expressing our gratitude to God for the beauty of creation. Such beauty is not only an outside thing; it is also within ourselves expressed through the stroke of the brush and the combination of color paints. It was such a relaxing activity, that we lost track of the time.

We thank our kind, gentle and generous instructor, Ms. Liesl Chua. We thank Mother Mary Thomas’ initiative and the OGF team for making this workshop possible via Zoom. The lucky in- person participants: Postulant Belle, Postulant Carmela, Sr. Anitta, Sr. Eugene and I are grateful to have learned some simple skills in glass painting.



LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

CEAP HOLDS ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION

By Sr. Jessica Arante, OSB

The Catholic Education Association of the Philippines (CEAP) convened once again for its annual National Convention with the theme, “Pilgrims of Hope Moving Forward in Synodality.” The event was held at the SMX Convention Center Manila, Pasay City, last October 25-28, 2022. It commenced with a Eucharistic celebration presided over by Bishop Honesto F. Ongtioco of the Diocese of Cubao.

Sr. Ma. Marissa R. Viri, RVM, the President of CEAP, delivered the opening remarks and welcomed the participants from the various Catholic schools of the country. Despite the pandemic, thousands of member delegates attended onsite; some participated via live streaming and nine of our Benedictine schools of the Manila Priory were represented, too.

There were clustered-concurrent sessions on Catholic Identity and Mission, Learner Development, Operational Vitality, Learning Environment, Community Engagement, and Leadership and Governance which enabled the participants to “listen to new insights” and “renew their spirits... as a faith community.”

The convention highlighted also the conferment of the Pro Deo et Patria and Catholic School Heroes Awards. Our very own, Mother Mary John Mananzan, OSB received the Pro Deo et Patria Award along with Bro. Armin A. Luistro, FSC, the newly elected first Filipino Superior General of the De La Salle Brothers. On the other hand, the recipient of the Catholic Heroes Award was Dr. Joselito C. Gutierrez, the Assistant Principal of the Junior High School of St. Louis University. Awarding the fifty-eight Jubilarians (200, 150, 100, 75, 50, and 25 years) and recognizing the new eight CEAP Member-Schools created a simply joyful atmosphere, to the pleasant surprise of the delegates.

A Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Most Rev. Bartolome G. Santos, Jr., D.D. with oath-taking of the newly elected officers of the CEAP National Board concluded the national onsite convention.

That in all things God may be glorified



International Formators Meet in Rome

By Sr. Pauline Triviño, OSB



Our 2022 International Formators' Meeting (IFM) was held from October 12 to November 3, 2022, in Casa Santo Spirito, our Generalate House in Rome. Twenty-four formators from our eleven priories and from our two houses of the Generalate District attended this meeting. Our two formators from the Peramiho Priory could not get their visa, so they were unable to join the group.

The spirit which permeated our IFM 2022 was the direction taken by our XIII General Chapter 2018 which states: "We are different yet one." "The way of Jesus ...to walk united with our differences."

In her Opening Address, **Mother Maoro Sye, OSB**, reminded us that as formators we are to lead the candidates to an inner conviction of the Missionary Benedictine values through our instruction and through our life examples.

Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB was the main resource person for the seminar-workshop. She discussed various topics such as: the anthropology of the Christian vocation, the components of formation, the qualities of a Missionary Benedictine formator, formation in intercultural living and inter-generational living. On the other hand, **Sr. Pauline Triviño, OSB** shared some points on the inner dynamics of the human person. In a video conference, **Mother Irene Dabalus, OSB** talked about the six constitutive elements of our Charism.

Fr. Lawrence Sakubita Like, OMI, another speaker shared with the formators a part of his Doctoral Dissertation. His Topic was "**Interculturality and Formation**" which he showed as both connected to mission in the Church. Therefore, formation like interculturality has definitely something to do with mission."

After the conferences, the formators discussed some "Experiences and Challenges in Formation." Each priory / Generalate District House prepared a 5-10 mins Powerpoint presentation with group photos of formandeas and statistics of the last six (6) years.

The remaining days were spent in working on the revision of the Congregation's Formation Manual: **Unfolding of God's Gift (UGG)**. During our Closing Liturgy, we had the joy of having with us a copy of our Revised Congregational Formation Manual: Unfolding God's Gift.

The participants were given opportunities for Reflection / Prayer Days, a pilgrimage to Subiaco and

Montecassino and Free Days for the small groups' tours around Rome.

Unexpectedly two of our Korean formators caught the Covid just a week before the end of the IFM 2022. We were back to health protocols of wearing masks around the house, even at Mass. We were disappointed that the closing program was cancelled due to COVID-19 infection. We were eager to have it. Through it we wanted to express our THANKS to Mother General Maoro, the General Councilors and the sisters of the Casa Community. Thank God, the Covid did not delay our travel back home. We could all depart for our home country as scheduled. That in All Things God May Be Glorified!

ICBE Preparatory Commission Meeting in Rio de Janeiro

By Sr. Rosario Obiniana, OSB

The International Commission on Benedictine Education (ICBE) was established through the leadership of Abbot Primate Dr. Notker Wolf, OSB. This was formed to support those schools which promote a Benedictine vision of education. With this vision an international symposium of Benedictine Educators' Network (BENET) was organized. Teachers and administrators from different Benedictine schools all over the world gather every three (3) years. Meetings are held in different countries like in Great Britain, Sao Paolo, New York, Chile, Philippines, Germany, Rome, and Australia. Next year October 11-15, 2023, BENET will meet again in Rio de Janeiro. The host school will be Colegio De Sao Bento do Rio de Janeiro.

P. Julian M. Schaumioffel, OSB, the President of ICBE called for a meeting to plan for the coming BENET symposium on October 11-15, 2023. As a member Benedictine school of this organization, Sr. M. Rosario R. Obiniana, OSB, the ABS Executive Director, representing the Philippines was invited to join the Preparatory Commission.

The ICBE Preparatory Commission 2022 is composed of the following delegates : P. Julian M. Schaumioffel, OSB, Italy; Dom Geraldo Gonzalez y Lima, OSB, Italy; David Donovan, USA; Cristobal Valdes, UK; Fr. Robin Checkathadhahl, OSB, India; Br. Josef Gotz, OSB, Germany; Herbert Herring, Germany; Stuart McPherson, UK; Mario Canales Turpaud, Chile, Dom Abade Filipe da Silva, OSB, Brazil; Jim F. Duffy, USA; Mike Nickolai, USA; Gabrielle Sinclair, Australia; and Sr. M. Rosario R. Obiniana, OSB, Philippines together with the team of the host school led by Dom Abade Felipe da Silva, OSB met last October 13 – 16, 2022 in Colegio De Sao Bento do Rio de Janeiro. They were able to come up with the theme: "What we have received, we pass on to you: Our past and future in the now of Benedictine education"

There were different suggestions raised in terms of Liturgy, Holy Mass, celebrants/ presiders, Lectio Divina, keynote speakers, deaneries, schedules for the 5-day event and other essentials needed for the big Benedictine symposium.



The meeting culminated with expressions of thanksgiving. P. Julian thanked the local team (Dom Abade Felipe and Collegio De Sao Bento) on behalf of the commission and remarked how wonderful the organization has been and how warm the welcome the delegates have received. He said that the group is full of hope for BENET 2023. Likewise, Dom Abade Felipe expressed his gratitude and joy for having ICBE in Colegio De Sao Bento. The welcome they offered in Rio came from the heart and the conference next year will be a celebration of life, faith and Benedictine charism of our schools and communities like "small Subiaco caves" from where life can flourish all around the world. That in all things God may be glorified!

FORMATION

SINAI IS BACK: “Together we grow, together we share”

By Postulant Belle (Ngoc Tan Lam)

SINAI (Sharing Interculturality by Nurturing and Aspiring for Integration) is a modular class program for Postulants. Formators from different congregations, both male and female, whose formation house communities are based in Tagaytay or the adjacent areas, put up this joint program for their postulants. They met and agreed upon the topics of the modules, invited and hosted speakers, shared venues, and expenses.

The program aims to develop self-awareness, personal growth and integration of the postulants, as well as help them discern the call to religious life. The modules include: theatre arts, intensive journal writing, inner child, body memories, self-esteem, human development, value process development, human sexuality, personality tests communication, and vocation discernment. The program ended with a Pilgrimage Tour and a Culminating Activity.

SINAI was put on hold due to the pandemic and returned after 2 years, and we were so glad to make new friends in a safe and trusting environment. The participants this year came from about 16 different congregations, whose nationalities are Filipino, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Korean, Timorese and Malaysian, ages between 18 and 40. “Together we grow, together we share” was chosen as theme of this year, as the participants journeyed together in the cheerful moments when we danced and sang together, sorrowful moments when we faced our own painful memories as we unpacked our life history, and consoling moments when we shared with one another, encouraged one another, in order to transcend and grow together in brotherhood and sisterhood. The modules were delivered within whole day classes, thus, we had time for bonding, sharing our packed lunches, praying, and learning new languages. The speakers were very competent in delivering their respective topics in a religious context and could engage the participants in various group discussions and activities. On the Culminating Day, mixed feelings were felt as we promised to pray for each other and to see one another again in God’s time.

I thank the formators for giving us formandeas such a wonderful opportunity to grow and to share ourselves; I thank my community for their support, company, and prayer, and my SINAI batchmates. As SINAI ended, a new future is opened as the participants felt integrated and willing to share their giftedness in their work in the vineyard, for the greater glory of God.



Thank God, it’s a Sunday! (Catechism Class, 2022)

By Aspirant Jonalyn Epe

Sunday afternoons can be lazy but not for the kids who are the aspiring first communicants from Purok 97 and children of the Formation House staff, who have started coming last Oct. 16 until February, when they will receive Christ in the Holy Eucharist for the first time. Some smaller kids joined them and they are instructed with the basics, “the sign of the Cross” and activities like drawing and coloring pictures from the Bible. The first meeting was a lot of fun, trying to memorize other kids’ names and getting to know the catechists, the community’s Aspirants. There was a lot of question and answer parts, focusing on some personalities of the Bible. The Aspirants had fun quizzing the kids on what they know. This was also a way to learn more about where the kids are coming from, in their knowledge of the Catholic faith. The answers were outrageously funny, but a good ground to sow, because the kids want to know more. After an hour, the session would come to an end, to the kids’ dismay, because they still want to stay and have time to play with the other kids. The Aspirants would bring them home to their parents, safe and sound, and looking forward to more Sundays. Indeed, thank God, it’s a Sunday!



VOCATION ANIMATION

“You Are Purposely Called: Recognizing God’s Invitation” Vocation Retreat 2022

By Sr. Marialuz Dungca, OSB

Sr. Marialuz Dungca, OSB, facilitated the first onsite Vocation Retreat, after almost 2 1/2 years of COVID-19 pandemic, to five ladies (from Laguna, Makati, Northern Samar, Parañaque and Las Piñas) last December 27-29, 2022 at the St. Scholastica’s Center of Spirituality, Tagaytay. She was assisted by Sr. Antonia Santiago, OSB and Sr. Leticia Saraza, OSB, the vocation animators of Tabunok and Formation House respectively.



The ladies appreciated the opportunity of having met each other and journeyed together with the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing. Some of their realizations and treasured insights were:

“Jesus leads us where He wants us to be; The Lord’s plan for His people is great and unexpected, pursuing Him does not mean to be perfect but to be open to what HE calls one for; God allowed myself to be genuinely at peace and whole heartedly happy. I am grateful for the Benedictine Sisters for the opportunity of finding our desires on what path God has prepared for us; We learn from the experiences of others and we do not encounter people by coincidence but by fate and faith”.

The retreat was concluded with a Holy Eucharistic celebration presided by Fr. Guisepppe Arsi or known as Fr. Scinti, a Focolare priest. Truly, God sent each one to be together and make a difference in each other’s lives. He purposely called each one and touched one’s heart, preparing them to courageously respond to His invitation, in HIS TIME .



October Life Direction Session: Laudato Si (Care for our Common Home)

By Sr. Mary Ignatius Aquino, OSB

LAUDATO SI
Care for Our Common Home

OCTOBER
LIFE DIRECTION SESSION (LDS)
9:00 AM, Oct. 16, 2022

Via Zoom-
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5822788604>
Meeting ID: 582 278 8604

Regift Repair Recycle
Rethink Reuse Refuse Reduce

Sixteen (16) young ladies and thirteen (13) sisters joined the virtual Life Direction Session on Sunday, October 6 sponsored by two communities: Westgrove and Formation House. Sr. Daniela Romero, OSB began the session with “Kumustahan” and asked each participant to introduce herself. Sr. Eliza Arpon , OSB did the Opening Prayer. Sr. Leticia Saraza, OSB gave the input on Pope Francis’ encyclical, LAUDATO SI, care for our common home, with her video presentation on STEWARSHIP. She challenged the group with these questions: “What do you do to show "malasakit for your personal things, your properties, and people dear to you? She stressed the value of “pagkalinga” or “malasakit.” If we can take care of our own personal belongings, our family or even our extended families, how much more should we have “kalinga”and “malasakit” for our Earth? This is the only Earth or World that we have.

What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to those who are now growing up? Some problems that the world is confronted with are closely related with the throw away culture especially the serious problem on the quality of our water. Integral ecology includes reflecting on our lifestyle. From the realities that we have seen in the video, we are challenged to respond collectively because our Earth is on a big crisis and we have to answer to its cry. We have to respect the purpose for which Earth was given to us: to give glory to God and to serve our needs in preparation for the vision of heaven. To give glory to God means to thank Him for the gift of the earth and in thanking Him we return it to Him clean and whole as He had given it to us. To serve our needs doesn't mean that we are free to subdue the earth. We do not claim ownership, nor consider ourselves masters of the whole universe. "Stewardship is a lifestyle that reflects who we are and what we believe in. It goes beyond the mere sharing of one's resources, but asks us to share ourselves, our time, our abilities and our ministry. Stewardship is really a call to be a holy people. Stewardship is the disciple's response.

The group went into five break-out rooms and a representative gave a report on their sharing on STEWARDSHIP. Then, Sr. Daniela, OSB synthesized by emphasizing that our Planet Earth is overexploited and challenged the group, "What can we as a people collectively do so that the future generations can breathe fresh air, drink clean water and live in a safe planet?"

The session concluded with the Midday Prayer.

NOVEMBER LIFE DIRECTION SESSION: "ST. HILDEGARD OF BINGEN"

By Sr. Zita Jamisola, OSB

The Life Direction session for the month of November, 2022 had as its topic, "St. Hildegard of Bingen", our own Benedictine Saint and one of the four women Doctors of the Catholic Church.

The communities in charge for this month's session were San Fernando, Angeles and Baguio and there were around 12 ladies who joined the said session.

The online meeting started with a prayer and then "kumustahan". It was followed by 2 video presentations on the life of St. Hildegard of Bingen. The participants shared their reflections on the life of St. Hildegard, her varied journeys. One participant shared that, "journey in life is sometimes difficult or joyful but you encounter God in the process". After the sharing Sr. Lydia Villegas, OSB gave the synthesis. The ladies also had their chance to offer their petitions and concerns; they were grateful to the Sisters for the experience of knowing the life of St. Hildegard. Over-all, it was a fruitful sharing and hopefully the ladies will have the inspiration to reflect on their call. The session was concluded with Midday prayer.



MANILA PRIORY BULLETIN TEAM

EDITOR: SR. ROSALINA FAJARDO, OSB

MEMBERS: SR. ISABEL ORITO, OSB & SR. MARY PETER MACKAY, OSB

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