



*May your Kingdom come!*

## MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IN ASIA

DECEMBER 2012



**Faith** is a gift that is meant to be shared. In this Year of Faith, we join the Church in celebrating the truth of our faith as well as in her renewed effort to evangelize and re-evangelize. Each of us has to take part in the mission of the Church and we hope that you may be inspired to celebrate and share the faith that you have received.



The Logo for the Year of Faith is composed of a square, bordered field on which a boat, symbolizing the Church, is represented as sailing on a graphically minimal representation of waves. The main mast of the boat is a cross from which sails are displayed in the form of dynamic signs which compose the trigram of Christ (IHS). The background to the sails is a sun which, associated with the trigram, refers also to the Eucharist.



*Blessed Pope John XXIII*  
50th Anniversary of the  
Second Vatican Council



*Blessed Pope John Paul II*  
20th Anniversary of the  
Catechism of the Catholic Church



*Pope Benedict XVI*  
Celebration of the Year  
of Faith 2012-2013

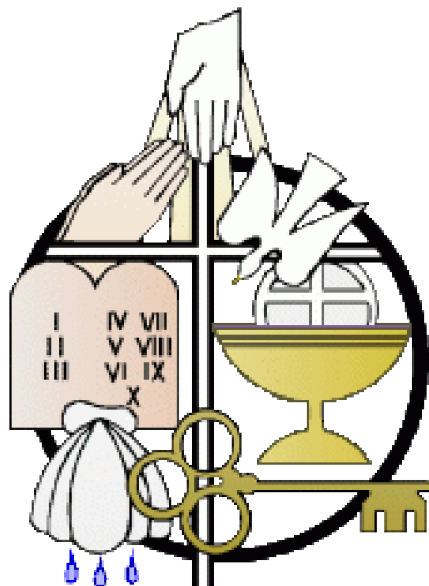
- The year of faith is intended to contribute to a renewed conversion to the Lord Jesus, to the re-discovery of faith and so we become credible and joy-filled witnesses to the Risen Lord in the world of today.
- Pope Benedict XVI in his *“Apostolic Letter”* Porta Fidei dated Oct. 11, 2011, announced the Year of Faith. This year began last October 11, 2012, on the 50th anniversary of the opening of the *“Second Vatican Council”* called by Blessed Pope John XXIII, Oct. 11, 1962 and the twentieth of the promulgation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, given to the Church by Blessed Pope John Paul II Oct. 11, 1992. The Year of Faith will end on November 24, 2013, the *“Solemnity of Christ the King”*.

ANCELLE MISSIONARIE DEL SANTISSIMO SACRAMENTO - ASIA

# FROM THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

## THE CREED

- Is the first pillar of the Catechism. It is also called the “*The Profession of Faith*” which is what the Catholic Church and Catholic faith believe. The Creed is always recited aloud during Sunday Masses and during Catholic celebrations to confess our baptismal promises.
- The Creed is divided into **12 articles**, according to the number of the 12 apostles. Ancient tradition says that the apostles gathered together in Jerusalem, and each of them composed one article of the Creed. Binding together the 12 articles, they composed the so called the **Apostolic Creed**, that wherever they go, they can preach the same faith. However, what we are using today is called the **Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed**. This was composed to counter a widening rift within the church, made by the confusing teaching of Arianism. In 325 A.D., Emperor Constantine convened a Council in Nicaea; and in 381 A.D., a second Council met in Constantinople. It adopted a revised and expanded form of the 325 A.D. Creed, now known as The Nicene Creed.
- **Jesus Christ** is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. *Jesus* in Hebrew means **God Saves**. Christ in Greek, or *Messiah* in Hebrew, means **anointed**. To say that Jesus Christ is the Lord means to profess that He is God.
- **Symbols of the Holy Spirit**: *Water* – signifies the new and eternal life we receive in Baptism. *Oil* – signifies our consecration to Christ. *Fire* – signifies the burning love of God for His creatures. *Dove* – signifies the purity of our soul at the day of our Baptism.
- **Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit**: *Wisdom* – the capacity to love spiritual things more than material ones. *Understanding* – the capacity to understand the



truths of faith in an easy and deep way. *Counsel* – the capacity to discern correctly and immediately the will of God in the different circumstances in life. *Strength* – the capacity to be strong in fulfilling the will of God in the moments of trials. *Knowledge* – the capacity to appreciate every creature in relation to its Creator. *Piety* – the capacity to love God with all our heart, and

our neighbor as ourselves. *Fear of the Lord* – the capacity to respect the majesty of God and to be afraid of sin.

- The **4 symbols** of the Church: *People of God* – the Church is the Community of those who believe in Christ. *Body of Christ* – the Church is the spiritual body of Christ upon which, Christ is the head, and all of us are the members. *Bride of Christ* – the Church is the spiritual bride of Christ upon which, the Church becomes the mother of the members of Christ. *Flock of Christ* – the Church is like a flock, and Jesus is her shepherd.

- The **4 Characteristics** of the Church: **One** – the Church is one, because of her founder that reflects the mystery in the unity of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Holy** – because Christ, who with the Father and the Spirit is hailed as ‘alone holy.’ **Catholic** – the word “catholic” means “universal”; henceforth, she is missionary by her very nature. Thus, the Church has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race. **Apostolic** – Christ governs her through Peter and the other apostles, who are present in their successors, the Pope and the college of bishops.

*Amen* – is a Hebrew word, which means ‘Yes, I approve.’ We end all our prayers with *Amen*, because we want to put in practice what we profess with our words.

### The Creed

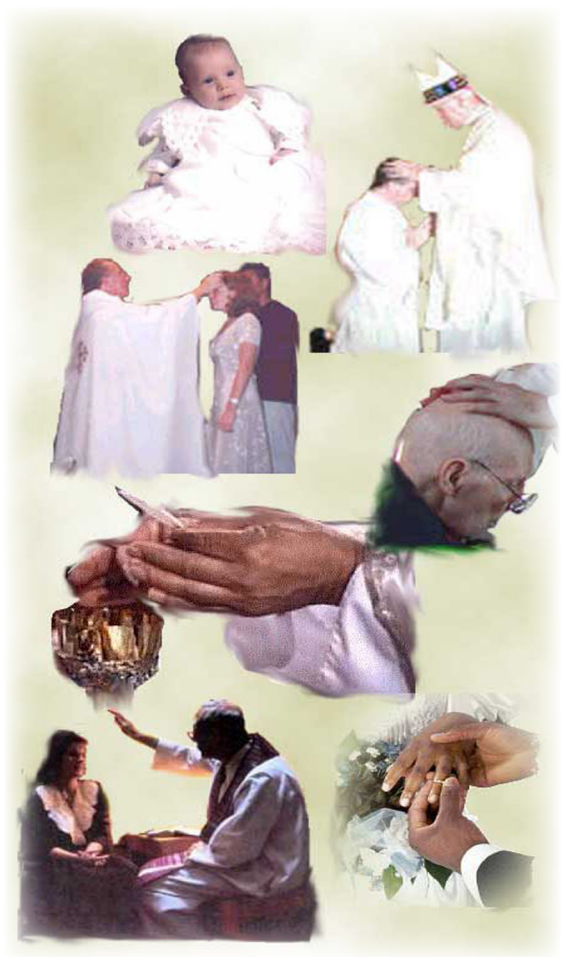
(1) I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. (2) I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, con-substantial with the Father; through him all things were made. (3) For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. (4) For our sake, He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, He suffered death and was buried, (5) and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. (6) He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. (7) He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end. (8) I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. (9) I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. (10) I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins (11) and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead, (12) and the life of the world to come.

Amen.



# THE SACRAMENTS

- **Baptism** is the first sacrament. When we are baptized, we become children of God. Members of the church are given eternal life and become missionaries. We can receive Baptism only once.
- The word “*baptize*” comes from the Greek word, *baptizein*, and means to “plunge” or “immerse.” A *priest*, a *minister*, or a *layperson* can baptize. What he does is to say, “***I baptize you (mention the name) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit***”, at the same time pouring water over the person who is being baptized. There are **two symbols of baptism**: **Water** - symbolizes the washing of sins; **Light** - symbolizes Christ Himself.
- The **Sacrament of Confirmation** is when the **Holy Spirit** comes to us in a special way making us strong in faith. Those who receive this Sacrament, by the power of the Holy Spirit, grow in faith and are ready for adult Christian life. We are confirmed by the **Bishop or the priest appointed by the Bishop**. He places his hands on us, prays, and blesses us with **Holy Oil** called *chrism*.
- The **Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist** is when Jesus is with us in the **bread and wine**. Through prayers, and the invocation to the Holy Spirit to come upon the gifts - the bread and wine become the **Body and Blood of Jesus**. Only a priest can do this. We believe that God is in the Eucharistic bread and wine so they should be adored and honored.
- This sacrament has different names: **the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Sacrament of Penance, the Sacrament of Confession**. This sacrament is confessing our sins to God. God knows what sins we have committed and will commit but with this sacrament, we are aware of those sins. When we go to confession, we receive graces from God to make it easier not to sin again. We should receive this sacrament as often as possible.
- The **Sacrament of Holy Orders or the Sacrament of Ordination** is for men to become priests. This sacrament was given to us by Jesus at the Last Supper. The first men who received the power of priesthood were the *apostles*. A priest is given special powers through *ordination*. He then can give us all the sacraments. Priests are called in a special way to help us and to preach the Word of God.



## The Sacraments

1. Baptism
2. Confirmation
3. Holy Eucharist
4. Reconciliation
5. Holy Ordination
6. Matrimony
7. Anointing of the Sick

- The **Sacrament of Holy Matrimony or Marriage** is when a man and a woman get married. They make promises to each other and to God to live together helping each other in good times and bad times, in health and in sickness, forever. The sacrament of marriage gives grace to the man and woman so they can live together, support each other and raise their children.
- The **Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, also called Extreme Unction**, is when a priest prays and blesses us with **Holy Oil** when we are in danger of dying. The sacrament gives us special grace and strength. If we are conscious, we should make a confession before death. If we are not conscious, this sacrament will gain pardon for us. We can receive this sacrament more than once.

# THE COMMANDMENTS

- The third pillar is the Commandments or the life of Faith. With the help of God's law and grace by following and living His Ten Commandments, the Catholics are called upon to live a life of faith in the image of God.
- God gave Moses His ten commandments, written in two stone tablets at Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments teach us to love God and our neighbor. We must observe the Ten Commandments in order to have eternal life.
- **Sin** is an act of disobedience to the commandments of God. There are two kinds of sin: **Venial** – is a sin which slightly wounds our soul; **Mortal** – is a grave sin which removes from us the sanctifying grace of God.



- **Vices** are habitual and strong dispositions to do evil. The vices come from the **7 Capital Sins**: **Pride** – is to believe that we are superior to our neighbor and to God; **Avarice** – is not sharing our earthly goods with the poor; **Envy** – is to be sad for a good thing which belongs to our neighbor; **Wrath** – is the wild passion to do evil to God and to our neighbor; **Lust** – is the uncontrolled sexual desire; **Gluttony** – is the indiscriminate desire to eat and drink; **Sloth** – is spiritual laziness in doing good.
- **Conscience** is the mysterious voice of God in our heart, which tells us to do good and avoid evil.
- **Virtues** are the habitual and strong dispositions to do good. There are **4 Cardinal Virtues**: **Prudence** – the capacity to discern good from evil and the steadfast effort to put it into practice; **Justice** – the habit to give God and our neighbor what is their own; **Fortitude** – the capacity to be constant in doing good even at the cost of great sacrifices; **Temperance** – the ability to use the created goods with balance, without abusing them.

## *The Commandments*

1. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have other gods beside me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep the holy Sabbath day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

- There are **3 Theological Virtues**: **Faith** – is to believe in God and in whatever He teaches us through the Church; **Hope** – is the desire of eternal life as the reward of our faith and of our good deeds; **Charity** – is to love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves.

*God's gift, which faith renders present, is not simply the promise of better conditions in this world. It is the proclamation that our life's ultimate meaning is beyond this world, in that full communion with God that we await at the end of time.*

*(from the Concluding Message, Synod of Bishops 2012)*



# THE LORD'S PRAYER

- **Prayer** is the elevation of the soul to God. Before we pray, we have to invoke the Holy Spirit. Jesus told us to pray continually and never lose heart.

- **The Forms of Prayer:** **Blessing** – is to do or to say good about someone. When we thank God for all His graces, we bless Him. **Adoration** – is to prostrate ourselves in silence before our God. **Petition** – is to ask God for spiritual and material graces. **Intercession** – is to ask God for spiritual and material graces in behalf of our neighbor. **Thanksgiving** – is to thank God for everything He has given us. **Praise** – is to glorify God for the very fact that He is God, apart from what He does.



- **Our Father in heaven** – God is our Father, and we are His children. He wants us to call Him “Abba or Daddy.”
- **Kinds of Prayer:** **Vocal Prayer** – is to give glory to God through our voice and our songs. **Meditation** – is to search in the silence of our heart for God’s love and will. **Silent Prayer** – is the silent and loving contemplation of God’s love. **Prayer of the Heart** – is the condition of continuous prayer.

## *The Seven Petitions in the Lord’s Prayer:*

- **Holy be your name** – We must bless and praise the Holy Name of God.
- **Your Kingdom Come** – The kingdom of God is the communion of love with God. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom.
- **Your will be done on earth as in heaven** – To do the will of God means to listen to His words and to put them into practice.
- **Give us today our daily bread** – The daily bread is the spiritual and material graces we need in our life.
- **Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us** – God forgives all our sins only if we forgive those who sin against us.
- **Do not bring us to the Test** – We ask God not to allow us to fall into temptation. In order to overcome temptation we need perseverance in prayer.
- **But deliver us from evil** - We ask God to cast away the evil from our life.

## *Congratulations His Eminence Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle!*

Pope Benedict XVI has appointed Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Tagle as one of the newest cardinals along with five others. On November 24, 2012 the Pope formally elevated them as new cardinals. Tagle, 55, will now be the country’s seventh cardinal joining the line of retired Archbishops Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, 80, of Manila and Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, 81, of Cebu. Born in Manila on June 21, 1957, Tagle took his Philosophy and Theology at the Ateneo De Manila University San Jose Major Seminary. He was ordained to the priesthood on February 27, 1982, at the age of 25. Tagle has been serving as the 32nd archbishop of Manila since last December, succeeding Rosales.

Our religious community rejoices with the Catholic Philippine Local Church for his appointment. We support Cardinal Tagle’s mission and responsibilities as a new prince of the Church through our prayers.



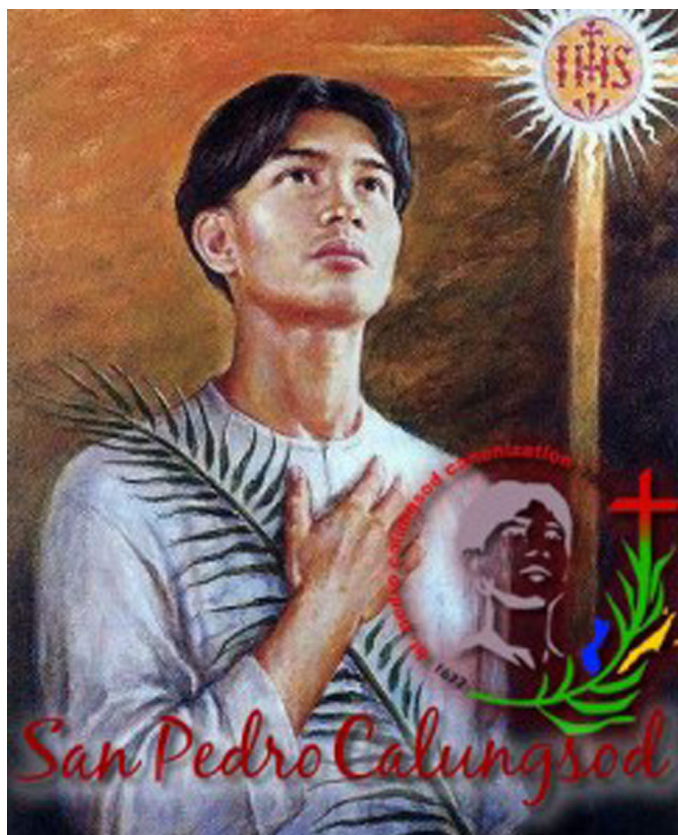
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*We share with you the story of this young Filipino Saint who was canonized on 21st of October, 2012. Young and old alike can take a lot of inspiration and challenges in living out our faith as we look at the brief yet meaningful life that St. Pedro has lived.*

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## ST. PEDRO CALUNGSOD MODEL OF THE FILIPINO YOUNG PEOPLE

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Pedro Calungsod was a teenage native of the Visayas region of the Philippines. Very little is known about him. We do not even know where exactly in the Visayas he came from or who his parents were. He was just one of the boy catechists who went with some Spanish Jesuit missionaries from the Philippines to the Ladrone Islands in the western North Pacific Ocean in 1668 to evangelize the Chamorros. In that century, the Jesuits in the Philippines used to train and employ young boys as competent catechists and versatile assistants in their missions. The Ladrone Islands at that time were part of the old Diocese of Cebu. It has been said that he was 14 years old when he joined the missionaries for the missionary works in the Ladrone Islands.

Life in the Ladrone Islands was hard. The supplies for the mission did not arrive regularly; the jungles were too thick to cross; the cliffs were very steep to climb and the islands were frequently visited by devastating typhoons. Despite the hardships, the missionaries persevered, and the mission was blessed with many conversions. But very soon, a Chinese man named Choco became envious of the missionaries. He started to spread rumors

that the baptismal water was poisonous. Because some sickly Chamorro infants who had been baptized died, many believed Choco and eventually apostatized. They began to persecute the missionaries, many of whom were killed.

Martyrdom came to Padre Diego and Pedro Calungsod on April 2, 1672 which was the Saturday before Passion Sunday of that year. At around seven o'clock that morning, Padre Diego and Pedro Calungsod who by then was already about seventeen years old, went to the village of Tomhon in Guam because they were told that a baby girl was just born in the village. They went to ask Matapang, the child's father, to bring the baby out for baptism. Matapang had been a Christian and a friend of the missionaries but had apostatized. He angrily refused to have his baby christened. To give Matapang some time to cool down, Padre Diego and Pedro gathered the children and some adults of the village at the nearby shore and started chanting with them the truths of the Catholic Faith. Determined to kill the missionaries, Matapang went out to ask for the help of another villager, named Hirao, who was not a Christian. At first, Hirao refused. He knew of the kindness of the missionaries towards the natives. But when Matapang branded him a coward, he decided to join Matapang. While Matapang was away, Padre Diego and Pedro obtained permission of Matapang's Christian mother and baptized the baby girl. When Matapang learned of the baptism, he became even more furious. He violently hurled spears first at Pedro who presumably tried to defend the priest. Pedro was able to avoid the spears with remarkable agility.



But finally, Pedro got hit by a spear at the chest and fell to the ground. Hirao immediately charged towards him and finished him off with a blow of a cutlass on the head. After that, the assassins also killed Padre Diego. Matapang took the crucifix of Padre Diego and pounded it with a stone while blaspheming God. Then, both assassins ripped the clothes off Pedro and Padre Diego. They dragged them to the shore, tied large stones to their feet. They brought their bodies out to sea on a proa and threw them into the sea. The remains of the martyrs were never found.

When the companion missionaries of Pedro learned of his death, they exclaimed, "Fortunate youth! How well rewarded his four years of persevering service to God in the difficult mission are; he has become the precursor of our superior, Padre Diego, in Heaven!" **They remembered Pedro to be a boy with a very good disposition, a virtuous catechist, a faithful assistant, a good Catholic whose perseverance in the Faith even to the point of martyrdom proved him to be a good soldier of Christ.** The faith that was planted in the Marianas in 1668 did not die with the missionaries. It grew, thanks to the blood of the martyrs and the perseverance of the succeeding missionaries.

On March 5, 2000, Pedro Calungsod was beatified by Pope John Paul II. In his homily during the beatification, the Pope said, *Young friends, do not hesitate to follow the example of Pedro, who 'pleased God and was loved by him' and who, having come to perfection in so short a time, lived a full life.*"

Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed him a saint on Oct. 21, 2012. The Pope said: *"May the example and courageous witness of Pedro Calungsod inspire the dear people of the Philippines to announce the Kingdom bravely and to win souls for God!"*

## *Young People can learn so much from St. Pedro Calungsod....*

**Faith** - by making God the center of his life and his constant reference point. Not only did St. Pedro firmly believe the truths of the faith taught by the Church, but he also studied them thoroughly. His knowledge so affected his life that he volunteered to go to the missions with Fr. Diego.

**Hope** - that was rooted in his strong faith in God and fully alive with the enthusiasm of his youth. The virtue of hope gave him the daring to leave home for the missions as a young man.

**Charity** - charity gives absolute priority to God and neighbor. Because of this love, St. Pedro offered his young life as a gift for the salvation of as many as possible.

**Generous Service** - to the mission, particularly the preparation of children for baptism, his participation in the building of churches, and chapels and his being the faithful assistant of Fr. Diego in his missionary journeys.

**Courage** - which kept him firm and strong in the face of oppositions and aggressiveness. Once, when things were not going well, he had the chance to go back to the Philippines, but he stayed. He gave proof of his courage to the very last moments of his life.

**Consistency** - effectively putting into practice in his daily life what he proclaimed to believe in and tried to teach to others.

**Purity** - protection against external and internal attacks and practice it in his thoughts, words and actions as a most precious diadem in his adolescent life. The immoral life of the Urritaos had succeeded in attracting and leading astray several assistants of the missionaries but did not damage the purity of St. Pedro.

**Trustworthiness** - whenever he received an assignment from Fr. Diego, he never let him down. People knew that when he said something, things were really so and if he had made a promise he would not break it.

**Piety** - prayer life. His child-like but strong devotion brought him to be united with the Lord, not only during the Mass and in other moments of formal prayer, but even in the midst of busy activities. St. Pedro loved to pray, especially in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

## ✧ Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament in Asia ✧

The Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament is an international Congregation founded in Venice, Italy on May 31, 1923 by Mother Caterina Zecchini and is present in Italy, Colombia and Philippines. Our community in Philippines started in 1992, ushered in by two MSBS Italian missionaries, Sr. Rosa Viscovich and Sr. Rosanna Favero. Its twenty years of existence here brought forth a rich apostolate in the field of mission animation and cooperation and in human promotion. It also attracted vocations from the country and became a place of formation for Filipino, Myanmar, Indonesian and Vietnamese sisters and formandeas. MSBS in Asia has become a place of dialogue of faith and culture whereby each one is strengthened to be a mission animator and cooperator and where each one becomes one in desire to make the Kingdom of God present everywhere.

*In view of the celebration of the Year of Faith, our inter cultural community shares with you the richness of our own experiences of faith in different cultural and religious context. With this, we also share the diverse meaningful gift of God to each of us and to our own nation and people.*

### *Mindoro's Evangelization: A Thing of the Past?*

Sr. Gracelyn, MSBS

Is Mindoro's evangelization a thing of the past? Looking into the reality and situation of the Church in Mindoro and the resounding call of the Church for new evangelization, this question lingers in the hearts of the faithful who are concerned with the spiritual growth of the Church.

Mindoro's evangelization began from the era of Spanish colonization as it is for the Philippines. The Spaniards invaded the island in 1570 with the intention of punishing the Mohameddan inhabitants of the Island. This event preceded the arrival of missionaries who were tasked to Christianize the pagan and Islamic coastal population. The Augustinian recollects were the first missionaries who set out for this mission while the Jesuits and the Franciscans came in later. Missionaries found the people peaceful, naturally religious and flexible. These characteristics advanced the mission of evangelizers without encountering so much resistance from the settlers. "Our forefathers accepted Christianity out of their belief that it was better than their ancient religion." (Candelario and Malilay) But these missionaries had their share of the odds of propagating the Kingdom of God. The marauding Moros posed not only difficulties but threat to life as well. Frequent attacks and pillages had



taken the lives of some missionaries who came to the aid of the locals. Fortresses were built with the help of missionaries but faith was their stronger fortress. Old villagers share how God protected them from the Moros. Up to now stories are passed on about the miraculous deliverance from harm of the locals with the aid of God. Missionaries also suffered ailments and records say that some missionaries died of this cause. Nonetheless, the early missionaries became successful not only in introducing Christianity but also in winning the people's trust and belief in this new type of religiosity. History records that they were able to baptize many of the settlers including the native people and formed parishes in several parts of



the Island despite the fact that Moros or Muslims were the first to inhabit the land.

The Christianization of Mindoro was a long and arduous task carried out by a succession of foreign missionaries. However, the SVD missionaries who started their pastoral work in Mindoro in 1916 are considered the dominant force that shaped the religious direction of the Catholic Church. These missionary priests tirelessly worked to deepen the faith and spirituality of Mindoreños. The war interrupted their pastoral work but soon after peace was restored, they resumed the propagation of faith, erection of parishes and establishment of schools. These missionaries endured the long and rough roads which they have to tread barefooted or on carabao-pulled sledges.

Centuries have passed with its records of missionaries who toiled and invested their sweat, blood and great amount of love and devotion. Twenty-two religious movements and organizations, two hundred basic ecclesial communities, eighteen parishes were established and the Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose was created. We cannot really claim that evangelization is a thing of the past. As it is for the whole Church, the community of believers faces a new sort of crisis in faith to which the call of the Church for new evangelization resounds with challenge and encouragement.

“One of the obstacles to the impetus of evangelization is the crisis of faith, not only in the Western world, but among most of humanity. However, we are hungering and thirsting for God and must be invited and brought to the bread of life and the living water like the Samaritan woman who goes to Jacob’s well and converses with Christ,” said Pope Benedict XVI in his Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei*.

Indeed, our hunger and thirst for the presence of God to permeate our life, to heal and purify our hopes and dreams and to fill our life signifies that each of us needs to be evangelized anew. The crisis of faith that the Church in Mindoro experiences is not an isolated case for this is the call to each one of us to transform our lives and let God’s presence be the soul of our lives.



*Holy Childhood members of San Jose, Mindoro during World Mission Sunday 2012*

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*The New Evangelization is centered on Christ and on care for the human person in order to give life to a real encounter with him. However, its horizons are as wide as the world and beyond any human experience. This means that it carefully cultivates the dialogue with cultures, confident that it can find in each of them the "seeds of the Word" about which the ancient Fathers spoke. (Concluding Message of Synod of Bishops 2012)*

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# From Pakudos to Cross

*Novice Susan, MSBS*

The Cross and Pakudos are symbols of two groups of people of different set of beliefs. The Cross is a Christian symbol which reminds Christian believers of the depth of God's love. Pakudos, on the other hand, is a symbol used by Mangyans as a design in their traditional dress which bears a striking resemblance to a cross. Mangyans are the indigenous people of Mindoro. Pakudos is but one trivial indication that these indigenous people truly have the seed of faith in them. Mangyan's rich culture and set of religious beliefs point out to the truth that God does scatter the seed with the hope that it will grow. The seed He scattered in the mountainous island of Mindoro found a fertile ground.

Mangyans of the earlier centuries and a portion of their entire population in the present time believe in one Supreme Being. They do believe in the existence of God who has created everything and they call Him 'Apo Maghuna'. Apo means owner while Maghuna means the one who molds or forms. One particular rite they perform underlines that they also believe in eternal life. This ritual is called Pangutkutan wherein they exhume the body of their beloved departed a year after the death to clean it and celebrate with food and chants the journey of Karaduwa (spirit or soul) to the eternal world.

As is evident in Pakudos, the cross is a part of their life though in a manner and substance that is different from what Christians believe. "We don't know Jesus Christ yet and His sacrifice on the cross but we believe that the cross has a certain power that can deliver us from harm or can bring us good luck. I remembered how we used to mark with the sign of the cross the path we walk on, the field where we plant, the rice we cook and in some other little things," shares a Mangyan Catholic convert. It is also interesting to note how their way of life is an incarnation of the Christian values taught by Christ. They have the concept of solidarity and fraternity. Passing by some fruit trees, a traveler would just pick what is enough for him and his companions. This practice is based on the need to share the blessings of 'Apo Maghuna' to all. "We are not the owner of this tree and its fruits. We get what is enough so that others can also have their fill," said one of them to a curious visitor. Whatever one receives from some generous 'damuong' or lowlander is shared for the benefit of the community. They walk down the mountain or move to another place in groups. They occasionally stop and share 'kwako' (cigarette of the tribe) or 'nganga' (betel nut with ikmo leaves and lime chewed by native people) among the group or even to other group of travelers that they meet along the road. The tribe also holds an annual celebration called 'Dulot'. It is sacred ritual offering and thanksgiving wherein they offer the best of their harvest or animals. They believe that their god will be offended if they will not make their offering and in revenge will make them sick or unlucky. In this celebration, parents mention their dead ancestors and loved ones, just like the saints and angels of the Catholics, to be with them in the celebration. They ask their intercession and guidance in all their needs.

Taking a glimpse at the rich culture of these people, we can see how God was able to penetrate their lives and faith despite the fact that certain aspects of the culture have to be evangelized as it is for other culture. They carry the seed of faith in them; their way of life and beliefs bears the mark of Christian Faith. Thanks to the help of the missionaries who reached out to them, a number of them received the light of Christian Faith which illumined and purified their way of life and believing.

From Pakudos, a symbol of their heritage, they found the Cross which gives meaning to their existence. From a simple symbol that identifies them as a people, they found the symbol that best represents the greatest gift that God has given to men, that is His love which culminates on the way of the cross. The cross is now the symbol that will identify them not merely as a specific group of people, but as members of the larger community and all encompassing family of God.





# CHRISTIANITY IN THE MIDST OF BUDDHISM: CATHOLIC EXPERIENCE IN MYANMAR CONTEXT

Sr. Pansy, MSBS

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar covers an area of 677,000 square kilometers (261,228 square miles). It is a land of hills and valleys and is rimmed in the north, east and west by mountain ranges forming a giant horseshoe. The main religions are Theravada Buddhism 89.2%, Christianity 5.0%, Islam 3.5%, Hinduism 0.5%, Spiritualism 1.2%, and others 0.2%. Buddhism in Myanmar was much earlier than Christianity. Buddhism started as early as 9th century while Christianity was found as early as 1287 in the form of frescos containing crosses, Latin and Greek words in some places in Pagan, which was once a flourishing kingdom. However, the proper missionary work was begun by the Barnabites (1730-1830) then followed by Oblates, Foreign Missionaries of Paris (MEP), PIME and other groups of missionaries. There are now 16 archdioceses and dioceses with active bishops and 5 retired bishops from Myanmar. Catholics remain a minority with the estimated numbers of 748,379, Priests 776, Religious (women and men) 2217, Catechists 2,691... (Dec 1, 2010).



Being in a Buddhist country and minority group at the same time, the Church in Myanmar and its faithful somehow adopted the culture of Buddhism such as the use of language, some gestures and postures even though evangelized by the Westerners. Many of the teachings of Buddha are expressed as reference point in the life of every Myanmar no matter to what religion they belong, for the teachings are very Christian and universal. Significantly, one of those is the Buddhists teaching their children the importance of the Three Jewels, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. In Myanmar, we call it ဘုရား၊ တရား၊ သံဃာ (God, His teaching and the followers/disciples). It means that we are to respect and always place them in our heart and in our everyday life, that by revering them we will be able to reach our aim in life successfully and will have a good future.

Most of the Christians and Catholics are found in ethnic minority people. Being minority and Christians, these groups are usually deprived of many things such as holding a higher position in the offices run by the government. Sometimes they are asked to change their baptismal name to a Burmese name for the sake of the work or the position they are applying for. This is the reality the people confront. There are some who would change their Christian name and some who would hold firm in their faith and would not change. For this they are deprived of the good opportunity they should have.

Furthermore, the Church is free to express but on one condition that the permission must be asked first before doing any kind of activities such as a procession, a big celebration where people from different places are involved. Besides,



the constructions of churches and church buildings have also certain laws to follow, and there were times when the permission is on and off. Sometimes it even included dethronement of the Crosses from one place to another. The government and the people of Bamar Christians are thought or considered to be foreigners since the evangelization is brought by Westerners. Looking at history, in general, there are three reasons for the alienation of Christianity: first, colonialism because it came to the country in the same package as colonialism; second, nationalism for it is very easy to identify Buddhism with nationalism in a country like Myanmar where 85% of the total populations are Buddhists.



The spirit of nationalism leads some of them to think that the Christians are betrayers of the nation simply because they denounced Buddhism which is thought to be the impetus for nationalism; and third, on cultural ground, the native people's cultural values are thought to be inferior to western culture and so they tried to condemn all the cultural elements. The Church respects other religions and their cultures and their people. While witnessing Christian faith and way of life, they acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians, also their social and cultural life. Being Catholics, this adaptation and respect have been practiced since the time of the arrival of enthusiastic missionaries of long ago and still continue to be carried out by the people. I have read and heard the stories of the enthusiastic missionaries that they did not only learn to speak the language but also lovingly practiced the way people lived at that time. The missionaries saw ordinary people live poorly and walk barefooted and so they did the same thing. They humbled before the monk to acquire the living style of people and the language. It was not easy to live under the shadows of many different Myanmar kings who warred against one another, founding new kingdoms whose minds were always changing and a word coming from their mouths means everything but they were so flexible, learned to adopt and adjusted to the situation. In spite of all the difficulties and misunderstanding, they proclaimed



*A Myanmar Catholic priest with Buddhist children*

the Christian faith by their exemplary way of living. These missionaries had given an example life to the people to respect and learn to live with the situation and to be open minded.

The response of the Church toward different struggles and hardships is trying to keep the spirit of the first missionaries alive. In spite of all the struggles and limitation, the church leaders and its faithful continue to profess and live their faith. The response of the Church was peaceful prayer and reverence in transferring dethroned crosses in a form of prayer and procession of religious and faithful where one can see the strength and encouragement by each one's presence. However, these did not affect much the relationship with Buddhist neighbours and friends for they considered that religious matters were not the same as friendship and socialization.

Rootedness in one's faith is very crucial in religious life most especially in living in the world where one

is challenged by the presence of other faiths. An attitude of 'bold humility' or 'humble boldness', as David Bosch said, is crucial. Being bold and humble means being brave, consistent and persevering in what one does while being rooted in one's faith. The Church in Myanmar has to hold on to this attitude in living amidst different struggles and professing one's faith. The formation of Christian faith must go on while celebrating this gift of faith in gratitude.



*Children praying on the tomb of a missionary*



# GARUDA PANCASILA

Novice Lin, MSBS

*Indonesia* is a country with the largest number of Muslims in the world. In spite of this fact which gives Indonesia the appearances of an Islamic country, Indonesia is not an Islamic state. It is a Pancasila state. Pancasila is the philosophical foundation or political foundation of Indonesia state (Dasar Negara Indonesia). Furthermore, this is the explanation of Garuda Pancasila. The main part of Indonesian national symbol is the Garuda with a heraldic shield on its chest and a scroll gripped by its legs. Traditionally, it is portrayed as a divine creature with head, beak, wings, and claws of an eagle, while it has the body of a human. Garuda symbolizes the virtue of knowledge, power, bravery, loyalty, and discipline. As for the national crest, the Garuda symbolizes strength and power, while the gold colour symbolizes greatness and glory. The total number of feathers symbolizes the date of the proclamation of Indonesian independence; the number of feathers on each wing totals 17, the number of feathers on the tail totals 8, the number of feathers below the shield or base of tail totals 19 and the number of feathers on the neck totals 45. These numbers of feathers correspond to the "17/8/1945" - the Independence Day of Indonesia. The shield of five symbols represents Pancasila, the five principles of Indonesia's national philosophy. Panca means five and Sila means principle or pillar. Its chest is covered by a shield with five symbols: star, chain, a banyan tree, a buffalo's head/banteng, and paddy and cotton. The shield background consists of 2 colours: red and white, represents the colour of the national flag of Indonesia. Its claws hold a ribbon with the word: *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, the National Motto, meaning: *Unity in Diversity*.

The five principles or pillars are these:

**(1) Belief in the One Supreme God / *Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa***. The first principle is represented with the symbol of a golden star. This principle was meant to unify Indonesia's population, which has diverse faiths and beliefs. The state shall guarantee freedom to every resident to adhere to his perspective religion and to perform his religious duties in conformity with that religion and that faith (Art. 29 of the Constitution concerns religion). This principle emphasizes belief in God. It also implies that the Indonesian people believe in life after death. It emphasizes that the pursuit of



sacred values will lead the people to a better life in the hereafter. One of the statements of the Indonesian preamble of the Constitution stated that by the grace of God Almighty and impelled by the noble desire to live a free national life, the people of Indonesia hereby declare their independence.

**(2) Just and civilized humanity/*Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Beradab***. The symbol for this principle is the chain. This principle requires that human beings should be treated with due regard to their dignity as God's creatures. The chain at the lower right of the shield symbolizes successive generations of humanity; the square links represent men while the rounded ones represent women.

**(3) The unity of Indonesia/*Persatuan Indonesia***. This is represented on the shield by the banyan tree at top right. This principle embodies the concept of nationalism, of love for one's nation and motherland. It pictures the need to always foster national unity and integrity. Pancasila nationalism demands that Indonesians avoid feelings of superiority on the grounds of ethnicity, race and skin color. The large shading tree symbolizes protection.



(4) **Democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives /Kerakyatan yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan/ Perwakilan.** The head of the buffalo/banteng at top left stands for this sila. Pancasila democracy calls for decision-making through deliberations, or *musyawarah*, to reach a consensus, or *mufakat*. The *musyawarah* ends in common decision agreed upon by all; this common decision is called *mufakat*. Problems are solved according to the *musyawarah-mufakat* system. The banteng was chosen to symbolize democracy as Indonesians saw it as a social animal. This is also symbolizing the strength of the people.

(5) **Social justice for the whole people of Indonesia /Keadilan Sosial bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia.** This is symbolized by the paddy and cotton ears on the shield. The rice and cotton represent sustenance and livelihood which symbolize prosperity. All of the country's natural resources and the national potentials should be utilized for the greatest possible good and happiness of the people. Social justice implies protection of the weak. On the contrary, they should work according to their abilities and fields of activity. All these principles are the common ground or the systems that unite the Indonesia as a nation from Sabang to Merauke. It is also where the values are build up. Everything is based on the Pancasila. No matter how far Indonesia lives and fosters all these values, there are still conflict and problems. With many different religions practised, conflicts between different religions arise so often. Nowadays, Indonesia is faced with serious problems. For instance: terrorism, violence, kidnapping, bombing, and burning of some churches. Even some churches are closed. The President himself calls the attention of Indonesian people to exercise more the true philosophy of Indonesia. Yes, there is a way to foster again the relationship among the people of Indonesia. There is a call for an interreligious dialogue and the *gotong-royong* system (work together/cooperation). The Indonesian people are said to have good relationship within the one and the same religious community, good relation also



between different religious communities and good relationship between religious communities and government. This is called the triple principles of inter-religious relationship. The leaders of five big religions (Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Hindu and Buddhist) in Indonesia have succeeded in establishing a forum for dialogue, under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which is called “Wadah Musyawarah Antar Umat Beragama” a forum of interreligious dialogue. This forum created valuable opportunities to get leaders of different religions meet and talk together.




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*Throughout history, from the first centuries of the Christian era to the present, the Gospel has edified communities of believers in all parts of the world. Whether small or great, these are the fruits of the dedication of generations of witnesses to Jesus-missionaries and martyrs-whom we remember with gratitude. (Concluding Message Synod of Bishops 2012)*

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# SEED ON A BLOODY SOIL

Novice Melanie, MSBS

*“The seed that was scattered on the land sprouts and grows by itself. The man sows with the trust that his work will not be fruitless. What supports the farmer in his daily effort is specifically trust in the power of the seed and in the goodness of the soil,” Pope Benedict XVI said to the faithful gathered at St. Peter’s Square on Sunday, 17 June 2012.*



In any history of evangelization, the dynamics of the seed makes a symbolic approximation of our life and growth in Christian Faith. Faith is a gift of God that enters the history and reality of man through a variety of ways. In the country of Vietnam and her history of Christian Evangelization, this seed was sown by God through the collaboration of men and women “who trusted that their sowing will not be fruitless.” These collaborators were the missionaries, who dared to share and live the Gospel in farther lands.

It was in the 16th century when missionaries from France, Spain and Portugal reached Vietnam with the aim of spreading the Christian faith. Keeping the Gospel and the love of Christ in the way they live and in their works, these missionaries won converts who were drawn to believe in the genuineness of the faith they profess and share. But in 1630, their missionary zeal and steadfastness were put to the test when Christianity was prohibited in the land. This was reinforced

with several edicts against Christianity signed by the Trinh and Nguyen Lords or by kings. The first of these was issued in 1640. Christian persecution grew worse and intense so that to be a Christian at that time required much courage, love and faithfulness.

Anyone found to be practicing the Catholic Faith confronted the risk of cruel and inhumane death. With this, the faithful practiced their faith and devotions secretly. Priests and catechists traveled from village to village to preach and attend to the spiritual needs of the faithful even while they were fully aware that death was the consequence of such activity. This constant threat to life did not hamper the growth of the seed that God had planted in Vietnam soil. Instead, these have contributed much to the growth and fruitfulness of the seed. The blood of those who have offered their lives for the faith cultivated and nurtured the soil where the seed can grow. These martyrs “*trusted in the power of the seed and in the goodness of the soil.*” They believed that God silently works through them, and most of all they believed that God has entrusted into their hands the precious seed of faith and salvation.





The seed of faith has indeed grown fruitfully. It is evident in the resilience and faith of the Catholic religious and laypeople who still experience a subtle persecution. Some Vietnamese priests and religious shared the suffering of the Catholic Christians at present. Some of them were tortured and put in solitary confinement or even imprisoned at the will of the authorities as the late Vietnamese Cardinal Francis Xavier Van Thuan, wrote of his experience. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church in Vietnam confronts this challenge armed with the faith and love that was handed to them and inspired by the example of the martyrs who have offered their lives for the faith. They continue to bear testimony to the faith as they live their daily lives in spite of the difficulties and trials that they experience always with courage, love and faithfulness.

## *Formation... Formation... Formation...*

*Our faith leads us to the fullness of life in Him. This faith led us to take this journey of religious consecration. It is our joy to speak of our experiences in formation and thus impart with you the life-giving and life-sustaining insights and experiences we have had in the process. Truly, God accompanies us and completes all our experiences in life.*

*MSBS Aspirants*

### *World Mission Sunday: A Call to see the others*

**Aspirant Maria Lam Bieng Kim Hien, MSBS**

In the third Sunday of October 2012, we had a solemn celebration of “World Mission Sunday”. The celebration was divided in five moments. Each moment was devoted to a country, which include Italy, Philippines, Myanmar, Indonesia and Vietnam. For each moment, the community members who belong to a particular country had a short procession to the altar bringing their own candles and accompanied by solemn songs. We had our candles lighted from the Paschal Candle and planted in a makeshift well. This symbolized the light of faith that each one of us had received and wished to keep aflame. Recognizing that our faith is a gift that we receive through the missionaries, we also listened to the stories of the life of the missionaries from the aforementioned country. Afterwards, the representatives of each country rendered a doxology as an offering of praise and thanksgiving. We ended the celebration with the song of our foundress, which expressed our missionary desire to keep and pass on the light of faith that we have received.

The beautiful celebration, which also expresses the interculturality of our community, had a great impact on my being missionary. I marveled at how God calls and gathers us together. When I heard about Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan, I felt his strong love for God. Despite the difficulties and trials





he was facing, his love did not fade. He continued God's mission while he was in prison. His life questioned my life: What do I contribute for the mission of God? How am I going to start? I have lots of opportunity to do mission since the road is wide enough. What should I do to accomplish my mission? Inspired by his life's examples, I realized and felt the call to nurture a deep desire for God's mission. Difficulties mean nothing but love is everything. As I kept in mind the reality of the world today, the solemn celebration led me to think of many young men and women who are called for His mission. The sad thing is, only few are attentive and willing to respond to His call while the world cries in need for evangelizers who will bring the word of God; the seed of peace, justice and love. The wish to cooperate with God's work should be rooted deeply in the heart of each human being. With clear conscience, courage and joy of heart, everyone should walk forward in the field of mission. To go to mission entails travel. What is the

purpose of traveling? For some, travel can be a form of relaxation where they can enjoy the beauty of nature while others travel to see the reality in our modern world. But what people tend to forget is that while traveling we should also open our eyes to see the needs of our brothers and sisters around us who hunger not only for food and other physical needs but for the word of God and for spiritual and emotional healing as well. Many lose direction in life and long for a homecoming where they will experience love, justice and peace. World Mission Sunday is a call to be more concerned about others. We, as followers of Christ, should do something for our Master who waits for our cooperation to restore the dignity of our brothers and sisters in need. Where we do our mission is not important; it may be near or far but it doesn't matter. What truly matters is that we give our whole heart, our strength and our whole self. I believe that in each step that we take with love and compassion, we can achieve our goal, which is to be cooperators in God's mission. I am very thankful for that solemn and meaningful celebration because it widened my understanding of mission and made me realize the most important thing in life.





≈ MSBS POSTULANTS ≈  
*My Greatest Fulfillment*  
Postulant Bridgid, MSBS



When I was a young girl, I used to talk with my friends about what I wanted to be and how successful I would be. We all dream, we all hope for something. For me hope is a beautiful thing. Hope led me to where I am now and leads me to my future. Aside from hope, there is another thing that people like to talk about, that is success. Many of us engage in conversation about one's own success or that of another. Achievements are sometimes taken as a source of pleasure in life, sometimes as a lesson to inspire or simply to share one's feelings about it. We tend to share our happiness with others.

The happiness that I would like to share with you now is my journey as a postulant. In our latest modular class, one of the activities that we had was to think about and write down our story of success or our own achievement. Do you know what I wrote? I wrote about one of my greatest achievements which is being who I am now; that is my life as a postulant in the Congregation of Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament. I feel so blessed. To be a postulant after six years of community life is an achievement for me. It is totally a grace from God. I really am grateful to God, who called me by name in spite of my unworthiness and limitation; who is always present while I journey; whose unconditional love I encounter especially this time. Moreover, I believe that there is no success without accompaniment. Behind all our achievement, there is always someone who, like a friend remains by us in our sorrow and joy. So it is for me; I have God and my community. I feel profound gratitude in my heart for my formators and co-postulants who become God's instruments of love and a big part in my journey. They also take part in my own journey of healing from my woundedness. They are a gift from God to me whose presence gives me a sense of hope to grow in life despite my brokenness. Now that I am in postulancy; I wish to describe my journey in two words: *Dessert Pain*. As a dessert enriches and completes a great meal, formation in postulancy gives me deeper meaning and reason to search for and serve Him in this life that I have chosen. I can reclaim my brokenness with the help of God's grace not without pain but with a different meaning from that of a child. I am invited not only to gain enriching thoughts and sentiments but more so to become a person that God wills me to be. This journey however, has its share of pain. That is why I call this my dessert pain because it enriches and helps me to complete my broken self. As of now, my wish is to excel in spiritual and real life and when time comes, to be vigilant and worthy enough to serve and love Him more and more. I thank the Lord for His Holy Spirit who enlightens, guides and protects me.





# *Journey to Knowing my Inner Self*

Postulant Naw Elsi, MSBS

I am grateful for this opportunity to share my vocation journey. My vocation journey started since I felt love and had faith in my heart. Growing up, I witnessed the importance of sharing my faith with those who do not know Christ yet. The lives of the missionaries urged me to move, to take risk, to share the love of God, to profess my faith, to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and to share my blessings with others. The seed of my vocation to follow Christ matured and became firm. God called me to nurture this vocation and I responded by committing myself to continue the journey of formation.

Along my vocation journey as a postulant, I find knowing inner self so interesting. It is very important to know myself because without knowing myself I can never know Christ or those who are around me. At times, I experience deep sorrow but joy remains in the deepest of my heart knowing that in this way, I will be purified. I learned to accept and understand that my pain is a medicine that will heal my wound. My superior and formators help me a lot in this process of discovering my inner self and encouraging me to go on with my formation. Their plans for me and all the opportunities they are giving provide me the room to grow as a better person and as instrument of God's love.

All the modular classes that we attend help me to discover who I am, to overcome and appreciate myself and others, to know the importance of community life and relationship, to see the value of the things and to discover how my faith aids my growth in spite of some trials in life that I face. Nevertheless, no one can change me unless I want to be transformed and transformation will not happen if I will not allow God to enter into an intimate relationship with me and to guide me with His wisdom.



I continue my search for the truth within myself and try to connect my heart to my community members. The moment of sharing our stories reveals trust, empathy, openness, encouragement, understanding and acceptance. We share our joy and pain as one family. We feel with one another in our suffering and joy because we believe that we are in His body. This strengthens and affirms our relationship. The more we understand each other, the more chances of breaking the communication barriers of fear and hesitation. Now I can understand more the difficulties and the task that my community carries out for the communal growth. I thank God for the gift of community, for the values that we hold and the dream and goal towards mission that we pursue. I try to be

responsible and to be a good follower. I nourish myself in different aspect to be strong and healthy so that I can serve God by being fully alive and remaining faithful to Him and to myself.



*It is possible to cross that threshold when the Word of God is proclaimed and the heart allows itself to be shaped by transforming grace. To enter through that door is to set out on a journey that lasts a lifetime. (Porta Fidei, 1)*



## ❧ MSBS NOVICES ❧

### *"Who will console the heart of the Mother Church?"*

Novice Jury, MSBS

Exposure is a gift of the Community for us. This is a foretaste of the life and mission that awaits us once we profess our vow of faithfulness and consecration to God. It allows us to grow and discover the resources that we have as well as our limitations. More importantly, it allows us to express the spirituality and charism of our Foundress in different apostolic realities.

We were assigned in four different apostolic realities. In our own realities, we try to listen and respond to the question posed by our Foundress Mother Caterina then: "Who will console the heart of the Mother Church?" In our own ways, we respond to her invitation to be the consoler of the heart of the Church. The Church's longing manifests itself in the realities of all those who are redeemed. Who are the people we consider redeemed?

Two of my companions are assigned in the home of joy. There they meet children who continue to fight for their right to live and be loved. They extend God's love and care to the handicapped and special children. They bathe, feed, accompany them and share their joy with smile and affection. As I listen to their stories, I also feel the beat of joy in the heart of God who delights in seeing that His children stand as stewards to one another.

My co-novices in Pontifical Mission Societies offer their self and make themselves available for the work of missions. They collaborate with the missionary work of the Church and in such a way answer to the Church's and Mo. Caterina's longing for more harvesters who are willing to work in the Kingdom of God. Cooperating in the mission of God is not a piece of cake but it brings joy and fulfillment to hearts that believe, hope and love in Him. One of my co-novices who works in CBCP Media, shares her time and resources by collaborating with the Church's work of disseminating truthful information to the public. She shares her love for the mission in what she writes and the simple things she is asked to do. By collaborating with the media, she echoes the call

of the Church for truth, justice and peace.

In my own exposure in the Philippine General Hospital, I console the heart of Church through the people I meet, people who are in great need of spiritual and emotional healing. The Church cries out in behalf of our brothers and sisters who suffer, who longs to be heard or listened to and who longs to be comforted in time of suffering and pain. I feel deep joy in my heart for having the opportunity to reach out to them and in doing so, to carry within me the Eucharistic-Missionary Spirit of our Congregation. I have no financial or material help to share but I share what I hold so dear in my heart. I share Christ's compassion





and mercy, His consolation and love. I share with them Christ's passion for mission by encouraging them to offer their pain and suffering for the mission.

"Who will console the heart of the Mother Church?" Each one of us is called to be a consoler of the heart of our Mother Church, in our present time and in our own reality.



*God's gift, which faith renders present, is not simply the promise of better conditions in this world. It is the proclamation that our life's ultimate meaning is beyond this world, in that full communion with God that we await at the end of time. (Concluding Message, Synod of Bishops 2012)*



### *Mother Caterina Zecchini : a Woman of Faith*

*"As long as God is glorified, what else matters?"* This is one of the thoughts that has inspired Mother Caterina, the foundress of Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, to give herself fully to God. These words can only find resonance in a heart moved by great faith. Her faith enabled her to follow the will of God at all cost. It set her attuned to the heart of the Church and made her attentive to the signs of the times.

It has found life and expression in the Congregation that she founded, a Congregation who finds strength in the Eucharist and commits its life to missionary animation and cooperation. Since a woman of faith is also a woman of service, her life and the life of the community she has formed were also marked with faithful service that is modeled after and inspired by the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles.

We, heirs to her legacy, continue to nurture and give life to her charism in our apostolate and community living. In faith, hope and love, we live in the present and move on to the future keeping alive in us the fire that has set her heart ablaze with love for God.

## TALENTO, IAALAY KO PARA SA MISYON NI KRISTO

Sr. Clemence, MSBS



"*Talento, iaalay ko para sa misyon ni Kristo*" was the theme chosen for this year to commemorate the day of a woman who offered herself as a "Victim of Love" for the salvation of humanity. Here, I speak of our beloved *Foundress, Mother Caterina Zecchini* whose deep love and passion for Christ and His mission found expression in awakening among the people their responsibility to cooperate in different possible ways to the missionary endeavors of the Church and in bringing the Good News to all parts of the world.

Animated by the same spiritual legacy, the community planned and worked together in order to share this particular Christian value of mission awareness to our pupils at **Mother Caterina School**.

While planning for the said event, we kept in mind the objective of inculcating in the consciousness of the children and families their obligation for the mission. In view of this objective, children were pre-pared for this activity, which they did during their session in Christian Living. We sent letters to the parents informing them of the said activity. They responded with joy and expressed their support by their presence and joyful cooperation in different ways to keep the true spirit of the said celebration, which is to hone and share their talents to glorify God and to contribute for the good of the missions. In the evening of the presentations, the families shared and pooled their gifts such as canned goods, noodles and the like. These were given in support of our feeding program for the least fortunate ones in the community.

In this way, we were able to teach and impart to the children and families the fact that they can take part of the mission even in simple ways; that even their talents can benefit the mission and glorify God. Thus, we feel that we have attained our objective for this activity. Besides, it was also a moment of experiencing the truth of our Christian convictions that tells us, "*The sole end of the talents we possess is the other*". Our possessions and personal gifts will only be meaningful when shared. The children cannot deeply comprehend yet the greatness, the sublimity and the blessing of that moment but they have surely experienced joy knowing and feeling that they can contribute something for Jesus and His mission. This event certainly has a great impact in their consciousness.

Mother Caterina consciously and deeply lived this thirst for the souls that she experienced in her heart. Contemplating the eagerness of the sisters to sacrifice, not minding the fatigue brought by the planning, preparation and execution, I proudly affirm that indeed they are daughters of Mother Caterina. They are willing to explore different possibilities in order to help the mission and quench this thirst in their heart. Likewise, I felt this "thirst for the souls" among the families and individuals who truly cooperated and responded to our



*Pupils of Mother Caterina School, San Jose Occidental Mindoro*





*Pupils of Mother Caterina Mission School Natandol,  
Occidental Mindoro*

call. It is also a good and enriching experience to see how the sacrifices have been wiped away and turned into a moment of deep joy and happiness.

I would like to express my joy in witnessing this. I am so grateful to God because despite the poverty and all faces of suffering and crisis that people experience in the local Church nowadays, there are still people who are willing to offer themselves and whose hearts are open for others. These people allow their hearts to be touched and respond with passion to the need of the Church particularly in the task of evangelization.

***Thank you, Mother Caterina, for the example for your courage and unique way of responding to this vocation.***

## ❧ MSBS COMMUNITY - QUEZON CITY ❧

### BE A SALT OF THE EARTH AND A LIGHT TO THE WORLD!

Sr. Gracelyn, MSBS

*“You are the salt of the earth... and the light of the world that must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.” (Mt 5:13-16)*

With my junior companions, I attended a talk given by Bishop Broderick Pabillo, the Auxiliary Bishop of Manila about the year of faith and its implication in our lives as consecrated women. One thing that struck me was the analogy of the salt and the light in my life as a religious. Bishop Broderick Pabillo said, “There’s only one commonality in the essence of the salt and



the light and this is their need for ‘small quantity’. A small quantity is enough to influence the whole. A little amount of salt gives taste and flavour while a flicker of light brightens up a dark room. The salt and the light do not keep their sense to themselves but let themselves be consumed. So, it is in our life of faith. In our littleness, we can contribute something for a greater purpose and that is to allow our humble selves to be consumed for others. “By our example, we become light; by our prayer we become salt,” Bishop Pabillo said. In the light of these insights, I questioned myself: How do I become salt and light for others? “Faith commits every one of us to become a living sign of the presence of the Risen Lord in the world.” (Porta Fidei) Being a consecrated person, I am called to be a sign of His presence through my life. I am called to let my light brighten up in the midst of darkness and to pass on the light of faith that I have with others. I am called to be a salt capable of giving flavour in a world that is wanting in the true flavour of faith in Christ. All this is possible when I am open to His Word, light and inspiration that can transform me and direct my path towards credible and faithful witnessing to His presence and love. In this witnessing, I pass on the clear message that Christ matters because it is He who can fill up a life with meaning and joy. Christ matters and so we pass on the joy of finding this truth by sharing it with the world with many Christ-less Christians.

*“Christians are called to radiate the word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us.” (Porta Fidei)*

This is the exhortation of the Pope in the celebration of the Year of Faith. Each one has his/her own calling.

We, **Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament** invite the **young ladies** who are willing to dedicate their lives wholly for God to join us in the journey of religious consecration.

To the **families**, we invite you to take part in the mission of transmitting the faith by joining our **Family for the Mission**, dedicating an hour of Prayer once a month for the Mission.

To those who feel called to serve God as a layperson, we invite you to join **MSBS Lay Associate** cooperating in the work of Missionary Animation and Cooperation.



*Buon Natale !*  
*Maligayang Pasko!*  
*ခရစ်တော် မွေးနေ့မှာပျော်ရွှင် နိုင်ကြပါစေ!*  
*Selamat Hari Natal!*  
*Mừng Chúa Giáng Sinh*

*Let us all give our contribution, great or small,  
for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls.*  
*Merry Christmas!*

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