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Today

SAINT JOSEPH
In the Lives
of the Filipino
Oblates Today



THE MARELLIAN TODAY

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of the Filipino Oblates Today

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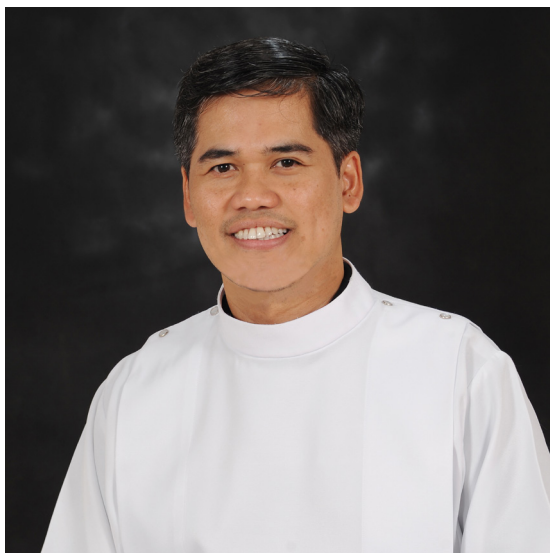
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ABOUT THE COVER

The cover features Saint Joseph, holding Jesus in his bosom, with his gaze fixed on an Oblate priest from afar. It depicts the very nature of our congregation's patron - silent and hidden; unseen in the eyes of many; unheard, yet vigilant in taking care of his sons who work in the vineyard of Christ.



FROM THE PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

REV. FR. JAYSON D.C. ENDAYA, OSJ
Provincial Superior | OSJ-Philippines

Father and Protector

The Father General has inaugurated last March 19, 2019 the Year of Saint Joseph in our Congregation to highlight the 30th year of *Redemptoris Custos*- Guardian of the Redeemer. He encouraged us to rediscover the person and mission of our patron and protector, St. Joseph and for us Oblates: to recognize in him the principal elements of that vocation which associates us to him.

As Oblates, we invoke Saint Joseph's intercession as our patron and protector. It is necessary to understand carefully the meaning and the extent of these two titles which the Pope bestowed on the Head of the Holy Family. First of all, what is the theological meaning of the term patron? At first glance, he is a protector, a defender in the spiritual and temporal order. He is a good provider for his clients and protégées. He is the one who takes their interests in hand and adjusts them to the salvific plan of God. He is in union with Jesus Christ, an accredited advocate with the Father, as Jesus is, according to St. John (1 Jn.2:1), "our advocate with the Father." Secondly, a patron is also a model of life, but a model who pleases us more, who is more suited to our temperament, to our personal tastes. He is a saint whom one feels drawn to imitate his example and style of life.

A patron is a father. His protégées and his adopted children are his spiritual infants. A special bond of affection, of tenderness, and of confidence unites patron and devotees and protégées alike. A degree of sincere and devoted love characterizes their intimate relations.

No wonder, our Holy Founder made St. Joseph the patron and protector of every Oblate. The saint that Marelli imitates and constantly follows as a model of "doing the ordinary in extraordinary way," especially for his Oblates of Saint Joseph. He uses Saint Joseph as an example when describing the virtues and qualities needed to live this life (Lettere pp.173,197 and Scritti pp. 134,136,173). But St. Joseph is not only an example for us, but also a powerful intercessor, whom we invoke as protector.

May we put into practice the statement of Article 7 of our Constitutions, as we come to him as his adopted sons: "...we live hidden and silently active in imitation of Saint Joseph." How can we truly live this challenge as Oblates of Saint Joseph confiding in the intercession of our great protector and patron?

As his Oblates and collaborators, let us embrace the way of the interior life under the guidance of Saint Joseph: by practicing faithfully, by focusing our attention to our interior advancements, by persevering renewal of good intention in all our actions, by practicing prayer and docility in the interior inspirations of God.

May the good and loving Lord bless our Congregation and our Province of Saint Joseph, and may St. Joseph grant us the choicest blessings we need in all our endeavors. ☩

*"Saint Joseph
is not only an
example for
us, but also
a powerful
intercessor whom
we invoke as
protector."*



ST. JOSEPH

NOT A PROBLEM BUT A NECESSARY SOLUTION

Rev. Fr. Omi O. Intia, OSJ

The shift of the liturgical season brings afresh a hopeful gaze into the image of the newborn Jesus. Despite Advent's character not solely restricted to the contemplation of the first coming of the Christ as an infant, an anticipation of the forthcoming festivities favors the icon of a cute baby over that of a mighty judge. Filipinos, for one, in our exaggerated preoccupation with yuletide merriments enthuse with decors, music and schemes centered on the birth of Christ. There is little if not zero regard for the penitential nature of Advent equally called for in reference to Christ's second coming.

The attention to that enigmatic night when the Savior was born as it is captured in hymns, pictures and plays throughout the ages allows us to reflect on the details that compound the mystery we behold. The image of Saint Joseph figures significantly in this panorama of details. An intent look at this necessary character of the *belen* brings us to realize how important his role is in the introduction of the Messiah to the whole world. As we look at Joseph lovingly gazing at the baby Jesus with Mary in the scene of the Nativity, we are helped to conclude: it is for this purpose that Joseph needed to be in the story, to shed light on the mystery of the person of Jesus!

THE PROBLEM

In the traditional Simbang Gabi or *misa de gallo* of the Filipinos, at least one day is liturgically accorded to reflect on Saint Joseph. On the third day of the novena masses, the Gospel recalls the annunciation to Joseph in which the latter is presented as a just man. However, true to the character of Joseph that does not draw anything to himself but points instead to the person of Jesus, it has to be noted that even the liturgical arrangement is intended for this purpose. The Gospel is strategically placed in the series of events immediately preceding the Nativity to invite the audience to discover through the figure Joseph the great divine agenda unfolding before us.

Joseph is in the story to help us understand, "Who is this baby about to be born?" Just as the baby Jesus occupies the center of the Nativity scene, the focus of any theological reflection on this mystery is Jesus no less.

That gaze of Joseph is a powerful gaze which directs all attention to its aim so much that every reflection on the role of Joseph leads to the understanding of Jesus. The same can be said of Mary, the Magi and even the shepherds and their herd. They all look at Him, behold His majesty and invite us to do the same and to ponder, "Who could this be that even the astronomical design seems to adore?"

The figure of Joseph is not problematic for the audience or readers. The concern at the time was to present Jesus as the Messiah. The evangelists occupied themselves with this concern and had to resort to available materials in order to address issues arising from the supposed "messiahship" of Jesus. One issue for example theorizes the precise moment at which Jesus was established by God as the Messiah. With their still-developing theology, the evangelists offered different answers. That the opening chapters of the respective Gospels deal immediately with this issue reveal how the authors perceive its weight in presenting the person of Jesus. While it is not the concern of this present work to elaborate on this matter, it suffices to insinuate the pressing kerygmatic problem in the early Christian communities: "How to preach that Jesus really is the Messiah?"

THE SOLUTION

The scarcity of reference to Joseph even in the Bible is suggestive of the theological preoccupation at the time. The evangelists were not as keen in unraveling the ambiguities surrounding the character of Joseph as they were in confirming the identity of Jesus as the Messiah. In other words, they are generally interested in Jesus rather than in Joseph.

Matthew and Luke are the two evangelists that provide insight as to the infancy of Jesus. That such infancy accounts are not present in the other two Gospels does not mean they are irrelevant in preaching Jesus, at least for their authors. Again, the evangelists used materials that support their own thesis pertinent to the "messiahship" of Jesus. Part of their dilemma is to advance their claim before a specific group of people that has specific cultural and religious sensibility. Such is the situation of Gospel authors who wrote accounts binding Joseph to the infancy of Jesus.

Matthew and Luke had to face circumstances we never had to face. Even if there were common elements in their presentation like the virginal conception, the birth at Bethlehem, the flight to Egypt and eventual return to and habitation in Nazareth, among others, the two evangelists needed to rearrange the available data in order to confront individual circumstances. Their use of the "Joseph material" in their Gospel is an example of this application and appropriation of data.

Matthew writes for Jews-turned-Christians; he needs arguments that would convince them that Jesus is the Messiah and thus turns to Scriptures. The Messiah had to be a descendant of David and Matthew accomplished this through a long genealogy at which Joseph figured without a doubt as the provider of the Davidic lineage to Jesus, something which could not have been accomplished through Mary, a woman who in Jewish culture did not matter for lineage. Further, Matthew

proves in a more semitic fashion that Joseph indeed is a father to Jesus in a true legal sense when he gave the baby the name "Jesus." After a few more references relevant to the safety and growth of the baby, Joseph fades into the background never to be found again in the account of Matthew. Nevertheless, the evangelist achieved his goal insofar as establishing through the figure of Joseph the identity of Jesus as the Messiah.

Luke writes for a pagan community that needs to be convinced that Jesus is the awaited Messiah and the Son of God from the very moment of conception. Hence, in his own account about Jesus' infancy, he highlights the figure of Mary and emphasizes that the child to be conceived by her is by the power of the Most High through the Holy Spirit. Luke also writes about her engagement with Joseph and how he and Mary were always together as when they travelled to Bethlehem, or during rituals like circumcision and presentation at the temple and the journey to Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. Likewise, Joseph disappeared from Luke's account after the event in the temple yet not without establishing that Joseph was indeed reckoned by Jesus as a fatherly authority when the latter eventually conceded to his parents and returned with them to Nazareth where He grew in obedience to them.

CONCLUSION

The available data on Saint Joseph, specifically those found in the Gospels, are primarily given not to promote his own character but rather to corroborate other materials that establish the person of Jesus, the Messiah and the Son of God. Nonetheless, they are read because they enrich our understanding on Joseph through...

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“O glorious patriarch St. Joseph, do not forget us as we continue to plod along with our weak flesh in this hard land of exile...

Be our exemplar in our ministry, which, like your own, is a ministry of intimate relationship with the Divine Word.”



“O GLORIOUS PATRIARCH ST. JOSEPH”

The Development of the
Josephite Spirituality of
St. Joseph Marello

Rev. Fr. Alfie A. Polistico, OSJ

INTRODUCTION

This work aims to trace the development of the Josephite spirituality of St. Joseph Marello from 1869 to 1895. As confirmed by two Marellian scholars,¹ it was only in 1869 that our founder had explicit textual “devotional reference” to St. Joseph in his letter to Fr. Stephen Delaude written in Asti on January 11 of that year. This study does not, in any way, claim that our founder was not a devotee of St. Joseph years before 1869. Due to the inaccessibility of the founder’s implicit and explicit verbal and textual devotional references to St. Joseph before 1869, I decided to limit this research based on the available explicit verbal and textual devotional references made by him (1869-1895) in his letters and biographies written and/or translated into English.²

I. ST. FRANCIS DE SALES’ INFLUENCE ON ST. JOSEPH MARELLO’S JOSEPHITE SPIRITUALITY³

a. St. Francis de Sales in Piedmont: People in Piedmont considered St. Francis de Sales as a national saint. Their affinity to the French saint was caused by geopolitical and pastoral reasons. Geopolitically, the Savoy-born Bishop of Geneva was a friend of Duke of Savoy Carl Emmanuel I whose residence was in Turin. Their friendship would mean frequent visits of the former to the latter in Turin. Pastorally, because of the saint’s brilliance and eloquence, “various cities in Piedmont welcomed him as a guest and apostle.”⁴ In fact, his work *Philotea*, written in 1608 for the laity, was translated into Italian and was published in Piedmont, particularly in Turin in the 1800s.⁵

Less than two centuries after St. Francis de Sales’ death in 1622, “biographies about him began

to circulate, and there arose in Turin and in various Italian cities Confraternities in his honor.”⁶ Moreover, Salesian spirituality began to permeate the Piedmont region evidenced by the founding of male and female congregations: Salesians of St. John Bosco founded 1859 and Salesian Sisters founded in by Sts. John Bosco and Maria Mazzarello in 1872. “Women and men of all classes were devotees and were interested in the spirituality of the Saint of Geneva.”⁷

b. St. Francis de Sales in Bishop Carlo Savio: Among these myriads of devotees was no less than the Bishop of Asti, Bishop Carlo Savio, “a true man of God, in the style of St. Francis de Sales.”⁸ Fr. Cortona notes that this bishop was the “spiritual guide and wise counselor of our venerable founder” from 1868-1881.⁹ Apparently, this wise bishop had a big influence on the spirituality of the founder given their thirteen years of spiritual intimacy. “Under the guidance of such a bishop,” Fr. Cortona narrates, “...Father Marello could acquire the combination of virtues necessary for his noble mission.” Regarding St. Joseph Marello’s “noble mission” as the bishop of Acqui, Fr. Cortona comments: “Whoever was attentive to his inner spirit found him gifted with meekness of soul, with a gentleness and adaptability rarely found, similar to that of St. Francis de Sales whom he strove to imitate.”¹⁰ We can surmise therefore that the devotion of our founder to St. Francis de Sales was deepened by Bishop Savio’s spiritual fatherhood.

c. Don Bosco and The Salesians: In his letter to his namesake Joseph Riccio dated September 6, 1867 (a year before Marello’s priestly ordination), our founder visited the Oratory of Don Bosco during his eleven-day stay in Turin. After this visit, Marello “had a special

relationship with the Salesians”: Don Bosco himself (this time, 66 years old) enrolled our founder “among the Cooperators in 1881”¹¹ (by this time Marello had been a priest for thirteen years, 37 years old); “on May 24, 1889, the Salesians asked him to be with them for the Feast of Mary, Help of Christians”¹² (by this time Marello had been a three-month-old bishop of Acqui); and he was invited again by the same group in 1892 “for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Oratory”¹³ (by this time he had been a bishop for three years).

While we cannot establish the exact year when Marello came to know personally Don Bosco and the Salesians, his 7-year friendship with Don Bosco¹⁴ (presuming that they had been friends since 1881, Don Bosco died in 1888) and almost three-decade (1867-1892 or maybe up to his death in 1895) friendship with the Salesians must have made a profound impact on his devotion to St. Francis de Sales.

d. St. Joseph Marello’s Imitation of St. Francis de Sales: St. Joseph Marello himself quips: “Let us imitate St. Francis de Sales: though he was very busy, was always calm and peaceful: even when he was alone in his room, he was very composed, because he was always in the presence of God.”¹⁵ Fr. Anacleto Bianco¹⁶, one of the first Oblates, comments on Marello’s behavior: “It is said that St. Francis de Sales was a live copy on the gentleness of the Divine Master. In my opinion, Mons. Marello was the most beautiful copy of St. Francis de Sales. This is what I learned from the eight years that I knew him and we lived together when I was young. I never saw him [sic] a frown on his forehead.”¹⁷ St. Joseph Marello took St. Francis de Sales as “the model of his episcopate to such a point that he was called another St. Francis de Sales.”¹⁸

e. St. Francis de Sales' Josephite Spirituality: Fr. Cortona

categorically claims that St. Joseph Marelo "learned about St. Joseph from long years of meditation on the works of St. Francis de Sales, whom he read with love and devotion. Above all...the interior life of St. Joseph."¹⁹ In this statement, two phrases need clarification: "long years of meditation" and "the works of St. Francis de Sales." As regards the former, given the popularity of the Bishop of Geneva in Piedmont, particularly in Turin, Marelo must have been acquainted with St. Francis' works even before his ordination. As regards the latter, in his letter to Fr. Cortona in November 1890, Marelo explicitly said that he found a copy of the *Philotea* on his desk after the end of his pastoral visit in the Vicariate of Mombaruzzo.²⁰ Aside from this, other works of St. Francis read by our founder were not specifically stated by the English sources I used.

While there seems to be an insurmountable difficulty in finding the exact work of St. Francis de Sales from which St. Joseph Marelo "learned about St. Joseph," there is no doubt that it was from him that our founder learned "the interior life of St. Joseph" as claimed by Fr. Cortona. It is clear, therefore, that Marelo's understanding of the interior life of St. Joseph, while not totally and exclusively influenced by St. Francis de Sales, has, in fact, a Salesian character.²¹

II. MARELO'S THREE SIGNIFICANT LETTERS IN 1869 AND 1870 AND POPE PIUS IX'S QUEMADMODUM DEUS

a. Letter to Fr. Stephen Delaude²² in 1869: St. Joseph Marelo made mention of St. Joseph for the first time in his letter to Fr. Stephen Delaude written in Asti on January 11, 1869 (by this time, Marelo had

been a priest for less than four months).²³ Here, he mentioned St. Joseph, together with Jesus and Mary, as his and Delaude's aid as "[they] will fight on and keep dragging this mortal flesh amid the bloody conflict without uttering one bitter word or retreating one step from the path to martyrdom." He saw St. Joseph, together with his spouse and his Son, as a source of strength in this fight with mortal flesh. In the same letter, he invoked again St. Joseph, this time together with Jesus, Mary, "Angels and Saints," to be his and Delaude's protector in their "walking along unknown paths." In his early months as a priest, St. Joseph was his [and Delaude's] support and protector.²⁴

b. Letter to Fr. Joseph Riccio in 1869: In his letter to his namesake Fr. Joseph Riccio, written in Asti before March 19, 1869, our founder wrote: "O glorious patriarch St. Joseph, do not forget us as we continue to plod along with our weak flesh in this hard land of exile...Be our exemplar in our ministry, which, like your own, is a ministry of intimate relationship with the Divine Word."²⁵ As far as this letter is concerned, this was the first time Marelo explicitly prayed to St. Joseph. In this prayer, our founder asked for the assistance of St. Joseph in his struggle with "his weak flesh." As a six-month-old priest, this carnal struggle must be bothering him internally. He was convinced that this internal struggle could be allayed by the powerful intercession of St. Joseph.

c. Letter to Father Joseph Riccio in 1870: In his letter to Fr. Joseph Riccio, written in Rome on March 17, 1870, Marelo revealed to his namesake that devotion to "our Holy Patron [St. Joseph]...would reach its highest peak". This "highest peak" refers to Pope Pius IX's approval of the petition of "38 Cardinals, 153 Bishops, and 43 Superiors

General" to declare St. Joseph as "Patron of the Universal Church."²⁶ The supposed declaration was not made during the First Vatican Council because the Council "was adjourned indefinitely on October 20, 1870" due to Franco-Prussian War.²⁷

d. Pope Pius IX's Quemadmodum Deus: On December 8, 1870, exactly one year after the opening of the First Vatican Council, Pope Pius IX, through the Sacred Congregation of Rites, promulgated the decree *Quemadmodum Deus* declaring St. Joseph as the Universal Patron of the Church (Patron of the Catholic Church) and "which also raised St. Joseph's feast of March 19 to the rank of double of the first class."²⁸ This declaration, already anticipated by our founder as indicated above, was seen by him as an exaltation of St. Joseph by "all of Christianity."²⁹

III. THE ITALIAN CATHOLIC MOVEMENT AND THE OBLATES OF ST. JOSEPH

a. Catholic Movement in Turin: In 1871, a year after Pius IX's declaration on St. Joseph, Turin became the birthplace of Catholic movement. This movement "is the collection of associations and of groups explicitly Catholic commitment, having the goal of making the Church, her principles and institutions more present in a society which sought to eliminate them."³⁰ This movement aimed to combat liberal secularism. Edified by the patronage of St. Joseph, two Catholic associations took inspiration from him: "the Society of St. Joseph which began in Turin in 1871 and the work begun by St. Leonard Murialdo."³¹

b. The Plan to Form the Company of St. Joseph: Moved by the Spirit, in view of the Catholic movement in Turin and the inspiration of St.

Joseph, Marelo thus wrote to Canon Cerruti of the Michelerio Orphanage on October 25, 1872 (by this time Marelo was already a four-year-old priest): "I ask that Your Reverence would kindly welcome me and several friends of mine as we unite in one common spirit under the patronage of St. Joseph (Company of St. Joseph) to promote the interests of Jesus in your new church"³².³³ Marelo's plan to form the Company of St. Joseph "did not come into being because neither Canon Cerruti nor the diocesan clergy were [*sic*] yet sufficiently ready for or sensitive to the needs of the time."³⁴ Had this company come into being, this would have been the first-ever Catholic movement in Asti.³⁵

c. The Oblates of St. Joseph:

Marelo had been a priest for nine years and two months before the Beloved Son of the just man finally inspired him to found the Oblates of St. Joseph. In his letter to Fr. Cesare Rolla,³⁶ written in Asti on November 4, 1877 (Feast of St. Charles Borromeo), upon the approval and encouragement of "Bishop Carl Savio, Fr. Carpignano of the Congregation of St. Philip, and Fr. Anglesio, superior of the Little House of Divine Providence,"³⁷ he made known to him his intention to found the Oblates of St. Joseph. The "primary goal" of the Oblates "would be to honor St. Joseph and to imitate his virtues, patterning themselves after the great patriarch's poor, humble, and hidden life."³⁸

d. Bishop Joseph Marelo's Image of St. Joseph as Guardian and Protector:

After being named Bishop of Acqui by Pope Leo XIII on February 11, 1889, Marelo's devotion to St. Joseph grew even deeper. In that same year, Marelo's image of St. Joseph as a very powerful protector is palpable as

evidenced by his letters.³⁹ The protection of St. Joseph was seen by him as a very powerful aid for the welfare of the youth. "This holy patriarch [St. Joseph]," Fr. Cortona observes, "actively guarded, defended, and nurtured Jesus. Our founder thus wanted us to imitate him by guarding, defending, and teaching youth, the most vivid image of Jesus, while not disattending the other sacred ministries."⁴⁰ If St. Joseph's paternal protection was so effective in rearing Jesus, Marelo believed that by imitating him, he and his Oblates would become an effective "apostle of the youth."

IV. ST. JOSEPH MARELO'S DISCOVERY OF THE RECIPROCITY OF ST. JOSEPH'S INTERIORITY AND ACTIVITY

a. St. Joseph's Interiority: As already mentioned in I.d, St. Joseph Marelo really admired the interior life of St. Joseph. "The recollection of this saint," Marelo observes, "produced in his soul an invincible peace and tranquility that brought the most perfect calm to all his faculties. He was never oppressed by sorrow or discouraged by trials, or too carried away by joy."⁴¹ Fr. Cortona calls this disposition of St. Joseph "equanimity of spirit" which our founder faithfully imitated. St. Joseph's interiority would also be understood by Marelo as "hidden life," "solitude," and "silence." In exhorting the members to emulate St. Joseph, Marelo would conclude: "[B]e hidden from men, but under the eyes of God; unknown to men, yet dear and beloved to God."⁴²

b. St. Joseph's Activity: By Joseph's activity, I mean his work. Joseph worked as a carpenter. "Work was the daily expression of love in the life of the Family of Nazareth."⁴³ Paraphrasing the words of St. Paul in Galatians 2:20, Fr. Cortona writes: "And so it is no longer we who

*"Remain hidden
and silently active
in imitation of
that great Model
of a poor and
obscure life."*

are working by ourselves, but it is Jesus Christ who works with us. From this everyone can see how much more effective our apostolic works become."⁴⁴ Work thus is an expression of love. St. Joseph's expression of love is made so manifest by his "obedience of faith." It is this kind of obedience that enabled him to take Mary as his wife and thereby made him become the juridical father of Jesus.⁴⁵

c. Be Carthusians indoors and Apostles outdoors: This imperative "which our good father so earnestly repeated"⁴⁶ captures the complementary value of St. Joseph's interiority and activity. For our founder, when one withdraws "therein with the resolve to remain hidden and silently active in imitation of that great Model of a poor and obscure life, he will have an opportunity to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ."⁴⁷

Therefore, the sole *raison d'être* why St. Joseph Marelo strove very hard to imitate St. Joseph is that he saw in the reciprocity of the carpenter's interiority and activity the perfect realization of the radical obedience to the will of God. It was the just man's silence and work that propelled him to faithfully serve the interests of Jesus. By faithfully obeying the will of the Father,...

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OSJ PRIESTS AND BROTHERS ASCEND TO MOUNT CARMEL

Rev. Fr. Joel M. Villanueva, OSJ

The Constitutions (Art. 51) and General Directory (Art. 83) of the Oblates of Saint Joseph mandate that all religious must undergo a once-a-year, week long spiritual retreat as part of their ongoing formation. Faithful to the mandate of the congregation, we, the Oblates of Saint Joseph-Philippine Province, ascended to Carmelite Missionaries' Center of Spirituality in Tagaytay City last October 14-18, 2019. Daily activities such as Eucharistic Celebration, adoration, conferences and recreations were assigned to the four life groups: **FEDELTA', FERMEZZA, FECONDITA'** and **FELICITA'**.

The five-day retreat was aimed to "rediscover the human experience of God in the various aspects of life of the consecrated persons." The opening Mass was presided by the Bishop of the Diocese of Imus, Most Reverend Reynaldo Evangelista, D.D. He welcomed us in the diocese with his fatherly reminder to take good care of our vocation by staying grounded on our human experience of sharing Jesus to our different pastoral ministries.

The second day of retreat was a timely discussion on the "Boundary Violations: What happens when priests commit abuses?" done by Rev. Fr. John V. Era, CM. Fr. John challenged us to have personal and communal actions so as to help ourselves to be faithful in our consecration and vows in order to avoid abuses. During the group discussions, we realized that we should faithfully become true pastors imitating the Good Shepherd. We agreed that we must end the negative impression of ourselves as "wolves" under the guise of white clothing capable of destroying the "sheep" entrusted to our care.

The third day of conference focused on the "Caring of One's Mental health and Understanding Various Mental and Emotional Conditions." The topic was given by a group of mental health advocates led by Dra. Belen M. Dimatatac, MD, FPPA. The group assisted us in evaluating the state of our mental health. They facilitated a workshop for us to determine our different stressors and de-stressors. This activity led us to discover the importance of having healthy religious community through healthy relationships, appropriate recreations, good habits and lively prayer life. Peace of mind helps us lead a healthy and holy lifestyle.

The fourth day of retreat touched the core of our religious life: community life. Msgr. Jaime Noel Deslate, discussed "The Value of Intimacy for Priests and Religious." This conference taught us that human beings are relational, that they are created for relationships. Moreover, it gave us clear understanding and deep insight about intimacy. Msgr. Jaime stated that "intimacy is not only between man and woman. Intimacy can be met in various relationships even among celibates." Quoting from John 5:15 ("I call you friends...because I have made known everything to you."), he emphasized that self-disclosure is the heart of intimacy. This affirmed the importance of healthy relationship among members

"Intimacy is not only between man and woman. Intimacy can be met in various relationships even among celibates."

of each rectory and community. The day was capped with the celebration of sacramental brotherhood held at Oblates of Saint Joseph House of the Junior Professed, Buho, Amadeo, Cavite.

The last day of retreat was a conference with the provincial superior, Rev. Fr. Jayson D.C. Endaya, OSJ. His talk focused on making better our service to the parishes, schools and mission areas assigned to us. He said that improvement had to start among ourselves by making it sure that we are physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually healthy. He acknowledged and thanked everyone and encouraged us to be closer fraternally and more effective pastorally.

This five-day retreat at Carmelite Missionaries' Center of Spirituality in Tagaytay City was truly an ascent to the mountain where we truly experienced the Divine. It strengthened our commitment to be faithful in our vows and to be concrete in our practice of religious life and ministry. ☩



ST. JOSEPH AND THE OBLATE PRIESTHOOD

Rev. Fr. Alfie A. Polistico, OSJ

THE "TWO NATURES" OF OBLATE PRIESTHOOD

Every priest has two "natures": "a human nature, which makes him another man, and a priestly nature, which makes him another Christ."¹ These words of Archbishop Fulton Sheen show very well the interplay between our humanity and priesthood as OSJs. Our humanity is the bearer of our priesthood and our priesthood the essence of our humanity. The former has to be conformed to the humanity of Christ; the latter to His divinity. To become true priests of Christ then, every Oblate priest has to be "configured" to Him.

While this configuration seems very clear, its realization is and will always be a work in progress. We find ourselves "within a process of gradual and continuous configuration to Him, in his being and his acting, which constantly challenges the person to inner growth."² The gradualness of this inner growth is caused by the tension between our humanity and priesthood; our sinfulness and God's grace. Priests who are serious in following the Lord will never deny this fact.

Our ordination to the priesthood does not take away from us our sinfulness. It is rather God's radical revelation to us that no sin can ever stop Him from loving us. Our weakness is "remedied by Christ's holiness who became for us a high priest."³ This healing affirms the fact that we ourselves are, in the words of Henri J.M. Nouwen, "wounded healers." Here, the words of St. Paul, who like us, in his following of Christ struggled so much, become more prophetic: "So I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:9-10, NRSV).

I am not in any way justifying our mistakes as priests. My point is that

our vulnerability makes us grounded and ready for "sympathetic understanding."⁴ Our weaknesses as human persons must always be known, accepted and remedied. By remedy, I mean, we have to take seriously our ongoing formation program because it is intended "to ensure fidelity to the priestly ministry in a continuing journey of conversion, in order to rekindle the gift received at ordination."⁵

ST. JOSEPH: A POWERFUL INTERCESSOR

In the ongoing formation of the Oblates of St. Joseph in the Philippines, St. Joseph plays a very important role. If "Saint Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood,"⁶ it is also equally true that he was called by God to be the guide of our priestly life and ministry. If he is the guardian of the Redeemer, he is also the guardian of the OSJs. If St. Joseph's fatherhood contributed so much to the formation of Jesus the High Priest, it can be logically surmised that his fatherhood to us would also contribute to the growth of our lives as priests. If we want to persevere in this life, we must deepen our devotion to St. Joseph and allow his way of life to be our way of life: to serve the interests of Jesus always.

Fr. Joseph F. Chorpensing, OSFS, in his work, surveys how our patron saint's intercessory power aided St. Teresa of Avila's and St. John N. Neumann's life and mission. "Like Teresa," Fr. Chorpensing notes, "Neumann has unlimited confidence in St. Joseph's intercessory power,

acknowledging too that its source is the saint's unique relationship with the Son of God.⁷ St. Joseph's unique closeness to Jesus makes his intercession uniquely powerful. Priests who are seeking his paternal intercession will have the needed spiritual energy to configure themselves to Christ. Jesus would not deny his father's request because He knew very well that whatever he would ask for was always the Father's will.

In the same vein, in the life and ministry of St. Joseph Marelllo, St. Joseph was his "powerful intercessor." In one of his letters addressed to his namesake Fr. Joseph Riccio, written in Asti before March 19, 1869, our founder wrote: "O glorious patriarch St. Joseph, do not forget us as we continue to plod along with our weak flesh in this hard land of exile...Be our

exemplar in our ministry, which, like your own, is a ministry of intimate relationship with the Divine Word."⁸

In this humble petition, our founder asked for the assistance of St. Joseph in his struggle with "his weak flesh." This struggle is never new to any ordained men. What is unique about our founder's prayer is that he truly saw in St. Joseph a powerful protector of priestly life and ministry. Moreover, he made St. Joseph a concrete model for his priestly life and ministry of intimacy with Jesus. Our founder succeeded in overcoming his weaknesses and thereby became a very effective pastor because he had St. Joseph as his powerful intercessor.

OBLATES OF ST. JOSEPH FOREVER

The foregoing statements have already solidified the efficacy of the intercession of St. Joseph in our ongoing formation to configure our priesthood to the priesthood of Christ. Once our devotion to St. Joseph becomes more profound, there can always be forever. By forever, I mean, our persistence to persevere in the priestly life because we are fully convinced that God called us to be Oblate priests. In such vocational awareness, our commitment to anchor our lives in Christ, notwithstanding our weaknesses, can be strengthened by the paternal intercession of St. Joseph who, in his earthly life, became Jesus' staunch defender together with Mary against His enemies.

While the tension between the two natures of priests as explained by Archbishop Sheen remains inevitable, St. Joseph's paternal aid enables us to be more perspicacious in leading our priestly life in a world that seemingly treats grace, spirituality and transcendence frivolous. There is in our priesthood

an innate gift to see beyond. In this kind of seeing, we always bear the weakness of our humanity, our "thorns in the flesh." While for some our priestly life seems impervious, God sees clearly the deepest yearnings of our hearts, albeit clouded, or worse muddled by insecurity, confusion, doubt, and materialism. When Jesus saw our sinfulness, I am pretty sure that Joseph was tapping His shoulder and saying these words: "I know that You are very patient with these men. I am fervently praying for them because they serve Your interests."

As Oblate priests, it is good to be reminded of this congregational prayer to St. Joseph:

"Joseph, son of David and husband of Mary, we honor you, guardian of the Redeemer, and we adore the Child you named 'Jesus.' Saint Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, pray with us that we may imitate you in lifelong dedication to the interests of the Savior. Amen."

1. Fulton Sheen, *The Priest Is Not His Own* (Bangalore: ATC Publications, 1963), 162.

2. *Congregation for the Clergy, The Gift of Priestly Vocation: Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (Pasay City: Paulines Publishing House, 2016), 71.

3. John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day Pastores Dabo Vobis* (25 March 1992), no. 20.

4. Sheen, *The Priest Is Not His Own*, 163.

5. *Congregation for the Clergy, The Gift of Priestly Vocation*, 71-72.

6. Tarcisio Stramare, *Saint Joseph "Guardian of the Redeemer" Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II: Text and Reflections* (Santa Cruz, CA: Guardian of the Redeemer Books, 1997), 24.

7. Joseph F. Chorprenning, OSFS, "St. Joseph in the Life and Ministry of John N. Neumann, CSsR," in *Saint Joseph Studies*, ed. Larry Toschi, OSJ (Santa Cruz, CA: Guardian of the Redeemer Books, 2002), 132.

8. Because of the change of numbering of the letters of St. Joseph Marelllo, the letter quoted here is either letter no. 35 or no. 37. ☩

"...we have to take seriously our ongoing formation program because it is intended "to ensure fidelity to the priestly ministry in a continuing journey of conversion, in order to rekindle the gift received at ordination."

BEING JOSEPH TO THE YOUTH

Bro. Cedrick E. Del Mundo, OSJ



The year 2018-2019 is one of grace for us Oblates of Saint Joseph - Philippine Province because we celebrate two figures central to our identity: Saint Joseph and the Youth. This year our Superior General, Rev. Fr. Jan Pelczarski, OSJ, has declared the year of Saint Joseph, in line with the 30th anniversary of the Apostolic Exhortation, *Redemptoris Custos*. Coincidentally, in preparation for the 500th anniversary of Christianity in the country, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has also declared this year as the Year of Youth, with the theme, "The Filipino Youth in Mission: Beloved, Gifted, and Empowered."

In his letter of inauguration for the Year of Saint Joseph, Fr. Pelczarski asks, "Is it worth proposing in our day a Saint of humility and of silence as a model to imitate?"¹ I answer, yes. Joseph is a model to imitate for the youth because he is as young as they are, and he is a father to them.

I. JOSEPH EVER YOUNG

Saint Joseph has been immortalized in the artistic tradition of the Church as an old and bearded man who looks more like a grandfather than a father to Jesus. This is in accordance

with the portrayal of his character in the apocryphal gospels.² Although these works may not be theologically correct, they have a certain didactic purpose, i.e., to teach how Joseph is not a father to Jesus in a procreative sense but as a mere custodian.

We may ask then, is Saint Joseph really that old? As far as the canonical gospels are concerned, we have no means of ascertaining the exact nor the probable age of Joseph.³ However, as Pope Francis points out, "youth is more than simply a matter of time, but a state of mind."⁴ And from this perspective we could affirm the youthfulness of Joseph as he is portrayed in the gospels.

Joseph, for one, is a man of dreams. He, for sure, already had big plans for his future family. However, all these came to a turning point when he found out that the woman of his dreams was already with child. We may say that Joseph's dreams were shattered in that instance, but it only led him to dream of greater things. The gospels count the times that Joseph dreamed, and in those dreams Joseph received messages from God as to what his life would

be. With this, the dream of Joseph shifted from wanting only to be part of Mary's life into being part of the greater plan of God for humanity.

Secondly, Joseph is a man of adventures. In the gospels, we see that his dreams are paired with instructions that demand him to venture out into situations which break the monotony of his life. This is expressed in the theme of the year of Saint Joseph based on Matt. 2:13-14, "and he rose up in the night, took with him the child and his mother." Fr. Pelczarski interprets this as suggestive of the character of Saint Joseph who "does not draw back in the moment of the challenge."⁵

Unlike the common trend among the youth today, Joseph's adventures are always in line with his God-given responsibility as guardian of the redeemer. It is not a matter of breaking away from authority but submitting to it. We neither read a word of complain from Joseph, nor did he negotiate terms with God so as to lighten the demand. He knew the urgency of the call of God and responded accordingly. Joseph being a man of adventure is mirrored by his responsibility, or should I say, response-ability.

Lastly, Joseph is a man of God. The evangelists describe Joseph as a "just man"⁶ and this could mean more than just being a faithful Jew. Bible scholars interpret this as having a sense of "religious awe for God's plan."⁷ For this reason, Joseph was always quick to respond to the demands of the situation. Amidst the confusion and peril



of his own life, Joseph offered himself in the most selfless way possible. In this way, we could say that Joseph is truly an Oblate to God.

This noble example from Joseph "transcends all individual states of life,"⁸ and today's youth can learn a lot from this. In particular, the witness of this young Joseph can inspire the youth towards the realization of their being Beloved, Gifted and Empowered. For insofar as Joseph is a man of God, he is Beloved; insofar as Joseph is a man of dreams, he is Gifted; lastly, insofar as Joseph is a man of adventure, he is empowered for mission.

We, Oblates, are enjoined by our Constitutions "to reproduce in our lives and ministry the Christian Mystery as it was lived by St. Joseph...in total commitment to the interests of Jesus."

II. THE FATHER'S IMAGE

Have we ever asked why Jesus chose the term 'Father' to describe God for us? For one, it could be the patriarchal culture prevalent in his historical situation. But Jesus wanted us to look at God more than just a powerful masculine figure who is over and above us, but as someone whom we can relate with. And so more than just the concept of patriarchy, the term 'father' could perhaps be something that is personally close to Jesus, so much so that he is able to call him confidently and intimately as "Abba."

This may affirm how Joseph carried out his task as the perceived father of Christ. Joseph's role in Jesus' life is not merely functional. Above all else, it is "a relationship that places him as close as possible to Christ."⁹ For sure, this relationship is analogous to the divine fatherhood of God, otherwise the lyricist would not have sung the name of Joseph as "the Father's image on earth."

The last of what we hear about Joseph in the Scriptures is at the finding of Jesus in the temple (Lk 2:41-52), and prior to that, their life in Nazareth was silenced (cf. Lk 2:39-40). Thus, we may not anymore find in the canonical gospels an

account of Jesus' growing years so as to concretely compare Joseph's paternal roles with the way Jesus speaks of the Father. However, it is not far that once upon a time, Joseph had been a merciful father (Lk. 6:36), a loving father (Jn. 15:9) and a providing father (Matt. 7:11) to Jesus. The God who called Joseph to fulfill such a task in his Son's life would surely "give Joseph a share in the corresponding love, a love that has its origin from the Father."¹⁰

Joseph's role in Jesus' life transcends mere legal and prophetic fulfillment, for he is truly a father to Jesus. As Fr. Larry Toschi points out, "Joseph exercised his role as father with affection, providing for his child, worrying about him, protecting and defending him, educating him in a profession and in the practice of obedience and religious observance."¹¹

Nowadays we are living in a society where dysfunctional families seem to be a norm. Many of the youth today are in need of a father figure; in need of men worthy to be looked up to and to be followed; in need of men responsible enough to build families in such a way that it becomes a prototype of God's fatherhood to all his creatures.

Truly, as we speak of care for the youth, we cannot do away with family life, and all these realities which gradually destroy it. In times such as these we need the witness of Saint Joseph to serve as a guide in addressing the needs of the youth today.

III. THE JOSEPHITES AND THE YOUTH

In the inauguration letter of the Year of Saint Joseph, Fr. Pelczarski exhorts us to “rediscover the figure of the Patron of the Universal Church and find in him the bases of that vocation which connects us to his name as Oblates.”¹² What does this mean for us? We, Oblates, are enjoined by our Constitutions “to reproduce in our lives and ministry the Christian Mystery as it was lived by St. Joseph... in total commitment to the interests of Jesus.”¹³

The term *interests of Jesus* may suggest a Christological dimension of our work and of our identity. What kind of Jesus are we to commit ourselves to and how are we going to do that? We are called to serve the interests of Jesus *like Saint Joseph*. Of course, Joseph was closest to Jesus in the period of his youth. It was in this period when Joseph spent the rest of his life performing in the best way possible, every single task of a Jewish father to his child—educating him and providing for his needs. For this reason, “among the forms of apostolic ministry of the Oblates of Saint Joseph, the Christian education of youth holds a position of privilege.”¹⁴

Like Saint Joseph could also mean *through the way of the Founder*. At a young age

Marello was aware of the decadent situation of the youth and lamented for them.¹⁵ As a young priest, he exhorted even his friends to “work hard for the welfare of youth” at the time when the anticlerical government opposes to their Christian education.¹⁶ And as a bishop he wrote a pastoral letter on the Christian education of the youth. The youth was very close to the heart of our dear founder so much so that this great apostle to the youth handed down to the Oblates of Saint Joseph this great task of caring for them.

When it comes to the care for the youth, we, Oblates, are at the forefront. Just as the two Josephs of our congregation are inseparable with the young Jesus, so we too must also be zealous in the task decreed to us by our charism. The coincidence of celebrating the Year of Saint Joseph along with the Year of the Youth is indeed a grace for us. It calls us to be and to work as Joseph to the young.

1. Fr. Jan Pelczarski, OSJ, *Letter of Inauguration of the Year of Saint Joseph*. January 23, 2019.

2. Larry Toschi, *Joseph in the New Testament* (Santa Cruz, CA: Guardian of the Redeemer Books, 1991) p.1.

3. Theories suggest that the term “betrothed” mean that Mary and Joseph are “two youths of ordinary marriageable age,” *Ibid*, p.24.

4. *Christus Vivit*, no. 30

5. *Letter of Inauguration of the Year of Saint Joseph*

6. Matt. 1:18

7. Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1993) p. 126.

8. *Redemptoris Custos*, no. 30

9. *Redemptoris Custos*, no. 7.

10. *Ibid*, no. 8.

11. *Joseph in the New Testament*, p.95.

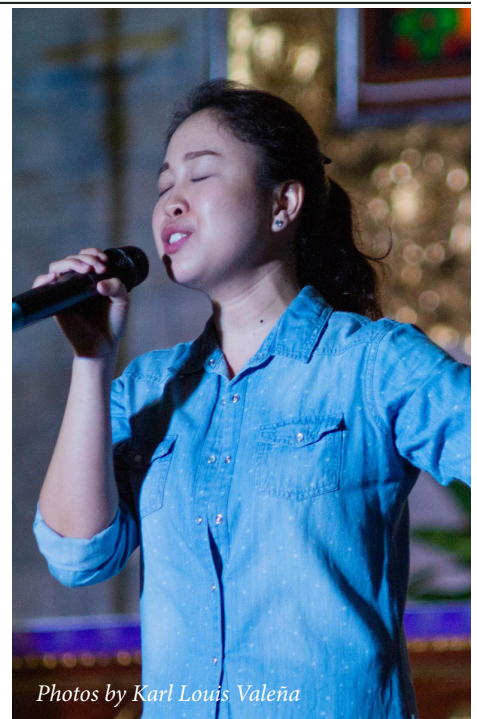
12. *Letter of Inauguration of the Year of Saint Joseph*

13. *OSJ Constitutions*, art. 3.

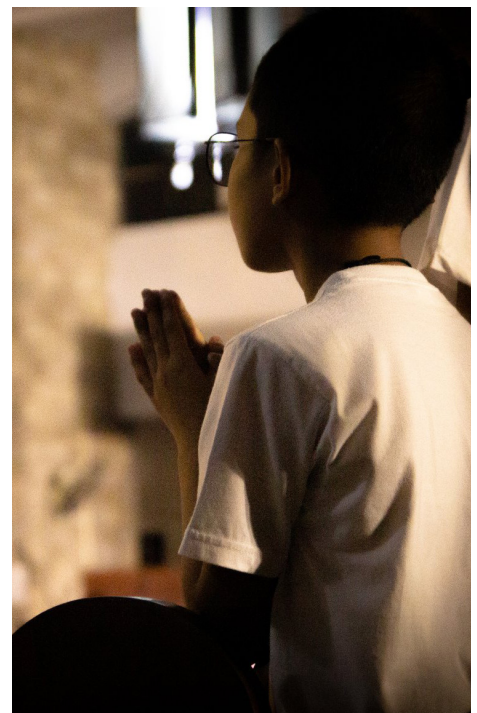
14. *Ibid*, art. 60; cf. *First Rules of the Congregation of Saint Joseph* (1892)

15. Cf *Letter no. 5 & 9*

16. *Letter no. 28*, see footnote 80. ☩



Photos by Karl Louis Valeña





ST. JOSEPH IN THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUTH

Rev. Fr. Regie D. Piad, OSJ

"To educate the youth, St. Joseph can be the model for all parents, teachers and elders. He is a good example not only in following the law of God but also in how he lives his life in a steadfast faith and trust in the Divine Providence."

"We must take inspiration from St. Joseph, who was the first one on earth to look after the interests of Jesus. It was he who took care of him as an infant, protected Him as a boy, and was His father during the first thirty years of His life on earth." St. Joseph Marelllo

In his pastoral letter on the Catechism, St. Joseph Marelllo talks about passing the gospel of truth to the youth. He also considers the parents as the first teachers who must show the image of God to their children, to lead them to know Jesus and to educate them in God's law. St. Joseph must have been in the mind of St. Joseph Marelllo when he proposes this advice to the people of Aquí.

ST. JOSEPH AS A MAN OF FAITH

"Joseph, son of David ..." In Matthew 1:20, the angel's greeting to St. Joseph in a dream signals his role in the history of salvation. It presents St. Joseph as the husband of Mary and the legal father of Jesus. This is his vocation. He is to be the father to the promised Son of David, the Messiah. Furthermore, the mission of Joseph is connected with giving Jesus his name and inserting him legally into the Davidic lineage.

"When he woke up, he married Mary, as the angel of the Lord had told him." Matthew 1:24 presents to us a man of tremendous faith. St. Joseph accepts God's invitation with humility and courage. His faith enables him to recognize the will of God in the many circumstances of his life even those hard to understand and impossible to believe. This kind of faith is what the youth needs today: prompt compliance to the commands of God, open to the divine communication and an unwavering belief in the goodness, mercy and protection of God.

ST. JOSEPH AS A FATHER TO JESUS

"The child grew and became strong, he was full of wisdom, and God's blessings were upon him." (Luke 2:40) A boy needs a father to introduce him how to live in this world. He needs to be given instructions on how to relate with people and to work on things. He has to be taught how to recognize and differentiate situations and to see the goodness of each person. A Jewish father is not only a provider or an authority figure but he must also be a teacher, a guide, and a role model. "Abba" which is an ancient Aramaic word, means 'father' or 'wise sage.' A person can be loving, caring and protecting of another person and can be described as 'fatherly' even though the recipient of such affections is not blood related to him. In the Jewish household, the father plays an important role in the development and education of his son. The Jewish tradition emphasizes the availability and stability of the father. He has to nurture a calm and loving environment where his children can grow. St. Joseph,

a faithful and obedient Jew prays regularly in synagogues and maintains a consistency of routine so that Jesus can learn and participate as he grows into manhood. According to their tradition which St. Joseph follows obediently, the father's responsibilities towards the son include circumcision (Luke 2:21), ceremonial purification (Luke 2:22), Torah study and teaching his son a trade (Mk. 6:3).

ST. JOSEPH AS A TEACHER TO JESUS

Deuteronomy 6:7 commands every Israelite to study the Law. It speaks of a constant obligation for everyone in general and for the fathers in particular to study and to teach the Law to their children. As a good father, St. Joseph has to teach his son, Jesus. This biblical command includes not only the theoretical aspect but also the practical knowledge of the application of the Jewish Law in all facets of their lives. The transmission of the law is important to ensure the continuity of the tradition and this duty falls on the shoulders of St. Joseph. In addition to these lessons of life, St. Joseph has the responsibility to share the stories, customs and beliefs of their clan or tribe for the purpose of continuing

the tradition handed on to them. It is not surprising therefore to learn that Jesus' knowledge of the geography, culture and traditions of the inhabitants of Israel, and the application of the Law to situations is excellent. St. Joseph's obligation to teach starts from the time his son begins to speak and will continue throughout his lifetime. According to their tradition, each child is to be taught the basics of the Jewish faith. Furthermore, following the Jewish tradition, St. Joseph is commanded to teach Jesus the lessons and practices of the Torah. In Genesis 18:18-19, God chooses Abraham and instructed him to "command his children and his household after him." This dedication in the teaching of the Jewish children is the basis of the relationship between the Israelites and God.

ST. JOSEPH, THE CARPENTER

"Is he not the carpenter's son?" (Mt. 13:55). Ecclesiastes 9:9 obliges fathers to teach their son a trade. One of the duties of a father is to assist the son to find a suitable wife. In the same way, the father must also look after his son's life or "livelihood". Therefore, St. Joseph has to teach Jesus the trade of being a carpenter. In Mark 6:3, the people refers to Jesus as the "carpenter". These responsibilities of the father are not only for spiritual development but also for the physical well-being of his son.

To educate the youth, St. Joseph can be the model for all parents, teachers and elders. He is a good example not only in following the law of God but also in how he lives his life in a steadfast faith and trust in the Divine Providence. The continuity of this educational tradition which is knowledgeable, faithful and responsible is the basic task of every father, parent and religious leader.

St. Joseph is a man of action. No word of St. Joseph is reported in the Bible because he simply obeyed in faith. The best lessons are given through good examples, actions and an interior faith. Like St. Joseph, the youth is called to share this faith through their obedience and trust to God's love and mercy.

In the Old Testament, the Pharaoh of Egypt during the great famine directs everyone to "go to Joseph" for food. In the New Testament, God selects St. Joseph to be a worthy father and teacher to His Son. In our times, the image and example of St. Joseph as a father, a carpenter, a teacher and a man of faith are the necessary elements in the education of the youth.

"St. Joseph, show us the way, support us at every step, lead us where Divine providence wants us to arrive." - St. Joseph Marelllo ☩



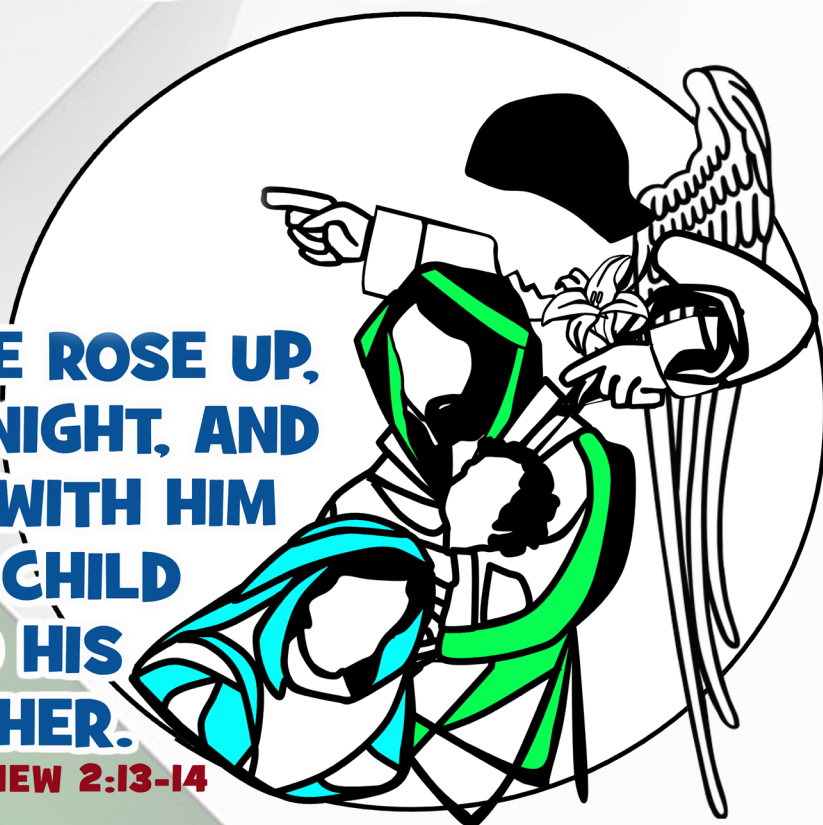


OBLATES OF ST. JOSEPH
PHILIPPINE PROVINCE

2019 YEAR 2020
of
SAINT JOSEPH

**AND HE ROSE UP,
IN THE NIGHT, AND
TOOK WITH HIM
THE CHILD
AND HIS
MOTHER.**

MATTHEW 2:13-14



30 YEARS OF REDEMPTORIS CUSTOS
APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
ON THE PERSON AND MISSION OF ST. JOSEPH

SERVING THE INTERESTS OF JESUS IN THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH

Rev. Fr. Den Mark A. Malabayoc, OSJ

When His Eminence was still the Bishop of Imus, he used to teach us "Theology of the Priesthood." Once he asked us, his students, which biblical figures received divine revelation through a dream, many answers were heard. But he was expecting a particular figure. Exhausted, he pointed at us, his Oblates of Saint Joseph students, and emphatically declared, "St. Joseph!" How embarrassing it was not to have mentioned our Patron's name, and that it took a bishop to point out the Patron to those under his patronage.

Yes, we could use more refreshers to go deeper into the person and mission of Saint Joseph, especially now that the Superior General has inaugurated the Year of Saint Joseph, which begins March 19, 2019 until March 19, 2020.

I would like to share with you my personal reflections regarding the theme chosen, which was lifted from the Gospel according to St. Matthew:

*"Rise up...
And he rose up,
in the night,
and took with him the child and his mother"¹*

I. RISE UP... AND HE ROSE UP

When Pope Francis visited the Philippines in January 2015, he met with families at the SM Arena.² The chair which was especially designed for his use was fitted with a fabric from the T'boli ethno-linguistic group from Mindanao. It is called *t'nalak*, and was made from abaca fibers. The woven patterns are said to be revealed in a dream to the weaver, thus earning the weaver the epithet, "dream-weaver."

I find it providential that with such backdrop, the pope would speak of the dream of St. Joseph. In his speech, the pope recounted how he would slip prayer petitions written on pieces of paper and presented to him under his statue of "sleeping St Joseph."

Consequently, many people went frenzied to buy that statue, which, unfortunately, was hitherto unheard of, meaning most religious articles stores would not have them in stock.

I was among those enthused by this novelty, and as soon as I was able, I rummaged through the stores near the Vatican, futilely looking for a statue of the "sleeping St. Joseph." In one of the stores in which I enquired, I asked the saleslady, "Do you have a small statue of St. Joseph?" To which she quipped, "Sorry, Sir, I'm afraid all of our St. Joseph are awake!"

It is easy to be misled into thinking that St. Joseph was dozing off in the aforementioned Gospel episode, perhaps weary from a whole day's work with his trade. Was St. Joseph really sleeping? Did he dream because he was sleeping?

A person with some background of the Bible would not fail to recognize that in the Old Testament, there exist personages who stand out in their involvement with dreams.

One would be the patriarch Jacob himself, who, in Bethel dreamt of the glory of God: a vision of a ladder which extends from the heaven, with the angels of God descending and ascending upon it.³

Another one is Jacob's son, Joseph, the so-called "Dreamer," or "Master of Dreams." It was through his dream that God revealed the famine that was to beset the region in which they lived. Fortunately, the presaging of the event through a dream resulted in the salvation not only of Jacob's household, but of many other people also.⁴

It is not wrong, therefore, to conclude that a “dream,” in biblical language, is a way of communicating with the Divine. What else would this man-to-God communication be called, if not prayer? For by such we define prayer. “Prayer is the raising of ones mind and heart to God.”⁵

In Hebrew narrative, the verb **rise** has the function of slightly emphasizing that the action is about to commence or is to be taken up.⁶ In the initial chapters of Matthew, in the instances that its subject is St. Joseph, it is always preceded by the fact that the angel appeared and spoke to Joseph in a dream. Only after then that St. Joseph would rise up and initiate the task that has been angelically, and ultimately, divinely revealed to him. It is after his angelic dream that he definitively decided to take Mary as his wife.⁷ The verse which we are treating now is the second instance in which this pattern is observed. Here, Joseph takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt for safety, after receiving God’s message through a dream.⁸ After being signalled in a dream, he takes back the Mother and Child to Nazareth.⁹

Thus, in moments that Joseph “rose up,” he was actually translating his prayer into action. Prayer should always result to action. It is a false dichotomy to believe that it is enough just to fulfill our daily piety. Nor is it right that a Christian should so engage himself with work that he neglects his duty of talking to his Creator. The Benedictine motto “*Ora et labora*” summarizes the cooperation between these two aspects of our Christian living.

If prayer is so important to our life as Oblates of Saint Joseph, how should we pray? Is there any particular type of prayer specific for our usage?

Our former Superior General, Fr. Severino Dalmaso, once gave a talk regarding the prayer tradition of the Oblates of St. Joseph. He said that in the beginning, our founder did not find it necessary to teach a new tradition of prayer for the foremost confreres. There were, in existence in his time, many ways to pray, that it seems it would be superfluous to add more to the pool of methods. There existed the Benedictine, the Carmelite, the Jesuit traditions and others. He said that the Oblates of Saint Joseph seemingly adopted the Jesuit tradition. Nowadays, he says that the *lectio divina* is seeing a revival in the Church, and that it should be adopted as our way of life.

The *lectio divina*, promoted by no less than Pope Benedict XVI himself, unfolds in a five-movement motion. It begins with *lectio*, and proceeds with *meditatio*, *oratio*, and *contemplatio*. The final stage consists of *actio*, which is evidently the fruit of all the preceding stages.¹⁰ Thus we see in this the pattern of St. Joseph’s way of life as evidenced in the Gospel according to St. Matthew: prayer which leads to action.

Bearing in mind that prayer should translate into action, we can recall the Founder’s repeated exhortation to strengthen our resolve to act now, to begin our journey of discipleship with Jesus today, right at this very moment. We are very much familiar with the recurring battle cry of the thoughts of the Founder for January: *Nunc coepi!* Now, it has begun! Our journey with God is begun right here, right now! To begin our life of discipleship, we rise up.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”¹¹ I remember Fr. Stramare, who used to rant with violence regarding the over-emphasis on the silence of St. Joseph. “St. Joseph was silent! This becomes an excuse to do nothing!” Apathy and indifference could have disastrous consequences. Humanity’s recent memory would prove that. The Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, the Japanese World War II atrocities in the Philippines and in other parts of the World. To rise and to do good, to rise and to stomp the tide of evil: this belongs to every men and women of faith. Joseph was silent, but he was also a man of action. As Oblates of Saint Joseph, we are called to be silently and hiddenly **active** in pursuing the interests of Jesus.

I would like to point out something about the verb in consideration.

The Hebrew word for rising, **בָּרַךְ**, figures in the Gospel of St. Mark when Jesus revived to life the daughter of Jairus, as he said, “*Talitha cum*,” albeit quoted in its cognate form in Aramaic.¹² But its Greek form **ἐγείρω** appears much more frequently, because this is the word used for the Resurrection. The very verb, therefore, leads to the Paschal Mystery, by pointing out the very core of our faith: the Resurrection!

Our prayer that leads to action is our rising up to defeat evil. We are rising up with our actions, and thus, we participate in the Paschal Mystery. We become one with Jesus in his Passion, Death and Resurrection, which is the grace we received through the Holy Spirit in our Baptism.

Rise up from slumber, O Christian! Rise up from death! Rise to your life in Christ!¹³

II. IN THE NIGHT

In any narrative, the setting plays an important part in unfolding the story. Let us now consider the setting of Matthew 2:13-14. The setting of Joseph's rescue of Jesus and Mary happens in the night. Under the cover of darkness, Joseph's moment of guardianship shines more brightly. He has to take Mary and Joseph to Egypt during the night.

What comes to our mind when we talk about night? Night immediately evokes darkness as its connotation. In the mind of the ancients, night is imagined and personified as a monster that has its mouth wide-open, ready to prey on the feeble. As such, it strikes fear in the hearts of the ancient men. In the Tagalog translation of the Preface II of Ordinary Time, the same image of death is conjured: *"sa labi ng imbing kamatayan."*¹⁴

Night could be a moment of failure, unproductivity. For Simon Peter, it was during the night that they have caught nothing.¹⁵ The warning of inability to work is told regarding night.¹⁶ More so, who could forget that it was during the night that our Lord was betrayed?¹⁷ This is repeatedly narrated in the Words of Institution of the Mass.

In Wisdom and Prophetic literature, the foolish men trod the path of darkness.¹⁸

In the Bible, some events that happened under the guise of night can be terrifying. Pestilence stalks in the darkness.¹⁹ We hear in the parable told in Luke's Gospel that the foolish man's life was taken away at night.

Darkness could also mean a place of punishment.²⁰ Darkness could well mean death.²¹

The terror of darkness is a relatable fact for everyone. Metaphorically, darkness could mean moral degradation.

At the conclusion of the General Chapter of 2018,

Pope Francis met with the Oblates of Saint Joseph at the Consistory Hall of the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican. Here he acknowledged the darkness prevalent in the times of our Founder: "those were times of rationalism intolerant of all spiritual dogma."²² He spoke also of the darkness of our times: "ours are times of unbridled relativism which undermines the edifice of faith and strips away the meaning of the very idea of Christian fidelity."²³

We live in a moment where our fidelity in faith is an act of heroism. When we live in darkness of relativism, the anchor of faith is a surety. Faith is our beacon of hope when the darkness of relativism seems ready to engulf everything and everybody.

Not everything about the night is dreadful. On the contrary, we find in the Scriptures indications of hope that occurred during the night.

In the Parable of the Sower and the Seeds, night is a time for growth.²⁴

We find in the Scriptures the moments wherein during the night, man encounters God. The shepherds found the Babe during their watch in the night.²⁵ Nicodemus came to Jesus by night.²⁶ It is even a moment of revelation for Gideon.²⁷ Even the Lord Himself prayed to God at nighttime, spending the night in prayer.²⁸

With regards darkness, we find in the Old Testament verses that speaks of darkness surrounding God.²⁹

God Himself promises our illumination when we are in the dark.³⁰

The Book of Revelation holds an eschatological promise: there will be no more night³¹ when we are totally in the presence of God, when we see him face to face.³²

There is another function of darkness that the Old Testament visualization of God depicts. In theophanies of God, he is accompanied by darkness. God was in the **לְפָנָיו**.³³ In the anthropomorphic divine vision, God's feet is wrapped in darkness.³⁴

Such vision of God naturally points to hermeneutics leaning toward apophatic theology. Darkness signifies the transcendence of God. He is that Other-One that goes beyond our limited existence. Our limitations points to His boundlessness. The title of a mystical opus is evocative: "The Cloud of Unknowing."

Despite such apparent massive wall, the formidable divinity also attracts all that is in humanity. God is a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. He inspires awe and fear, yet at the same time, attracts and beckons. His presence drives man away, but at the same time, attracts man to Himself.³⁵

In mystical language, darkness signifies unknowing, purgation, dryness, hiddenness. St. John of the Cross would call it the Dark Night of the Soul. The spiritual masters recognize that the seeming abandonment of God in this moment of spiritual ascent, God is actually performing his work of perfecting the soul. This is the time for growth and purification.

So we come into conclusion that even the night is a privileged place for encounter with God. *Out of the depths*, the soul can reach out to God.³⁶ Even as the soul walks *the valley of darkness*, it fears no evil.³⁷

In the darkness of night, St. Joseph took with him Jesus and Mary. He thus found himself in possession of God's jewels, in the nocturnal flight for salvation.

We are also invited to see darkness and night as an opportunity to encounter God. Moreover, we are need to imitate St. Joseph, to take Jesus and Mary in our hearts, when the obscureness threatens our vision and our capacity for hope.

III. AND TOOK WITH HIM THE CHILD AND HIS MOTHER

Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt to save their lives from the threat of Herod. In this action, we see that the safety of Mary and Jesus was the priority of Saint Joseph, thereby establishing the fact that Joseph has in his heart the spirit to serve "the interests of Jesus."

St. Joseph Marengo, when he was conceptualizing the establishment of the Congregation, repeatedly used the phrase "taking care of" or "promoting" "the interests of Jesus." He wanted to rescue a chapel in the Michelerio Institute which fell into disuse, and thus, by salvaging it, he envisioned a "Company of Saint Joseph" which will promote "the interests of Jesus."³⁸

The basis for the Founder's appeal "to care for the interests of Jesus" comes from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians. In this part of his letter, he talks about sending Timothy to the Philippians. In the course, he contrasts the character of Timothy against other companions in mission,

*I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. All of them are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.*³⁹

How is Timothy genuinely concerned for the welfare of the Philippians? The original description of St. Timothy in Greek is *ισόψυχος*, which means "of similar spirit" or "like-minded." Prior to this verse, the word has been used by St. Paul as an admonition to remind the Philippians to be united in spirit, to united in purpose and in action.⁴⁰ In contrast, the other co-workers with whom St. Paul had the experience of collaborating, are seeking their own interests.

This unity of spirit is a *sine qua non* for being a member of the Company of St. Joseph. St. Joseph Marello, in fact, speaks of a "communion of interests."⁴¹

I think the Founder has in mind the same mission of a priest as the mission of the members of the Company of Jesus: "to make the Doctrine of Jesus known, loved and lived."⁴² If Timothy and Paul had the same interests, that would be the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.⁴³ If Timothy and Paul had the same interests with the Philippians, that would be the building of the body of Christ.⁴⁴

There is sure one attitude that is necessary to be able to participate in unity of interests, and of uniting to the interest of Christ: humility. The famous hymn from the Letter to the Philippians immediately follows St. Paul's reminder to be of one spirit, and the hymn talks about the *kenosis*, the self-emptying of Jesus.⁴⁵ This humility places oneself in the service of others.⁴⁶

Meanwhile, St. Joseph Marello warns that one could be deceived into thinking that one promotes the interests of Jesus while on the contrary does the other way around. He reminds us of obedience as the safeguard for this presumption.⁴⁷

As an aside, upon hearing the request to make an exegetical note on this Scriptural basis for "taking care of the interests of Jesus," I felt like I bumped into one insurmountable wall when I checked the original text. For one, there is no exact term in Greek that was used as basis of the translation of interests. What we have are pronouns in the genitive. The official translation in Italian by the Italian Bishops' Conference has *interessi*, but the Nova Vulgata has chosen to reflect the original Greek by resorting to the lacunal genitive also.

At this point, I would say that the Tagalog translation suited to be used for the phrase has to be *pagkalinga sa kapakanan ni Hesus*. This would properly reflect the tenderness by which St. Joseph took hold of Jesus in his arms.

I would like to point out also that the contravening value is also reflected in Tagalog by the use of pronominal genitive: *pagkakanya-kanya*, acting according to each one's interests.

In what way does an Oblate of Saint Joseph participate in caring for the interests of Jesus?

We know that our religious vows ultimately derives from the initiation we received through Baptism, the sacrament in which we have participated in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Water symbolizes death and life. Baptism, by use of water as matter of the sacrament, effects in us death to sin and a new life in Christ.

Colossians 3:3 asserts that our life is hidden in Christ. To belong to the community of God, one no longer needs physical marks to validate such membership. Circumcision is no longer necessary for belonging to the fellowship of the believers. One could go on living in the world, but still belonging to Christ.⁴⁸

With our bodies, we are participating in the death of Christ by enduring hardships for His sake.⁴⁹ We therefore offer our bodies as a living sacrifice for God.⁵⁰ Marello acknowledges that "Every word, every step, every desire could be the building material of the interests of Jesus."⁵¹ This forms part of the so-called "common priesthood of the faithful."

Lumen Gentium clarifies the distinction between the ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood of the faithful.⁵² Let us then offer every good thing to God, no matter how ordinary, no matter how small, "without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world."⁵³

Again, hiddenness in Christ and the silence of St. Joseph are not excuses to be inactive in apostolate. St. Joseph was hiddenly but silently active in promoting the interests of Jesus. We should recognize in our activities that what we do are for the sake of Christ. A common temptation in being active in apostolate is self-promotion. One does that thing or another for the purpose of gaining a name for oneself, repudiating the spirit of St. Joseph who worked not for his own sake, but for the sake of Jesus. In this matter, we are called to a serious examination of

conscience regarding our actions, so that our intentions may be purified before God.

No doubt we have seen many confreres busy and effective in apostolate, but can we see in ourselves the other aspect of our life as Oblates of Saint Joseph, viz., being Carthusian? To fail in prayer is to endanger oneself to become less of an offering to God, but more of an egocentric person, whose only desire is to leave glory for oneself by leaving behind the legacy of edifices and structures which are worth nothing by themselves in the face of God.

We can talk of promoting the interests of Jesus in particular, i.e., in liturgy and evangelization. We are familiar with the reflection on the parallelism on the life of Joseph of the New Testament and Joseph of the Old Testament. Besides the "dreamer" connection, we can also see that these two personages saved their respective families by bringing them to Egypt. Yet, the similarity doesn't stop at these.

In Egypt, since Joseph of the Old Testament had secured the food supply of the nation during the famine, by planning and building the grain silos, the people would be advised to "Go to Joseph" because he has the bread necessary for survival. Meanwhile, the New Testament Joseph has the "bread of life,"⁵⁴ Jesus of Nazareth, our Lord and Savior. In the person of Jesus is our salvation.⁵⁵ It is in this context that the coat of arms adopted by the Oblates of Saint Joseph bears the motto *Salus nostra in manu tua*, which is beautifully rendered in artistic representations and iconography of Saint Joseph bearing the Child Jesus on his arm. In the words of the decree *Quemadmodum Deus*, "And Him whom so many kings and prophets desired to see, Joseph not only saw, but abode with, and embraced with paternal affection, and kissed, yea, and most sedulously nourished, even Him whom the faithful should receive as the Bread come down from Heaven, that they might obtain eternal life."⁵⁶

Fr. Tarcisio Stramare, an Oblate Italian confrere, was the first Oblate of Saint Joseph to graduate from the prestigious Pontifical Biblical Institute with a licentiate in Sacred Scriptures, meaning a license granted by the Holy See to teach in Catholic schools and universities. When he was freshly graduated from the institute, he chanced upon a certain prelate, Bishop Edward Schick, in a café. The bishop was tasked by the Pope Paul VI to complete the new translation of the Bible into Latin, which we know by the name Nova Vulgata. Fr. Stramare was introduced to the pope, and the pope, extremely delighted by the fact that after many refusals, somebody finally got the courage to take up the arduous task, gifted him the tapestry which was used in the proclamation of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. It depicts St. Joseph with the Child Jesus on one hand, with two angels kneeling before him. One of the angels holds a miniature church, in support of the tapestry's theme.

When I finished from the same biblical institute, during my assignment in Santuario de San Jose, I was recruited by the Philippine Bible Society to work as a translator in a new project they conceptualized: a literary-liturgical Tagalog translation of the Bible which they named the "Filipino Standard Version" (FSV). I was to work as translator of most of the Deuterocanonical books: Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, The Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Holy Children, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Sirach (12:11 - 51:30), 1 and 2 Maccabees; plus the Book of the Prophet Jonah. Of all the Filipino alumni from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, why me?

It dawned upon me that it is not incidental that as Oblates of Saint Joseph, we were tasked with these projects involving translation of the Word of God, the Bible. Saint Joseph took care of Jesus, the Word of God Incarnate.⁵⁷ He is the Word of God in flesh, in human form. Jesus reminds us that the Scriptures speak of him⁵⁸; St. Jerome admonishes us that "ignorance of Scriptures is ignorance of Christ."⁵⁹

In the work of evangelization, we, the Oblates of Saint Joseph must be deeply rooted in the source of our strength: the sacred liturgy and the Word of God. Like our Patron St. Joseph, we need to safeguard the Bread and the Word, so that in time of danger and need, people can come to us and say "Let us go to Joseph!" We are the hands of St. Joseph, which disposes of the Bread of Life and the Word of God.

We, therefore, need to value the sacred liturgy as much as our first confreres, who were known for helping in the liturgical celebrations in the parishes they worked with. We should be also well-versed in Catechism, and the Word of God, being custodians of the fonts of our faith.

Looking back to the practice of our former confreres, we can see that they have taken on themselves the duty of catechizing in our schools. Perhaps there is a need to revive such vital apostolate, especially in these times of moral degradation and relativistic attitude.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We have seen that "to rise" means to transform prayer into action. Although at the outset, night and darkness represent danger, unproductivity and death, they are in fact the an occasion for encountering and communicating with God. As Oblates of Saint Joseph, we imitate our Patron in serving the interests of Jesus, in spiritual and liturgical sacrifice, in serving the liturgy and in the work of evangelization, and in all the selfless work we do in the spirit and charism that we live.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Matthew 2:13-14.

2. The event took place on January 16, 2015.

3. Genesis 28:11-16.

4. Genesis 37-50.

5. ST. JOHN DAMASCENE, *De fide orthodoxa* (ed. J. P. MIGNE) (Patrologiae Cursus Completus – Series Graeca 94; Paris) 3, 24: 1089C.

6. T. O. LAMBDIN, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York 1971) 239-240.

7. Matthew 1:20, 24.

8. Matthew 2:13-14.

9. Matthew 2:19-21.

10. POPE BENEDICT XVI, *Verbum Domini – Apostolic Exhortation* (Città del Vaticano September 28, 2010) 86-87.

11. Earliest form by JOHN STUART MILL: "Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing." *Inaugural Address Delivered to the University of St Andrews*, 1867.

12. Mark 5:41.

13. Cf. Ephesians 5:14.

14. "From the lips of sordid death." This does not exactly match up to the original Latin, but is perhaps a homage to the kundiman of Miguel Velarde, Jr., which is entitled "Lahat ng Araw," also known as "Silayan." Kundiman is a Tagalog musical genre that is characterized by poetic lyrics and melancholic music. Culturally, it used to be sung during serenades, perhaps until the first half of the twentieth century. Usually performed with the accompaniment of a guitar.

15. Luke 5:5.

16. John 9:4.

17. John 13:30.

18. Proverbs 2:13; 4:19; Ecclesiastes 2:13; Isaiah 29:15.

19. Psalm 91:6.

20. Matthew 8:12.

21. Psalm 107:10; 143:3.

22. POPE FRANCIS, *Address to the Participants in the General Chapter of the Oblates of Saint Joseph* (Vatican City August 31, 2018).

23. FRANCIS.

24. Mark 4:27 *He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how.* (NRSV).

25. Luke 2:8 *et passim*.

26. John 3:2.

27. Judges 7:9.

28. Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; Luke 21:37.

29. Exodus 20:21; Deuteronomy 4:11; 5:22-23; 2 Samuel 22:10 and 12; 1 Kings 8:12; 2 Chronicles 6:1; Psalm 97:2.

30. Isaiah 9:2; 29:18; 42:7 and 16; 60:2; Matthew 4:16; Luke 1:79.

31. Revelation 21:25; 22:5.

32. 1 Corinthians 13:12.

33. Thick darkness. Exodus 20:21.

34. 2 Samuel 22:10.

35. R. FERRIOLS, *Pilosopiya ng Relihiyon* (Quezon City 1995).

36. Cf. Psalm 130 (129).

37. Cf. Psalm 23 (22).

38. SAN GIUSEPPE MARELLO, *Epistolario* (ed. S. DALMASO) (Opera Omnia 1; Roma 2010) Letter 83 (antea 76) 274 - 80.

39. Philippians 2:19-22. NRSV.

40. Philippians 2:2. "Make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind." NRSV.

41. MARELLO, 275.

42. MARELLO, Letter 27 (antea 25) 131.

43. Philippians 2:22.

44. Ephesians 4:12.

45. Philippians 2:5-8.

46. Philippians 2:4.

47. MARELLO, Letter 83 (antea 76) 276.

48. M. Y. MACDONALD, *Colossians and Ephesians* (ed. D. HARRINGTON) (Sacra Pagina 17; Collegeville 2000) 132-3.

49. Philippians 2:12-13; 3:7-11. Cf. 2 Corinthians 4:10-12.

50. Romans 12:1.

51. MARELLO.

52. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, *Lumen Gentium – Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (Vatican City November 21, 1964) 10.

53. Philippians 2:14-15.

54. John 6:35.

55. John 3:16; Acts 4:12.

56. SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES, *Quemadmodum Deus – Decree* (Vatican City December 8, 1870).

57. Cf. John 1:14.

58. John 5:39.

59. ST. JEROME, *Commentary on Isaiah* (ed. J. P. MIGNE) (Patrologiae Cursus Completus – Series Latina 73; Paris) 1.2: 1-3. ☩

"SE VANNO, MI FANNO UN VERO PIACERE: Ed Io Do Loro La Mia Benedizione di Tutto il Cuore."

("They will give me true pleasure if they go. And I will give them my blessing with all my heart.")

Rev. Fr. Christopher P. Alday, OSJ



These are the exact words of Pope Benedict XV to our first Rector Major, Padre Giovanni Battista Cortona and Don Carandino when they went to Rome to ask the Holy Father about the proposal by Monsignor Petrelli, Bishop of Lipa. The *Giuseppini* were being asked to go to the missions. Let me go back to that story later. But what strikes me immediately while reading the history of the *Mission in the Islands of the Philippines* is the involvement of the same Pope Benedict XV who is also called "the Missionary Pope" for being a staunch promoter of the missions in the Church. Four years after this providential encounter with our dear Fathers Cortona and Carandino in the presence of course of Monsignor Petrelli, in 1919, Pope Benedict XV would promulgate his Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* challenging

all Catholics to participate in the missionary activities of the Church.

One hundred years later, Pope Francis dedicates the whole month of October 2019 as the Extraordinary Month of the Missions to remind all Christians of our vocation to be missionaries. Pope Francis uses the occasion of the centenary of *Maximum Illud* to encourage everybody to missionaries wherever we are.

While it is clear in the mind of Pope Francis what the meaning of "being missionary" is, most of us still ask the basic question; "What does it mean to be a missionary?"

When I received the request to write something about the "missions" I thought I was the obvious choice being away from the Philippine Province for almost 6 years now. In fact it was clear when I left that I would be serving the North Italian Province as a missionary. And so I accepted the request.

But to talk about the essence of being a "missionary" is a lot more difficult than most of us think.

In the Diocesan Journal of the Diocese of Alba, Emmanuella Costa wrote an article entitled *Mission: A Vocation within a Vocation (Missione: una Vocazione nella Vocazione)* where she begins by saying that the term "missionario" is no longer exclusive to the priests and religious who leave their respective land and family to "evangelize." Costa refers to the various expressions of the term in the multiplicity of experiences and expressions in the contemporary world and because of the "complexity" of the nature of being "missionario" she says it is now difficult to distinguish who is the "evangelizer" and who is being "evangelized."

And so the basic question "Who is the missionary?" is not that basic after all. In the way that Costa distinguishes the term, I say I belong to the first group of "Missionari(o)"

"In the grand scheme of things, I realised that I am only one of the thousands who try to contribute in my own way in the building up of the Church through the missionary apostolate and that there is no need to dwell on the difficulties but to see the beauty in the way the faithful have responded to the call to be missionaries."

because I am a religious, a priest, I left my country to "evangelize" in another one. Some call our type the "traditional missionaries." When I think about it I can say that I am proud because I feel I belong to the same company of other "traditional missionaries" like our very own Anfossi, Fornaca, Gherlone, Camera and Maccagno. These were the great men who were bold and selfless in their decision to be the first ever missionaries of our Congregation.

Going back to why our superiors that time (Cortona and Carandino) went to Rome to see the Pope, it was precisely because the proposal by Petrelli to dive into the missionary apostolate was a "novità" for the confreres of a very young congregation. As it was recounted by Don Severino Dalmaso in his book *Storia della Congregazione degli Oblati di San Giuseppe*, without prior experience in the field of the missions, but open to the promptings of Divine Providence, the Superiors decided to go to

Rome to seek some guidance from no less than the Holy Father. It was in that particular encounter with the Pope that he gave his seal of approval with the words attested to by Don Carandino who was present with the Rector Major, Don Cortona. "Se Vanno, Mi Fanno un Vero Piacere: Ed Io Do Loro La Mia Benedizione di Tutto il Cuore." They will give me true pleasure if they go. And I will give them my blessing with all my heart.

Having had the opportunity to read the history of the beginning of the OSJ Philippine mission, from hindsight, it appears the first missionaries really needed all the blessings from the Pope for all the challenges they had to face in that "far away land."

A small footnote if I may add is a very interesting detail about the composition of the first missionaries to the Philippines. In the original list of "Giuseppini" destined for the Philippine missions, the decree from the "congregazione concistoriale" enumerates the following: Natale Brusasco, Giuseppe Anfossi, Eugenio Gherlone, two clerics preparing for the priesthood; Egidio Mortera and Ernesto Layover and two brothers Giuseppe Maccagno and Luigi Dova. From the original list, after having sort out the processing of the pertinent documents, the final list of confreres bound for the Philippine mission was sent to Monsignor Petrelli around the 10th of June 1915 with Anfossi, Gherlone and Maccagno and the addition of the newly ordained Don Ernesto Fornaca who was at that time assigned in our oratory at Mondovì and Fratello Giovanni Camera who delighted Monsignor Petrelli in his visit to our Casa Madre with his attention and hospitality. He made such an impression on the good bishop that even before leaving Italy for the missions, he already had

the intention of bringing with him our dear fratello Camera to Manila in the Apostolic Nunciature. Upon hearing the news that Fratello Camera would be joining the group, Monsignor Petrelli thanked the superiors and Fratello Giovanni for the generosity and the audacity to make himself available for the missions saying, "I express my true pleasure for the news that fratello Camera felt the call to be a "Filippino." Meaningful words from the good archbishop because it says a lot about the nature of missionary life of that time. Once one is called to be a missionary to a foreign land, he/she is no longer expected to go back to his/her native land. In fact even today, from some of our confreres here, they still have that same mentality when it comes to modern day missionaries; we are all expected to become "Italianni."

We all know the difficulties that missionaries face when they are uprooted from their native land in order to serve in another one. Our first missionaries also had their share of challenges and struggles and I can go on details about their different experiences in the missions but there will not be enough space in this article. I would like to end this episode though regarding our valiant first missionaries with the parting words of Don Giuseppe Anfossi who was nominated first rector of the mission as they were about to depart from the Port of Barcelona: *Abandoned on the arms of Divine Providence, conscious of the holy obligation vested on us, under the help of Saint Joseph with his gaze fixed at the heavens, we entrust ourselves with serenity and*



tranquility inspite of the unstable waves. May God be with us and the blessing of all our superiors...DO NOT FORGET US...!"

P. Anfossi would not be able to return to Italy. He died in the Philippines in 1921.

I have already said this before but I will say it again, P. Anfossi played a significant role in my vocation story and if I may say it, even in my "missionary vocation story." Serving as a Marellito altar knight, I would often see the tombstone near the altar where his name was written and the name Anfossi always had a sweet tone to it. I have always been fascinated by his name and later on, his story and the very important role he played in the Philippine mission ignited in me the desire to also be a missionary. But to die in the mission is something that is now alien to most "missionaries" considering the fact that travelling from one country to another is no longer that difficult. However, the difficulties of missionary life is not diminished all together at all.



In the homily that I delivered on the 27th of October, I decided to cap off the Extraordinary Month of the Missions by offering a personal reflection on my experience as a missionary. In the homily I said that when I left the Philippines I was full of enthusiasm with the dream to give 100% of myself for the mission. But when I arrived in Italy, I immediately realised that it would not be that easy. I needed to study the language, I needed to understand the way of life and it was a must to enter the culture, I also needed to change my worldview. These are all necessary elements in any missionary endeavor and the success of the mission all depends on how well one adapts...



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MARELLO CUP



EXPRESS



EXCEL



EXALT



"Remain in Me as I in you" (John 15:4). NJB

MARELLO CUP : REMAINING IN JESUS TEN YEARS AND BEYOND

Bro. Roy Roldan C. Matibag, OSJ

Momentous milestone, a year of favor, the youth shines out, united they stand..." These words kept aflame the youthful spirit in the tenth Marelo Cup. It gathered all the members of the Joseph Marelo Youth (JMY) aged 16-39 in a sports and cultural event held at the Holy Family Parish, in Brgy. Alupay, Rosario, Batangas last October 25-27, 2019. It was organized by the Joseph Marelo Youth Council, guided by the provincial youth director of the OSJ Philippine Province, Rev. Fr. Jefhrie P. Perez, OSJ and his assistant, Rev. Fr. Jerwin Christian S. Valdez OSJ.

As it was inspired by two other celebrations: the CBCPs Year of the Youth, with the theme, "Filipino Youth in Mission: Beloved, Gifted, Empowered," and the OSJs Year of St. Joseph with the theme, "And he rose up in the night, and took with him the child and his mother (Matthew 1:13-19)," this year's Marelo Cup dealt on the theme, "Remain in me as I in you: Express, Excel, Exalt." The theme highlighted the youth's identity as beloved, gifted and empowered, hence remaining one with Christ. On its decenary, Marelo Cup united the beloved JMY who continuously support the church through youth ministry.

Relishing this occasion, unlike previous observances, the Marelo Cup 2019 working committee prepared a dynamic first day opening program and added new sections to stir up the flame of youthfulness. Early morning of October 25, the 733 registered youth delegates coming from 23 different communities arrived

at Sto. Rosario Academy gymnasium for their deployment into 239 foster families. In the afternoon, after the celebration of the holy Eucharist that was presided by one of the provincial councilors, Rev. Fr. Willie A. Alibagon, OSJ, the Marelllo Cup X formally opened. The program consisted an opening salvo by the JMY Alupay, lighting of torch by the parish youth directors, oath of sportsmanship led by Andrei Ruzgal from JMY San Juan, and oath of officials by the JMY Marshalls - Rosario. Afterwards, the parade of the delegates in festive costumes with their banners and the cultural dance competition were showcased. The JMY of L'Annunziata Parish (Muntinlupa) won the best banner and the JMY of San Francisco de Asis Parish (Davao) won in the Banner-Making and Cultural Dance competitions respectively. In the evening, after the talk of the provincial vocation director, Fr. Francis Elly O. Capuno, OSJ, the first ever Search for Mr. and Ms. Ambassador and Ambadress was held. Mr. Deeson C. Lali-man of JMY Padre Garcia and Ms. Joyce Chloie D. Cesicar of JMY Cavite were hailed as the first JMY Ambassador and Ambadress respectively.

Expressing with the same intensity as it had opened; the second day of Marelllo Cup X was a smash hit. At six o'clock in the morning, the program started with a Zumba led by JMY Davao, followed by a Shibashi prayer. Though it rained hard, the delegates competed in 5 sports events which fostered their teamwork, 4 individual sports which challenged their wit, and 4 special events which highlighted their talents and personality.

Loaded with youthful spirit, in the afternoon, youth directors and some OSJ priests teamed up for an exhibition basketball game. They were divided into two teams: green and yellow, wherein yellow team won. This was followed by the tune-up basketball game where the OSJ College Seminary basketball varsity won over selected JMY Marelllo Cup X delegates.

Living out Pope Francis' call in the synod, the JMY opened doors to work with other youth organizations. Right after the final round of JMY Idol 2019, the Live Pure Movement animated the delegates as they led them in worshipping the Lord through songs, dances, and praises on the second night. The night ended with a colorful fireworks display.

On the last day, a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided by our beloved provincial superior concluded Marelllo Cup X. Before the final blessing, Fr. Provincial announced the plan of the province to bring JMY representatives to Italy in the coming years to visit the sites significant to St. Joseph Marelllo and the congregation itself. He also declared the creation of *TEKTON* (τέκτων), a new organization for young professionals. Lastly, he blessed the 10 JMY who expressed their desire to follow Christ more closely in the religious life. Meanwhile, Fr. Jephrie Perez, OSJ presented the message of the OSJ Superior General, Rev. Fr. Jan Pelczarski, OSJ, to the JMY Philippine Province especially to the Marelllo Cup X delegates. Ms. Ermelita Kasilag, JMYC president, expressed her words of gratitude for the success of Marelllo Cup X and presented the token and certificate of gratitude to the provincial superior. After the holy Mass, the awarding ceremony took place. JMY Rosario bagged gold as they were proclaimed overall champion; next to them on the rank were JMY Greenhills and JMY Ibaan respectively.





Coming as one family, all the delegates including their foster families, priests, and religious confreres gathered over a festive lunch. It was themed Lechon Festival as the JMYC wanted to help the hog raisers of the Province of Batangas in a way that guarantees a safe and good quality of livestock despite African Swine Flu (ASF). It was indeed a benevolent act expanding the Josephite- Marellian spirit beyond the confines of the JMY.

Undoubtedly, Marelo Cup X was a success. This feat was the fruit of the unity of JMY family who expressed how beloved they felt; excelled as they recognized they were gifted with talents; and exalted their praises to God who EMPOWERED them in spirit.

Putting it simply, great things can happen if we remain in Jesus, united as one family in faith. On this new dawn of hope, the whole JMY family puts forth an inspiration and empowerment to the youth of today as they continue to hear, see, and feel the moving power of God in their witnessing. Marelo Cup X shall be kept alive in the hearts of everyone who became part of it.

10 wonderful years of gathering in one Marelo Cup proves that remaining in Jesus assures His loving presence in us. The challenge therefore, is to continue to live day by day expressing, excelling, and exalting our Catholic faith imbued with the Josephite-Marellian spirituality, serving the interests of Jesus like St. Joseph.

MARELLO CUP X WINNERS

The tables bellow show the winners for each event in the Marelllo Cup X:

EVENT	WINNER
Basketball	JMY Isabela
Volleyball	JMY Ibaan
Table Tennis-Doubles	JMY Ibaan
Dodgeball	JMY Rosario
Badminton-Doubles	JMY Greenhills
Bible Quiz Bee	JMY Alupay
Chess	JMY Greenhills
Dama	JMY Biñan
Scrabble	JMY Taguig

EVENT	WINNER	NAME
JMY Idol '19	JMY San Juan	Ma. Karen Rose F. Ilao
Canvass Painting Competition	JMY San Jose	Aljon H. Besana
Spoken Word Poetry	JMY Alupay	Aubrey May P. Lucero
Photography Contest	JMY Christ the King	Ma. Catalina Ranoso



ST. JOSEPH AND THE OBLATE FORMATION

Rev. Fr. Faig Edmerson T. Quinto, OSJ

The Oblates of St. Joseph (OSJ) by nature is clerical and laical. One may be a priest or a lay brother. The majority of the members are priests, but they first make a public profession of the religious vows. Thus, an Oblate has the identity of a religious and may also have the identity of a priest.

In this regard, the Oblates are formed not only in view of the imminent ordination but also taking into consideration the "religious" identity that they also have. Hence, the Oblate formation also consists in shaping the aspirants to fit perfectly in the consecrated life.

Nevertheless, formation in this sense does not constitute a dichotomy. It is because both share the same end, that being the configuration to Christ. The Congregation for the Clergy declares that under the

guidance of the Holy Spirit, the formation of seminarians is inspired and guided by the person of Christ who is the Head and Shepherd, Servant and Spouse, so that they may be conformed to Him (cf. RFIS 35). In a similar tone, John Paul II states that the consecrated life, through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, constitutes a closer imitation of the way of life which Jesus, the supreme Consecrated One embraced (cf. VC 22).

We find such unity of purpose of this two-fold identity – priest and religious – in the provision of the OSJ Constitutions. To the Oblates, the purpose of formation is to bring the human person to perfection in Christ (cf. C 80).

Now, speaking of religious or consecrated life, the Oblates have a unique way of approaching

"In responding to the demands of prayer life, the Oblates take recourse to St. Joseph as model."

the formation of aspirants. The Constitutions provide that "[f]or the Oblates of St. Joseph Christian formation is identified with the ideal of the founder: to follow the divine master and to dedicate oneself to the interests of Jesus in imitation of St. Joseph" (C 81). What makes the Oblate formation unique is the integration of the character of St.

Joseph into it. Here we see the role that St. Joseph plays in the Oblate formation. St. Joseph is the model taken by aspirants as they proceed through the demands of formation. It is on this note that we offer here a reflection on how St. Joseph could be the Oblates' exemplar in the formation to the religious life; or even, as already full-pledged religious, in the perfection to it. In what follows, we shall look into the hallmarks of religious life in the OSJ, namely, the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience; community life; and prayer.

CHASTITY

Chastity is a form of the virtue of temperance by which one is able to control by right reason the desires for sensual pleasures. Chastity is vital in religious life as it aids the religious to respond to the call to follow the footsteps of the divine master with undivided heart. In the OSJ, chastity means the preferential love for the Lord (cf. C 15).

Chastity is one of the many virtues exemplified by St. Joseph. In the prayer tradition not only of the Oblates but of the Universal Church, St. Joseph is often addressed as chaste: "Blessed be Saint Joseph, [Mary's] chaste spouse..." (The Divine Praises at Benediction); "chaste guardian of the Virgin...", "Joseph, most chaste..." (Litany of Saint Joseph); "chaste lover of Mary...", "chaste spouse of the Mother of God...", "Saint Joseph, chaste and just man..." (The Seven Sorrows and Joys of St. Joseph); O Jesus, you honored so much in earth the Blessed Virgin Mary and her chaste spouse..." (Intercessory Prayer for Vocations of the OSJ).

The proof of St. Joseph's chastity is logically derived from the dogma of Mary's Perpetual Virginity. Joseph and Mary did not have intimate relation before Jesus was conceived;

and St. Joseph decided not to have relations with Mary even after taking her to his home as wife. (Cf. Mt 1:18-25). This decision is presumed to be out of respect for the unique mystery of virginal conception and divine incarnation (Cf. Toschi, 1993, 36). This mystery is within God's masterplan of salvation. Therefore, St. Joseph's chastity consists in his high regard for the will of God. We see here a clear connection between the evangelical chastity (chastity professed and lived by a religious) and the chastity of St. Joseph.

The chastity of St. Joseph sends a very powerful message on the way the Oblates observe and remain faithful in the vow of chastity. We see in St. Joseph a model who chose to be chaste as a way to express love for God.

POVERTY

Poverty in the parlance of religious life is not so much about not possessing worldly goods. It is regarded by many as a virtue of many facets. For instance, John Paul II declares that the poverty is often expressed in an active involvement in the promotion of solidarity and charity (Cf. VC 89) and in the service of the poor (Cf. VC 90). The Oblates also follow this line of thought when it comes to poverty. To them, poverty is effectively practiced by the sharing of goods that gives witness to the spiritual communion that unites members of the same family (Cf. C 23). In short, poverty is the opposite of selfishness. It consists in generosity, especially to the more needy.

St. Joseph was not literally poor.

His being a carpenter does not make him poor. In fact, his profession as a carpenter makes him above the poverty line. In the ancient Jewish society, the recognized poor are the widows, orphans, and the unclean by virtue of disease. They are considered poor because they do not have any source of living. They could not work for themselves. They live only on begging. St. Joseph's poverty consists in his love for poverty. He is called "lover of poverty" in the Litany.

We must also see the poverty of Joseph as not being selfish but generous. Before the annunciation to Mary, we could imagine Joseph planning a life with Mary. Perhaps Joseph dreamed of a simple, happy life in Nazareth with his family. We are sure Joseph dreamed of having kids with Mary. The first time he came to know about the pregnancy of Mary, he planned to divorce Mary in secret. But when he came to know of God's plan, he gave up all his personal plans. Joseph used to be rich in personal plans, but he was not selfish that he did not stick to his personal plans in view of God's greater plan. Being a "just man" (Mt 1:19) he could have been assured of salvation. But in giving up his personal plans and in effect paving the way to the coming of the Savior, he became even generous to the most needy of God's salvation.

We find in St. Joseph a model of poverty taken as generosity.

OBEDIENCE

Evangelical obedience is the submission of one's will to that of a higher authority. It is always taken in the spirit of faith and love in the following of Christ who was himself obedient to the Father even unto death (cf. can 601). For the Oblates, the purpose of the vow of obedience is to consecrate oneself to God by the perfect sacrifice of

"The chastity of St. Joseph sends a very powerful message on the way the Oblates observe and remain faithful in the vow of chastity."

one's will, thereby uniting oneself to the saving will of God (C 31). Even the Founder, St. Joseph Marelli recognizes that obedience by which one gives up his/her personal judgment is the "secret of Christian living, the touchstone of sanctity" (Letter to Fr. Stephen Rossetti, November 1868 [Letter 19]).

St. Joseph is addressed in the Litany as "most obedient". We can trace his obedience from his "justice" – being a "righteous man". This is the only explicit description we have of St. Joseph in the Scriptures: "Joseph... was a righteous man" (Mt 1:19). The adjective "just" or "righteous" when said of a Jew, like Joseph, connotes faithfulness to the Mosaic Law (Cf. NABRE, Commentary on "righteous man"). This sheds light to Joseph's

plan to break up with Mary. Joseph thought that Mary committed a gross violation of law against adultery.

Joseph's plan to break up with Mary was replaced by his decision to take her as his full-pledged wife. This happens after the angel made known to him God's plan of salvation. Here, we see Joseph submitting himself to the will of higher authority – God. From then on, he became obedient to the wishes of God concerning the plan of salvation. Whatever God tells him through the angel, Joseph obeys. He obeyed when he was told to take Mary as his wife (Mt 1:20-24). He obeyed when he was told in the middle of the night to flee to Egypt with Jesus and Mary (Mt 2:13). He obeyed when he was told, again in the middle of the night, to leave Egypt and go back to Israel (Mt 2:19).

Therefore, St. Joseph was obedient; first, on account of his righteousness, his faithfulness to the law; and second, on account of the "generous" submission of his will to the will of God. The Oblates see in St. Joseph a model to live and perfect the vow of obedience. In fact, this is explicitly mentioned in the OSJ Constitutions: "In the observance of their vow of obedience the Oblates draw constant inspiration from their model, St. Joseph, who was the saint of prompt and generous obedience (C 36).

COMMUNITY LIFE

Another expression of the Oblates' following of Christ is community life. The Code of Canon Law provides that fraternal life unites all the members of the religious community into, as it were, a special family in Christ. This fraternity is rooted in charity (cf. can 602). Thus, one of the primary concerns of the OSJ is to foster community life (cf. C 38). The Oblates recognize this role of charity in building community life. The OSJ Constitutions provide: "The religious community, as a family united in the name of the Lord, rejoices in His presence, images the life of the Trinity and gives witness to the world of the power of God's love" (C 37).

The family that Joseph took care of is definitely a model community. It would not be called "Holy Family" for no reason. In the Jubilee Year of 2000, the Archdiocese of Lipa conceived of a beautiful cross (the "Glorious Cross", now enshrined in the Most Holy Trinity Parish in Batangas City). That cross bears two faces. The front depicts the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The back side shows the Holy Family:





Facade of the Oblates of St. Joseph College Seminary in Brgy. Marawoy, Lipa City.

Joseph, Mary and the Child Jesus. The face of the Trinity has the title of "*Communitas in Aeternitate*" (Community in Eternity). While the face of the Holy Family bears the title "*Communitas in Tempore*" (Community in Time). The Glorious Cross of Lipa sends a powerful message: the Holy Family of Nazareth is the mirror of the perfect family of the Trinity.

Both the Holy Family and the Trinity are united in love. The Trinity is the family of the "Lover, the Beloved-and-Loving, and Love itself" (Catholic Voice Foundation, 2000). The Holy Family lived that divine

love in Nazareth (cf. RC 22). Fr. Toschi regards St. Joseph as patron of family life on account of the unity, love and faith that he, Mary, and Jesus shared together as a family who shuns individual interests (cf. 1993, 106).

If the Oblates should reflect the Community in Eternity and Time, they should live together in the bond of love as well. Community life is the avenue by which the Oblates feel the presence of God's sustaining love manifested by fraternal charity (Cf. GD 18). The Oblates achieve the ideals of the congregation by observing the supreme commandment of charity within a community lifestyle which imitates the love and unity of the Holy Family of which St. Joseph was head (cf. C 8).

PRAYER LIFE

If St. Joseph is regarded as a "just man" in the sense of being a devout Jew, then it only makes sense that he is a pious Jew. We can see the nature and depth of St. Joseph's prayer life in the instances of his dreams narrated in the Gospel of Matthew. Through a dream he was told by the angel of the Lord to take Mary as his wife (Mt 1:20) and to

name Mary's child "Jesus" (Mt 1:21). In another dream he was told to rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt (Mt 2:13). Another dream told him to return from Egypt to Israel (Mt 2:19).

Now, prayer is the means by which man communicates to God. St. John Damascene regards prayer as the raising of one's mind and heart to God (cf. CCC 2559). The result of which is the coming to meet the mind and heart of God in turn. In the Scriptures, dreams have been God's way of responding to man's prayer; a means of divine communication (cf. Toschi, 1993, 50). St. Joseph's dream was God's way of responding to his doubts over the pregnancy of Mary. It is not illogical to think that Joseph must have brought this thought in his prayer that it resulted in God's responding in a dream. And it must have been a deep prayer, an authentic one, because enlightenment was brought upon his doubts. We are pretty sure of this because Jesus himself said "...all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it" (Mk 11:24). St. Joseph must have asked for answers in his prayer and he received them in his dreams.

The virtue of silence which St. Joseph was known to have practiced also bears witness to his piety. Fr. Toschi calls St. Joseph a "model of interior life and contemplative prayer" (1993, 107).

For the Oblates, prayer life is a matter of religious identity. They are more worthy of their name when they follow the teaching...

"Community life is the avenue by which the Oblates feel the presence of God's sustaining love manifested by fraternal charity."

SIX OSJs ORDAINED TO PRIESTHOOD

Bro. Jeffrey T. Dinglasan, OSJ

San Jose Batangas - The congregation of the Oblates of Saint Joseph - Philippine Province welcomed six newly ordained priests last June 12, 2019. The congregation, headed by its Provincial Superior, Rev. Fr. Jayson Endaya, OSJ, the ordaining Bishop, Most Rev. Reynaldo Evangelista, D.D. from the Diocese of Imus and other invited religious, priests, and guests gathered at the Archdiocesan Shrine of St. Joseph the Patriarch for the celebration that started at nine in the morning.

In his homily, the bishop emphasized, "*Ang pagiging pari ninyo, mga minamahal na diyakono na ngayon ay oordinahang pari, mula sa araw na ito [...] hanggang sa kabilang buhay, ay regalo ng Diyos na dapat ninyong pakaingatan at gamitin para pabanalin at paglingkuran ang sambayanan ng Diyos.*" He further reminded that as priesthood is a gift, it should be noted that they must as well be a gift to others.

The newly ordained priests were: Rev. Fr. Julius Erwin Pera Amarillo, OSJ from San Juan, Batangas, Rev. Fr. Raymond Ladao Escoton, OSJ from Lamba, Banga, South Cotabato, Rev. Fr. Juanito Valeriano Francisco II, OSJ from Laua-an, Antique, Rev. Fr. Excel Millamena Nietes, OSJ from Sibalom, Antique, Rev. Fr. Carl Andrew Pimentel Patricio, OSJ from Biñan City, Laguna, and Rev. Fr. Jerwin Christian Sequijor Valdez, OSJ from Padre Garcia, Batangas. Following the ordination rights were the thanksgiving masses of the newly ordained on their respective hometowns. ☩



POSTULANCY PROGRAM STARTS ANEW

Bro. Post. Roden Deus R. Landicho



July 1, 2019 – Twelve seminarians were accepted as postulants by Rev. Fr. Jayson DC. Endaya, OSJ, the provincial superior of the OSJ Philippine Province. The rites were conducted at Saint Joseph the Protector Chapel, OSJ House of the Junior Professed (OSJHJP) in Brgy. Buho, Amadeo, Cavite. The new postulants are brothers Don Lorenzo T. Dayao, Timothy Laurenz M. Pinto, and Mark Ruivivar from Antipolo City, Rizal, Marvin A. Geron from Ibaan, Batangas, Joshwin R. Isidro from Pilar, Bataan, Deeson C. Laliman from Padre Garcia, Batangas, Roden Deus R. Landicho and Kim Kiel B. Olvido from Lipa City, Batangas, Michael Anthony P. Paz from Tagum City, Davao, Daved L. Perono from Victorias, Negros Occidental, Paul

Justin F. Sombero from Jaro, Iloilo and Marvick S. Vargas from San Pedro, Laguna. Witnessing their entrance to postulancy were Fr. Alfie A. Polistico, OSJ, the newly appointed director of the program of Postulancy in the Oblates of Joseph Philippine Province and other OSJ priests involved in the initial formation of the congregation.

The provincial presided the Holy Eucharist. In his homily, he emphasized that the charism to live in the spirit of St. Joseph is the very essence of being an oblate. Adhering to the teachings and disciplines of the Holy Mother Church, he highlighted the importance of a total dedication to the interests of Jesus. Also, he stressed the importance of prayers in order to resist and overcome all the temptations. The occasion was attended by the postulants' families, friends, benefactors, and some OSJ confreres. ✠

A traveller knows where he is heading but along the road, he is unaware of the many circumstances that may come upon. He then discovers his identity and mission as products of what transpired along the way. Likewise, formation in the priesthood and religious consecration is a lifelong journey. What he develops along the way grows fuller as he treads further in the formation, both initial and ongoing. It only proves how important it is to start things right.

Pope Francis, in his address to the Plenary of the Congregation for Clergy highlighted, *"It [formation] means guarding and fostering vocations, that they may bear mature fruit. They are 'uncut diamonds,' to be formed both patiently and carefully, respecting the conscience of the individual, so*

GIFT OF ACCOMPANIMENT

Embracing a New Thrust in the OSJ Formation

Bro. Jim Brent B. Lacdao, OSJ



*that they may shine among the People of God."*¹

The thrust therefore is to give emphasis on the role of the formator *"to accompany the candidate, patiently and with tact, enabling him to probe more deeply into areas of life that he brings up for discussion through skilful questioning, clarifying, confrontation and encouragement [...] for the candidate [...] to explore how he lives out the divine call in day to day life."*²

These matters were the center of Fr. John C. Era's discussions as he...

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OSJ PHILIPPINE PROVINCE SENDS BROTHERS TO ITALY AND BRAZIL

Bro. Amiel Joseph B. Sevilla, OSJ

Another path of service and mission was rediscovered by the Oblates of Saint Joseph - Philippine Province as it sends four junior professed brothers (two each) to Italy and Brazil. Bro. John Paulo Garma, OSJ and Bro. Don Christer Lazado, OSJ left for Italy on June 18, 2019, while Bro. Ericson Alfante, OSJ and Bro. John Mark Comia, OSJ left for Brazil on September 8, 2019.

The information in this article are excerpts from an interview with the Provincial Superior of the Oblates of Saint Joseph, Rev. Fr. Jayson Endaya, OSJ, and from the four missionaries themselves.

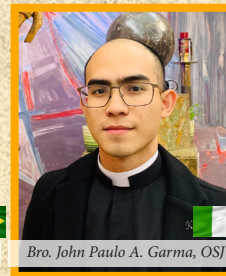
According to Fr. Jayson, OSJ, the sending of four junior professed brothers in Italy and Brazil is the OSJ Philippine province's response to the resolutions of the 17th General Chapter and in accord with what the General Directory prescribes in articles 37 and 38. Father provincial further reiterates to seek to ensure that the missionary spirit be kept alive among us and reinforce our presence in these two provinces. Fr. Jayson expects that as the missionary-brothers study to finish



Bro. Ericson K. Alfante, OSJ



Bro. John Mark S. Comia, OSJ



Bro. John Paulo A. Garma, OSJ



Bro. Don Christer A. Lazado, OSJ

their theological studies in their respective mission areas, they will understand better the need for their services there and they will be better equipped with mastery of the language and familiarity of the culture where they are assigned so as to render better service. Moreover, Fr. Jayson expects that they finish their theological studies in their respective mission areas, be ordained priests after, and be able to serve the local churches of their mission for at least five years.

Brothers Paulo, Don, Ericson and JM all shared the same feeling of shock upon learning their new assignments. Yet they also shared the feeling of gratitude as they accept this new opportunity for service and mission. As for their preparation, all of them prepared the necessary requirements and documents to go to their new missions. Bro. Ericson and Bro. JM underwent Portuguese classes with Fr. Ian Yacat, OSJ. They composed themselves physically. Most of all

they prepared themselves spiritually through Eucharistic adorations, Holy Masses, personal meditations, and spiritual directions.

At present, Brothers Paulo, Don, Ericson and JM continue to adapt to the language and culture of their respective assignments. They face their present difficulties with courage, hope, and the assurance that what they do is for the glory of God.

With this flourishing of another noble undertaking, Fr. Jayson envisions that confreres will love to work in the missions so as to make into reality the wish of our founder, St. Joseph Marelllo as stated in the OSJ Constitutions, "...Marelllo wished his sons to be apostles outdoors and to bring Christ to the world with that generous spirit with which St. Joseph called to service by the Eternal Father, nurtured Jesus and prepared Him for His ministry of salvation." ✠

St. Joseph Mission Institute in San Jose, Batangas was built in 1951 to accommodate the growing number of aspirants.



REORGANIZATION AFTER THE WAR:

OSJ-Philippines from 1946 to 1952

Rev. Fr. Wilfredo F. De Mesa, OSJ

Post-war rehabilitation gradually brought the Philippines back to recovery. The coming of peace in 1945 was soon followed by Philippine Independence on July 4, 1946. This relatively peaceful atmosphere enabled the Church in the Philippines to continue the propagation of Catholic life in the country. Among the positive signs of growth in the Church were the re-establishment of the hierarchy, the creation of new dioceses, the increase in the number of native vocations, and the flourishing of the missionary and educational works of religious congregations. It was in this atmosphere that the Oblates of St. Joseph in the Philippines found itself.

Among the significant developments of the OSJ Mission during this period were: the arrival of more Italian missionaries in Lipa, the reconstruction of parish structures, the return to normalcy of the Catholic life in the parishes, the rigorous recruitment of local vocations and the eventual establishment of St. Joseph's Missionary Institute.

willing to remain; for its part, however, the Congregation should send sufficient personnel. Look at the priests of the good press of Don Alberione who are already well established in the Philippines. It is so because they receive the appropriate personnel. And we after so many years are like sickened, always at the same level and maybe even lower. Whose fault is it? Certainly not ours. Do not say that you do not have available personnel because when it comes to sending personnel to America, you are not lacking, but when it comes to sending personnel to the Philippines there is none.²

1. Urgent Appeal for Personnel

Considering the exhaustion of the six remaining OSJ priests and the immense amount of damage left behind by the war, it would be impossible to put things back into order without sufficient personnel. Hence, the missionaries strongly appealed to the Superior General, Fr. Luigi Garberoglio in Asti for additional priests to work for the

physical and spiritual reorganization of their areas of mission. It would not be far that Bishop Verzosa would be forced to reduce the OSJ parishes into two or three, for the good of the souls, if no reinforcement would arrive.¹ Fr. Ernesto Fornaca, the Superior of the Mission, strongly pleads:

If it is of prestige for the Congregation that we keep this mission, we are

Fr. Giuseppe Visintainer also expressed the need to either send more priests or close the Mission. He writes:

Moving on to this mission, it is superfluous to say that we are in the greatest need. We have before us an immense amount of work, material and spiritual work. To cope with everything we need at least seven other priests. I say seven and it is no joke. As soon as possible, that is as

soon as the routes are opened. For now we are forced to temporarily entrust the Bishop three parishes: San Jose, Cuenca and Lumangbayan. If it is not possible to send more priests, I think it is better to close the Mission.³

Fr. Visintainer gave two reasons why the Mission should be closed if the current lack of personnel was not remedied. First, some parishes within the district entrusted to them have to be turned over to the diocesan clergy. If it was already difficult to move forward even with having an autonomous vicariate within the diocese, how much more when they were mixed with Filipino clergy in administering a single vicariate? Collaboration would be difficult due to the difference in race, and therefore, difference in viewing things. Second, the vastness of the parishes and their population requires that they should have more priests. In Fr. Visintainer's opinion, it would not be far that the Bishop would be forced to reduce the parishes into two or three, for the good of the souls. He suggested at least two priests for each parish, arguing:

*[...]at least two because the work is too much for only one person, at least two so that we can move a little without having to abandon the dying, at least two in order to provide a bit better to the great multitude of souls to which the Congregation has to take into account, at least two so that we too can exercise fraternal charity among ourselves, and benefit of these great aid to religious life which are the vows and the rules, at least two to be able to support each other.*⁴

During the Fifth General Chapter held in Asti in 1946, Fr. Fornaca and Fr. Visintainer, the delegates from the Philippines, renewed the plea for additional personnel- at least six- the minimum number required

in order to live the community life in the Mission and to lessen the weight of the parish work. Bishop Verzosa also sent the same appeal through a letter while the same General Chapter was ongoing:

*I earnestly beg Your Reverences to send more religious to help my diocese. We have a great deal of hardship here of priests, mostly after the war when about ten priests of ours were killed by the Japanese, including the Fathers Vicente Prandi and Antonio Fanchini, children of Your congregation and that in glory they may remain in divine mercy. The Superior of the Josephite Fathers here is currently in Italy; I wish Your Reverences to grant us new religious to come with him on his return to the Philippines.*⁵

The urgent appeal was not immediately granted, to the disappointment of the OSJ in the Philippines: *"Poor Philippines! How it is forgotten! The Philippines, at least so far, is the mission which has most prestige to the Congregation before the Holy See, but it is also the most forgotten, the most abandoned. It is now 32 years that we have accepted the mission and we are almost still in a primitive state."*⁶

The much awaited help from Italy came only in 1947. The new missionaries left Italy on May 6, 1947 and arrived in the Philippines on June 14. They were Fr. Urro Gotri, Fr. Edoardo Meda, Fr. Vito Sorrenti and Fr. Pasquale Pontelandolfo. Fr. Gotri was 30 years old and a

priest for four years. Fr. Meda was 29 years old and a priest for four years. Fr. Sorrenti was 26 years old and a priest for two years. Fr. Pontelandolfo was 26 years old and a priest for a year. They immediately carried out the parish work while still struggling with the Tagalog language. Fr. Lucio Aguilar, one of the first Filipino OSJs came back to the Philippines in July of 1946. With the addition of the new missionaries, the OSJ in the Philippines numbered eleven.

The OSJ administered six parishes and the newly formed group of seminarians housed in Taysan. Still, the number of the OSJ remained insufficient in order to meet efficiently the demands of their apostolate. "Aside from the personnel for the Seminary, five more priests would be necessary in order to have two in each parish and the Superior may remain free."⁷ Even so, the missionaries had to move forward.

In September 1946, Fr. Guido Coletti was appointed as Superior of the Philippine Mission. At the same time, he

took charge of the parish of Ibaan. Fr. Urro Gotri assisted him, taking charge of the chapel at barrio San Agustin. Fr. Visintainer was the parish priest of Cuenca, with Fr. Pontelandolfo as his coadjutor and in

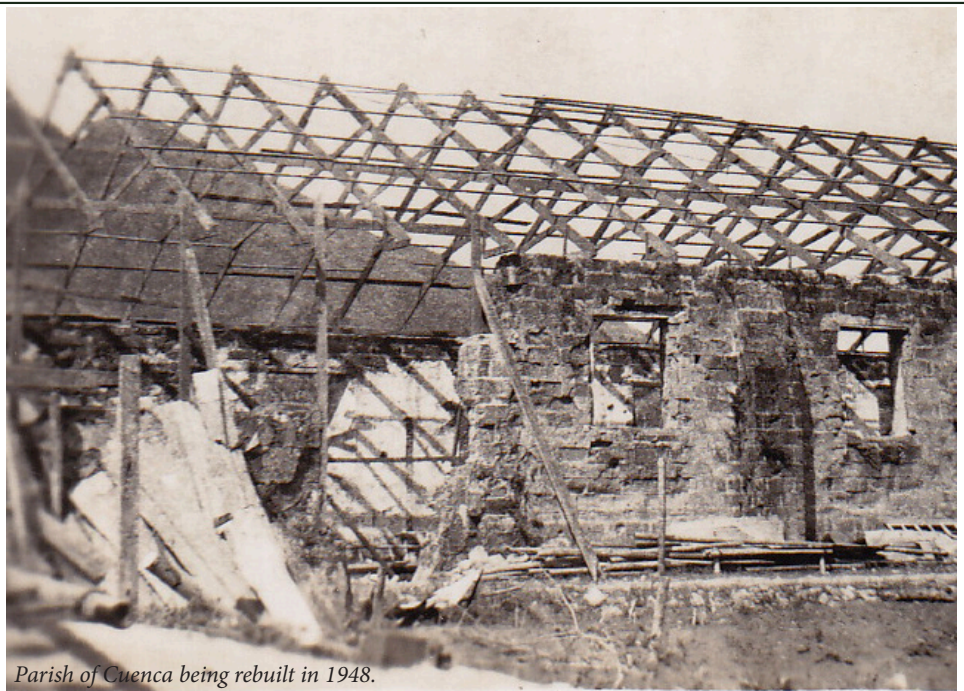
"Moving on to this mission, it is superfluous to say that we are in the greatest need. We have before us an immense amount of work, material and spiritual work."

charge of the chapel of barrio Dita, four kilometers from the town proper. In Rosario Fr. Luigi Mortera was the parish priest. His brother, Fr. Egidio Mortera served as coadjutor and in charge of the barrios of Alupay and Pinagsibaan, twelve kilometers away from the town proper. Fr. Ernesto Fornaca and Fr. Lucio Aguilar were assigned in San Jose. Fr. Lorenzo Bo was assigned in Taysan, together with Fr. Vito Sorrenti. In 1946, the parish of Lumangbayan was temporarily taken over by the Diocese. In October 1948, Fr. Edoardo Meda took over its administration.

2. Restoration of Parish Structures

One of the massive tasks to be carried out on the years following the war was the reconstruction of the churches and rectories. However, an enormous amount had to be accumulated in rebuilding the OSJ parishes and rectories. From the community fund the missionaries were able to save some amount in dollar currency: \$1000 at the Apostolic Delegation and \$555 at New York City Bank. All the rest of the fund was lost during the war.⁸ In addition, the materials and the work force cost five times more than its amount before the war. With that, the missionaries had to look for funds. Fr. Coletti reports:

On 16 (November 1947), I visited the confreres of San Jose. Then I went until Lipa with Fr. Ernesto (with his jeep, which belongs to the parish and not to the house) who with the Legionaries of Mary will go to the monthly meeting of the Legion. From there I proceeded to Taysan.



Parish of Cuenca being rebuilt in 1948.

Fr. Sorrenti was supervising the catechism class in the church. There are 67 pupils, with six catechists, including an elementary school teacher[...] Towards the evening I came to Luma(ng-Bayan) of Fr. Meda. He would have had a meeting if it were not for the rain. He had prepared lambanog or coconut wine stronger than brandy and cigarettes for the tenientes and vice-tenientes de los barrios. The gathering would be next Sunday. He had printed nice letters which they would bring in all the houses of the heads of the barangays for the purpose of asking contribution for the repair of the burned roof of the church. It would cost around 4000 pesos[...] I did not go to Rosario where Frs. Mortera are; I had to sleep. Fr. Lorenzo told me that Fr. Luis was decided to build the convent at any cost, because it is going bad, even with food. He has to go to the karihan to buy food already cooked. Last (November) 18, Fr. Luis had to go with Fr. Lorenzo to their friends in Manila to look for some money[...] I arrived in Cuenca at 10 in the morning, and I did not find any of the two; only the scrivente was there. Fr. Jose was out to collect contributions in the barrios. Fr. Ponte(landolfo) was called to

*a confession. I visited the sacristy which serves as the church; what a pity to see the altar and the church with a part of the wall collapsed and cracked; the floor ruined by some bombs. It would cost twenty thousand pesos for the reconstruction of the roof, the plastering, the doors and windows, excluding the ceilings and the floor. We hope that the people may give and that Fr. Jose may not get sick and become agitated.*⁹

On August 19, 1948, another group of OSJ priests left Asti for Lipa. They were the newly ordained priests Frs. Federico Lano, Elia May, and Enrico Tunesi. Fr. Luigi Rosso, the Superior General, was pleased to finally be able to grant the request of the confreres in the Philippines:

Finally the confreres can depart to bring you that help, which for a time you are waiting for, and which for a time we would want to gladly send, if it had been possible. I have a firm confidence that you would find yourselves happy, that the confreres who are arriving are good and capable, and I am not denying that sending them to you counts much to me because I was counting much on them. But I rejoice over the thought



Fr. Enrico Tunesi was missionary to the Philippines from 1948 to 1958.

kilometers from the town proper, just in a strategic point of Aglipayani. There he celebrates every Sunday and there he works with delight. The chapel for now consists only of four canes supporting a tarpaulin but little by little it would take form more concrete and more worthy of accommodating the One who also did not disdain to be born in a real stable. In these two months, acting as a true errand boy for the ministry, he has already gone around all the barrios of Rosario, even the most distant,

*that the good that they cannot do here in Italy they would do there, still in the vineyard of the Lord and in the Congregation, and the Lord would reward us of the sacrifice done with other good vocations[...]*¹⁰

The Superior General instructed Fr. Coletti to study the characteristics and capacities of these three priests before giving them posts. He suggested that Fr. Lano be assigned to the House of the aspirants because he was more skilled in teaching than in doing parish works while the other two could do their best in the parish ministry.

On the same year, Fr. Allan Pearson arrived in Lipa although the exact date is unknown. The Superiors of the United States opposed the latter's intention to go to the Philippines, but through the insistence of Fr. Fornaca who came to Pittston, Pennsylvania in 1947, he was able to leave for the mission. The new missionaries' initial activities were:

Fr. Tunesi in Rosario has already formed a sketch of the chapel a few

*with true joy of the people who surrounds him with the feeling of sympathy. Fr. May works as well in Ibaan at the center and in a chapel in the countryside already constructed by Fr. Guido some years ago. He has the courage of a lion and he simply took Tagalog with ease. Fr. Lano teaches, and naturally specialized in English to be able to attend well to his duty. But on some Sundays, after a gap in which Fr. Pearson (from San Jose) came, he becomes the holyday helper here in Luma which to me he is of precious help especially for the children.*¹¹

Thanks to the concerted efforts of the OSJ, parishes, rectories and barrio chapels were rebuilt. In 1948, Fr. Luigi Mortera was finally able to build his new rectory in Rosario. Fr. Visintainer finished putting roof over the church of Cuenca. Fr. Gotri and Fr. Pontelandolfo adorned the church of Taysan and worked to extend the mission to the different barrios of their vast parish. Fr. Meda worked on erecting chapels in some villages to make them the venues of Sunday catechism classes. In the newly reconstructed rectory, a space

is procured for a high school founded in 1949 and in which he had to pry to fight against the Aglipayans who wanted to put the same there. He used to teach religion twice a week and he was searching for ways to make it an authentic Catholic school. Fr. Egidio Mortera started working in Alupay, a distant barrio of Rosario. The excessively vast territory of Rosario impeded the priests to efficiently attend to the needs of the inhabitants found distant from the main parish. Hence, with the decree of Bishop Verzosa, ten barrios were separated from the main parish and the new parish of Alupay, called Parroquia della Sagrada Familia, was erected on March 19, 1949. It consisted of the barrios of Alupay, Mabato, Mabunga, Macalamcam, Matamis, Natu, Pinagsibaan, Putingkahoy, Salao, and Tulos. Its formal inauguration took place in December of the same year.

Another parish was handed to the care of the OSJ on March 30, 1949: the parish of San Luis. Fr. Vito Sorrenti came as its parish priest. Because there was no rectory, he had to stay in the sacristy of the church. In 1951, Fr. May became the next parish priest. The missionaries deemed it unsuitable for a priest to live in such condition, without a house and without sustenance. Thus they thought of pulling out Fr. May from the parish. The Bishop, however responded that, "for the good of the souls," the OSJ may remain in the parish until the Diocese has an available priest to be sent there.¹² Fr. May thus worked for the construction of the parish convent. In 1957, the administration of the parish was



Fr. Edoardo Meda arrived in the Philippines in 1947. He served in the parishes of Padre Garcia and Rosario.

handed back to the Diocese.

Collaborating with the missionaries were the various parish organizations such as Legion of Mary, Holy Name Society, Josephinos, Katekistas, Celadores, Adoracion Nocturna Filipina, Catholic Women's League and other lay organizations who were beginning to be active in the parishes in the country. They were indefatigable in their visits even to the places on the mountains and far-flung areas.

A letter of Fr. Vito Sorrenti outlining briefly the missionary work of the OSJ in the Diocese of Lipa in 1950 showed that the pastoral life of the OSJ has gradually returned to normal, thanks to their efforts to bring the parishes back into order, few years after the war:

In general, all are well and very busy in their respective places assigned by the Superior.

Fr. Egidio Mortera is working in the vast area of the new parish of Alupay: baptisms, matrimonies,

confessions to the sick, and ascending the barrios over the mountains, and it seems that they cannot win over the fiber of this Padre who is already quite old.

Fr. Luigi Mortera and Fr. Enrico Tunesi are untiring in their travel to the streets of the town and the bukid for the distribution of spiritual bread to the children and the youth: the catechism is their arm with which they seek to conquer the minds and hearts of their people. They have various male and female organizations: Legion of Mary, Josefinos, Katekistas, Celadoras, who

work with them so that faith may be strengthened and may flourish in their parish of Rosario.

Nearby are Fr. Urro Gotri and Fr. Pasquale Pontelandolfo, who, despite of the difficult situation of Taysan (I am familiar with that parish because I have also been there for two years), are indefatigable, with patience and sacrifice, in their visits to the places on the mountains, now rendered more difficult because the Huks (rebels to the government with Communist leanings) are hiding up there. These two Fathers already adorned their church, which before did not even have windows; they have widened the camposanto; and now they are working to extend the mission to the different barrios of their vast parish.

Fr. Edoardo Meda is always incomparable for his activity, which is too difficult to describe. Now he has the facility to bring himself to every part of his parish which has good roads, because he has procured a motorcycle, in order to save time which the sasakyan (means of Filipino transportation) cannot seem to give. His parish (already Lumangbayan,

and recently named Garcia, from the name of a priest who hailed from the town) is one of the most flourishing, thanks precisely to his continuous activity.

Most important is the parish of San Jose which Fr. Ernesto Fornaca governs with the help of Fr. Lucio Aguilar. Catechism, confessions in the church and at the bukid, masses in different barrios, homilies and several other works, including the Legion of Mary, are tasked to both, taking into account that Fr. Ernesto is not young anymore.

Ibaan is administered by Fr. Guido Coletti, Superior of the Mission, helped by Fr. Elia May. The work is also never lacking here, and the parish has progressed spiritually, thanks to the assiduous work of more than ten years of Fr. Guido.

These priests are working also, helped by Frs. Lorenzo Bo, Federico Lano, Giovanni Pearson, for the erection of the new seminary for our aspirants in San Jose. Last April 30, after long toil and industry, the first foundation is placed, blessed by the Bishop, in the presence of the government officials of the province and numerous people. We hope that Providence would help us finish the construction.

Fr. Giuseppe Visintainer is in Cuenca. He has repaired the roof of his church destroyed by the war and baguio (cyclone), and now he is working for the construction of the canonical house. At his age, he runs to all the necessities of the parish, bringing to all the spiritual help, the instruction, the Sacraments of the Church.

The undersigned, lastly, is in a new parish which the Bishop has entrusted to us. It is called San Luis. It is located at about fifty kilometres from our other parishes: and it is very extended; one part has mountains,

and the other three parts have seas. The first time I came, a year ago, it was abandoned, that is, without a permanent priest. Although there may be constraints, with the help of the Lord, with the contribution of the Bishop and the faithful, I was able to construct a small chapel made of cement and wood, of eight meters by sixteen, in a central part of the parish, so that the faithful may have a House of God, and can receive the Sacraments and fulfil the holyday precepts. I hope I could also later construct the canonical house to give a final accommodation at the parish.¹³

It must also be mentioned that Fr. Coletti had attempted to establish a religious house outside Batangas as early as 1947. He sent this proposal to Archbishop Michael O'Doherty of Manila sometime in 1947. The secretary of the Archbishop of Manila wrote him on November 21, 1947, in reply to this petition to establish a house in Manila which would be the residence of the future aspirants of the Congregation:

*After a mature and careful examination, your petition has been denied for the reason of the existence of an excessive number of religious houses in this city of Manila; Therefore it would be better for the aspirants to stay in another religious house, or in the same Central Seminary of Santo Tomas or in San Jose.*¹⁴

On July 5, 1950, Fr. Coletti renewed his petition to open a house in North Balut, Balut Island Subdivision, Manila, and to erect a church adjoining the house. This proposed site is about one kilometre from the chapel of San Roque. On December 21, 1951, the Archbishop replied:

After a mature study of your petition to erect a religious house for your



Flores de Mayo (1950s)



OSJ Seminarians, 1954

*Congregation in North Balut Island, of this city of Manila, it appears that the piece of land you wish to occupy is also the same property that we have assigned for the future parish church of that section. It is with great regret, therefore, that we cannot grant you your request.*¹⁵

3. Establishment of St. Joseph's Missionary Institute

Concentrated to the enormous demands of parish apostolate, the OSJ in the Philippines were unable to establish a seminary and form local vocations during their first years in the country. After thirty years of their mission, only two Filipinos persevered: Lauro Guce, who became member of the Congregation and was ordained priest in 1935, and Lucio Aguilar, who professed perpetually to the Congregation in 1939 and was ordained priest the following year. These two confreres took their entire formation years in Italy.

The OSJ had already felt the desire and seen the necessity of building a seminary even before it was suggested during the Fifth General Chapter of the Congregation in 1946. However, according to Fr. Coletti, "about vocations, we would have them, without doubt,

given that, here, it costs a lot to become secular priests. The difficulty, however, would be in giving them formation."¹⁶ The Mission lacked competent personnel who were sufficiently adapted to the local culture to be able to comprehend the mentality of Filipino youth and to be able to instruct them in English language. Hence, if the desire to build a seminary was to be realized, there was a need to have priests adequately knowledgeable of the Filipino ways. The Superior General, Fr. Luigi Rosso, however, urged the missionaries to start opening a seminary, notwithstanding the abovementioned limitation. He replied to Fr. Coletti concerning the opening of the Seminary:

For the Seminary, it is the desire of all and, in the first place, of the Superiors who established such in the United States and Brazil. It takes a lot of sacrifice and then some very good would to initiate, sustain and continue it. Start it and in the meantime help will arrive and in time they will come. I think Fr. Lano will be very suitable to help in the formation and then to replace Fr. Bo. But you must be careful not

*to aim much for the number as to the quality.*¹⁷

Thus the OSJ took the bold step of recruiting aspirants in 1947. Fr. Lucio Aguilar sent a prospectus to many parishes of the Philippines. Most of these were sent to parishes in the Visayas, especially in the dioceses of Cebu, Iloilo, Samar, and as far as Mountain Province. The promotion was successful. That year two boys, namely, Engracio Jimenez and Rodolfo Cañares, both from Minglanilla, Cebu, arrived in Taysan:

*Here in Taysan under the leadership of Fr. Lorenzo Bo two young men are already being prepared that seem to give good hope of success; certain, however, that it is only a beginning and that it is difficult to continue it for long if other help and reinforcement will not arrive since the teaching of all the necessary subjects, with spiritual guidance, without sufficient personnel is not an easy work.*¹⁸

In May 1948 Raymundo Tabontabon from Guiuan, Eastern Samar joined the two aspirants. Concerning the activities shortly after his arrival in Taysan, he recounts:

In Our Lady of Mercy Parish we enjoyed doing some odd jobs around the house, like cutting the tall grass



First Communion in the Parish of Ibaan, 1947



Frs. Fornaca and Tunesi with the Members of the Holy

(*talahib*) in the backyard. In the evening hours we were allowed to go to the *tuklong* or chapel for the May devotions by singing and praying the rosary with the people. At the beginning of June we were recalled to the seminary as we had to start preparing for the school or seminary opening. Meanwhile, some other four or five boys arrived to join us. Some of their names were: Niceto Amador from Atimonan, Quezon, Ernesto Gallo from Bontoc, Mountain Province, Alfredo Holgado from Tanauan, Batangas, Alberto Chavez from Lipa, and a certain Napoleon from Cebu.¹⁹

Because of the increase in number, the eight seminarians were transferred to the larger rectory of San Jose. In the meeting of the Council of the Mission on January 5, 1948, it was decided to formally open the seminary in June.²⁰ Therefore, June 7, 1948 marked the opening of St. Joseph Missionary Institute. Fr. Lucio Aguilar served as the rector. The instructors were Fr. Allan Pearson for English, Fr. Aguilar for Oral Tagalog and Written Tagalog, Fr. Ernesto Fornaca for Latin, Fr. Lorenzo Bo for Italian, and Fr. Federico Lano for Mathematics. Practically, the rectory of San Jose was only a temporary place to accommodate the aspirants. Since

the rectory was attached to the church and served as venue to some parish functions, the aspirants could not enjoy an atmosphere of silence and privacy. Hence, the place was inconvenient to become a house of formation.

These were the first seminarians of St. Joseph's Missionary Institute and the year of their entrance:

1947: Rodolfo Cañares, Engracio Jimenez

1948: Niceto Amador, Ernesto Gallo, Raymundo Tabontabon, Alfredo Holgado

1949: Napoleon Parilla, Cristobal Agravante, Alberto Chavez

1950: Constantino Cardenas

1951: Alejandro Mendoza, Juan Tornato, Beltran Factoleria, Florentino Irisari, Gervasio Laplana, Ignacio Manila, Antonio Reyes, Mario de Torres

1952: Amado Carandang, Eleseo Delima, Adriano Sobremisana, Jesus Pareño, Miguel Alcantara, Calixto Ballos, Ceferino Balmes, Pedro Damasco, Romeo Valensay

1953: Manuel Duetao, Raymundo dela Cruz, Efren Lausple, Pablo Rivas, Cornelio Sotomel, Mariano Loyola, Dario Valearcel

1954: Librado Ilagan, Romulo Balajadia, Constantino Conti, Carlos Roño, Rogelio Rozal

1955: Nemesio Espinosa, Ramon Silvela, Alfredo Píad, Loreto Patriarca, Emeterio Julitan

1956: Antonio Babas, Benjamin Barlolo

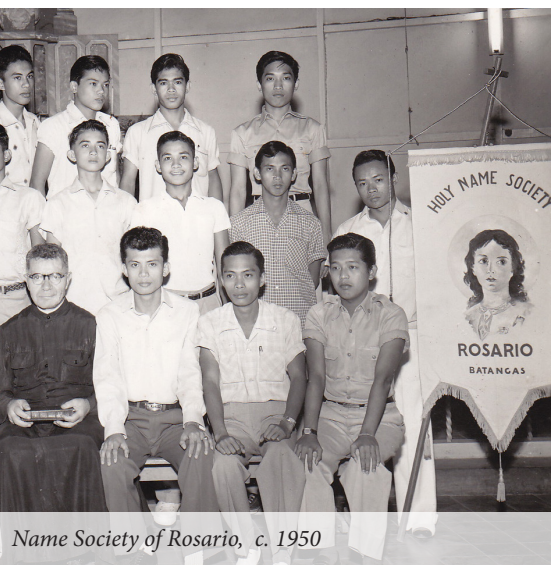
1957-1959: none

1960: Eriberto Marquez, Gloriso Manigbas, Jaime Laqui, Geronimo Reyes, Sancho Sison, Dominador Pereña

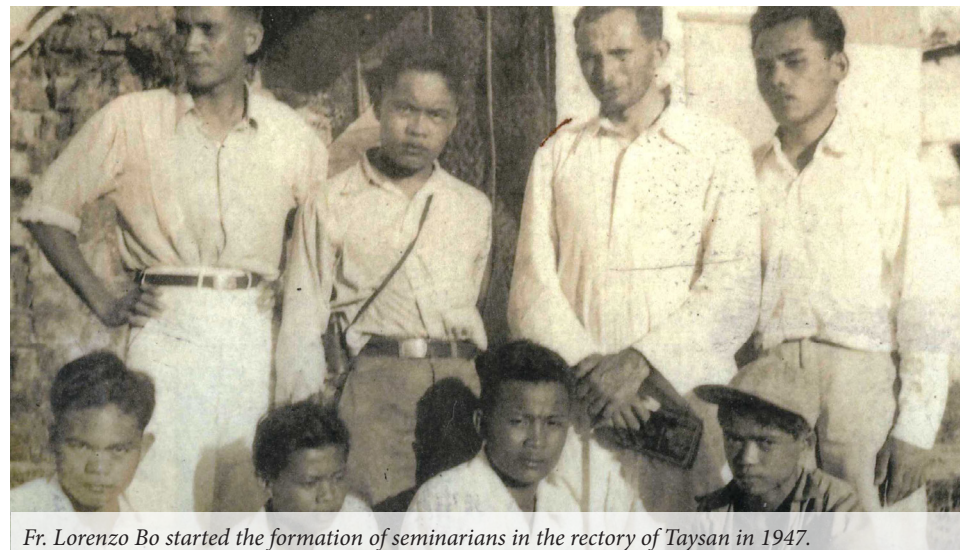
1961: Edgardo Bayani, Conrado Carreon, Dante Mamiit

1962: Lorenzo Abunales, Pedro Lumagbas, Marcus Jorge Vargas, Benjamin Ayon, Marciano Casala, Antonio Balang, Jaime Mitra, Rodolfo Navarrete, Segundo Cabalitan, Reynaldo Lauron, Santiago Salas, Virgilio Selarde, Florenio Salmorin

In 1950, some of the seminarians were already in the third and fourth year of studying Latin and other preparatory subjects and had reached the appropriate age to undergo the novitiate formation. Thus Fr. Luigi Rosso instructed that the aspirants be sent to Asti for their Novitiate, as well as for their philosophical and theological studies. Thus on August 8, 1950, two aspirants, namely Aniceto Amador and Raymundo Tabontabon, left for



Name Society of Rosario, c. 1950



Fr. Lorenzo Bo started the formation of seminarians in the rectory of Taysan in 1947.



Fr. Egidio Mortera was assigned as the pastor of the newly erected parish of Alupay in 1949.



Holy Family Parish,
Alupay, erected in 1949

Asti for the continuation of their religious and priestly formation.

Fr. Coletti took the initiative of acquiring the one hectare and a half lot for the construction of a new seminary. The land, situated on the east of the church of San Jose which used to be the cemetery, was sold by Bishop Verzosa to the Congregation for a sum of one thousand pesos. Fr. Coletti and Fr. Pearson took the work of raising money and other materials for the

construction. Several days of the week, when he was not needed in the parish, Fr. Coletti would go to the parishes in Batangas and to several houses in Manila to raise funds. A good part of the material to be used for the construction was procured through the friendship of Fr. Pearson with the head of the Americans in the military base. On April 29, 1950, solemnity of the Patronage of St. Joseph, the groundbreaking ceremony led by Bishop Verzosa was held. It was also attended by the governor of the province of Batangas and other local authorities. The construction began on May 12, 1950. Concerning the sources of funds for the construction, Fr. Coletti writes:

As for the material we are making good progress. In terms of money—perhaps—perhaps we may be able to gather through the Patrons ten thousand pesos; with factory cement bricks, a part of which I will buy and a part the Bishop of Lipa will buy, we will pay only a little amount for cement. Several days of the week, when I am not needed in the parish, I go to Manila to knock on the doors of the rich Catholics; of course with the

written permission of the Apostolic Delegate, of the Bishop of Manila, and of our Bishop. In our parishes we will also collect some. So, we can collect at the most forty thousand pesos to build the framework and the walls, all concrete, including the roof. The size is 12m x 24m, with two floors. The architect has estimated 150 thousand pesos; but since we already have the materials, and by providing the blocks and by staying behind, the sum of 90 thousand pesos will suffice, all complete; but for this year we would be happy if some rooms can already be occupied, and then gradually it would be finished.

21

The seminarians were also involved in the construction of the seminary. Fr. Tabon recounts:

As supposed pioneers, we were greatly involved in its construction. Almost every afternoon after class hours, with Fr. Allan Pearson driving us in a six-by-six truck, we would go to the Batangas surplus depot to get some construction materials, such as steel beams, four-by-fours of different dimensions, big boxes or crates that we had to dismantle

*to make them fit in the truck, planks of wood and many other useful materials- all given to us by Fr. Pearson's American friend who was the officer in charge of that sprawling compound. With our borrowed truck loaded with these construction materials we would sometimes return home late at night [...] We had a cement mixer borrowed or given to Fr. Pearson by his American friend, together with a "molder." Into this box they pour the wet cement, and then they take away the wood covering, and it comes a still soft hollow block. The workers would pick this carefully and then put them to dry in the sun. When they are completely dry and hard, then they are ready for use in construction.*²²

On September 12, 1951, Fr. Aguilar, Fr. Bo, Fr. Lano, the eight seminarians, a cook and another personnel, transferred to the new seminary building. The next day, the first mass was celebrated in the seminary chapel. The concrete edifice of St. Joseph Missionary Institute measured 42x11 meters, and had two storeys and still had the possibility of putting up another level. It could accommodate about sixty seminarians. Fr. Aguilar served as the first rector, Fr. Federico Lano as Prefect of Discipline, and Fr. Bo as Prefect of Studies. The Seminary became the residence of the seminarians being prepared for philosophical studies. Fr. Coletti expressed his envisioned goal of the formation in the new seminary:

[...] to be able to educate Filipino youth to the priesthood, who may work in any part of the world; who have intellectual and moral capacity. With this comes

*the need for suitable educator, an educator who understands the Filipino ways; who knows how to conform to their good customs, to their eastern views, without obliging them to think like Italians; and who is prudent and patient.*²³

4. Dispute with Msgr. Santos and the Visitation of the Vicar General

On February 5, 1951, Bishop Verzosa was relieved of the administration of the Diocese of Lipa with the appointment of Msgr. Rufino Santos as Apostolic Administrator of Lipa, *sede plena*.

In September 1951, barely eight months in office, Msgr. Santos summoned Fr. Coletti for a colloquium. Few days after, Fr. Coletti appeared before the Administrator at his residence in Lipa. What has transpired during the conversation between Msgr. Santos and Fr. Coletti?²⁴ First, Msgr. Santos cited the old agreement (with Bishop Verzosa) which indicates that the Bishop can terminate the presence of the OSJ in the Diocese anytime he wills. Consequently the Bishop told Fr. Coletti that he would write to the Superior General informing him that the former would dismiss the OSJ from the Diocese in two years' time. The Bishop told Fr. Coletti that he was "displeased" with them.

Second: Msgr. Santos questioned the fidelity of the OSJ parishes in paying the quota at CWO.²⁵ Fr. Coletti responded that some parishes had paid while admitted that others did not.

Third: Msgr. Santos then told Fr. Coletti that, according to the contract, the OSJ came to the Diocese for the mission and not to build a seminary. With the erection of a seminary, said the Bishop, they

hindered and would hinder the future of the diocesan seminary. He also questioned why they had to build such a big structure and how would they be able to maintain it without disturbing the people under the Diocese. To this accusation, Fr. Coletti responded that the OSJ did not intend to compete with the diocesan seminary because they had started forming aspirants in 1947, three years before the diocesan seminary was established. He then clarified that the Bishop himself had given them the permission to build the seminary. This may be supported by documents. He also reasoned out that they were obliged to build one in order to continue the mission. They had to form young Filipinos who would succeed them, Italians, in the diocese in the near future.

Lastly, Msgr. Santos also questioned some activities of some OSJ priests in the parishes: the transfer of Fr. Pearson to San Luis without seeking his approval, the service rendered by Fr. May and Fr. Pearson to a community of Sisters in Taal without permission from the proper authority, and the case of Fr. Meda solemnizing a marriage in his parish without the knowledge of the

"They had to form young Filipinos who would succeed them, Italians, in the diocese in the near future."

parish priest of the couple.²⁶ Fr. Coletti explained that Fr. Pearson was transferred in San Luis only temporarily and not as an assistant parish priest, thus there is no need for legal approval of the Administrator. Fr. Coletti defended Fr. Meda, saying that he administered marriage to the couple because the case was a grave and urgent one.

Two days after the meeting, Fr. Coletti went to Msgr. Egidio Vagnozzi, the Apostolic Nuncio to inform him about the colloquium. The latter told Fr. Coletti to write Fr. Rosso and ask him to send to the Nunciature a copy of the letter of Msgr. Santos, as soon as he received it. He also told Fr. Coletti to gather all the necessary documents. He also told that if the Apostolic Administrator questions the ownership of the Seminary, he advised them to make an appeal to Rome. Then Fr. Coletti prepared an account of his conversation with Msgr. Santos verbatim, a copy of the permission letter of Bishop Verzosa for the construction of the seminary, and a copy of the letter of Msgr. Santos to Fr. Meda prohibiting him sub poena to solemnize marriage and sent them to Fr. Rosso.

When the situation of the mission in the Philippines reached the knowledge of the Superior General, he, in his letter, requested having a broader picture of the real condition of the missionaries in the Diocese of Lipa. He wanted to be clarified whether the reasons cited by Msgr. Santos were real or merely rooted on some underlying, unspoken causes. He inquired on the following points: First,

did the contempt of the Bishop arise because he had seen and noted the lack of union among the confreres and their lack of esteem towards one another? Second, was this contempt supported by the local clergy? Third, was the intention of the Bishop to send them away supported by the people? Fourth, was it based on facts that, because there had been some carelessness on the part of some confreres, they made a hurdle to the diocesan seminary and it therefore justified the assumption that they would hinder it in the future? Fifth, was there someone among the confreres who are connected in an exaggerated way with the Bishop? Sixth, did the Diocese have a sufficient number of clergy? Last, did the population prefer the local clergy over them, foreigners?²⁷ Fr. Rosso asked every single confrere to make a detailed account of their opinions regarding the points he raised, to collect them and to send them to him. He advised the confreres to hold a meeting and discuss the new contract to be proposed to the Bishop in the light of the latter's dispositions. He also advised them to remain calm and have rectitude of intention.

Based on the responses of the OSJ missionaries on the guide-questions of Fr. Rosso, among the possible motives for Msgr. Santos' displeasure were pointed out: the Bishop's anti-religious spirit;²⁸ the Bishop's aversion towards the White;²⁹ the Bishop's friction with Fr. Coletti;³⁰ the imprudence and incapacity demonstrated by Fr. Coletti as Superior³¹; the lack of unity among confreres that reached the knowledge of the Bishop;³² and Fr. Tunesi's exaggerated connection with the Bishop that made the latter become aware of the internal affairs of the Oblates.³³ The missionaries were of the same opinion that the newly-built seminary was not a hindrance to the diocesan

seminary; that the Diocese did not have sufficient clergy; and that the Bishop's warning of their dismissal was not supported by the diocesan clergy and the people.

After having read and examined all the opinions written by the confreres, the Superior Council decided to send the Vicar General, Fr. Eugenio Gherlone to the Philippines:

*With this letter we name the confrere Eugenio Gherlone, Vicar General of the Congregation, Visitator for our Houses in the Philippine Islands, according to Art. 177 of our Constitutions. To him, at the meeting of January 15, is given all authority to dispose of the houses and individual confreres and to confer and treat with His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate, with its excellence Ordinary of the Diocese of Lipa and in general with all the civil and religious authorities for matters related to our business in the Philippine Islands.*³⁴

Being a former missionary to the Philippines and being in-charge of the Missions of the Congregation, Fr. Gherlone was the most competent person to deal with the Bishop and the confreres in the Philippines. On March 10, 1952, Fr. Gherlone left Asti. On March 14, 1952, he arrived in Manila.

A source of encouragement for the Oblates during this crisis was the support of Msgr. Egidio Vagnossi who advised the Administrator of Lipa to "leave the Oblates work in peace and told the Oblates to continue working undisturbed and with alacrity."³⁵

Meanwhile, on March 12, 1952, Fr. Luigi Rosso received a letter from Fr. Silvio Masante, an OSJ missionary in California, with an attached letter from Msgr. Guglielmo Piani, now the



Fr. Guido Coletti delivering a speech before the government officials of Ibaan, Batangas (1952)

Apostolic Delegate in Mexico.³⁶ Fr. Masante was in Monterrey looking for vocations and studying the possibility of opening a religious community there. The letter says that in Mexico, everything has already been decided and they were just waiting for the arrival of the OSJ. With this invitation for an opening of a mission in Mexico, Fr. Rosso wrote Fr. Gherlone, already on his way to the Philippines:

*While you are there, if you could find some confreres who may not be needed there and can come to Mexico let me know soon. I say this because it may be that the Administrator [Msgr. Santos] is able and wills to provide some parishes with his clergy. In this case I think it is fitting to show that we are not too attached to the place, when our job is directed almost exclusively to the work in the parishes which is directly dependent on the local Ordinary.*³⁷

Msgr. Piani made his offer official in a letter to the Superior Council dated August 25, 1952, asking at least 10 to 12 priests to be sent to

Mezquital as soon as possible to get the Prelature underway.

When Fr. Gherlone, the appointed Visitor, arrived in Manila, he proceeded to the Apostolic Nuncio. The next day, he went to San Jose. On the days that followed until April 4, he visited the confreres one by one and listened to their opinions about the recent events that took place in the Mission, about the various discord among some confreres, and about the misunderstanding between the confreres and the Apostolic Administrator of Lipa. On March 17, 1952, Fr. Gherlone and Fr. Fornaca, paid a visit to Msgr. Santos. The Bishop prudently made no mention of any particular matter 'but persistently said that he had many things to deal with.'³⁸ This was the impressions of Fr. Gherlone, after his meetings with the Bishop and the missionaries:

Incompatibility of characters, misunderstandings and quarrels among confreres prompted the Superior for a pullout and transfer of personnel subsequently in the

parishes of Rosario, San Jose and San Luis. To the attempts made rashly by the Superior to remedy these problems the subjects did not correspond with the docility and readiness desired, knowing that they have the bishop in their favor. This influenced in creating a certain tension between the Superior and the Administrator, a tension which was aggravated by the addition of some causal mishaps and insubordination of someone in the campaign for the Diocesan Seminary[...]. This state of affairs antagonized the minds of the confreres, sowed pessimism, doubted the possibility to last in the Diocese of Lipa, suggested the need for a Visitor... The Fathers felt that the Administrator wants to get rid of us; they are left to understand that he likes the Italian Josephites- not quite submissive to the Prelate - to leave and to call in their place other religious. The Bishop said...

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From page 5**(NOT A PROBLEM BUT A SOLUTION)**

...whose Davidic lineage, Jesus is regarded as the Christ, the true Messiah foretold by the prophets.

Though his appearances in the Gospels merely assist a Christological claim, we are blessed to have discovered in this characterization a virtue that is truly Josephite – Jesus is the center, we are to claim and draw nothing to ourselves. In an age of ‘selfie-driven’ hedonism, we are reminded that Jesus Christ is the reason we celebrate Christmas. Joseph’s loving gaze to Jesus screams loudly in silence, “Truly, You are the Son of God.” ☩

From page 9**(O GLORIOUS PATRIARCH, ST. JOSEPH)**

... Joseph became a true husband to Mary and a true father to his Son. It must be clear by now that our founder’s faithful imitation of St. Joseph is his surest way of fulfilling the will of the Father through serving the interests of Jesus.

CONCLUSION

St. Joseph Marelo found in the life of St. Joseph the “Goldilocks Zone” of discipleship. For our founder, the perfect harmony between St. Joseph’s contemplation and action is the key to obey in faith the will of God. After successfully decoding this great mystery of the silent carpenter from Nazareth, Marelo would never hesitate to exhort the Oblates: “Serve the interests of Jesus like St. Joseph.”

1. After consulting Fr. Alberto Santiago, OSJ about the matter, Fr. Guido Miglietta, OSJ thus wrote via Facebook Messenger on November 28, 2019 at 2:25 PM: “I asked from [sic] Fr. Alberto Santiago. We do not have any text contening [sic] a reference to St. Joseph in our founder St. Josph [sic] Marelo, before his devotional reference to our saint in a letter of him written on january [sic]- 1869. The presence of Fr. Marelo to the Council Vatican I - as a secretary of the

bishop of Asti mgr. [sic] Carlo Savio, and the declaration of St. Joseph as the patron of the Universal Church on [sic] 1870 introduced him to the spirituality of St. Joseph.”

2. I cannot read and understand Italian texts very well.

3. For us, Oblates of St. Joseph, St. Joseph Marelo is the new St. Francis de Sales. See Oblates of Saint Joseph (Philippine Province), Manual of Prayers (OSJ Provincialate, Santuario de San Jose: Mandaluyong City, 2012), 106.

4. Nicola Cuccovillo, OSJ, “St. Francis de Sales in the Spirituality of St. Joseph Marelo,” in *Studi Marelliani: St. Joseph Marelo in the History of Piedmont in the Second Half of the 19th Century*, yr. 2, nos. 1-4, (Jan/Dec 2010): 30.

5. *Ibid.*, 29-30.

6. *Ibid.*, 30.

7. *Ibid.*, 30.

8. Severino Dalmaso, OSJ, quoted in Cuccovillo, OSJ, “St. Francis de Sales in the Spirituality of St. Joseph Marelo,” 30.

9. John Baptist Cortona, OSJ, *Brief Memories of the Life of Joseph Marelo Bishop of Acqui and of the Congregation He Founded* (Santa Cruz, California: Guardian of the Redeemer Books, 1993), 16.

10. *Ibid.*, 81.

11. St. Joseph Marelo, Letter 14. See footnote 153. In the other version of the compilation of the founder’s letters, the same footnote is numbered 135.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

14. If Marelo personally encountered Don Bosco on his visit in the Oratory in 1867, they would have been friends for twenty-one years.

15. St. Joseph Marelo (Writings, p. 247) quoted in Oblates of St. Joseph, *Lessons in the Spiritual Life: For the Novitiates of The Oblates of St. Joseph* (Rome, 2005), 70.

16. “Cleric Anacleto Bianco, called Bro. Felix, entered the Congregation in 1886 and was ordained a priest in 1899. He died in Asti in 1945 after a varied apostolate in various houses in Italy.” See footnote 745 under St. Joseph Marelo’s Letter 276 [242].

17. Oblates of St. Joseph, *Lessons in the Spiritual Life*, 146.

18. *Ibid.*, 85.

19. Cortona, OSJ, *Brief Memories*, 24. In his letter to Fr. John Baptist Cortona dated November 1890, St. Joseph Marelo stated that he had a copy of Philotea (*Introduction to the Devout Life*) on his desk.

20. St. Joseph Marelo, Letter 228 [199].

21. Here, I used the term “Salesian” to qualify the word “character” in relation to the influence of St. Francis de Sales on Marelo’s understanding of the hidden life of the great patriarch. This does not refer to any congregation leading the Salesian

spirituality.

22. Stephen Delaude, Stephen Rosetti, Joseph Riccio and Egidio Motta were the closest friends of Marelo. These four were the “recipients of his letter when he was a cleric.” See footnote 6 of Letter 1.

23. *Ibid.*, Letter 26 [23 and 24].

24. He started to use the initials W.G.M.G. (Long live Jesus, Mary and Joseph) in his letter to Fr. Delaude, written in Asti in the end of January 1869. See St. Joseph Marelo, Letter 27 [25].

25. St. Joseph Marelo, Letter 37 [35]. It is interesting to note that contained in this letter is the indication that during this time St. Joseph’s day was Friday, not Wednesday.

26. St. Joseph Marelo, Letter 64 [62]. See footnote 240.

27. Laurence J. Spiteri, *A Guide to Church History: From the Council of Trent to Post-Vatican II*, vol. 5 (St. Pauls: Makati City, 2014), 144.

28. Oblates of St. Joseph-USA, “Quemadmodum Deus,” osjusa.org, under “St. Joseph in Magisterium,” <http://osjusa.org/st-joseph/magisterium/quemadmodum-deus/> (accessed November 28, 2019).

29. St. Joseph Marelo, Letter 64 [62].

30. Giovenale Dotta, CSI, “Spirituality and apostolate of the laity in the Second Half of the 19th Century in Piedmont,” in *Studi Marelliani: St. Joseph Marelo in the History of Piedmont in the Second Half of the 19th Century*, yr. 2, nos. 1-4, (Jan/Dec 2010): 76.

31. See footnote 316 of the founder’s Letter 83 [76]. For a detailed work of St. Leonard Murialdo see Dotta, CSI, “Spirituality and apostolate of the laity in the Second Half of the 19th Century in Piedmont,” 74-76.

32. This “new church” was the “il Gesu” chapel “in the Michelerio complex as its center, thus fostering also Canon Cerruti’s charitable initiative.” Siro A. Dal Degan, OSJ, *History of the Congregation 1878-1993: With a Political and Religious Background of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Sacramento, California: Oblates of St. Joseph, 1993), 24.

33. St. Joseph Marelo, Letter 83 [76].

34. Dal Degan, OSJ, *History of the Congregation 1878-1993*, 24.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Fr. Cesare Rolla (1849-1922) was the pastor of Mongardino d’Asti beginning in 1879. See footnote 386 of Letter 107 [94].

37. Cortona, OSJ, *Brief Memories*, 21-22.

38. *Ibid.*, 21. See also St. Joseph Marelo, Letter 108 [95].

39. These letters are 158 [140], 170 [150], 171 [151], 182 [157], 193 [167], and 196 [170].

40. Cortona, OSJ, *Brief Memories*, 86-87. [Additions mine].

41. St. Joseph Marelo quoted in Cortona, OSJ, *Brief Memories*, 24.

42. Cortona, OSJ, *Brief Memories*, 24.

43. Tarcisio Stramare, OSJ, Saint Joseph "Guardian of the Redeemer" Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II: Text and Reflections, trans. Fr. Paul J. Pavese, OSJ (Santa Cruz, California: Guardian of the Redeemer Books, 1990), 43.

44. Cortona, OSJ, Brief Memories, 162-163.

45. John Paul II, Redemptoris Custos [Apostolic Exhortation on The Person and Mission of Saint Joseph in the Life of Christ and of the Church], 15 August 1989, nos. 4-7.

46. Cortona, OSJ, Brief Memories, 159.

47. St. Joseph Marellio, Letter 10 ☩

From page 28

(SE VANNO, MI FANNO...)

...to the missionary environment. But it needs to be said that these difficulties may also be great sources of virtues like humility, patience, perseverance and trust in Divine Providence. In the grand scheme of things, I realised that I am only one of the thousands who try to contribute in my own way in the building up of the Church through the missionary apostolate and that there is no need to dwell on the difficulties but to see the beauty in the way the faithful had responded to the call to be missionaries.

Going back to what Elisabetta Costa was saying, the missionary vocation in the modern world now takes on a more inclusive meaning by making the lay discover their missionary calling as fruit of their own baptism. Pope Francis in fact, invites everybody in this Extraordinary Month of the Mission to understand that it is a must to be missionaries. "To be a missionary is part of our DNA as Christians."

Bianca Marengo, in the same Diocesan Journal on the Mission also wrote an article where she speaks about BEING MISSIONARIES IN REALITY WHERE WE FIND OURSELVES (Essere Missionari Nella Propria Realtà). She says "if we take to heart our being children of God, we must all be missionaries

for all time, in whatever time of the day and in whatever place we find ourselves: in our families, in school, in our workplace, on the streets and even in the field of politics..."

In what way? Marengo speaks in concrete terms saying, "by trying to love and sharing love in concrete gestures: by weaving interpersonal relationships based on reciprocal respect, on patience, on attentive listening, on condision and collaboration, on our capacity to forgive other's offenses, by the use of and diffusion of language that is not arrogant, by performing gestures of peace..."

She ends the article by saying, "Who among us who dream of a better world cannot but BE a missionary."

"Baptised and Sent" is the theme of this Extraordinary Month of the Mission and so we are indeed. BLESSED because we are children of God and we are all SENT to share this blessing to all the world. We are all called to give a living testimony of our faith to world. A faith that is nourished by the Word of God and the Eucharist. A faith that is capable of bringing the love and mercy of God to all.

This is what it means to be a "Missionary." This is what our first missionaries brought from Italy, planted here in our soil and now after more than 100 years has given us much fruit. In the congregation we now have modern day missionaries who try to emulate our predecessors but today and into the future, side by side with the lay and all the faithful, we will continue to spread the love and mercy of God to all peoples because the work of being a "missionari" never stops until Jesus Christ comes again. ☩

From page 36

(ST. JOSEPH IN THE OBLATE FORMATION)

...of their Founder and the example of their early confreres by cultivating prayer (cf. C 46). Fr. John Baptist Cortona, OSJ writes in his "Brief Memories" that the first confreres were outstanding in the virtue of piety (1993, 140). The exemplary exercise of such virtue of the first confreres was of course inherited from the Founder. Even before the founding of the congregation, Fr. Cortona narrates, St. Joseph Marellio lived a pious life manifested by the many long periods of prayer and constant meditation that he spent (cf. 1993, 138-141). The first confreres were also instructed on the observance of rigorous silence as a way to practice the virtue of piety. All these pious practices of the Oblates are summed up in the Founder's maxim "be Carthusians indoors..." (Cortona, 1993, 159-164). In responding to the demands of prayer life, the Oblates take recourse to St. Joseph as model. In a spiritual conference with the first confreres, Fr. Cortona said, "We cannot pride ourselves on being sons of St. Joseph if we do not imitate him, and we cannot in any way imitate him without devoting ourselves to the interior life" (Cortona, 1993, 159).

Fr. Toschi recognizes that we do not only seek St. Joseph's protection by asking him to pray to Christ with us, but we also take him as a model for imitation in the various facets of the way he lived the Christian mystery in response to his vocation (1993, 104). Not only is St. Joseph the patron of the Oblates, he is also their exemplar in all aspects of their life as religious be it in the initial formation or ongoing formation. Their ultimate mission is to "serve the interests of Jesus". But this is always carried out in imitation of St. Joseph – "like St. Joseph".

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From page 38**(GIFT OF ACCOMPANIMENT)**

...gave a two-day workshop/seminar organized by the Commission on Formation of the OSJ-Philippine Province last July 26, 2019 at the OSJ College Seminary. Present on the event were formators in different stages (from aspirancy to period of temporary vows) and lay professionals who also work in the formation of seminarians.

1. Francis, *Address to the Plenary of the Congregation for Clergy* (3 October 2014): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 226 (4 October 2014), 8.

2. OSJ Commission on Formation, *The Gift of Accompaniment in Formation* [5]. ☩

From page 51**(REORGANIZATION AFTER THE WAR)**

...he was displeased for their acts of insubordination; anyhow, he is ready to put aside the past if the Fathers on their part by promise a more devout submission...³⁹

On April 4, 1952, the Fr. Rosso received a telegram from Msgr. Piani asking for a response regarding the mission in Mezquital. The Superior General replied that he was still waiting for the response of the Vicar General from the Philippines. That same day, he sent a letter to Fr. Gherlone asking if they could count on some confreres from the Philippines that, knowing Spanish and English, would be very suitable for a Spanish-speaking region bordering the United States. "Maybe it could be someone who finds himself uncomfortable there or is uncomfortable to the confreres and who instead could do very well elsewhere for the spirit of initiative and industriousness."⁴⁰ That same day, April 4, 1952, Fr. Gherlone had

a meeting with Msgr. Santos. He narrates:

Yesterday I met with the Bishop to treat formally the most burning questions ... I found him better disposed than I could expect. He agreed for good to the contract signed under Msgr. Verzosa - formulated in 1940 by Fr. Prandi with the cooperation of Msgr. Piani - and with this act the "thorny" dispute is considered closed, thorny in someone's mind.

*In the morning of Holy Friday, a monthly recollection would be held here in San Jose, and in such occasion, a meeting, in which I would try to avoid what may be stormy: even here the confreres lament: "hominem non habeo." If God wills, after speaking with every confrere to advise them generous cooperation for the good of the Mission, I would take the fight back on April 19, Saturday[...] To St. Joseph be the rest of the matter, which for the moment, looks good. The confreres show satisfaction with the results which, moreover, would depend one hundred percent on their good will, given that the good God always helps those who help themselves in doing good.*⁴¹

Through the close guidance of Fr. Rosso and the intervention of Fr. Gherlone, the misunderstanding between the OSJ and Msgr. Santos was resolved. More than assuring the presence of the OSJ in the Diocese of Lipa, the incident became an occasion for the OSJ in Lipa to examine themselves, particularly in the aspect of community life that they should cultivate, for a more effective witnessing in their apostolate.

1. Orig. letter of Fr. Visintainer to Fr. Garberoglio, Feb 16, 1946, *Archivio Generale - Oblati di San Giuseppe*. Henceforth, AGOSJ.

2. Orig. letter of Fr. Fornaca to Fr. Garberoglio, Oct 15, 1945, AGOSJ.

3. Orig. letter of Fr. Visintainer

to Fr. Garberoglio, Feb 16, 1946, AGOSJ.

4. Ibid.

5. Orig. letter of Bishop Verzosa to Fr. Rosso, Oct 1, 1946, AGOSJ.

6. Orig. letter of Fr. Fornaca to Fr. Luigi Rosso, Mar 28, 1947, AGOSJ.

7. Orig. letter of Fr. Coletti to Fr. Rosso, Jul 7, 1947, AGOSJ.

8. Financial Statement, Jan-Jun 1946, AGOSJ.

9. Orig. letter of Fr. Coletti to Fr. Rosso, Nov. 20, 1947, AGOSJ.

10. Orig. letter of Fr. Luigi Rosso to Fr. Guido Coletti, Aug 19, 1948, AGOSJ.

11. Orig. letter Fr. Edoardo Meda to Fr. Luigi Rosso, Feb 1, 1949, AGOSJ.

12. Orig. letter of Fr. Bo to Fr. Rosso, Jul 8, 1953, AGOSJ.

13. V. SORRENTI, "Un rapido sguardo alla nostra Missione dalle Filippine" in Joseph, Sept 1950, 12-8, pp. 12-13.

14. Letter of Fr. Augusto Ignacio to Fr. Coletti, Nov 21, 1947, OSJPA, Box 1, I, 2. Spanish.

15. Letter of Arch. Gbriel Reyes to Fr. Coletti, Dec 21, 1951, OSJPA, Box 1, I, 2.

16. Orig. letter of Fr. Coletti to Fr. Rosso, Jul 7, 1947, AGOSJ.

17. Orig. letter of Fr. Rosso to Fr. Coletti, Nov 7, 1947, AGOSJ.

18. Orig. letter of Fr. Sorrenti to Fr. Luigi Rosso, Oct 30, 1947, AGOSJ.

19. R. TABON, personal written account.

20. Verbale, Jan 5, 1948, OSJPA Box 1, I, 4.

21. Orig. letter of Fr. Coletti to Fr. Rosso, Feb 21, 1950, AGOSJ.

22. R. TABON, personal written account.

23. Orig. letter of Fr. Coletti to Fr. Rosso, Feb 21, 1950, AGOSJ.

24. See Letter of Fr. Coletti to Fr. Rosso, Sept 27, 1951, AGOSJ, Relazione del Colloquio tra Mons. Santos and Fr. Guido Coletti, tenuto il giorno 22 Sett, 1951.

25. The beginnings of the CBCP may be traced back to February 15, 1945 when the Most Rev. William

Piani, apostolic delegate to the Philippines, created the Catholic Welfare Organization, to meet the war emergency. On 19 July, the CWO became the official organization of the hierarchy of the Philippines. Incorporated on 22 January 1946, its purpose was to unify, coordinate and organize the Filipino Catholics in the works of education, social welfare, religious and spiritual aid under the direction of the Filipino bishops.

26. Fr. Meda officiated the marriage of a couple from another parish. The couple, because the parents did not want them to get married on the date they desired, decided to move away from their home and live together. Ashamed of coming back unmarried, they desired to be married in the church as soon as possible. The couple inquired in their parish, but learned that they had to pay P80 for the service, an amount unaffordable for them. They inquired to the parish of Lipa, but the payment was P70. The relatives approached Fr. Meda in Padre Garcia. Fr. Meda asked his sacristan to go to the parish priest of the couple to ask permission, but the sacristan did not find him in the rectory. Then Fr. Meda inquired in the fiscal and learned the couple were baptized and there were no canonical impediments in the planned marriage. To avoid the option of getting married civilly or in the Aglipayan rite, Fr. Meda agreed to marry them. Fr. Meda also admitted that what he did was not perfectly orthodox but believes in his conscience that what he did was not wrong. See letter of Fr. Meda to Fr. Rosso, Sept 28, 1951, AGOSJ.

27. Orig. letter of Fr. Rosso to Fr. Coletti, Oct 7, 1951, AGOSJ.

28. Orig. letters of Fr. Bo, Nov 2, 1951; Fr. Coletti, Oct 23, 1951; Fr. May, Oct 26, 1951, AGOSJ. It must be noted that, Msgr. Santos also had a conflict with the Jesuits, the Good Shepherd Sisters, the Benedictine

Sisters, and another religious congregation of Sisters in Lipa.

29. Orig. letters of Fr. Meda, October 24; Fr. Lano, Oct 24, 1951; Fr. Coletti, Oct 23, 1951; Fr. Visintainer, Dec 19, 1951, AGOSJ.

30. Orig. letters of Fr. Bo, Nov 2, 1951; Fr. Sorrenti, Oct 25, 1951, AGOSJ.

31. Orig. letter of Fr. Tunesi, Nov 12, 1951, AGOSJ.

32. Orig. letter of Fr. Tunesi, Nov 12, 1951, AGOSJ.

33. Orig. letter of Fr. Sorrenti, Oct 25, 1951; Letter of Fr. Coletti, Oct 23, 1951, AGOSJ.

34. Orig. letter of Fr. Luigi Rosso, March 10, 1952, AGOSJ.

35. See orig. letter of Fr. Meda to Fr. Rosso, Nov 14, 1951, AGOSJ.

36. Msgr. Piani knew the OSJ well since he had been previously the Apostolic Delegate in the Philippines. It must be noted that, as Apostolic Delegate in the Philippines, he saved the OSJ mission in the country for several occasions.

37. Orig. letter of Fr. Rosso to Fr. Gherlone, Mar 13, 1952, AGOSJ.

38. See orig. letter of Fr. Gherlone to Fr. Rosso, Mar 18, 1952, AGOSJ.

39. Pro Memoria of the Visit written by Fr. Eugenio Gherlone, Apr 1952, AGOSJ.

40. Orig. letter of Fr. Rosso to Fr. Gherlone, Apr 4, 1952, AGOSJ.

41. Orig. letter of Fr. Gherlone to Fr. Rosso, Apr 5, 1952, AGOSJ. ☩

"...Marello wished his sons to be apostles outdoors and to bring Christ to the world with that generous spirit with which St. Joseph called to service by the Eternal Father, nurtured Jesus and prepared Him for His ministry of salvation."

Heed God's call to be
Religious Priests
and Brothers

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