

Monastic Mindfulness – Expanding our Hearts in Christ

By Sr. Ana Maria Raca, OSB



Sister Kathryn Huber, OSB of the Ferdinand Benedictines in Indiana, USA facilitated the two-week course on “Monastic Mindfulness - Expanding our Hearts in Christ” from May 18 to June 1, 2024 in St. Scholastica’s Center of Spirituality, Tagaytay City. This was participated in by two participants each from the Abbey of Our Lady of Montserrat, Mendiola, the Abbey of Transfiguration, Malaybalay, the Benedictine Nuns of the Eucharistic King, the Benedictine Sisters of the Eucharistic King, the Sisters of Daughters of Mary Consolatrix and thirty four Sisters from the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing – Manila Priory.

From now on, all monastic courses offered by the St. Benedict Resource Center in Tagaytay including the RB Study Weeks of the previous 12 years from 2008 to 2019 will be subsumed in the renamed **Benedictine Monastic Institute**. For the Tutzing Sisters, this Monastic Mindfulness is the first course for the first year of the five - year inter-generational renewal program.

Sister Pia Lansang, OSB, one of the most senior participants, on her 59th year of monastic life summarized the contents of the course as follows: “*Weaving a rich tapestry of monastic Benedictine topics, Sr. Kathy(Kathryn Huber, OSB) created vivid designs and colors around the theme of “Monastic Mindfulness: Expanding Our Hearts in Christ” Truly a journey “to one’s deepest heart!.* The core of Mindfulness is

“embracing the presence of Christ, and listening and attending to his voice with gratitude as a listening and compassionate servant”. In short, Mindfulness of the sacred presence spans the whole of our monastic life: prayer, work, profession and the vows, community where all the “different hues and colors of Christ are reflected”, sacred leisure, and awareness of the need for mercy and compassion.

*A few highlights in limited space: **MINDFULNESS_(M)** as the need for attention, consent, acceptance, and gratitude prodding (nudging) us “to spend more time within”; (1) **M** as the keen awareness of Christ’s presence and our interdependence... attentive care and concern for others; (2) **M** in the daily work of the monastic; “How much of what we do each day is service and what part is just plain work”? (3) **M**, a constant -- running through the seasons of our lives – in the second half of life we are “strong enough to hear deeper ... how mindfully do we negotiate the stages of life?” (4) **M** in a 2023 Book, simply entitled “AWE”, D. Keltner outlines *The Eight Wonders of Life*: among them, moral beauty, nature, music, visual design, spiritual and religious, epiphanies. In what form do we practice monastic “sacred leisure?” (5) **M** is being attentive to giving and receiving mercy. In conclusion, **M** deals with the practice of “beginning again!” (RB = Rule for Beginners!). Always begin.” An **M** Mantra: Never forget, “I am with you. I love you. Trust me”. Are we ready to begin all over again, -- again and again? You bet we are!*

On the other hand, Dom Luis Giuseppe Ma. Mendiola, OSB, one of the two youngest in monastic life has this to say:

“As a young monk who just professed my first vows a month before this two-week course, I found my participation on the said course timely as I begin to live the life of a vowed monk. The monastic course helped me to develop mindfulness in all of the vital parts of monastic life: attentiveness to God’s voice through prayer, the readiness to attend to others through service and community life, and above all else to listen, to feel, and to transmit the love that I abundantly receive from God. What I would consider as a bonus is that apart from the wisdom that I got from Sr. Kathryn Huber, OSB, our resource speaker, I was able to gain a lot of wisdom too from the elderly Benedictine sisters through their honest sharing of their stories of struggles and blessings in the monastic life. I shall be bringing all of those stories ever mindful of the beauty of the Benedictine life and tradition. I so love to be a Benedictino!”

The offerings of the Benedictine Monastic Institute are partially financed by AIM International, which has for its goal the promotion of Monastic Life and Formation in Asia and Oceania. This inter-generational course has indeed enabled the participants to step out of their age-groups and cultures in the service of one another and have resolved to



begin anew to faithfully practice monastic mindfulness. But as Thomas Merton said, “There are only three stages to do this work: to be a beginner, to be more of a beginner and to be only a beginner.” That in all things God may be glorified!

Ninety-four Years of Loving and Faithful Service: Turn-over of SPC to the Archdiocese of Palo

By Sr. Maureen Cariaga, OSB

On the 110th year of foundation of St. Peter's College of Ormoc, Inc. (SPC), in a simple yet solemn rite integrated within the Mass of the 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the management and administration of the said revered institution was handed over to the Archdiocese of Palo, Leyte thru His Excellency Archbishop John F. Du, D.D. After 94 years of loving and faithful service to the Ormocanons and the people of Leyte Province, the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing sadly, yet gratefully bade farewell to the oldest Catholic school in Region 8.



This historic event marked on June 16, dubbed as an end of an era of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing in SPC, started with a Eucharistic celebration presided over by the Archbishop of Palo, Leyte. Together with the Archbishop were eight concelebrants -- seven priests in the Archdiocese of Palo and Fr. Emy Maningo, CSsR, an SPC alumnus. Three of the concelebrants are the incoming SPC administrators namely, Msgr. Erlito Maraya (President and Dean of College), Fr. Wilson Chu (Treasurer), and Fr. Daniel Alexander Hilvano (Deputy Dean and Campus Ministry Officer).

In the Rite of Turn-over, Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB, Prioress of the Manila Priory, thanked the people of Ormoc for welcoming the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing though the encounter was not "love at first sight." She also thanked the Archdiocese of Palo for entrusting SPC to the Congregation from 1930 to 2024. After her word of thanks, Mother Prioress, symbolically handed over keys, flags, and documents to the Archbishop of Palo. She also generously donated to the Archdiocese some acquired property through the efforts of the OSB Sisters, which are the Piano House and the Pastoral Center.



Archbishop John Du likewise thanked Mother Mary Thomas for the 94 years of hard work and dedicated service rendered to the said renowned educational ministry. He also thanked the Congregation and handed a plaque of recognition to Mother Prioress. In his gratitude, he gave a cheque for the Manila Priory and an "ampao" to the OSB Sisters, which brought smiles to hearts heavy with goodbye.

The momentous occasion was witnessed by SPC's various stakeholders. Among those who graced the event were Vice Mayor Carmelo Locsin, Sr. and his wife, former Congresswoman Vicky Locsin, City Councilors Hon. Atty. Nolito Quilang and Hon. Carmen Jean Torres-Rama, former Mayor Eric Codilla and his wife, Alumni President, Atty. Ruben Capahi, PTA President Ms. Mary Ann Chetcuti and her VP, Mrs. Arlene Paña, some SVSF builders and officers, representatives from CHED and DepEd, members of the alumni, former SPC administrators, Franciscan Sisters of the Handmaid of the Lord (FSHL), selected student leaders, invited guests, all the mission partners of SPC, and about fifty OSB Sisters. Tokens of gratitude were distributed after the Mass; one token coming from Mayor Lucy Torres-Gomez for the OSB Sisters and another from the OSB Sisters to all the mission partners and guests. A sumptuous lunch capped the remarkable affair.



Sisters Renew Vows of Religious Profession

By Sr. Sophia Marie De Guzman, OSB

On May 18, 2024, the Manila Priory held a joint-celebration for our Golden Jubilarians, Sr. Rosalina Fajardo, OSB and Sr. Adelaida Ygrubay, OSB, and for our Silver Jubilarians, Sr. Cecilia Carolino, OSB, Sr. Evangeline Madayag, OSB, Sr. Martha Lugtu, OSB, and Sr. Eliza Arpon, OSB through a thanksgiving Mass presided over by Rev. Fr. Anselm Manalastas, OSB and a rite for the Renewal of Vows officiated by M. Mary Thomas Prado, OSB in the beautifully decorated



St. Scholastica's Priory Chapel. The solemn singing of the sisters accompanied by the majestic music of Sr. Agnella Capili, OSB made us forget about the extreme hot weather. Upon chanting the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, the atmosphere was then filled with the Spirit's presence. It is such a unique and stirring presence that does not only touch the heart but also echoes into the depths of one's spirit. This same Spirit was invoked as the Jubilarians renewed their self-offering to God by the signing of their profession cards and the chanting of the *Suscipe Me, Domine*. As mentioned in the Prayers of the Faithful, "a Jubilee is a joyful celebration of praise and thanksgiving when we remember people and events that God has sent into our lives." Truly, our Jubilarians displayed in their smiles and words of thanks their overwhelming joy and gratitude to the people who have become part of their 50 and 25 years of Missionary Benedictine vocation. The Eucharistic Celebration finally concluded in a solemn blessing and a final hymn of praise to the Lord who is ever faithful in His love for our dear Jubilarians.

Over 300 guests joined our Jubilarians in the festive lunch held at Kuniberta Hall, St. Scholastica's College, Manila. The respective families and friends of our Jubilarians were present along with our sisters from the different communities. M. Abbess Joseph Marie, Sr. Ma. Immaculata, Sr. Marianne, and Sr. Micah of the Benedictine Nuns and Sisters of the Eucharistic King as well as Sr. Kathryn Huber, OSB from the USA were also present. A short program hosted by Sr. Isabel Orito, OSB then followed after everyone has enjoyed the delightful meal. The first performance was rendered by our sisters from the Marikina Community who beautifully sang about the goodness of our God. The members of the Formation House Community then performed a traditional Filipino courtship dance called Kuratsa which was popularized in the Visayas region. The celebration became even more lively and exciting with "the array of colors and movements" as described by Sr. Isabel when the Manila Priory performed its series of intercultural dances featuring our sisters from Korea, India, and Kenya. Cheers and applause filled the entire room when Sr. Seraphina, a Kenyan junior sister, started singing "O Ilaw," to serenade Sr. Marianne, a Namibian sister. It was a very entertaining number together with the Juniorate Community and with the special participation of M. Mary Thomas Prado, OSB, Sr. Therese Bulatao, OSB, Sr. Ruth Bartonico, OSB, and Sr. Marialuz Dungca, OSB. After all the performances were over, a video presentation featuring the journey of our Jubilarians through time and space was then shown. The event ended with the joined forces of the sisters from the Priory House and the Manila Communities leading us to a dance of jubilation to the tune of the song, "Stand by Me." As a fitting tribute of the jubilarians to God's faithfulness and goodness, they planted Araucaria evergreen pine trees in BeneFarm, San Fernando.



Socio Pastoral Apostolate Luzon Meet: Walking Together in Proclaiming Christ's Mission of Justice and Truth

By Sr. Edita Eslopor, OSB

From April 16-18, 2024, the nine SPA Sisters, accompanied by their twelve lay mission partners, convened at the St. Scholastica's Archives Museum in Subiaco, Manila for the Luzon assembly.

The overarching theme of the assembly was "Walking Together in Proclaiming Christ's Mission of Justice and Truth to the Margins of Society with Courage and Hope."

The assembly successfully achieved all six of its objectives over the allotted three days.



The initial day of the assembly, April 16, was dedicated to providing updates on the national landscape and focusing on mental well-being. Atty. Kristina Conti, the secretary-general of the National Union of People's Lawyers, served as a resource speaker, shedding light on the economic and political challenges faced by the underprivileged and marginalized sectors. Following this, Fr. JD Zaldivar delved into the realm of Mental and Psychological Well-Being, imparting valuable insights on coping mechanisms for life's adversities, particularly in the context of apostolate work. The attendees engaged in group discussions and shared personal experiences. After the break, updates and reports from the Centers followed.



On the subsequent day, Mother Prioress delivered a poignant address, centering on the assembly's theme and dissecting it into comprehensible segments. She underscored the significance of unity in walking together,

collectively discerning God's will, and collaborating in the spirit of synodality, a key aspect of the Church's mission. Emphasizing the importance of nurturing the lay partners for enhanced collaboration, she highlighted their pivotal role in shaping the direction and planning for the SPA's upcoming 50th anniversary in 2025.



Solidarity night, a cherished tradition in assemblies, unfolded on the following evening, offering a platform for camaraderie and bonding among participants. The event showcased the diverse talents of the attendees and featured lively games with a plethora of prizes, creating a joyous and entertaining atmosphere that was relished by all.



The culminating day of the assembly saw the Sisters and lay partners reveling in camaraderie at the picturesque Paglitaw Spring resort in Tanay, fostering a sense of unity and shared experiences beyond the formal proceedings of the assembly.

ABS Coordinating Council Meet By Sr. Mary Ignatius Aquino, OSB

The Association of Benedictine Schools Coordinating Council (**ABS Co-Co**) Meeting was held at St. John Conference Room, St. Scholastica's College, Manila on April 13-14, 2024 attended by the School Heads and Treasurers. Sr. Christine Pinto, OSB gave the participants a warm welcome and Sr. Rosalina Fajardo, OSB delivered the Welcome Remarks in lieu of the Prioress.

Sr. Rosario Obiniana, OSB introduced Atty. Eduardo Lizares, who expounded the "Clarity of the Taxation of Educational Institutions and Effect of the Removal of the Constitutional Tax Exemption of Non-stock, Non-profit Institutions." Atty. Lizares explained the Legal Update on TAXATION: Income Tax Exemption, Real Property Tax Exemption and discussed relevant concerns of Non- Stock, Non-Profit Institutions and Proprietary Educational Institutions.

For the School Year 2024-2025, the ABS theme is "Rekindle the Gifts of Benedictine Education." with focus:

St. Scholastica's Academy San Fernando

"100 years of Love and Service"

St. Scholastica's Academy Tabunok

"60 years of Blessings Embraced with Gratitude."

St. Scholastica's College Tacloban

"25 years of Embracing Grace and Unity,
Ora Et Labora"

St. Scholastica's College, Westgrove

"Continuing Years of Pilgrimage in Hope"

St. Peter's College Ormoc

"Kindle the Gift of Benedictine Education"

On the first day, the **ABS Policy on Child and Adult Protection Code of Conduct** specifically for Sisters in the Educational apostolate was presented by Sr. Christine Pinto, OSB and Sr. Daniela Romero, OSB. The topics were as follows: Rationale; Self-Care; In the Exercise of our Missionary Service; Relationships with Lay and Others; Pastoral Standards on Confidentiality; Conflict of Interest; Sisterly Correction. In addition, the the Anti-OSAEC Law 2024 and Safe Spaces Act was incorporated.

Sr. Mary Francis Dizon, OSB, presented the **ORGANIZATIONAL AUDIT REPORT** of ABS member schools for the last 7 years (from School Year 2017-2018 to 2023-2024) in terms of the ratio of the number of employees over the enrollment. The results of the gathered data were not conclusive thus, the following were suggested as follows:

Look into the charging of expenses: e.g. repairs done after the pandemic, upgrading of technology for the new mode of teaching-learning

Do an item analysis of the school's financial statement; have an internal audit

Look into how the employees' salaries were computed: include the length of service, efficiency rating, graduate studies, etc.

Merge some offices to reduce costs

Retrench to lessen the number of employees

Sr. M. Rosario Obiniana, OSB, presented the summary of the ABS Senior High School Survey on the students' preferred programs for colleges and universities of their choice.

On the second day, Sr. Daniela Romero, OSB, reported on the **High School Student Leaders Congress** on February 16-17, 2024 at St. Scholastica's Academy, Pampanga with the theme: Reuniting as One Community,

Promoting our Benedictine Legacy.” Two hundred eighteen (218) delegates: (193 students, 22 teacher chaperones, 3 principals (1 lay, 2 sisters) from SSA, Pampanga, HFA, Angeles SSA, Marikina, SSA, Legaspi, SSC, Manila, SSC, Westgrove and SSA, Bacolod participated.

In addition, a report on the Grade School Student Leaders and Athletes Congress on March 15-16, 2024 at SSC, Manila with the theme: “Benedictine Children: One in Mind and Heart”. Two hundred twenty four (224) delegates (191 students, 28 teacher chaperones, 5 principals – 1 lay, 4 sisters) from SSAP, HFA, SSAM, SSA, SSCM, SSCW, SSAB and SSCT.

Salient recommendations for the School Year 2024-2025 were planned.

- a. Hold ABS Teachers’ Congress at St. Agnes Academy, Legaspi City for SY 2024-2025
- b. Evaluate the CLE book writing which was started some years ago under the leadership of Sr. Edna Quiambao, OSB.
- c. Formulate the ABS Faculty and Staff Development Program on Benedictine Spirituality.
- d. Organize the ABS Campus Ministry with suggested resource persons.

On the other hand, Sr. Marianne Razon, OSB, gave an update concerning the finances of the Association of Benedictine Schools in the presence of all the ABS treasurers. Likewise, the new CBS Accounting System was presented by Sr. Shirley Roble, OSB, chair of Finance Technical Committee (FTC) duly approved by the Priory Government. After a thorough discussion the superiors agreed to implement the new accounting system by the start of the new fiscal year.

The main focus of the ABS Strategic Plan SY 2024-2025 of a Catholic Benedictine School is centered on a holistic transformative education, academic excellence, gender fairness, has to be technically equipped and financially stable. It was recommended that the institutional planning of each school must be aligned to the ABS Strategic Plan as presented and approved. On the other hand, an ABS Research Council was formed composed of representatives from the different member schools.

In addition, some common best practices in school promotion and marketing are the following:

through the use of social media such as regular uploading of information in the school’s website, Facebook page, Instagram, Tiktok, Twitter, promotional videos ,
flash mob, jingles, sponsoring activities during the city fiesta,
school-to-school campaign, open house, host inter- school competitions
printing and posting of tarpaulins outside the school of students’ winnings and achievements,
distribution of brochure/flyers to different schools, word by mouth- personal invitation to enroll,
scholarships, play date and tapping of alumni.

New Course Offering at SSC, Manila

For the school year 2024—2025, Sr. Christine Pinto, OSB, announced that preparation for a new course offering has been initiated in St. Scholastica’s College, Manila. A partnership with Makati Medical Center for students’ internship has been negotiated for the opening of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing for the School Year 2025—2026. Last July 3, 2024, Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB, announced that Makati Medical Center has accepted to be the base hospital for Nursing students’ internship.

That in all things God may be glorified!

ABS BED STUDENTS' CONGRESS

By Sr. Daniela D. Romero, OSB

The Association of Benedictine Schools - Basic Education (BED) Commission successfully organized the High School Students' Congress for Leaders with its theme "Reuniting as One Community: Promoting our Benedictine Legacy" on February 16-17, 2024, at St. Scholastica's Academy San Fernando, Pampanga. There were 218 delegates, which included 193 students, twenty-two teacher chaperones and 3 principals.



Likewise, the Grade School Students' Congress for Leaders and Athletes, themed "Benedictine Children: One in Mind and Heart," convened on March 15-16, 2024, at St. Scholastica's College Manila. Two hundred twenty-four delegates attended. Among them were 191 student delegates, accompanied by 28 teacher chaperones, and supported by 5 principals.



Designed to foster camaraderie and instill a profound sense of community among Benedictine schools, both events featured an array of team building activities to fortify bonds among attendees. Moreover, the said congresses were intended for participants to glean wisdom and inspiration from accomplished Benedictine leaders like Ms. Catherine Marie Castillo (SSCM Alumna) and Ms. Rosa Patricia Jay Angeles (SSAM Alumna) who shared to the Grade school students their experiences on how Benedictine education has molded their character and guided their journey. On the other hand, Ms. Loren Amor Gozum- Soriano (SSA-P Alumna) had a compelling talk on Benedictine leadership to the High School delegates.



The experience of listening to the resource speakers evoked in them a profound sense of pride in being a Benedictine child, igniting a fervent desire to exemplify the Benedictine values in their capacity as leaders and exemplars to others. Additionally, everyone was enriched by the vibrant local cultures of each school, showcased through captivating dances, melodious music, and the delightful sharing of unique food from each region during the Benedictine night.

The high school delegates were treated to a tour through the rich cultural and religious tapestry of Pampanga. They explored revered landmarks such as the San Guillermo Church in Bacolor and the Lourdes Shrine in Cabetican, while also delighting in the tranquil beauty of Lakeshore. Meanwhile, the grade school delegates embarked on an enlightening exploration of Manila's historical sites, including Fort Santiago, Manila Cathedral, San Agustin Church, and Casa Manila. Guided by Ms. Becky Marquez, they also had the privilege of touring St. Scholastica's College, where they visited the four buildings recognized by the Philippine National Museum as significant cultural properties and treasures of the Philippines due to their exceptional cultural, artistic, and historical significance.

The delegates departed feeling contented and fulfilled after the two-day Congress. They forged new friendships, embraced their Benedictine heritage with pride and left energized to make meaningful contributions to their communities. They all look forward eagerly to the next congress!

NEWS FROM STATIONS

FORMATION HOUSE

Kids' Camp of the Children of Mary

By Postulant Joanne Zamudio

Likened to a mother who carried her baby in the womb for nine months and happily welcomed her child after much labor, the *Tiangge ni Maria* which started in October 2023 had her first major charity project last June 12, 2024 (9 months after), that is, the kids' camp of the children of Mary.

The three-day camp from June 12-14, 2024 had 24 participants, ages 7 to 14. If it may be recalled, the "*Tiangge*" (convenience store) ni Maria was a project started by the Formation House Community where some basic goods like vegetables, fruits, eggs, rice, oil, etc., were sold every Tuesday for the nearby purok communities at a very affordable cost. It aimed to help our poor and marginalized neighboring families to have access to healthy commodities. The profit earned and donations received funded all the expenses of the camp. And the joyful part is, the children who participated are the same kids of our loyal and regular customers.

The tasks were divided and shared amongst the formandeas, with the back support from our Sisters and lay staff. In the morning, planned activities were more physical to heighten the spirit and energy of the kids. These included morning exercise/zumba, praise and worship dance, team building games, Filipino traditional games like *kadang-kadang* and an adapted life-sized Benedictine game which the kids and even us, kids at heart, enjoyed to play. Afternoon sessions were planned indoors because of the high chance of rain. The team focused on inputs about our Catholic faith, prayer, Mama Mary and some Bible Stories. Here we encouraged the kids to make their own prayer and share about what they have experienced and learned. Top favorite activities of the kids were the Origami class facilitated by Novice Belle, where she taught us how to make a dove and then after, everyone offered it to our Blessed Mother. Then, the campfire with hotdogs and marshmallows, where the kids appreciated the chance to cook their snack on the fire, assisted by the formandeas.

The last day's activity was in solidarity with our barangay community's concern on cleanliness and our priory's mandate to participate in activities with environmental action. The formation house community with all our lay staff, barangay representatives, the kid participants and their guardians came together to culminate our Camp with the Environmental clean-up drive along Magallanes and Bonifacio streets. The kids were all energetic and felt fulfilled giving their share in cleaning the environment, sweeping and collecting trash from the roadside.

At the end of the activities, all our participants received gift packs containing school supplies and goodies. They also have brought home their free T-shirts and ID lanyard. Over-all we are very pleased to be able to impart to them Benedictine values that hopefully they would carry as they grow older: hospitality, stewardship, discipline, and prayer to mention a few and in return, we, as the older sisters ("*ates*"), learned from them how to be child-like: spontaneous, flexible, innocent, pure and respectful.

We are grateful for God's providence and His ever-loving presence upon all our activities. May He continue to bless everyone who supported, contributed and participated, in their own little ways, to make our project a success and a venue to witness to His goodness. May Our Blessed Mother intercede for us and for the plans of her *Tiangge*. That in all things God may be glorified!



SSC-W Music Recital held at St. Cecilia's Hall

By Ms. Ana Teresa Cadiz -Student Activities Coordinator

On May 5, 2024, the prestigious St. Cecilia's Hall of St. Scholastica's College, Manila was alive with artistic energy as St. Scholastica's College-Westgrove held its second recital under the Continuing Education Program, in collaboration with the School of Music of St. Scholastica's College-Manila.

The recital displayed an impressive array of performances by students from Kinder to High School, reflecting their immense talent, dedication, and hard work. Parents, relatives, friends, and other guests gathered to witness this remarkable event, creating a warm and celebratory atmosphere.

The program began with captivating ballet performances, followed by energetic street dance routines showcasing the students' versatility. The audience then enjoyed enchanting piano pieces, powerful violin renditions, and soulful vocal performances, each reflecting the students' dedication and musical prowess. The recital concluded with dynamic drum performances, highlighting the diverse talents nurtured at St. Scholastica's College-Westgrove.

The recital was honored by the presence of the Benedictine Sisters, including Sr. Christine L. Pinto, OSB, President of SSC-Manila; Sr. Agnella Capili, OSB, Dean of the School of Music; and Sr. Daniela D. Romero, OSB, Directress and Principal of SSC-Westgrove. Their attendance underscored the importance of the arts in education and their unwavering support for the students' artistic endeavors.

Sr. Christine Pinto, OSB, in her heartfelt opening remarks, shared her pride in the students' achievements and the wonderful collaboration between both campuses. She reflected on St. Benedict's wisdom about living a balanced life, captured in the motto 'Ora et Labora'. She also spoke warmly about the Benedictine values of dedication, discipline, and community, which play a key role in nurturing both academic excellence and artistic talent.

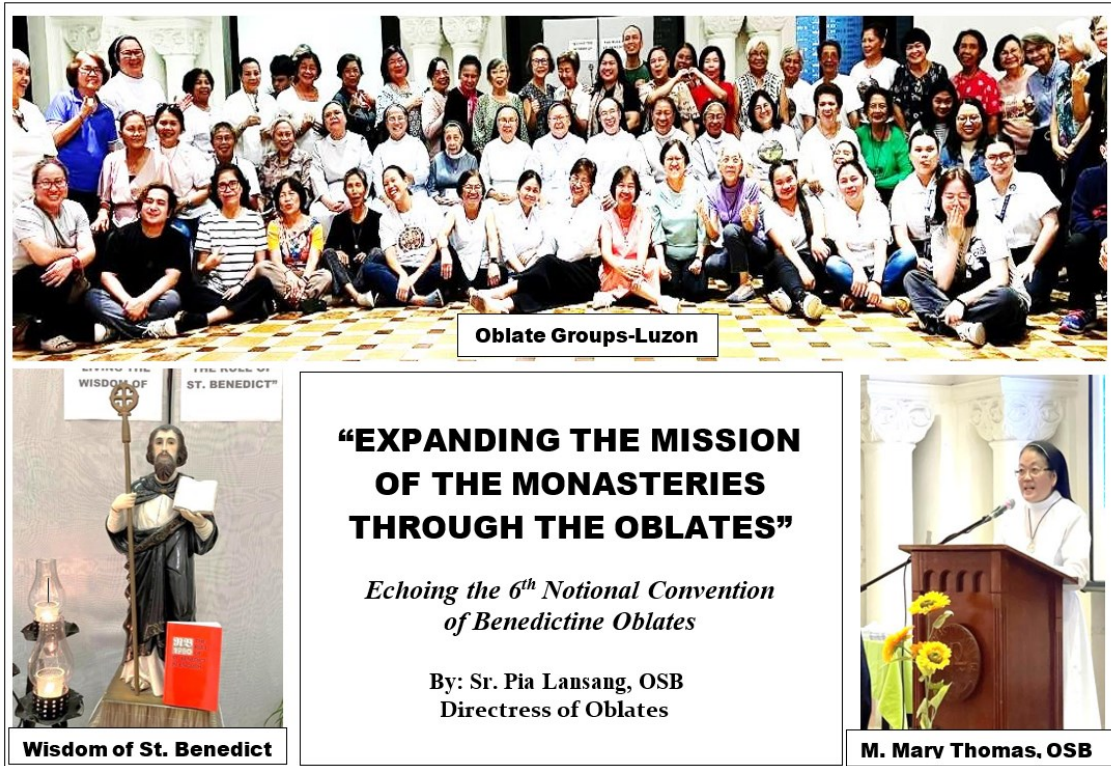
The recital was not just a display of skills but a celebration of the students' journey, their growth, and the support from their families and mentors. It was a day that highlighted the importance of the arts in holistic education, fostering creativity, confidence, and cultural appreciation among young minds.

The event concluded with heartfelt closing remarks by Sr. Daniela D. Romero, OSB, who commended the students and their mentors for their hard work and dedication. She also extended her gratitude to Ms. Ana Teresa C. Cadiz, the Students Activity Coordinator of SSC-Westgrove, for her vital role in making the Continuing Education Program possible through her diligent coordination.

As the evening ended, the applause and cheers resonated through St. Cecilia's Hall, marking the success of yet another recital and setting the stage for future performances. The event was a testament to the power of collaboration, the joy of learning, and the beauty of the arts in enriching the lives of the students and the community at large. St. Scholastica's College-Westgrove and the School of Music of St. Scholastica's College-Manila continue to inspire and cultivate young talents, ensuring that the legacy of excellence in arts education thrives for generations to come. That in all things God may be glorified!



OBLATES UPDATES



Seventy (70) Benedictine Oblates from around Luzon gathered on June 22, 2024 at the Social Hall of St. Scholastica’s College, Manila to attend the ECHO of the recent 6th National Convention of Oblates in the Philippines. Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB opened the convention with an inspiring message on Benedictine spirituality. Sr. Rosalina Fajardo, OSB Sub-prioress graced the occasion earlier to greet the group, many of whom were former teachers when she was in school administration. Oblate-Moderators and other Sisters who came were Sr. Edna, Sr. Carmelita, Sr. Ma. Luisa, Sr. Hilda, Sr. Daniela, Sr. Rosalind, Sr. Edita, Sr. Zita, Sr. Victoria, Sr. Alexis and Sr. Pia (as Coordinator) to accompany the Oblate-participants from Manila, Baguio, San Fernando, Pampanga, Marikina (SBH and School), Westgrove, and Batangas.

The main themes of this convention dealt with a feedback by the Oblates themselves on the Talks of **Fr. Pachomius San Juan, OSB** and **Mo. Cecile Lañas, OSB**: (1) The Oblate’s vocation to apply the monastic wisdom of the Rule of St. Benedict (RB) to *“the complexities of (their) everyday life in family, work or community engagements”*. Oblates, who are lay individuals, commit themselves to living the Benedictine spirituality while remaining engaged in their secular responsibilities. (2) Expanding the mission of the monasteries through the Oblates – in their sharing of the Benedictine mission of prayer (Divine Office, *Lectio*) and work in schools, hospitals, retreat centers, gift shops and so on, as well as in the larger mission of the Church and society.

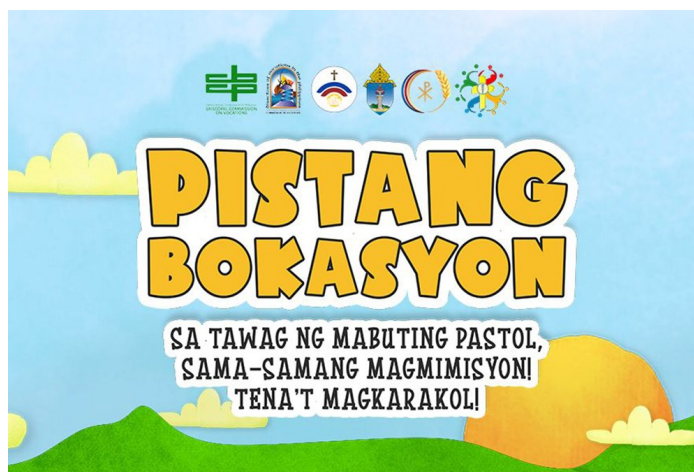
Of the RB’s enormous wealth of human and spiritual values, emphasis was given to monastic moderation, mindfulness, and the dignity of work, which provide the Oblates timeless guidance that can help them *“navigate the challenges of modern living”*. However, an even greater emphasis was given to *seeking God in all things, which is at the heart of the Rule, and is of profound relevance in our modern world today*. To end, a memorable take-home note for everyone!: the Benedictine holistic approach to spirituality, namely, the balance of prayer, work and *Lectio* which form an integrated TRIAD built upon “H&H” -- Hospitality and Humility.

VOCATION

28th National Convention of Directors and Directresses of Vocations

By Sr. Marialuz Dungca, OSB

This year's National Convention (NatCon) of Vocation Directors and Directresses commemorated the 50th Anniversary of the Directors of Vocations in the Philippines (DVP), which was first held on May 20-22, 1974, when it was formally organized. The 50th anniversary celebration of DVP was hosted by the



Diocese of Imus. The event's themes focused on: vocations, synodality, the faith experience of Filipinos, and the religiosity of Caviteños. Thus, the general theme of the celebration: "Pistang Bokasyon sa Tawag ng Mabuting Pastol, Sama-samang Magmimisyon! Tara na't Magkarakol!"

The main venue of the 28th NatCon was held at St. John Marie Vianney Parish and Rogationist College Auditorium, Silang Cavite from April 22-26, 2024.

The first day, April 22, 2024 (Monday) was the arrival of the participants from the different retreat houses within the area. There was an Opening Mass at the St. John Mary Vianney Parish (SJMVP) presided over by the Most Rev. Reynaldo G. Evangelista, D.D, followed by a welcome dinner and cultural night at the SJMVP Hall. Some of the highlights during the gathering were the Conference Plenary Sessions with specific theme on Communion: "The Good Shepherd and the Ecclesiology of Communion" given by Dr. Estella Padilla, Member of the Philippine and Asian Synod Leadership Team on Mission: "The Flock of the Shepherd: Vocations in the light of the Church's Mission Today" by His Excellency Most Rev. Raul B. Dael, D.D., Bishop of Tandag; on Participation: "The Voice of the Good Shepherd: The Synodal Calling of the People of God" by Rev. Fr. Jose Quilongquilong, SJ.

There were also conferences and concurrent sessions on the second day, and they were: For Religious Men, the topic was on, "Practical Tips in the Evaluation of Applicants" (Speaker: Mr. Lester G. Bautista, RGC); for Religious Women, "Laughter and the Love of God: Rediscovering Joy in Ministry" (Speaker: Rev. Fr. Loreto A Jaque from Archdiocese of Cebu; and for the Lay Vocation

Animators, they had: “KAPEHAN: Animating Vocation Promotion Today” (Speaker: Bro. Tito Revearal , Dir. of Antipolo).

In the afternoon of the third day, there was the presentation of the revised DVP Constitution and By-Laws and in the afternoon of the fourth day, there was the Election of the New DVP Officers (2024-2026). The celebration was ended with a Pilgrimage to Old Churches in Cavite, where the concluding mass was presided over by the Most Rev. Bartolome G. Santos, D.D. , Bishop of Iba, Zambales. The itinerary of the pilgrimage “Via Lucis for Vocations” included the Diocesan Shrine of Nuestra Sra. de Candelaria, Silang, St. Gregory the Great Parish, Indang, Diocesan Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Naic, Diocesan Shrine of St. Augustine and Parish of the Holy Cross, Tanza, Diocesan Shrine of Nuestra Sra. De la Soledad de Porta Vaga and Parish of San Roque, Cavite City; Diocesan Shrine of St. Mary Magdalene, Kawit and Diocesan Shrine of Nuestra Sra. del Pilar, Imus Cathedral. The big gathering was closed by a sumptuous dinner at the Our Lady of the Pillar Seminary, Imus City, Cavite.



It was indeed an edifying experience to be with more than two hundred thirty Directors/Directresses of Vocations of the Philippines, praying the Divine Office, participating in the Holy Hour, and being present in the Holy Eucharist daily. Despite the decreasing number of vocations at this time, the participants were still fired by the Holy Spirit to continue “fishing for vocations” together, for the service of the Church and greater glory of God.

This great event was grandly culminated by the “First National Vocation Festival”, hosted by the Imus Diocese and Rogate College, Silang Cavite on the following day, April 27, 2024.





HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW SUPERIORS

Four superiors were installed during the month of June for the first term of office effective June 15, 2024.

- Sr. Josefa Martinez, OSB was installed superior of Angeles Community by Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB, on June 8, 2024 in Angeles City
- On June 18, 2024, Sr. Ruth Bartonico, OSB, Superiors of Pambujan Community was installed by Sr. Rosalina Fajardo, OSB in Pambujan, Northern Samar
- Mother Mary Thomas Prado, OSB installed Sr. Celine Saplala, OSB, Superior of Baguio Community on June 20, 2024 in Baguio City.
- Sr. Lydia Villegas, OSB, Superior of Legazpi Community was installed by Sr. Rosalina Fajardo, OSB, on June 24, 2024 in Legazpi City.



FROM DIFFERENT PRIORIES

Hearty Welcome to Manila Priory

- Sr. Paula Lee, OSB of Seoul Priory – April 18, 2024 to learn English and take up Masteral Degree in Theology
- Sr. Juliana Nogueira, OSB of Olinda Priory – May 15, 2024 to learn English for some months before the General Chapter
- Sr. Remedios de los Reyes, OSB of Windhoek Priory – June 27, 2024 to attend to some business transactions in Bacolod.



ABS opening of Classes for SY 2024-2025

- July 15- HFA, SSA, Pampanga, SSC, Westgrove
- 2nd week of July- SSA, Bacolod
- July 29- SSA, Marikina
- August 12- SAA, Legaspi
- August 5- SSC, Tacloban: BED
- August 19- SSC, Tacloban: College
- 1st week of August- SSC, Manila: BED

MANILA PRIORY BULLETIN TEAM

EDITORIAL TEAM:

SR. ROSALINA FAJARDO, OSB, SR. THERESE BULATAO, OSB,
SR. MARY PETER MACKAY, OSB

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