

May Your Kingdom Come!

MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IN ASIA



DECEMBER 2015




Heralds of Mercy



In the desert of violence, hatred, individualism and other self-serving ideologies and “culture”, we, Catholics, are called to be heralds of the mercy of God. The mercy of a God whose heart flowed with forgiveness and love even at the agonizing moment in the Cross beckons us all to strive that the Church may really be an oasis of mercy for all. This is the call of our Holy Father, Pope Francis who declared a Jubilee of Mercy. In this year, which will begin this December 8 and end on November 20, 2016, the Pope in his Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, exhorts all of us to experience the mercy of the Father and to be heralds and witnesses of it through our lives: “In this Jubilee Year, let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of casting open the doors of his heart and of repeating that he loves us and wants to share his love with us. The Church feels the urgent need to proclaim God’s mercy. Her life is authentic and credible only when she becomes a convincing herald of mercy. She knows that her primary task, especially at a moment full of great hopes and signs of contradiction, is to introduce everyone to the great mystery of God’s mercy by contemplating the face of Christ. The Church is called above all to be a credible witness to mercy, professing it and living it as the core of the revelation of Jesus Christ. In this Holy Year, we look forward to the experience of opening our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society: fringes which modern society itself creates.

How many uncertain and painful situations there are in the world today! How many are the wounds borne by the flesh of those who have no voice because their cry is muffled and drowned out by the indifference of the rich! During this Jubilee, the Church will be called even more to heal these wounds, to assuage them with the oil of consolation, to bind them with mercy and cure them with solidarity and vigilant care. Let us not fall into humiliating indifference or a monotonous routine that prevents us from discovering what is new! Let us ward off destructive cynicism! Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our

presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own, and together may we break down the barriers of indifference that too often reign supreme and mask our hypocrisy and egoism! ...May the Church echo the word of God that resounds strong and clear as a message and a sign of pardon, strength, aid, and love.” Let us rediscover in our hearts the mercy that flowed out from the heart of Christ. Let us relive in our day-to-day life the loving mercy of our Father who welcomes us, binds all our wounds and embraces us with tenderness. And so enriched by this experience, we’ll find in our heart the indomitable strength to channel mercy especially to people who are most wounded and broken of this world. May we indeed become an oasis of mercy to all. 





"It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples. Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy... And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy..."
(Pope Francis)

What is Mercy?

Mercy is God's love, revealed in God's intentions, attitudes and behaviors toward us. It is God's love that creates; it is God's compassion that sees and understands what has been broken in his creation, in our humanity; it is God's forgiveness that redeems his creation and our humanity, despite itself, and makes us whole again. And just when mercy seems beyond our undeserving grasp, at that very moment, God enters into his creation anew, enters into human experience again as the mystery and grace, that is, God's loving presence and mercy takes us in his embrace. Our thoughts now turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who enlightens our minds.



Mercy helps us understand the Incarnation.

Why did "the Word become Flesh and dwell among us (John 1: 14)?" We read in the Gospel of John: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (John 3: 16-17)."

Mercy helps us understand the Eucharist

Why did the Lord Jesus give us his very Body and Blood as food and drink? In the Gospel of John we read: "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst (John 6: 35)'." In the Gospel of Luke we read: "And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' And in the same way he took the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood (Luke 22: 19-20)'." Because of his mercy and love for us, Christ gave us himself, whole and entire, in the Eucharist.



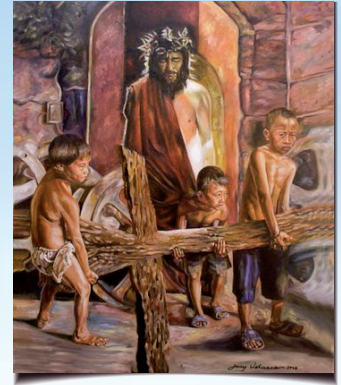


Mercy helps us understand the forgiveness of sins

We read in the Gospel of Luke: "The Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them (Luke 9: 56)." From the Cross, the Lord Jesus' last, saving words have sounded through the centuries: "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do (Luke 23: 34)."

Mercy helps us understand the Passion

We read in the Gospel of John: "Truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit (John 12:24)." And, again, in John: "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends (John 15: 13)."



Mercy helps us understand the Resurrection

In the Letter of Peter we read: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who, according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1: 3)." Mercy gives rise to a hope that would not be possible had Jesus not risen from the dead.

Mercy helps us understand the Church of Christ

In the Gospel of Matthew we read: You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16: 18-19).

Pope Francis reminds us: Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching and in her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love (VM, 10)." And Paul writes that we "do not lose heart by the mercy of God (2 Corinthians 4: 1)."



Finally, mercy helps us understand Truth

Authentic mercy always leads us to the recognition of Truth because mercy is based upon Truth. The Psalmist sings "Mercy and Truth shall meet (Psalm 85:10)." In Christ, mercy and truth meet together. It is unmistakably clear in his intentions, attitudes and behaviors throughout the Gospels. In fact, I do not believe that we can experience authentic mercy without the simultaneous experience of Truth because one really does not really exist without the other.

(Excerpt from the Pastoral Letter of Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M., to the people of the Diocese of Trenton.)



What are the works of mercy?



According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2447, the works of Mercy are “charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities”.

All the ordinary deeds of service that we do everyday to relieve the corporal or spiritual needs of others are true works of mercy if done in the name of Christ.

There are two categories of the works of mercy:

Corporal Works of Mercy



The Corporal Works of Mercy are drawn from St. Matthew’s account of the Last Judgment (cf. Mt. 25:35; 42f). They are usually listed as follows:

1. To feed the hungry.
2. To give drink to the thirsty.
3. To clothe the naked.
4. To shelter the homeless.
5. To visit the imprisoned.
6. To visit the sick.
7. To bury the dead.

CFC # 972

Spiritual Works of Mercy



The Spiritual Works of Mercy are listed as follows:

1. To instruct the ignorant
2. To admonish sinners
3. To counsel the doubtful
4. To comfort the sorrowful
5. To bear wrongs patiently
6. To forgive all injuries
7. To pray for the living and the dead

CFC # 975

The basic source of these merciful acts is not our own good intentions or energies, but rather God’s grace. “God is rich in mercy, because of his great love for us, he brought us to life with Christ when we were dead in sin. Merciful grace itself is doubly pertinent to all of us: it manifests both our common solidarity in sin, and our consequent common need for healing and redemption. We are all obliged to render direct and personal help to our needy brethren such as the hungry and the thirsty, the naked and the homeless, the imprisoned and the sick, when the opportunity of doing so presents itself. Paying a visit to comfort and cheer a sick person as well as attending a funeral and extending aid to the bereaved family are meritorious works related to “burying the dead”.

To instruct the ignorant

Contributing to developing the human mind and imparting the truth is a truly Christian work if done for the love of God and of neighbor. Since religious knowledge is the highest knowledge, those who teach the Catholic religion practice this work of mercy. Here too parents play the primary part, with teachers second to the parents.



To admonish the sinner

If we can turn away a person from sin, we must not hesitate to speak. We admonish the sinner in order to lead him to virtue, but this task must be done with intelligence and prudence, with gentleness and evident love. Otherwise, we might make a sinner become obstinate in his sin, especially if the correction was done with an appearance of righteousness on our part. Those in authority, such as parents and teachers, are bound to admonish those under them of their faults, even if in doing so they bring trouble upon themselves. Good example is another way of admonition.



To counsel the doubtful

We should be most zealous in helping those whom a word may save or aid. How happy we should be if the word we say helps a doubtful one to become firm in his faith! As in admonishing sinners, advising the doubtful should be done prudently, and gently, to effect good results. It is seldom effective to rush into heated argument. Let us pray first, before giving counsel.



To comfort the sorrowful

We can comfort the afflicted by showing them sincere sympathy, by suggesting consolations, and by helping them in their need. To comfort the sorrowful is a work of mercy, similar to curing the sick, since grief is a mental and emotional ailment. To give comfort, we may speak of God's providence, of His love for every single one of His creatures, of the happiness He reserves for us in Heaven, when all earthly sorrows and troubles will be ended.



To bear wrongs patiently

By being patient with injustice, we benefit both ourselves and our fellow-man. Our patience helps him realize his wrongdoing. It is, however, wrong to permit others to falsely lay a serious crime to our charge. But let us be patient, for love of God.



To forgive all injuries

We must not seek revenge. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord" (Romans 12:19). We must forgive others, as we hope God will forgive us. Instead of seeking revenge, those who wish to imitate the saints go out of their way to do favors to those who injure them. Like Jesus Christ, they love all men.

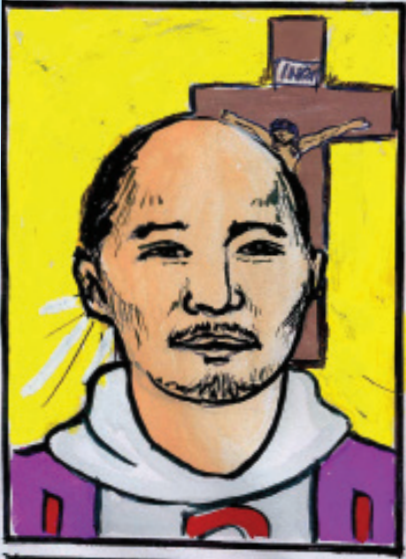


To pray for the living and the dead

Through prayer, we can obtain heavenly graces for those souls still struggling on earth and for souls in purgatory. Not one single prayer raised to God from a sincere heart is wasted. We should pray not only for those whom we love, but also for the needy members of the Church, for all Christians, and for the conversion of all sinners, heretics and unbelievers.



This story is about the missionaries who offered themselves at the service of our needy and suffering brethren. By their mere presence, they proclaim the love of Jesus and realize the call of the Church to be an oasis of mercy to all people.



MISIONERO SA TIMOR LESTE

In 1999, a decisive moment in East Timor's struggle for Independence took place after hundreds of years of Portuguese colonialism and 24 years of foreign occupation. Pro-Indonesian paramilitaries began attacking the people of Timor Leste, beginning in its capital in Dili. An estimated 1,400 people were killed and 200,000 displaced into the detention camps in

Indonesian West Timor. Towns and villages were burned. East Timor was almost razed to the ground.

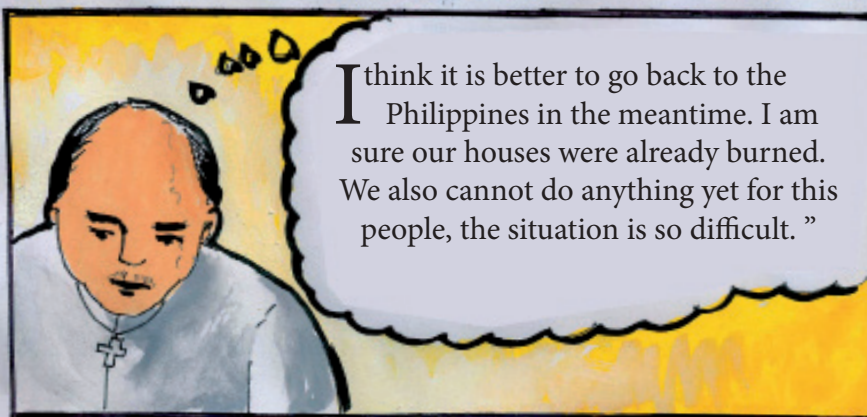


Among the thousands of people who were displaced was Fr. Cyrus Banque, a Filipino Claretian missionary.



A plane from the Philippines arrived bringing doctors and nurses for the refugees. The Ambassador of the Philippines told the Filipino missionaries:

You can go back to the Philippines with us.



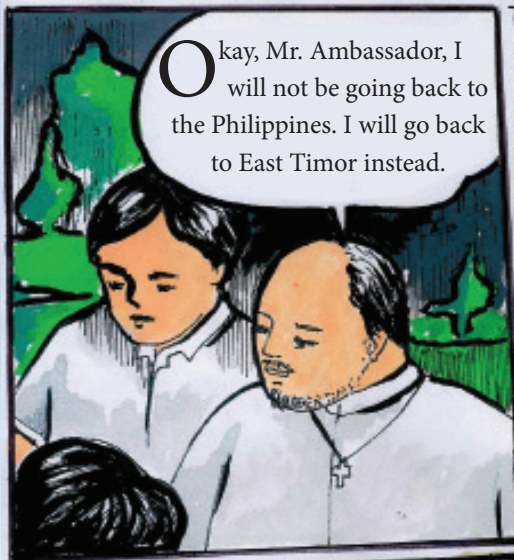
I think it is better to go back to the Philippines in the meantime. I am sure our houses were already burned. We also cannot do anything yet for this people, the situation is so difficult."

Okay, I will go with you.

Father, we have been together for a long time. We escaped together. Now it's the time to go back to our country because the UN is already there. Why would you leave us now?

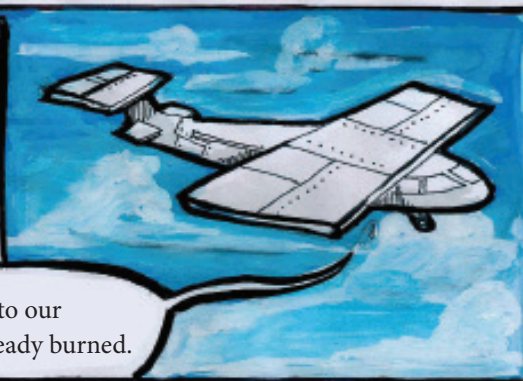
So what shall I do?

Yes Father, please stay with us and we will go back together to East Timor.

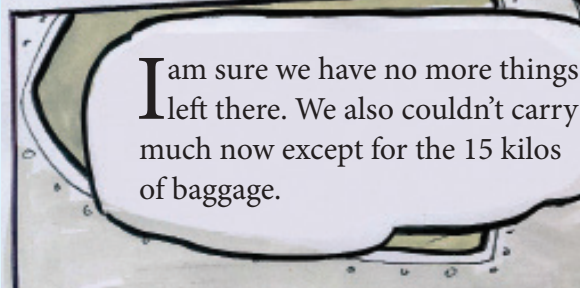


Okay, Mr. Ambassador, I will not be going back to the Philippines. I will go back to East Timor instead.

Fr. Cyrus and the other missionaries went back to East Timor via World Food Program plane, a small plane with a 12 person capacity.



I wonder what happened to our convent. Maybe, it is already burned.



I am sure we have no more things left there. We also couldn't carry much now except for the 15 kilos of baggage.



What are we to do? We have to survive in that country where everything is out of order. Then, we also do not have gas to get to the mission place in the mountains.



Maybe, we'll just stay with the Salesians first.

The missionaries stayed with the Salesians in the meantime. Then they approached the World Food Program and World Vision to ask if they could go with them as they bring food to the area where they were going.

What are we to eat in the mountains? Where are we going to sleep if our convent was already burned? O God, there's so much uncertainty but I entrust myself to you.



When they arrived in the place, they found some houses reduced to ashes. Only the brother's quarter was half-burned.



Thanks God we still have the other half. We can make use of it as a temporary shelter.

"Yeah, you're right. Anyway, I trust that God will provide for us."

Their prayers were soon granted as people there came to bringing little things that they needed...chairs, tables, spoons, plates...

"Fathers, we thought you need this. I hope it will be useful to you."

This too, Fathers. You can have it Father. Fathers, the UN rationed this to us.

Here, we brought you something to eat.

That's right. So let us praise God together and thank Him for his goodness.

"Thank you very much! As soon as we settle the necessary things, we will start rebuilding our community from these ruins."

Your presence means a lot to us. Thanks for not abandoning us. Indeed God really loves us.

Truly, if we risk ourselves God will not abandon us. He will always come to our rescue in many other ways, in ways that we couldn't think about. What is important is that I give myself.

The missionaries helped in rebuilding the houses and other structures. They talked with the people, visited the wounded or the sick and celebrated the Mass.

God's steadfast love shines more resplendently in time of suffering! God's missionaries who are working in this sort of situation are the signs of God's unfailing love for his people.

The history of the Church is filled with people, who have proclaimed the mercy of God through their own lives and in their own simple ways. This section wishes to share with you some stories and testimonies of simple people who may be unknown yet their lives echo the message of forgiveness, love and mercy to those they have met or served.

"As we can see in Sacred Scripture, mercy is a key word that indicates God's action towards us. He does not limit himself merely to affirming his love, but makes it visible and tangible. Love, after all, can never be just an abstraction. By its very nature, it indicates something concrete: intentions, attitudes, and behaviours that are shown in daily living. The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible; that is, he desires our wellbeing and he wants to see us happy, full of joy, and peaceful. This is the path which the merciful love of Christians must also travel. As the Father loves, so do his children. Just as he is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other." (Pope Francis)

"I was ill and you cared for me."

By: Asp. Ma. Thuon, MSBS

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me." (Matthew 25:35-36)

Fr. Michael Ya Thu, a Vietnamese priest, lives up to these words of Jesus. In my four-day stay in his parish last March, I witnessed his dedication in serving the poor of Christ. Many people in his parish know and love him. When I went with him to his apostolate, we were greeted by almost everybody we met on the road.

One day, I also helped in giving bread to the children and the elderly and accompanied him to the house for lepers that he built. He said that he goes there three days a week to do the cleaning of their wounds. As he worked, I could see his passion and love for the lepers. He smiles and talks to them as he gently cleans their wounds. Despite their miserable condition, the lepers' faces radiated hope, serenity and happiness.

I feel blessed for having those experiences with him. I learned so much from him. What he is doing is difficult considering the lack of



support from the government but he continues to trust that God will sustain him in this work. He trusts in the providence of God, relying on him for the things he needs in his ministry without failing to contribute all that he can to realize the mission he believes he was called to do. As he kneels down to clean the wounds of the lepers, I remembered the hands of Christ that touched and healed the lepers in his time. Fr.

Michael's hands stretched forth like the hands of His Master, healing the sick, soothing the battered spirit of those who have lost grasp of hope, his love flowing from his heart to his hands.

In 2013, Pope Francis told the priests in his homily during the Chrism Mass, "Our people like to hear the Gospel preached with unction, they like it when the Gospel we preach touches their daily lives, when it runs down like the oil of Aaron to the edges of reality, when it brings light to moments of extreme darkness, to the outskirts where people of faith are most exposed to the onslaught of those who want to tear down their faith."

Witnessing the works and mission of Fr. Michael, I am convinced that the oil of his anointing runs down to the edges of reality, touching the lives of those whom he serves and those who witness his dedication. Through his caring hands, the love of Jesus becomes tangible for those poor people and the lepers. For me, his life is an excellent preaching of the Gospel, not so much with words but with the love that is felt, a love that brings light in the midst of the darkness of pain and hopelessness. May there be more priests like him who channel God's love and compassion to people. 🙏

Sr. Giuseppina dal Bianco: Witness through Suffering

By: Sr. Melanie S. Reyes, MSBS

"In our poverty, there is one thing we can do: to suffer."

When you seemed to lose everything, are you still willing to offer the little that you have?

Our Lord gives a sterling testimony that offering something out of one's poverty is possible and a generosity of this sort adds greater value to the thing given. We know that the Lord offered his most precious love and forgiveness while all his strength and his life ebbs on the Cross.

Following the footsteps of her Lord and Master, Sr. Giuseppina dal Bianco tread the path of self-emptying, offering all she had, the little that she had for the mission that God has entrusted to her. Sr. Giuseppina dal Bianco was among the first ten Missionary Servants. She was born in Mareno di Piave, a town of the province of Treviso on December 17, 1902. On January 5, 1929, she joined the Congregation of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament in Venice and was welcomed by the Foundress herself. She took the name Sr. Ma. Giuseppina of the Sorrowful Mother on the day she pronounced her vows to the Lord.

She lived a simple and hidden life. Her co-sisters attested to her humility, her serenity in doing her daily tasks and her capacity to live authentically the spirituality and charism of the Missionary Servants. For almost all of her life, she was assigned to do the work in the kitchen. Since the Congregation was just starting then, it was not an easy task. Nonetheless, she accomplished her task with careful attention to the needs of her



co-sisters. In the profundity of her heart, she listened to the instructions imparted by Mother Caterina, our Foundress and was faithful in her prayers.

At 35 years of age, Sr. Giuseppina began to suffer from a severe form of deforming arthritis, which gradually weakened her and made a slight movement of hands increasingly difficult for her. Despite this, she devoted herself to doing chores for the mission, enduring all the pain and efforts that these chores demanded of her fragile body.

With her arthritic hands, she made beautiful shawls and doilies until she was able to do so. Brought in a wheelchair, she participated in the life of the community with constant serenity, expressing in words her union with God and her offering for the missions.

One of her co-sisters recalled how the then infirmed Sr. Giuseppina asked forgiveness for not being

able to do her task well. She said, "Madre (Sr. Luigina Papinutto) gave me the work of praying for the Congregation, for the mission and for vocations. And sometimes, in the Chapel, I get distracted and sometimes I fall asleep, too. But that was the time of my work."

Strength and physical vitality had gradually abandoned her but not her will to offer the last ounce of her strength for God's mission. Her choice of name foretold the vocation that she was to live in the heart of the Church. Like the Sorrowful Mother, she stood at the foot

of the Cross of Christ, bearing her pain and suffering with serenity and surrender to the saving plan of the Father. Sr. Giuseppina's earthly life ended on February 13, 1975 but her life remains an eloquent witness to the loving message of the Gospel.

Her witness of life tells us that a heart that loves, a heart that has experienced the infinite love of the Father, is always willing and able to give to the point of giving all that one has, all that one "owns". "In our poverty, there is one thing we can do: to suffer." Perhaps, Sr. Giuseppina kept in her heart these words of our Foundress for she willingly accepted and endured her suffering for the mission, for the spread of the Kingdom of God here on earth. Sr. Giuseppina took on the ministry of suffering so that she may be one with the Lord who suffered on the Cross, with the missionaries who give their lives for this same end.



A Pointer to Heaven

By: Sr. Melanie S. Reyes, MSBS

Aboard a bus traveling to Mindoro at 5:00 in the morning, the beauty of the first streaks of dawn painting the skies with orange hue filled me with awe and led me to praise God. I turned my eyes to the sidewalk, and there my gaze fell on the unkempt bodies lying on the cold, hard floor, on some people catching some sleep in a cart that has become their home. I wondered at how these people begin their day in such a dismal condition.

The trip went on and occasionally we stopped. Because it was such a long trip, I had a few new seatmates along the way. I get off at some stopover to stretch and there I met new people and greeted them with a smile or talked with them. And I told myself life is like that. We go on a trip, meet people, see things and realities that become part of us. People, things, places present themselves to me and if I welcome them with open eyes, mind and heart, they would

point to that one reality, the reality of our life with God.

In my 25 years of existence on this earth, I have met so many people who have taught me what life is, and shown me its meaning and beauty, people who have pointed out to me the existence of a loving and merciful God, a God who does not abandon his people.

I met strangers along the way who turned out to be good friends, good

teachers, wise guide or just new persons who taught me a thing or two about life. I would say that our new parish priest is one of them. Fr. Jose Glenn Orocio began his ministry in our parish last June. He describes himself as a simple and ordinary priest, who prays that God may make him holy and fitting for his service. His first homily struck me with its simplicity and the clarity of the message he wanted to impart. He said that when he gets up in the morning, he prays to the Holy Spirit and asks His guidance so that his whole day may be spent on doing the Will of God. And he wished that we too begin our day intent on doing God's Will for us. He shares about temporal life while pointing to something else - to life eternal.

"See you in heaven." This is how he sometimes concludes his homily. "Place your heart not in acquiring the riches of the earth, but in trust and confidence in the loving Providence of our God." He shared about his struggles in doing so and yet, his life, his choices speak of his detachment from earthly things.

As I listen to his homilies and reflect on his simple initiatives as a pastor of our Parish, I was led to thank God deeply and praise His name. He alone inspires priests and guides them to become "alter Christus" in the world that needs most a pastor, a guide, a co-journeyer in discovering the path to life eternal.



At a certain point of our life, we will meet that loving look of Mercy in the eyes of our Lord. His penetrating gaze continually beckons us to give our loving response. This section aims to share with you the personal experiences of that gaze which has greatly influenced and changed so many lives.

“We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace... Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness. At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives.” (Pope Francis)

A Day with God’s Beloved People

By: Asp. Maria Gisela Weu, MSBS

Last 2013, I had a chance to join with my classmates and professor an outreach to the in-patients of the Life Change Recovery Center (LCRC). LCRC is a private and professional treatment facility for individuals with substance dependency such as drug addiction and alcoholism, psychiatric conditions, and/or behavioral problems.

Arriving in the place, we were given the orientation. Our professor reminded us to be friendly to the patients. We introduced ourselves to them and were given few hours to talk or do some activities with them.


The main purpose of our visit was not to give material things but to talk and really spend time with them. My professor asked me to facilitate some games to make them happy. The task of making other people happy was ironic for me

since inside my heart I was grieving. My dear grandfather passed away and that same day was his funeral. But then, I pretended to be alright and accepted the task given to me. With my grief was also the fear that

those people in the center might do us harm. However, my fear was gone in just one look at their eyes because I saw in those eyes the plea for love. In those eyes, I felt God’s mercy.

When my turn to facilitate the game came, I saw them staring at me with no smile on their faces. I moved in front and explained the mechanics of the game. Then, they stood up and the game started. We played together and I saw that this time, they were not just smiling, they were laughing aloud. Their joy and laughter also thrilled me and I told myself: God did not just embrace my grandfather in heaven; He also embraced all these people. God calls those who were led astray to experience the tenderness of his love. He gives many chances to embrace and seek him. This experience turned my mourning into joy



because God has allowed me to see not only my own pain and sadness but also the longings of others and He gave me the chance to spend some time with these people whom he loves most. 

Back to the Loving Embrace of the Father

By: Asp. Katarina Mogi, MSBS

What would you feel when someone you love leaves you behind?

I was just two years old when my father left us and went to another island together with his relatives. Although I was still young then, I felt the pain of being abandoned. My mother and grandparents made me feel loved but nothing can fill the void that my father had left in my young heart.

My father came back three years after but those three years seemed too long to me so I harboured anger towards him. When he came back, I avoided him until I was in the high school. He tried to get my attention and to be close to me but my heart was hardened. I rejected his show of affection until I had this retreat when I was in high school. Moved by the atmosphere of silence and prayer, I was inspired to share to a Passionist sister about my relationship with my father. After listening to me,

she said, "Please open your heart to your father and try to forgive him because your anger and hatred will not help you grow."

At that moment, I realized my shortcomings and wrongdoings to my father. I realized that I was hurting him with my attitude but he did not tire of showing me his love. In spite of my cold treatment of him, he did not stop loving me when in fact, it was I who owed him a debt of gratitude for bringing me into the world and for his love.

Upon arriving home, I talked with him and asked his forgiveness. He was the first one to hug me and he



seeing his children grow up, of not being there during the important moments of our lives and the pain of being away from us. As a return for his love and sacrifice, I gave him a cold shoulder and anger but he did not give up on me. He waited with patience for the moment that I will be able to understand and love him back.

also asked sorry for not being with me when I needed him. He told me that he needed to leave us in order to give us a better life and a better future. My heart was opened and I began to understand that he did not abandon us. He loves us so he chose to endure the pain of not

So it is with the love of God for me. I have lost count of the times I chose to stay away from Him but every time I do so, he would wait for me to come back to my senses like the Father of the prodigal son in the Scriptures. He waits for me and runs to welcome me back into his loving embrace, to the joy of his household and clothe me with the robe befitting of his daughter. I know in my heart that many people nowadays long for this warm and welcoming embrace and so it is my hope, that each of us may discover in our life the Father who awaits to embrace us, to bind and heal our wounds from the many times we stumbled and fell hard on the ground. May all of us discover the path leading to the house of our Father and return to the house where Mercy and Love dwells. 🙏



The River of Life

By: Post. Chloue Ann-Encarguez , MSBS



I am a traveler in this life, journeying towards my true home. At a point in my life, I ask myself this question, "What is the purpose of my life in this world?" While searching for the answer, I let the flow of the river of life bring me. I savored the calm and coolness of water, embracing other creatures and lifting my head up to bask in the balmy rays of the sun.

Along this journey, I encountered the God who gave me a much-longed for hug of divine love, a hug that showed me the purpose and meaning of my life. This I experience in silence in front of the One hidden in the Blessed Sacrament.


My mother used to say "I do not have energy when I have not attended the Mass". I did not understand what she meant then, but I gradually felt a mysterious presence behind that small piece of Bread. When I lived with the MSBS sisters, I began to appreciate the daily encounter with God

presence in the Blessed Sacrament fills the hunger of my soul and led me to the path of self-giving service in the Church, to the path of religious life.

I joined the Missionary Servants and last July 5, I began the journey of Postulancy, trusting that He will mold me into a true servant of the Church. The community gives strength and assists me in this process of formation. With them, I began to realize that struggles and difficulties are part of the journey of growth. When the rain and wind

in the form of the Blessed Sacrament. Every time I receive the Host, I am reminded of my sinfulness, of the many times I turned my back on him but most of all, I am reminded of how much He loves me. His

blow so hard that I felt like going back to a safer place, someone would tap my back to remind me to pause for a while and think it over, and then I realized God sent them to me to remind me of my purpose. Time also comes when the river runs dry and I cannot seem to reach the wide ocean. I looked around again then I realized that I am not alone. In the middle of dryness, God stays with me. He bestows upon me his many gifts and blessings. He lets me discover more deeply who I really am. He shows me that although I am flawed and imperfect, he loves me and gave me a community that will help and mold me for His mission. He is making me capable of serving his Church.

I give my best to cooperate in the process of self-discovery and Christian maturity. I am not yet in the middle of the river of life. I know that a lot of things await me - struggles and joy, but I trust that whatever happens, God will always be there for me. 



In God's Perfect Time

By: Post. Maureen Martinez, MSBS

One early Sunday morning, I received a text message from a sister granting my request to visit their convent. To get there, I had to take a tricycle and a jeepney, and then a long walk. As I was walking alone, my spirit faltered; the eagerness and excitement slowly vanished and I was filled with fear and hesitancy. I thought I was ready for it, but I felt it was not the right time. So I turned back and went home. Few months passed, a phone call came from a sister of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, inviting me to their convent. I felt that the long wait was over. In God's perfect time, he himself initiated the first step of his plan for me.

Before I joined the Missionary Servants as a search-in, I was exposed to various activities in the Church. I was leading the youth ministry of Couples for Christ-Foundation for Family and Life in our place. We gather children and give sessions to them. It was then that the seed of faith was planted and nurtured in me with the help of my parents and the ministry. In the course of time, this seed of faith began to sprout and spread, reaching the top of the soil and enabling me to see life with the eyes of faith. I found extraordinary joy in serving

Him especially among the poor and the children. The ministry also made me feel the great love of God for me.

My encounter with our suffering brothers and sisters motivates me more to serve Him.

My family, the ministry and the various priceless experiences

led me to take a crucial decision in my life: to serve and follow him in religious life.

My yes to the invitation of the MSBS sisters was my response to the mystical voice whispering from within, the voice that calmed my restlessness, the voice that enlightened me in my confusion and doubts. My response to that invitation was a step closer to the voice who calls me. I really wanted to be a religious but fear and anxiety was for me an inevitable part of my journey. It was my first time to live far from my family, to live with people of different upbringing and culture. I was also struggling to know myself.

In my anxiety, He gave me His assurance. I was then reflecting on the passage when Jesus asked his disciples: "Who do you say that I am?" Suddenly, these words came to my mind: "Do not strive to become the person you are not. Be yourself and do not

conform yourself to what others want you to be. You have your own identity. My father created you in his image and likeness. I know you since you were born. I chose you and called you. You are special to me because you are my friend. Just trust and you will find your true self in me." These words contained the answer to my doubts and queries and calmed the turmoil within me.

So now, I continue to undergo religious formation to discover more myself, nurture and purify my vocation. I am taking responsibility for my own growth and the community is also helping me to grow and mature in my vocation not just as a consecrated but particularly as a Missionary Servant, to offer my prayers, works and sacrifices for the missionaries and for the universal mission of the Church. Though I am sure that it is not an easy journey to take, I trust that with His help, I will be able to conquer any obstacle or hindrance along the way. I know God will hold me tightly and will not allow me to go through this journey alone. I will walk with him until that beautiful day when I will be standing in front of him and wholeheartedly saying: "Lord, You called me, Here I am."



Beyond the Borders

By: Nov. Amelita Cadiao, MSBS

“What will separate us from the love of Christ? (Rm. 8:35) Will it be distance, borders, pain of separation, fear of persecution, or restriction to express one’s faith? These thoughts arose in my mind as I remember the situations of our Christian brothers and sisters in some countries who continue to negate the call for freedom of one’s faith and religion. How can they endure the daily struggles of their journey in a place where their faith, hope and love are put to the test?

I can only imagine the pain they are experiencing there, being far from their own home and loved ones and living with the people who are different from them in race, creed and culture. How can they survive? Where do they get strength and consolation when there is no church around, no Bible, Eucharistic Celebration or any other liturgical feasts and commemoration? I hope they will find and look up to the Man hanging on the Cross, the Pure Love who will assure them that they are not alone in their suffering. He is the One who bears with them the weight

of the Cross and will enable them to endure all pain.

God has His own way and will always make a way to be near His flock and will not abandon them in the midst of their struggle. My exposure in Radio Veritas Asia (RVA) Filipino Service gave me a glimpse at God’s love and compassion which surpass any obstacle in a restricted world.

Serving the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in East Asia and Middle East, in countries dominantly populated by Muslims, RVA Filipino Service nourishes the faith and spiritual life of the faithful in those countries. It airs the Gospel reading and reflections for the day and on Sundays, the Eucharistic Celebration. In this way, the OFWs are given the privilege to unite in spirit with other Catholic faithful throughout the world through the celebration of the Mass. It also airs the teachings of the Catholic Church to help deepen their understanding of our faith, to update them of the events in the Church and in the world, of the call of the Holy Father to every believer; and to strengthen them with food for the soul. These simple services serve

as the very hands of God, giving the reassuring caress, embracing them in their sorrows and encouraging them to hold on to His love.

My exposure also gave me the joy of participating in God’s expression of love for His people. The humble service of editing, recording the Gospel and the reflections of the day, my participation in the aired Eucharistic Celebration as well as my sharing in the segment “Kalusugan ay Kayamanan” Program (Health is Wealth) inspired me to collaborate with God, to be His loving hand. I am grateful to the people who made this exposure possible: my supportive community, the RVA family especially Fr. Carlos, Fr. Gab, Fr. Jim, Ma’am Ayie and Sir Lawrence who warmly welcomed and guided me. I am glad for being able to contribute for the mission of extending God’s love beyond borders, overcoming distances, reaching out to the farthest corners of the world, and penetrating even the darkness of oppression. Indeed, what can separate us from the love of God? What can stop Him from loving us?



You Are the Light of the World

By: Sr. Benedetta Rimoe

“You are the way and the light for these people,” our parish priest told me when I went home for a month-long vacation in Myanmar. I objected to his words, saying; “No, Jesus is the only way and the only light”. He insisted, “Yes, but you are a member of Christ’s Body and you are to be his light to the people.” His words lingered in my heart and made me ask myself: How can I be Jesus’ light to the people in this village?

My village is a home to both Catholics and animists. My family, some of my friends and relatives adhere to traditional beliefs and practices. Just a day before the thanksgiving celebration for my first profession, my mother told me; “You must go through a ritual of purification.” This ritual is done by pouring animal’s blood on the forehead. The blood has to be from the heart of cow and pig, and from the mouth of a chicken. For a half day, I had to keep the mark of dry blood on my forehead and make sure they will flow straight. They believe that it is not good if the blood does not flow straight down to the nose.

Being a Catholic and a religious at that, I strongly opposed her by saying, “There is no need for that, I have done nothing unclean.”

My mother insisted that I go through the ritual; otherwise something bad will happen to me. Because of her insistence, I finally conceded to her request.

Confronted by this reality, the words of our parish priest resonated in my heart. Indeed, I have to be a light that will illumine and lead the people to the path towards Jesus. And so I told myself: I will make use of this short stay in our village as an opportunity to share the light of my faith to them. The people in my village are very kind. On the day of the thanksgiving celebration for my first Religious Profession, Catholics and non-

Catholics came to join us. Some non-Catholics also attended the Mass especially the old ones. Despite their differences in beliefs, they showed no discrimination and excluded no one. Instead, they worked together to make the celebration an experience for

keeps. Many of them, because they are animists, did not understand the kind of life I have chosen but they came to greet and present some simple gifts and beautiful songs and dances. An old man also came. He brought some eggs that day. Nothing was so special about his gift and it is worth nothing in the eyes of many but for me, it was one of the best gifts I have ever received in my life. The gift of the old man was all that he had and that made his gift extra special. This old man was so poor but he just could not pass up this opportunity to give something so he went around begging for some eggs from his neighbors.

His generosity and those of the people in the village, the friendliness and goodness in their hearts made me realize one thing - these people had so much to share and teach me. True, my faith can shed light to them but they too are bearers of the light of truth. Their lives speak of the goodness and generosity of God, the God who is willing to give all that He has for the love of us. Their examples speak of the God whom they might not know but whose image they reflect in their own simple way. 🙏



The Call to be joyful, to be prophetic and to be people of Communion

By: Sr. Emi Soe Agatha

In view of the celebration of the Year of Consecrated Life, my co-sisters and I attended the talk given to Religious by Cardinal Tagle on August 5, 2015. The Cardinal discussed the three invitations of Pope Francis for all the Consecrated persons.

First, we religious are called **to radiate authentic joy** that comes from our experience with God. We are called to share the joy that comes from genuine fraternity in the community and from total self-giving service to the church, to families, young people, elderly and the poor. We are asked to help people, especially the young, to discover the joy of finding hope in God even in the midst of suffering. As a young religious, I am challenged to share my joy, which comes from encountering God, from sharing my life in the community and from serving other people around me.

Pope Francis' second invitation is **to be prophetic**. He said, "radical evangelical living is not only for religious: it is demanded of everyone. But religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way." To be prophetic demands a heart able to listen to and discern the call of the times. Attentiveness to the outer and inner reality will enable us to live our prophetic vocation in the world.

Cardinal Tagle said that attentiveness to the signs of the time requires

immersion to the different aspects of life - the world of economy, social communication, and digital age. He set as an example the situation of migrants and refugees, a pressing issue in our world today. Although this gives rise to conflict in many parts of the world, he says that God has opened a new dimension through them and even makes

use of the most painful moment to become a new missionary movement for the new evangelization. Our task as religious is to fill with hope the spaces that God has opened to us. The Pope's third invitation is **to "be people of communion"**.

In this digital age, we need to foster authentic human encounter. The people, especially the young, still long for an authentic human encounter. "The Church is inviting us to embrace the spirituality of communion, the '*culture of the encounter*', where the brothers and sisters with whom we follow Jesus do not remain solely '*our major penance*'; indeed, they offer us the possibility of experiencing God in a concrete way, because it is our brothers and sisters who give us the opportunity to love", says Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic life during the World Meeting with Religious. As religious, we are to be people of communion, authentic persons capable of living




an authentic relationship and of leading people to an authentic human encounter.

Living in a formation house with an intercultural reality, this call is all the more relevant for me. It demands my openness to variety and differences. As I also live with young people who are in the stage of discerning their vocation, I am invited to understand them and to help them understand themselves, thereby contributing to the formation of people who will be joyful, who will find the reason to live and die for.

These three aspects are equally stirring and challenging to Religious Life. They call us not to be ignorant of the world we live in but passionately live our life as witnesses. To respond to this call, we need to have a clear vision that will serve as our guiding star in loving



and serving God and others. We need to get in touch with the reality and to respond with zealous commitment to make the dream of God for humankind a reality in the here and now, and if we do persevere in this commitment, we surely will hear God saying "Well done, my faithful servants, come share the Master's joy." 

Life Changes

By: Ms. Arlene B. Venus



Poverty is not the reason for the young girl named ARLENE B. VENUS not to have a better life. She dreamt of finishing her studies and having a better future for her family. Because of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament (MSBS), she was able to finish her studies. Her dreams became real and this is a short article about her life as a student, as a teacher and as an individual.

My name is Arlene B. Venus, 25 years of age, only daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Arnel S. Venus. I am the middle child of the family. It was raining when I was born on August 24, 1990 but despite the bad weather, no one could stop me from seeing the beauty of the world. I lived in Gomez Village, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro.

My life as a student..... My life started to change when in my years in elementary school, the MSBS chose me to be one of their scholars. They were looking for children who are in need of financial assistance. I became one of those. They helped me and my family financially. They also moulded me into a better person and strengthened my faith. They taught us to thank God and to trust in God no matter what life brings. In my life as a student, I encountered lots of hindrances but with the help of my parents and friends, I surpassed the challenges in my life. Now, I am one of the scholars who completed

September 25, 2011 and by God's help, I passed the examination and got a professional teacher's license.

My life as a teacher.... Yes, it was only a dream to become a teacher but this dream became a reality to me. Until now I can't believe how my life has changed and I thank God for leading me in the right path. Why did I choose to be a teacher? Some of my friends ask me why...and I always tell them that I want to be part of the life of the young. I want to impart my knowledge, love and values to them....And besides, Jesus was once a teacher.

At present I am teaching at Quintal Minority School in San Jose,

Occidental Mindoro as Teacher 1. It takes 2-3 hours of walking before I reach the school. I also experienced wading in very deep flood water which was over my shoulder. In summer time, we can use our motorbike. My pupils belong to an indigenous tribe in Mindoro. The

a degree in Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. I graduated last March 20, 2011. Right after graduation, I reviewed for the Licensure Examination for Teachers on

experience of living with them is very memorable for me. I keep in my heart all the unforgettable moments I had with them. The life in the mountain taught me to be more humble and contented in life...Money can't buy all things...happiness, joy and love shared with each other. I experienced eating "bayuko" (small snail living in trees), and name (a root crop) and I had a chance to explore the beauty of nature in Quintal when we had a home visitation to those students who are not attending their classes. There are difficulties but the joy that I experience is worth it.

My life as a individual person.....all the experiences made me a better person, humble and contented in life. It taught me to enjoy life and serve others without hesitation and discrimination...just give and share love.....

I thank God for all the things and blessings in my life.....I thank my family, parents and friends for all the sacrifices and support they gave me. They never left me alone through my ups and downs. And lastly, I thank the MSBS, through them I finished my studies. 🙏



MCS

By: Sr. Sherlyn Joy Dapito, MSBS



Excitement, enthusiasm and joy wafted in the air as the concert organized by Mother Caterina School went on last October 17. To the joyous applause and cheers of the audience, the selected pupils and the faculty of MCS performed cultural dances from the countries where the MSBS are now present: Italy, Colombia, Philippines, Myanmar, Indonesia, Vietnam

and Dominican Republic. Each dance was preceded by a short introduction on the reality of the country and the mission apostolate carried out by the Missionary Servants in



particular context. Beginning from the place of origin of the Foundress and the MSBS Congregation, the Caterinians together with the audience, retraced the footsteps of the




The expression of gratitude and appreciation of the audience for the new awareness of other realities brought us so much joy and assured us that we have

spirit of Mother Caterina. We also trod on the footsteps of those who have carried on and continue to keep alive her missionary spirit in the world today, the Missionary Servants who courageously opened the way for the charism to thrive in other countries as well.

The parents of the pupils who performed and the faculty planned and worked together to ensure the success of the event. Together, they worked hard to solicit financial help from generous donors and pooled their resources not just to entertain but at the same time to share their God-given talents to others, to glorify God and to express their heartfelt gratitude to the school.

Great efforts were also taken by all MCS Teachers, who

meaningfully commemorated the death of our beloved Foundress, that is, by passing on the charism of animating the people of God and empowering them to offer their all for the mission.

As MSBS Sisters, it is our joy to reminisce the memory of her zeal for the mission and to pay tribute to her and to all those who have put their hearts, hands and feet at the disposal of the Lord of the Harvest in the spirit of love for the Eucharist and the mission. Nurturing the hope that Caterinians may imbibe in their souls the missionary spirit, we strive to get the best out of all opportunities laid out in our path as Mother Caterina looks on us from heaven, guiding us and interceding for us. 



*By sharing in Christian charity with the poor,
we promote an authentic cooperation with the
fruits of their and our work, the
(Pope Francis)*



*ose who face numerous obstacles,
with the poor so that, through the
ey can live a dignified life.*

A postolic A ctivities...



A postolic Activities...

SCHOLARSHIP

In the midst of material, moral and spiritual poverty, we are called to sow hope for a better future.
"Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society." (EG, 187)



In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. (EG, 120)

HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION AND PROPAGANDA FIDE



MSBS LAY ASSOCIATES

It is a group of laywomen who commit themselves to a life of poverty, chastity, obedience and to missionary animation and cooperation. The members are given spiritual assistance such as retreats, recollections and formative seminars.

FAMILY FOR THE MISSION



The flame of Mission in Myanmar

By: Dorothy Moet Moet Htun

The aim of Missionary apostolate is to transform the human community into the Church of Christ that prays with her voice and with her life the Our Father (Ad Gentes 7). The flame of missionary apostolate in Myanmar was ignited and kept alive by many missionaries from foreign lands. This year, the bishops in Loikaw, Bp. Stephen Tjephe and Bp. Sotero Phamo, warmly welcomed and encouraged the MSBS apostolate in Myanmar. With the grace of God, the MSBS Sisters were able to open the Mo. Caterina House in Naung Yah and the "Via Pacis Home" in Htayngalia.

A group of children from different villages, mostly from remote areas, were accommodated in Via Pacis Home, and provided with food and aids for their studies. Their education, material and spiritual needs are fully supported by the Sisters and the Via Pacis benefactors while the parents support them in the ways they can. The children are also formed spiritually by giving them catechesis. By doing so, it is hoped that their faith is nurtured and they are helped to appreciate the gift of life. In addition to faith formation, rules and regulations were also set for their observance. Such form of discipline and formation aims at forming them to become good persons and Christians.

This apostolate is not yet well-known to many people because it is just beginning and also because the Sisters are not yet constantly present in Myanmar but those who know it greatly appreciate the work, evoking the spirit of generosity in them

as well. Some felt the need to give even out of their meager resources such as food or other materials.

In Mo. Caterina House in Naung Ya, young people who feel called by God begin the journey of nurturing their vocation and spirituality and learning more about the Congregation. They are given basic lessons in the English language as a preparation for their studies and formation in the Philippines as well as training in other practical works.

Through this apostolate, the ray of Christ's love is extended in Myanmar. I collaborate in this work convinced of the spirit and passion that fueled Mo. Caterina to found the Congregation. Having undergone years of formation in the MSBS Congregation, I also try to pass on the values that I have learned, especially the love for the mission, to the young people whom I am now assisting in Myanmar because I believe that missionary animation and cooperation is very relevant if we want to form Christians who actively participate in the mission of the Church. It is my hope as well that the beneficiaries may become effective missionaries in their own way and in their own time.



The local Church in Myanmar supports this initiative and encourages young people to offer their lives for the mission. Our beloved Bp. Stephen and Bp. Sotero accompany the journey of MSBS with their spiritual and moral support while some priests and nuns promote vocation to young people. In this way, they too share the joy of Christ's mission.

Blessed be the Name of the Lord! He does wondrous things for His people. Witnessing the mission work alive in the Church of Myanmar cannot but evoke in me a feeling of joy and gratitude for the Lord. Thanks be to the Congregation, benefactors and to all those who collaborate generously with God's mission. ✠



HCA

By: Sr. Juliet Mejia, MSBS

The Seed of Mission

All fun, all play. This is what often comes to our mind when we think of a child's life, but is this the only thing they can really do?

Why then, did our Lord tell us these words, "Unless you turn and become like little children you will not enter the kingdom of heaven"?

Children may be little in the eyes of everyone, helpless creatures always in need of love and care, but their hearts are wide enough to welcome the immense love of God, the love for neighbors and mission. This is what I witnessed as I relate with the Holy Childhood and Propagation of Faith members here in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro.

One Saturday afternoon, we had a choir practice for the celebration of World Mission Sunday. After the practice, I informed the children that we will also animate the Eucharistic celebration. Immediately, three girls volunteered; the two as lectors and one as commentator. When everything was settled, we bade goodbye to each other. As I was preparing myself to go home, two boys came to me and said, "Sister, I and my friend would like to be the server tomorrow." The smile on their lips and the excitement in their voices brought much joy and hope in my heart. I consider their present longing and desire to serve God in the Eucharist as seed of the mission and



I hope that this will grow more and more and reach people especially their fellow children who are beset by suffering and threat to their very dignity and existence.

How I hope that these hearts will remain restless and discontented until they have stretched their hands to help, to give comfort and to pray for the distressed. A great treasure is locked within the hearts of these children, the love of the Eucharist that cannot but push them to cooperate in the mission. I cherish the hope that in time, they will be able to pass this on and fill the hearts of their friends, relatives and their fellow with that passion and love for Him. I know that these children have their own stories to tell; stories of joy, unfulfilled longings and desires, sadness and pain but amidst all of these, their hearts are still open for self-giving service.

Their zeal, which I witnessed in my every experiences with them are

surely the fruits of those who have worked hard to make them aware of their being missionaries; of those whose sacrifice and zeal nurtured the seed of mission in the children's hearts. It is the fruit of the work both of those in the forefront of mission and of those who selflessly offer their every work, prayer and suffering for the benefit of the mission.

May we continue to embrace the children into our own arms, bearing in our minds and hearts their right to receive our love and care as well as their capacity to contribute to the Church's mission. For as the Church says, all the baptized are missionaries. May all of us be fervent cooperators of the mission of helping men believe in Jesus and implanting in them the knowledge and love for the mission so that they may responsibly cooperate in the Church's work of evangelization both as witness and living instruments. ☩



A Dream that Reached Foreign Lands

By: Sr. Maricel Delingencia, MSBS

All of us, I believe, nurture dreams in life. It comes with our existence, a beautiful gift from our loving Creator. Oftentimes, these dreams lead us to our own mission here in the world, which He Himself has planned for us. He himself has a dream for each one of His creatures. No one can foresee where a single dream can lead us, or how a single dream can influence people even in the lands we fail to envision or set our foot in. The life story of Ms. Alda Pasqualini, Foundress of the MSBS Lay Associates, shows how a single dream can lead one to one's mission in life.

Alda Pasqualini was born to a good family in Treviso on August 11, 1914. She was beautiful, intelligent, and a great musician and pianist. A woman gifted with remarkable beauty, she did not lack admirers and suitors. With all the privileges she had in life, she manifested a strong and firm character in pursuit of her dreams. In her youth, she enrolled in the Catholic Action Association, in which her Christian formation was reinforced. After the Second World War, she became an ardent supporter of the political Christian Democrat Party. This party aimed to defend and advocate the values of Christian civilization. She also studied theology to equip herself with the knowledge of Christian teachings and collaborated with different civil or religious organizations.

This woman's passion was fueled by a dream she nurtured in her heart, to dedicate her entire life for the Lord and His mission. This dream moved her to make the choice of turning back from earthly aspirations. This dream led her to her true calling to become

a missionary animator and cooperator in the Church. She invested all her talents and efforts in the field of mission animation and cooperation, especially her enviable facility of speech and organization. As a missionary animator and cooperator, she helped people around her to understand the mission of the Church and its needs, and cooperated in all possible ways to all mission initiatives. The Diocesan Mission Office occupied a very special place in her heart.

Alda also took special care for the Parish Mission Delegates who were sent to mission conferences and gathering organized by PMS. Many of those delegates were consecrated to God from their youth. She noticed that despite their enthusiasm, they were often left to themselves, without any support and spiritual help and their situation inspired her to start a group of consecrated single and widowed women who commit to the work of mission animation and cooperation.


In one of the mission conferences she attended, she met a sister of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, founded by Mo. Caterina Zecchini. Providentially, she discovered that the MSBS Congregation and the secular group she started have the same charism. She, then, realized that God directed her to her true vocation, in a journey that began with her simple dream to serve Him and His mission.

Along her journey, she was not exempted from incomprehension, trials and difficulties but with her



determination and courage, she obtained the approval of the bishop for the Institute to be an Aggregate of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament. Alda accompanied the group who made the first promises in Venice on December 8, 1969, feast of the Immaculate Conception.

She then wrote: "The Lord loves us, therefore let us not be disturbed from our littleness and unworthiness but journey firmly towards the light, trusting in His divine call, joyfully grateful for the love that He brings and wonderfully shows us". Alda suffered much due to her illness and on March 29, 1976, she died.

From Treviso Italy, the group of widows and single MSBS Lay Secular group spread to Colombia and on December 8, 2012, three single women made their first promises and became the pioneer group of MSBS Lay Associates in the Philippines. Certainly, Alda never thought of the possibility that her dream will reach foreign lands but by God's willing it, her dream had set foot in foreign lands and now continues to spread its vocation and mission in the world. 



The Miracle of Mercy

By: Allan Potestades

At the dawn of a new day, October 23, 2014, 5:30 a.m., I and my beloved wife welcomed a new life that made the sun more radiant for us: our third child. My wife had a very delicate and painful delivery but the sight of our little angel, whom we named Joanna, eased away all her pain and all our worries.

The days that followed were days of pain, struggle and suffering for our family. My wife suffered

post-partum depression, a moderate or severe depression in women who had just given birth which may be caused by a stressful event during pregnancy or delivery or by a difficult or emergency delivery. We incurred considerable debt from hospital bills and other necessities so I had to work doubly hard, and my wife, aware of the difficulty, tried to help me out in household chores although she still needed to recuperate. The stressful situation affected her much that in the succeeding days, she seemed to be not her usual self. She became silent and aloof, lost appetite for food and had difficulty getting a good sleep. She became constantly nervous and paranoid. Her condition worsened by the day till the point that she was already unable to eat, drink or even respond to the call of nature.

On the 29th of December, we rushed her to the hospital in Calapan. There, we learned that she suffered enlargement of kidneys, UTI secondary to retention, pneumonia, hypertension and major depression. The doctors gave her first-aid and other medications.

We were financially drained then and to me, the hospital bills and the cost of medications were really impossible to bear. In that moment, I fervently surrendered to God everything we were going through. I leave everything up to you Lord! I uttered in my heart. Presto! His response to that heartfelt prayer was so immediate and beyond my expectations. My facebook page and cellphone were flooded with messages and I received several phonecall from friends here in the Philippines and abroad whom I have not gotten in touch with for years, our relatives, neighbours, former classmates some of whom I couldn't even remember anymore, and many others extended financial help. My father too, did not abandon us in this difficult moment.

All these blessings that poured forth in our lives in the moment we needed them most are for me, fruits of the incessant prayers of those who showed their concern and solidarity with us. Mass intentions were offered for us in the parish community which adopted us. The community regularly checked-up on us especially on the condition of my wife, and extended financial help as well by allotting



a part of the second collection for us.

A family, which we have recently joined, did not also fail to lend a helping hand: the Family for the Mission. Their sense of solidarity made me realize that it is also our mission to care for our fellow families who are in dire need. Their sympathy gave us strength and determination to stand firm and hold on to the hope that everything will also be well. We also received the news that the

MSBS unceasingly prayed for us. Some also bothered to send inspirational songs which strengthened me, and messages that reminded me that God does not abandon me. And God answered all our prayers.

How good is our Lord! He has let us feel his unconditional love and mercy through other people.


At the coming of the Holy Father, I confidently and fervently prayed for the healing of my wife through him. Standing in front of the television in the hospital room, I held out my hand and rested it on the television screen. With tears streaming down my face, I begged for the recovery and healing of my beloved. At that moment, I firmly trusted that He will heal my wife. While watching the Holy Father and uttering prayers, I massaged her whole body.

I was on the brink of sleeping when suddenly, I heard her voice. "I want to use the comfort room, dy." I couldn't believe what I have just heard. Praised be the Lord! I held her up and assisted her to the comfort room. She caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror, asked for a comb and requested to have her dress changed into fresh and clean one. The next day, I was able to talk with her, to feed her orally and to give her medicine. After four days, she was discharged from the hospital and since then, her condition was getting day by day. However, there are still problems to face and trials to hurdle. A lot of needs demand our attention, especially financial. She was not receiving salary because it has been six months that she stopped teaching. I was not earning much too.

By the grace of God, I was able to find a job in San Jose, Romblon in June. I was hired as a DSWD employee. It is a sacrifice to live away from my family but I thank God because in spite of all the trials, He remained by our side. In the times when we really had nothing, He became our Great Provider and Savior. We were tested many times but I kept in my mind and heart that He will always be there for us and so He provided us the strength to overcome all trials. I surrendered myself, our family to His will and begged him to look on us with favor. This act of surrendering was the greatest lesson I have learned from this experience.

Continuation on page 29...

The experience also made us stronger and led me to discover that in life, love and faith matters much. In love, we will not give up but instead will do everything, surmounting all difficulties and heedless of our nothingness. What matters most is that we have a Faith in God, which will serve as a stronghold when we cannot anymore bear the weight of our burden. God will never let us

down. Now, we begin to rise up again, fortified by a positive vision that all the challenges in life can only bring greater strength. I will continue to serve with all the blessings that I have received from Him, with the songs of praise and thanksgiving to God and in trying to live true to my being a Catholic here in the island.
TO GOD BE THE GLORY! 

Cebu to host the 51st International Eucharistic Congress

Cebu will host the upcoming 51st International Eucharistic Congress (IEC), with the theme "Christ in you, our hope of glory" on January 24-31, 2016.

A communique by the Pontifical Commission for International Eucharistic Congresses stated that "The celebration of the 51st International Eucharistic Congress in this country, the only one with a Catholic majority in Asian continent, is an important challenge to strengthen the missionary/ evangelizing perspective as well as for identifying new ways in celebrating the Congresses themselves."

The Catholic Bishops conference of the Philippines expressed their desire that the said event will deepen Eucharistic devotion in the country as well as prepare for the 500th Anniversary of the evangelization in the Philippines. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI announced in 2012 the choice of Cebu Philippines as the venue for the IEC.

International Eucharistic Congresses are held every four years with the purpose of celebrating and glorifying the holy Eucharist. It is a perfect venue to spread devotion and knowledge of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, which is the foundation of Catholic worship and piety. It also aims to deepen our understanding of the celebration of the liturgy and to draw attention to the social dimension of the Eucharist.

The Eucharistic Congress began in France in 1881 as the fruit of the Eucharistic apostolate of St. Peter Julian Eymard, famously considered as the apostle of the Eucharist along with French priests Fr. Antoine Chevrier, the apostle of the Holy Face, Leon Dupont, Bp. Louis Gaston de Segur.

The first person to propose the idea of giving public homage and veneration to the Blessed Eucharist under the name and form of the Eucharistic Congress was a laywoman named

Emilie Marie Tamisier with the theme "The Eucharist saves the World". The first Congress approved by Pope Leo III was held in Lille, France on June 28-30, 1881. The last gathering was held in Dublin, Ireland in 2012. The Philippines has previously hosted the Congress in Manila in 1937.

The IEC which will be held in Cebu is a significant and monumental event in the Catholic Church and a life-changing experience for all who will experience it.

LOGO

The logo was prepared by Jayson Jaluag, a Fine Arts student from Mandaue City.

Meaning of the symbols used:

The sun, a principal symbol of the Philippine Flag, also represents hope.

The seven rays of the sun symbolize the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, fortitude, understanding, counsel, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

The cup and bread are the symbols of the Eucharist.

IHS which stands for Iesus Hominum Salvator is the monogram of the Holy Name of Jesus and refers to Cebu which was formerly called Villa del Santissimo Nombre de Hesus

The boat is the mode of transportation in the Philippines and represents the missionary Church

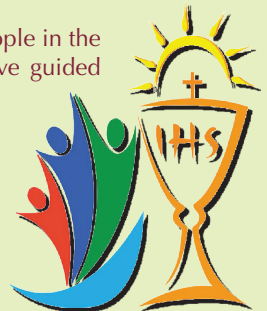
The colors which were used in the people in the boat highlights the principles that have guided the Filipino faith:

Green- color of hope that blooms even in adversity

Blue- color of faith that we cling to

Red- is the symbol of charity

While the Aqua blue which is the color of the boat represents the journey of Christians towards heaven.



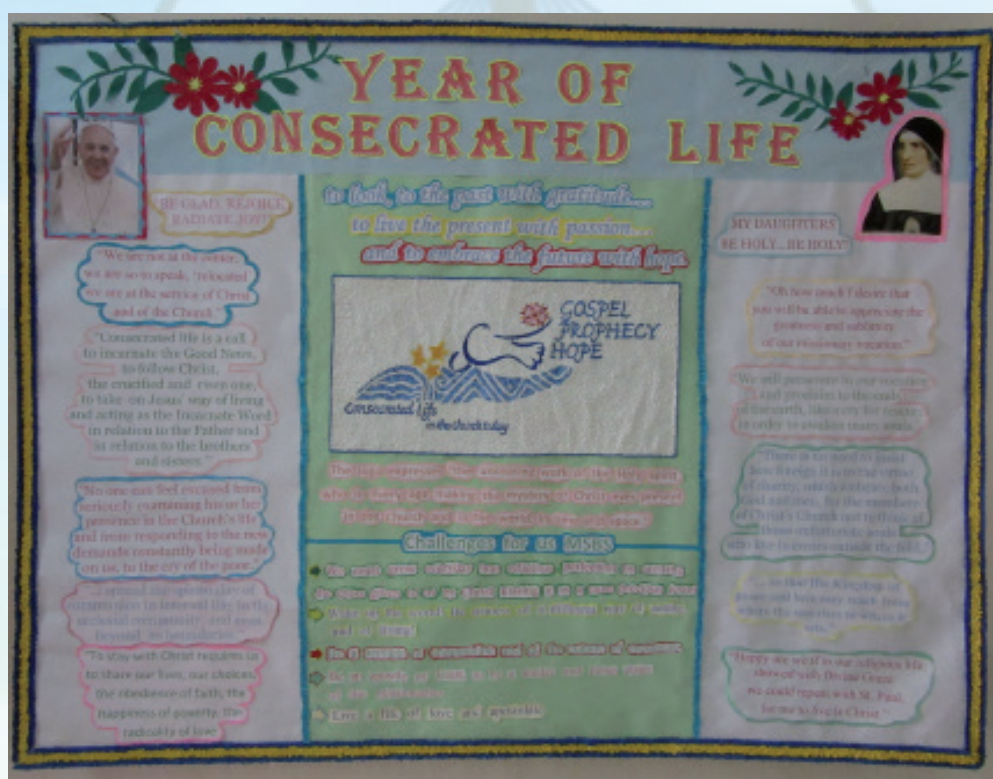
Young Consecrated Men and Women meet in Rome

Approximately 4,000 young consecrated men and women from various parts of the world assembled in Rome on September 15-19, 2016 for the first World Meeting for young consecrated men and women. The Meeting, with the theme "Wake up the World: Gospel, Prophecy and Hope", was organized by the Congregation for Institutes of

Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life as part of the celebration of the Year of Consecrated Life which began in November 2014 and ends in February 2016. The aims of the meeting are the following: a formative experience through Biblical, Theological-Charismatic and Ecclesiological reflections

upon the fundamental elements of Consecrated Life; to offer the possibility of sharing one's reality, desires and formation expectations; to celebrate and witness the beauty of one's vocation. Each morning the participants gathered in the Paul VI Hall in Vatican City to listen to the keynote speeches on vocation, fraternal life and mission. In the afternoon, the participants were divided into language groups in various locations in Rome for the sharing of

feedback. In the evenings, there are various itineraries offered, among which they chose: the Pathway of Announcement: (missionary night in central Rome); the Pathway of Encounter (helping socio-ecclesial organizations, like Caritas, St Egidio Community, Talitha Kum), and the Pathway of Beauty (guided visits to the Vatican Museums and the Sistine Chapel).



He addressed in particular those coming from Iraq and Syria, recalling the many martyrs that have witnessed the faith with their blood and thanked the women consecrated for their witnessing, "I would like to give thanks for the witness of consecrated women. You always have the wish to go to

the front line, as you are mothers, you have the maternity of the Church, that brings you close to people. ... You are the icons of the Church's tenderness and love, of the maternity of the Church and of Our Lady. The Pope also answered three questions posed to him by a priest from Aleppo, Syria, named Pierre, a religious sister named Sara, and another sister named Mary Hyacinth, from India. Speaking of prophecy in

A prayer vigil in St. Peter's Square presided by Archbishop Jose Rodriguez Carballo, OFM, marked its opening. The vigil began with an entrance procession of fifty of the young religious who carried lighted lamps in commemoration of the fifty years since the events of the Second Vatican Council. An icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary was enthroned, as the young men and women religious were entrusted to the Mother of God, that they might be able to "wake the world"

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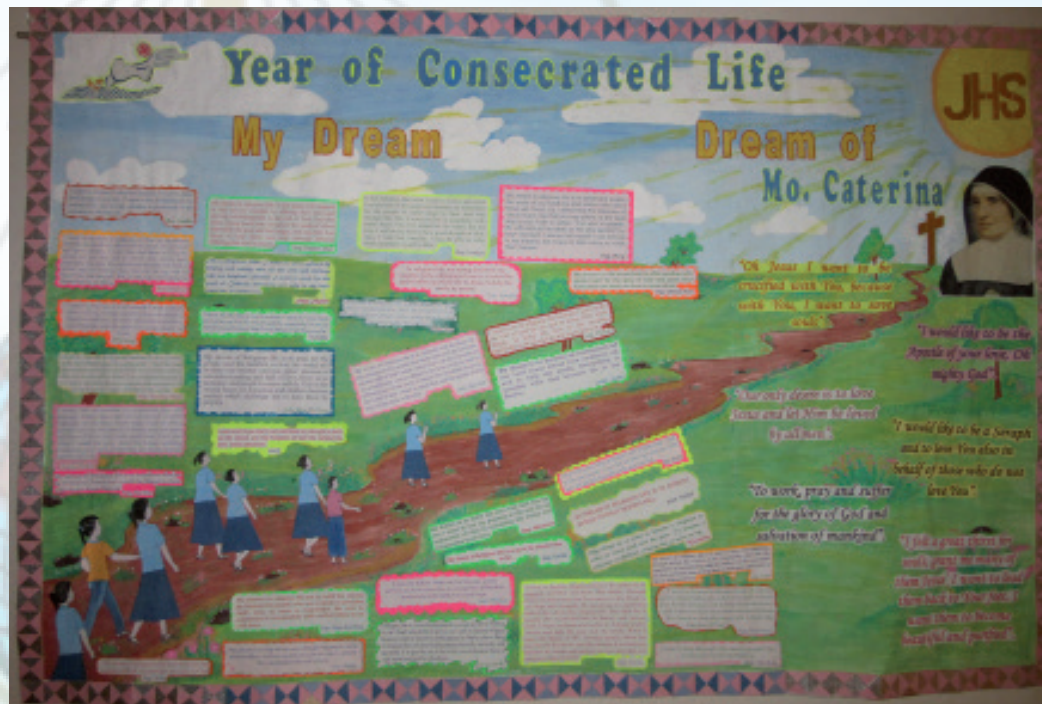
consecrated life, the Pope said, "A mother who raises her children in a strict fashion ... and does not let them dream ... annuls their creative future, rendering them barren. Consecrated life, too, can be barren, when it is not truly prophetic, when dreaming is not permitted. ... Prophecy, the capacity to dream, is the opposite of rigidity. And observance must not be rigid: if it is, it is personal egoism. ... Always keep your heart open to what the Lord says to you and bring it into your dialogue with the superior, the teacher or your spiritual guide, the Church, the bishop."

In response to another question on evangelisation, the Pope emphasized that apostolic zeal comes from a wish to evangelise that inflames the heart. "Evangelising is not the same as proselytism", he remarked. "We are not a football team seeking members and supporters. ... Evangelisation is not about simply convincing, it is about bearing witness that Jesus lives. ... And this witness is given with the flesh, with one's own life."

The Holy Father also pointed out memory as a key word in consecrated life. It is the memory of one's own vocation. "In the darkest moments, the moments of temptation, in the difficult moments of our consecrated life, return to the source, treasure the memory and wonder of when the Lord looked upon us," the Pope continued. The Pope then recalls the memory of his own call. "I don't know how it was. I entered the Church by chance, I saw a confessional and I left changed, I left in a different way. My life changed then. And what attracted me to Jesus and the Gospel? I don't know ... their

closeness to me. The Lord has never left me alone, not even in dark and difficult moments, nor in moments of sin ... because the Lord always meets us definitively. He is not part of the culture of the provisional: He loves us for ever and He accompanies us always". Pope Francis concluded with two words: narcissism and adoration. He warned religious of narcissism and invited them to say yes to adoration, for this is the opposite of narcissism. "Be men and women of adoration," he urged them.

An evening of music and witnessing in St Peter's Square was held on September 18, at 8.30 p.m. and a Eucharistic Celebration in St Peter's Papal Basilica was presided by the Prefect of the Congregation, H. Em. Cardinal João Braz de Aviz on September 19, at 11.30 a.m. The celebration culminated on September 19 with a great Memorial Celebration of the Saints and Martyrs of Consecrated Life: a prayerful procession from Sta Maria in Aracoeli to the Coliseum.



Through the course of history, the light that shatters the darkness reveals to us that God is Father. Light is stronger than darkness and corruption. This is the message of Christmas night. God does not show impatience; he is always there, like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, waiting for his lost son as he returns; and every day, with patience (Homily of Pope Francis, December 24, 2013). May this Christmas season be a renewed discovery of the unfathomable love and mercy of our Father. May we be his messengers and agents of his peace, sharers of his love and reflection of his patience. Merry Christmas!!!

