MARCH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATORS

3 Br. Pompeyo de Mesa, OP
5 Br. Virgilio Ojoy, OP
9 Br. Marc Adrian de la Peña, OP
15 Br. Raymundo Bayaras, OP
17 Br. Patricio Hiwatig, OP
   Br. Charles Moises Barrientos, OP
22 Br. Jose Rizal Dimapilis, OP
25 Br. Bejay Namuag, OP
28 Br. Jerry Manlangit, OP
   Br. Greg Gregory, OP
29 Br. Hilario Sicat Jr., OP
30 Br. Joaquin Valdes, OP

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INAGURATION OF ST. ALBERT THE GREAT SCIENCE LABORATORY

By Br. Art Vincent Pangan, OP

As the world celebrates Valentine's Day on 14 February 2020, Lyceum of Camiguin gathered its stakeholders for a Family Day. The highlight of the celebration was the blessing of the Science Laboratory dedicated to the patronage of St. Albert the Great, the foremost Dominican scholar of natural sciences. The St. Albert the Great Laboratory was a product of the contributions from Letran Alumni and from the concert proceeds of Inggo 1587. The parents and teachers of Lyceum of Camiguin also generously contributed out of their own initiative for the purchase of the monoblock chairs.

ITINERANCY
(as a Priority of the Province)


DEEPER FRATERNAL INTEGRATION
(as a Priority of the Province)

FEATURED BATCH

We pray as he journeys in heeding God’s call!

First Name: FELIX III
Middle Name: CAMAYUDO
Surname: LEGASPI
Nickname: “Fr. Liklik”
Birthday: 25 Oct 1975
Entrance to the Novitiate: 8 Apr 1995
Simple Profession: 9 May 1996
Solemn Profession: 1 May 1999
Ordination: 10 May 2003
DPP ID No.: 199401

Current Assignment: Convent of St. Raymond of Peñafort (since Nov 2016)

DSMC IS 30 YEARS OLD!
By Br. Laurence Ryan V. Mata, OP

The Dominican Students’ Media Center or DSMC celebrated their 30th founding anniversary with a radio drama last February 22, 2020 at the Dominican Studentate. Instead of the annual short film fest, the DSMC decided to make a radio drama because of some restrictions caused by the spread of NCOV virus. The brothers were not allowed to go to places outside Santo Domingo nor invite other people for the short film. Despite all these, the radio drama was a success. The student brothers were able to showcase their talents and skills in radio production. The program was hosted by Br. Mervin Lomague, OP, head of the video department and Br. Kurzweil Lasuga, OP. The program began with a red carpet entrance from the main door of the Studentate heading towards the community area. The event was also graced by our invited judges, Fr. Greg Gregory, OP, one of the pioneering members of the DSMC, Fr. Mandy Malijan, OP, a former member of the DSMC and Fr. Roland de la Rosa, OP. Kadaupan won most of the awards, specially the coveted Best Radio Drama. The 2nd best radio drama was given to the KAPATID, followed by MUKHA AD and PST respectively.

CANON LAW SOCIETY OF THE PHILIPPINES (CLSP) CELEBRATES ITS 28TH YEAR
By Br. Glen Mar T. Gamboa, OP

The 28th CLSP National Convention held last 17-20 February 2020 at F1 Hotel in the Bonifacio Global City (BGC), with the theme “Clergy in Crisis? Canonical Perspective and Prospect” was centered on the application of procedural norms in the adjudication of graviora delicta contra sextum cum minore cases and other pastoral means of safeguarding and protecting minors and vulnerable persons.

In the inaugural Mass, His Excellency Mylo Hubert Vergara, DD, Diocesan Bishop of Pasig, shared the triple As as guiding principles for participants during the conference, namely: Acceptance of the fact that clerics have wounded the Church through sexual abuses but likewise have received God’s forgiveness and mercy; Accountability for the misdeeds against the members of the Church through the execution of laws towards the reform of the offender, restoration of justice, and repair of scandals; and Accompaniment to our brethren who are facing scandals and problems, as a manifestation of care and love towards their healing. Present also in this Eucharistic celebration were Hon. Laarni Cayetano the 2nd District Representative of Taguig, House Speaker Allan Peter Cayetano, and PNP Chief PLTGEN. Archie Francisco Gamboa who delivered a message to the participants.

Due to the threat of COVID-19, Archbishop Charles Scicluna the Promoter of Justice of the Congregatio pro Doctrina Fidei did not grace the convention. In his place, the distinguished professor Fr. Vicente Uy of the UST Faculty of Canon Law delivered a series of lectures, namely: “Clergy Sexual Misconduct: A Canonical Synopsis and Philippine Situataioner,” an exposition of the types of misconduct in iure that a cleric might violate vis-à-vis their inherent
penalties. The lecture on “Penal Process for Clergy Sexual Abuses: Administrative and Judicial Penal Process,” delivered in two sessions, highlights the new procedural norms stipulated in *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* promulgated by Pope Francis which establishes procedures in manner of reporting *notitia virisimilem criminis* and alleged cover-ups or omission of due diligence on the part of the competent authorities pertinent to reporting, carrying out preliminary investigation especially if the report concerns the Bishops and their equivalents, and others. Moreover, Fr. Uy exposed the intricacies of applying the *iter* or method of resolving *graviora delicta* cases whether Administrative or Judicial Penal Process as stipulated in *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela*, amended by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010, the norms in the Code of Canon Law, and other relevant documents. The sessions were made more enriching by the engaging participants who through their interventions and sharing of experiences in dealing with concrete cases have enlightened the questions of the assembly.

The other speaker was Dr. Gabriel Dy-Liacco, Ph.D, who is the Director of the Catholic Safeguarding Institute of Emmaus Center for Psycho-Spiritual Formation. He was appointed by Pope Francis as member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults whose mandate is to advise the Holy See on safeguarding matters within the Church and to promote responsibility for the safeguarding mission among particular churches. His lecture centered on the holistic and concrete pastoral response on dealing with sexual abuse cases perpetrated by clerics, saying that it must be proactive, preventive, restorative, and communal.

The Vice-President of the Republic, Hon. Maria Leonor Robredo, also graced the convention by addressing the clergy of the Philippine Catholic Church on their vital role in nation building and contribution in lifting up the Filipino’s state of life.

A round table discussion with Bishop Mylo Hubert Vergara from the Diocese of Pasig, Bishop Buenaventura Famadico from the Diocese of San Pablo, and Bishop Reynaldo Evangelista from the Diocese of Imus followed. It focused on their experiences on dealing with sexual abuse cases by the clergy in their respective dioceses. They also presented the sufferings and pains of the erring clerics as well as of their victims as they go through the process of the trail. Moreover, the measures and means on how they resolved and prevented these cases were also shared to the assembly.

This convention urges the canon lawyers to work more diligently in bringing justice while bearing in mind the sweetness of God’s mercy. It was indeed the Best Gathering of Canonists in BGC.

**THE REAL SCORE ABOUT THE DIVORCE BILL**

*Br. Aguedo Florence Jalín Jr., OP, JCL*

The *Filii Sancti Dominici* sponsored, through the Catholic Business Forum (CBF), a round table discussion on the proposition “Should Divorce be finally allowed as a legal means to terminate a valid marriage in Philippine Society?” last March 7, 2020, 8:00am-11:00am, at Café Inggo, Quezon City. Congressman Edcel Lagman was the speaker and the panel discussants were Hon. Emmi de Jesus (Gabriela), Atty. Katrina Legarda (Director, Child Protection Unit), and Br. Aguedo Florence Jalín Jr., OP, JCL.

Congressman Lagman presented the contents of House Bill 7303 also known as an Act Instituting Absolute Divorce and Dissolution of Marriage in the Philippines which he authored whereby the bill had passed the 3rd reading in the Lower House on March 19, 2018. He stressed that the Bill was pro-woman, pro-children and pro-family.
The open forum was participated in by Rev. Fr. Romulo Rodriguez, OP, JCD (Bahay Dominiko), Prof. Gemma Aboy (UST Institute of Religion), and other Filii members.

**March in DPP History**
*(Culled from the Archives of the Province)*

- **1936 March 19** – The very first Filipino, Gregorio Hontomin, a native of Batanes, was admitted to the Dominican Order. He stayed in the Order as a Cooperator-brother for 44 years. He died on 6 July 1982.

- **1969 March 20** – 34 Filipino Dominican priests held the first Filipino Dominican Conference at the University of Santo Tomas Central Seminary that formed an Executive Committee paving the way for the eventual establishment of the Dominican Province of the Philippines on 8 December 1971.

- **1976 March 31** – The maiden issue of PHILDOM, the official newsletter of the Dominican Province of the Philippines was released after the First Provincial Chapter of the Dominican Province of the Philippines was held from 25 December 1975 until 22 January 1976 (Convent of St. Raymond of Peñaflort, Legazpi City).

- **1990 March 25** – The building of the Dominican Novitiate of the Annunciation within the compound of the Priory of Our Lady of the Rosary in Manaoag, Pangasinan was inaugurated.

- **1994 March 1** – The House of St. Albert in Colegio de San Juan de Letran, Calamba, Laguna was elevated to a Convent with Br. Patricio Apa, OP, as the first Prior.

**A NOVITIATE WITH NO PARTICULAR PLACE TO BE**
*By Br. Hilario V. Sicat Jr., OP*

On March 1, 1978, Fr. Vincent de Couesnongle authorized the transfer of the Novitiate from the then Convent of the Most Holy Rosary in Jaro, Iloilo to the Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary in Manaoag, Pangasinan. The Novitiate was moved to Manaoag due to the impending plan to use the Laires Mansion as the venue for a new formal school of the Province: the Angelicum School-Iloilo (In its incipient years, the cash-strapped Province established entities, e.g., parishes and schools, that would facilitate cash inflow for the support of its apostolates and for the expenses for the formation of the brothers.). In Manaoag, the novices occupied the third floor of the fathers’ residence.

The Novitiate remained in Manaoag until May 1982. But because the provisionary quarters of the novices at

In terms of reactions, Hon. De Jesus and Atty. Legarda highly favored the passing of the Bill so that battered women could be freed from their miserable marriages. Atty. Legarda even cited the case of Te vs Te (G.R. No. 161793, February 13, 2009) to prove that the Supreme Court was in favor of giving a decent burial to a cadaver of a marriage. Br. Jalin, on the other hand, emphasized that the main issue and fault of the Bill is the dissolution of a valid marriage which is by nature a sacrament. Now, the Church is very aware of the plight of women and children in the hands of abusive fathers so the Bill is no longer necessary because the civil forum already has the legal separation and annulment, not to discard the Church Tribunal handling the Declaration of Marriage Nullity which the couples in irreparable relationship can avail. He further expressed that the problems concerning the inefficiency and expensive processing of the current laws could be improved by the lawmakers in favor of the poor and needy petitioner similar to what was cited in Sec. 6, letter c of HBNo. 7303: Upon application of a court-assisted petitioner or petitioners, the proper court shall waive the payment of filing fees and other costs of litigation...

In fact, it is the answer to the cry of many Filipino women who are in irreparable marriages. He highlighted the grounds of Absolute Divorce coming from legal separation (Article 55 of the Family Code), annulment (Article 45 of the Family Code), psychological incapacity, irreconcilable marital differences, and gender reassignment.
the third floor of the Fathers’ residence could no longer accommodate the growing number of novices, and at the same time, due to the increasing number of assigned priests in the convent, it was transferred anew to the Convent of Santo Domingo in Quezon City.

Incidentally, with the transfer of the Pre-Novitiate from the Studentate Building in the Convent of Santo Domingo to Letran College in Calamba in June 1981, ample space in the Studentate Building was made available for the novices. The novices occupied only half of the third floor of the Studentate Building, separating them from the Student-brothers who were in the second floor, and in the other half of the third floor.

In the course of time, due to limited space and the increasing number of brothers, over-crowding was once again experienced in the Studentate. Thus, the Provincial Chapter of 1988 commissioned the Provincial to establish a separate formation house for the novices.

The task of looking for a place and constructing a new edifice for the novices fell on the shoulders of the then Master of Novices, Br. Edmund Nantes, OP. Many places were considered for the location of the Novitiate, such as the Dominican Hill in Baguio, Marikina, Antipolo, Binangonan, Angat, Tagaytay, and Davao. With the stroke of Providence, and the intercession of the Lady of the Rosary, the Novitiate found its place on an idle lot in the vicinity of the Church. On September 8, 1989, the cornerstone of the Novitiate was laid. And on March 25, 1990, on the Solemnity from which its name was derived, the Dominican Novitiate of Annunciation was inaugurated. This ended a long search for a place where the brothers might spend a year or so in solitude and prayer. It turned out that the Lady wanted her sons to be initiated in the Dominican way of life, under her maternal protection.

FOR OUR DECEASED BROTHERS
Per mandate by the Eleventh Provincial Chapter Statute 26, V, we kindly request all communities to include in the intentions of their Conventual Mass and Evening Prayer our deceased brothers during the anniversary of their death in the month of March.

March 2 + Br. Benjamin San Juan, OP
12 + Br. Antonio Posadas, OP
13 + Br. Gaudencio Mondragon, OP
The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?
The Lord is my life’s refuge; of whom should I be afraid?
For God will hide me in his shelter in time of trouble,
He will conceal me in the cover of his tent.
Psalm 27: 1,5

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Dominican Family,

As you know, after China, Italy is suffering gravely due to covid-19. Some members of the Dominican family in the north of the country have contracted the virus. Let us continue to pray for all the sick, those who care for them, those who are trying their best to find ways in overcoming the pandemic and its adverse effects.

Together with the brothers and sisters here at Santa Sabina, I wish to offer words of solidarity as a gesture of our nearness to one another at this time when common good requires “social distancing”. Our mission is to build communion and yet in this time of crisis, we seem to surrender ourselves to isolation. Paradoxical as it may seem, keeping distance from one another means we truly care for each other, because we want to stop the transmission of the novel corona virus that has claimed the lives of many and has imperiled the lives and livelihood of countless people all over the world. We keep our distance not because we see our brother or sister as a potential virus-carrier, or we are afraid of getting sick; but because we want to help break the chain of viral transmission. When the healthcare system becomes overloaded, as it happened in the north of Italy, our health care providers will be forced to make difficult ethical decisions --- would a patient who is younger and therefore with longer life-expectancy be prioritized over one who is elderly? We hope and pray that we would prevent that from happening anywhere by doing whatever we can to prevent further toxic transmission. Here in Italy, as in other countries, it is painful for us not to publicly celebrate the Eucharist, the sacrament of communion, at a time when the people need it most because of isolation. And yet we have to endure this suffering in the spirit of human solidarity and communion, for “if one part of the body suffers, all the parts suffer with it” (I Cor. 12:26).

In this time of quarantena en quaresima, we are invited to pause and ponder the nearness of God to us. When public worship is suspended for the well-being of worshippers, we become keenly aware of the importance of spiritual communion. In these places, it is as though the people experience a prolonged “Holy Saturday” when the Church “abstains
from the celebration of the Eucharist” meditating on the passion of the Lord and awaiting his resurrection (*Paschale Solemnitatis*, 73-75). In an experiential way, we are reminded of the hunger for the Eucharist of our brothers and sisters in remote areas who could participate in the Mass only once or twice a year. Now, more than ever, we need to find ways on how to break isolation, to preach the Gospel of love and communion, even in the “digital continent” (ACG Biên Hòa 2019, 135-138). We need to remind our people that Jesus remains near to us even as we hunger for the Bread of Life.

Let me recall what we know deep within our hearts. If we want to spread the Gospel, we must be with the people, be near to them! We must cross linguistic, cultural, even ideological boundaries to spread the Word of God. Conversely, if we want to arrest the spread of something bad like the corona virus, we must keep distance, we must refrain from personal encounter because any proximate encounter has the potential to spread the contagion.

The current pandemic clearly shows that for something to circulate, personal closeness and encounter is necessary. When this crisis is over, let us not forget the lesson: if we want the Gospel to circulate in our secularized world, the same personal closeness and encounter is necessary. I hope and pray that our centers of studies, parishes, and other apostolic centers would continue to become like an “airport”, i.e., a hub where people deepen their knowledge and faith so that they too may positively “infect” everyone with the contaminating joy of the Gospel.

We continue to pray for the sick and those who care for them. Even in our solitude, God is close to us, and we are never alone for we all belong to the Body of Christ.

Your brother,

Fr. Gerard Francisco P. Timoner III, OP
Master of the Order
Sa bumbunan o ‘crown’ (CORONA) tayo pinahiran ng langis noong tayo’y bininyagan tanda ng kaligtasan mula sa kasalanan na tinanggap natin sa Sakramento ng Binyag.

Ang regalong ito na tinanggap natin sa Binyag ay nasusugatan dahil sa kasalanan. Kaya naman ang pagbubudbod ng abo sa ating mga bumbunan o ‘crown’ (CORONA) na isinagawa natin noong Miyerkules ng Abo ay nagpapahiwatig ng paghihilom ng sugat na dala ng kasalanan sa pamamagitan ng Pagpapakasakit, Kamatayan, at Muling Pagkabuhay ng ating Panginoon.


Ngun't ang pagsabog ng Bulkang Taal na nagkamit sa atin ng abo ay isang tunay na NATURAL DISASTER na wala din sa kontrol natin. Ngunit ang pagkagutom dahil sa kasakiman ng iilan, ang kawalan ng bahay at buhay dahil sa pagkamanhid ng mga kababayan ay MAN-MADE DISASTERS na kaya nating maiwasan.

Nawa ang CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) na parang nakasabit na pasakit sa bawat isa sa atin ay magpalalala din sa atin ng KORONANG TINIK na sumisimbolo ng mga sugat ng Panginoon na siya ding hihilom sa atin.

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.” (Isa 53:5)

The Church has selected the story of Transfiguration as the reading of the second Sunday of Lent. We may ask how this kind of powerful story may fit into the entire season of Lent. The key is that the Transfiguration is fundamentally linked to the Cross of Jesus. In Luke’s version of the transfiguration, Jesus was talking to Moses and Elijah about His “exodus.” This reminds the ancient Israelites who exited Egypt, walked through the desert, and entered the Promised Land. Yet, the real end of the exodus is the city of Jerusalem, and eventually the holy Temple where God dwelled among His people. Just like the ancient Israelites, Jesus’ exodus has to end in Jerusalem.

The glorious moment of transfiguration is not intended to last long. Jesus has to go down and walk again toward Jerusalem. However, the disciples got it wrongly when Peter offered to put a tent and to stay in the wonderful moment for good. Jesus reminded them that they need to go down. The disciples cannot stay there, and they must continue their journey.

There are moments in our lives that we believe that we have seen and reached the glory of God. We feel so blessed when we pray before the Blessed Sacrament. We experience peace during our retreat and meditation. We are inspired after we listen to the insightful preaching. We are re-energized by songs and praises. These things are good, but they are never intended to be the end of the journey. We must go down together with Jesus, and to carry our daily crosses. Jesus understands that there is no real love without suffering, no true glory without pain, and no salvation without the cross.

I am currently in the Holy Land, and I was walking in the same way where Lord Jesus had set His feet. I was truly blessed that God allowed me to be in this Promised Land just months after my ordination. The joy is overwhelming. Israel is truly a land flowing with milk and honey, a truly
beautiful land. I am studying the Bible for years, but only now that I truly see and touch these biblical places. My faith becomes truly alive. The more I walk through the land and places, the more I want to stay and learn. I have seen the glory of the Lord, and I want to pitch my tent. However, I cannot wait too long, and I need to go back because my mission is not [yet] at this Promised Land.

Last March 4, 2020, the house for the elderly and disabled run by the Missionaries of Charity in Aden, Yemen, was attacked by the terrorists. Four sisters were killed during the ambush. Their apostolate for the elderly in one of the poorest countries is itself a heroic act, but their true glory lies when they gave their lives totally for God and the people they loved. Every morning, the sisters always prayed together in the community, and this prayer [attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola] has inspired them through the last moment of their lives:

“Lord, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and to ask for reward, save that of knowing that I do Your holy will.”

GOD IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19

By Br. Aguedo Florence A. Jalin Jr., OP, JCL

Medical experts around the world are scrambling to produce the vaccine that will stop the virus from spreading. While rigid testing is being done to determine the pathogen, the death toll keeps on rising. In Wuhan, people were left with no choice but to wait until the lockdown order was lifted before they could move freely. Since no one knows when will the order cease, the people are trying to live in the most normal way while avoiding unnecessary contact with one another. The UN, on the other hand, is meeting world leaders to create a collective move in combatting the epidemic. Allocation of budget for health in most countries suddenly surges to produce or procure face masks, alcohol, disinfectants, and protective suits for the medical and health workers who are at the frontline.

After a peek at the global scene, we zero in on the Philippine setting for we are listed as one of the countries affected by the virus. The Department of Health (DOH) reported 1 death of a Chinese national and a number of verified persons under investigation (PUI). Our country is doing everything just like the other countries, becoming extra vigilant on a daily basis.

But there is one aspect we did not forget to add to all our efforts, i.e. prayer. Our local Episcopal Conference issued the Oratio Imperata for COVID-19 to be read in all parishes in the Philippines. This is a clear and explicit way of facing with God the virus. What does this mean? It means we do everything with God: searching for the cure, assisting those afflicted with the symptoms, and subjecting individuals to 14 days of quarantine. We know there is the virus but we also know that God walks along with us in this very trying moment. God is as real as the virus.

This is our share in the global fight against COVID-19. We put God in all our efforts for we know that we can never succeed without God. Our country may not have the advanced technology in medicine but we have our faith to strengthen the simple or little capacity we have. We are certain that, no matter how long it will take for the virus to subside or to be out, the power of God will triumph as in the days of Jesus. Even if China does not believe in God, our petitions for them will definitely create an impact. Every time we pray the Oratio Imperata, we solidify our actions for those physically suffering because of the virus, their families, and those health workers laboring day and night to save lives. When we pour out our prayers, God cannot simply close His ears but listen and do something. In our prayer, our hearts and minds go in unison with the efforts of the world to stop COVID-19. We learn therefore that being technologically and scientifically advanced is not enough. We need a higher power.

Hence, as we move about in our daily fight against the virus, let us put God first in all our human efforts.
We are the world. What we find in the nature outside us is what we find in the nature inside us. When we look at the surface of our body, we discover plains and valleys, plateaus and hills, grasslands and fields. Going deep into our interior anatomy, we see islands floating in bodies of water. Reflecting on our eyes, we observe light in our eyes as though glitters in the stars up above. Our nature is indeed an interplay of the world’s basic elements -- soil, fire, water and air. No wonder that the way we relate with the external nature conditions our internal nature.

Covid-19 pandemic slows down if not totally stops our daily routine. Hopefully, this leisure forced though it may be affords us with the opportunity to reflect on how we've treated the universal nature which fondly we call “mother”. Have we really respected this mother as genuine children who are wont to care for their biological and psychological mother? Or on the contrary, have we not so abused the patience of Mother-Nature as to incur her wrath? And what a fury! Now, she’s behaving more like a mother-in-law who has gone amuck. Of course, that’s not the case. But our guilty conscience makes it appear as though she has gone on the vengeful mode. She’s just reeling from the wounds we’ve inflicted on her. And the deeper the wounds, the longer the healing process takes place. Such healing starts with us. Instead of patronizing our greed which violates the moderation which Mother-Nature prescribes, we imitate her thrift. Yes, Mother-Nature is thrifty. It abhors excesses. She distributes us her gifts according to our needs and not according to our whims. A life of lust and greed is certainly the most effective way to dehumanize Mother-Nature. By our abusive behavior towards her, we’ve alienated ourselves from her, and strangely enough, we provoke this Mother to treat us no longer as her children. Because we’re eating up all her resources, she no longer regards us as integral members of her body but voracious parasites who devour their host until it dies. In so doing, have we not become her covid-19?

The truth is nature through our fault may cease to be our mother but it is not for this reason that nature will die. Nature will just undergo change without us. Because we have acted like viruses, nature will eject us from its body. Truly, nature will survive without us, but not so with us. We can only exist in this world as long as we treat nature as our mother -- respected, cherished and cared for.

God created nature as a sacrament of God’s loving generosity to us. Nature is God’s gift to us. What we do to it is our gift to God. So, let’s use the bounty of nature to help our communion with God. For, indeed, close to nature, closer to God.

PROUD BROTHER HERE OF AN ARCHITECT-PRIEST

By Br. John Paul A. Sontillano, OP

One sweet day, the Provincial Secretary asked me a very wonderful question: “Your brother has successfully passed the 2020 Architect Licensure Examinations. How do you feel about it?” At once, I gave him an equally wonderful answer: “I believe that I am happy for my brother! I am proud of him! And I thank you!” Late have I realized that it was actually a trap to lure me into writing an article for PHILDOM.

And so allow me to begin with the surprise that came by 2012 when my brother was in his third year of priestly ministry in the Archdiocese of Capiz. The then newly installed Archbishop Jose F. Advincula told Fr. Dennis Dexter A. Sontillano to take up Architecture for the benefit of the local Church. The great revelation must have been confusing to him at first. But, obedient as he is, he left the comfortable zone of the familiar and braved the challenging world of the unknown. The rest was history. Now, my brother can serve God and His people in more ways than one.

The story of the two-fold vocation, however, began much early on. Here is a little prequel. Fr. Dennis and I were brought up in a religious family with an eldest brother who used to be a seminarian himself. Ours was a home conducive for the sacred calling to grow. I understood that my elder brother had yet another childhood dream to consider. Gifted with visual-spatial intelligence among others, he would do well with Fine Arts or Architecture.
As it turned out, he chose priesthood for the love of God. But God is not over with His priest yet and His generosity is boundless. That which my brother had radically given up was eventually added back unto him because he sought first the Kingdom of God. Indeed, God works in mysterious ways.

But the journey was not a walk in the park at all. I can only imagine how difficult life was for my brother – five years of schooling at the University of San Agustin, two years of apprenticeship at the National Historical Commission, and then the review and the board. But he made it through anyhow because he remained faithful. Thank God for the parish and the religious communities in Iloilo and Metro Manila: They were his constant reminder that he is a pastor who only happened to be a student or an employee; for his youthful classmates and dedicated officemates, their spirit refuelled his fire from burning out even as he shared with them his own; for his friends from inside and outside the Archdiocese, their prayers and support kept Fr. Dennis safe from the risk of losing himself in the process. It took the whole village to raise up an Architect-Priest that he is today. His victory is ours to share.

Not everyone is blessed with an opportunity of pursuing what one loves but my brother was. My family and I are so happy for him! Not all who received such a blessing persevered to the end but he did! We are extremely proud of him! Ours is a celebration of gratitude to God, without whom we are all helpless. To Him is the glory forever. On a personal note, I am inspired by my brother’s fully conscious and active participation in God’s unending grace. Indeed, the University of Santo Tomas that granted him the STB and STL-MA degrees has taught him well and nurtured in him effectively the pastoral orientation of studies. His perseverance challenges us to persevere. I would dare say that, in some ways, my brother is more Dominican than I am. I smile as I declare this because it makes sense. He is after all practically my recruiter to the Order.

“A Father’s Love”: THE STORY BEHIND THE SCRIPT

By Br. John Andrew S. Bautista, OP

(A Father’s Love’ is a Radio Drama entry presented by KADAUPAN which won the grand prize in last month’s DSMC Radio Drama Festival held at the Dominican Studentate)

“Each of us is like a constantly unfolding narrative. Many of us leave our stories untold, capable of inspiring and moving others once these are made known.”

For the first time in the history of the DSMC awards, a Radio drama competition was held. This distinctive change allowed the Student-brothers to squeeze their creative juices in them, and to artistically think outside the box for the sake of a buzz worthy and noteworthy entry in this year’s contest. That is why, for us members of the KADAUPAN apostolic group, we felt the need to tell an inspiring story in order to captivate the hearts of our audience. After all, this is what Radio Drama is all about – it’s always about good storytelling, for Radio drama, I believe, is the most liberating form a writer can work with if you want to tell a story. This particular genre has all the immediacy of film and television (immersing the listener into the space of the work) along with the imaginative power of fiction (creating whole worlds in the audience’s head) and the movement of poetry (traversing real and non-real spaces to chase down ideas).

A story to tell

As they say, in a Radio drama, listeners will not listen if a story is dry, dreary or uninteresting. In the conceptualization phase of our drama entry, we thought of a story and script that would touch and connect to persons of all ages, both the young and the old. Along with this notion is that the story should generate an awe-inspiring and heartfelt individual and collective experience. Ultimately, we want to tell a story that is real, authentic, and in a way connects intimately to both the Student-brothers and the lay. That is why given these classifications that we have harmoniously set, we unanimously decided that the best way to go to is to tell a “true-to-life” story that is close to us, and in the same manner, captures each and everyone’s hearts.

A story that comes to life

The “true-to-life” story that we have chosen to be put into drama is a personal story of a man who, in so many ways, journeyed with us in our life as Student-brothers under formation. This person is Mr. Bernard Bernal, a
long-time employee and maintenance staff of PDCIS-IP who is a familiar face to every Corista today, and to the Dominican brothers and priests who had studied and finished Philosophy in this venerable Dominican academic institution for the past 2 decades. Outside work, Kuya Bernard serves as an Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister of Holy Communion (EEMHC) of Santo Domingo Parish and he is also at present, a lay affiliate of KADAUPAN, wherein he has continually dedicated himself for our ministries and projects dedicated to the poor.

A story of unfailing love and unwavering faith

Apart from his dedication, commitment, and love for his work and duties as a lay servant of the Church, what is captivating in Kuya Bernard’s life-story is that of him being a loving father to his family. He is a true exemplar of a “Padre de Familia”, as we sat down with him to listen to his life experiences, we could really tell that he has this strong love and affection to his family that each of us, can greatly learn from. The most touching part of his sharing was about his eldest son, Jeff, who died at a young age of 23 because of leukemia. Though enveloped and struggled with pain because of his eldest son's passing, he was able to overcome his moments of grief and sorrow by trusting God’s divine plan and will. In doing so, Kuya Bernard moved forward with his life to continue loving and caring for his family, while remembering to praise and glorify the Lord for the countless blessings he and his family are receiving every single day.

A story that is destined to be told

In the competition proper, KADAUPAN was more than serious and dedicated in presenting Kuya Bernard’s moving and inspiring story. True enough, in this time and age of hate and indifference, we realized that Kuya Bernard’s story is destined to be told! While winning the Radio drama competition would naturally be the elusive goal for our group, in all honesty, our aim is really not about that. For us, it is more of giving justice to a life-story of a man who made us appreciate the depth of God’s love for us, His children and His people. At the end of the day, we are proud to say that this one-of-a kind life story, which we concurrently put together to inspire and touch the hearts of the people through this Radio drama entitled *A Father’s love*, is in itself, a moving and an empowering tale of faith, hope and love that should inspire people a hundredfold.