Ordinations!

Prior Provincial's September 2019 Calendar

2 - Meeting with Cardinal Tagle, Manila
3-5 - National Convention on Laudato Si and Climate Change, Makati
7 - Recollection of OSB, Manila
8 - Mass at Regina RICA, Rizal
10 - Board of Trustess Meeting of Caleruega-Philippines, Bahay Dominiko
20-21 - 1MBA Classes, Quezon City
23-27 - Permanent Formation Program, Batangas
30 - Board of Trustees Meeting of UST-Legazpi

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY CELEBRATORS

1 Br. Delfo Canceran, OP
2 Br. Orlando Aceron, OP
4 Br. Samuel Sonny Gunawan, OP
5 Br. Gerard Zabala, OP
6 Br. John Andrew Bautista, OP
8 Br. John Rheed Cartuza, OP
10 Br. Mingdry Hanafi Tjipto, OP
13 Br. Manoj Rasanjana A.D., OP
17 Br. Francisco Mendoza, OP
19 Br. Alfredo Fernandez Jr, OP
22 Br. Roland Mactal, OP
23 Br. Jeffrey Pagaduan, OP
25 Br. Angel Aparicio, OP
28 Br. Arturo Pestin, OP
Br. Laurence Ryan Mata, OP

IN THIS ISSUE...

- Formation Encounter 2019
- Presbyteral and Diaconal Ordinations
- PDCIS-IP Mass of the Holy Spirit
- Mister Saint Dominic Anime Edition 2019
- A Fraternal Visit of Fr. Michael Deeb, OP
- “Gospel in Action” The Dominican Family Justice, Peace and Care for Creation Seminar-Workshop
- Thanksgiving Mass of Rev. Fr. Reynor E. Munsayac, OP
- NEWS IN PHOTOS
- FEATURES
  - Jalan-Jalan from Being a Foreigner to a Missionary in Indonesia
  - Sri Lanka Mission Exposure
  - First Year in Theology: The Return of the Comeback
- DPP GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY
  - The Biographical Sketch of the Life and Ministry of Br. Gregorio Hontomin, OP

BROTHERS ON FOREIGN TRIP
(By reason of Office)

- 1-9 Sep – Japan – Br. Isidro Abaño, OP – To attend the annual conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Kyoto.
- 11-15 Sep – India – Br. Herminio Dagohoy, OP – To attend the Xavier Board Meeting.

... continue on page 9
ITINERANCY
(as a Priority of the Province)

Br. Asanka Melroy Adikari Arachchige Don, OP, is appointed Local Formator for Sri Lanka on September 3, 2019.

Br. Reynor Munsayac, OP, is assigned to the Priory of Our Lady of the Rosary on September 10, 2019.

DEEPER FRATERNAL INTEGRATION
(as a Priority of the Province)

FEATURED BATCH
First Name: LAMBERTO
Middle Name: LANSANG
Surname: PASION
Nickname: “Fr. Pasion”
Birthday: 16 Apr 1928
Entrance to the Novitiate: 1948
First Profession: 17 Aug 1949
Solemn Profession: 17 Aug 1952
Ordination: 8 Dec 1954
DPP ID No.: 194902
Current Assignment: Priory of St. Thomas Aquinas (since 2004)

QUALITY FORMATION
(as a Priority of the Province)

FORMATION ENCOUNTER 2019
By Br. John Paul R. Pamintuan, OP

Last August 26, 2019, the younger members of the Dominican Family had their formation encounter at the Colegio de San Juan de Letran – Manila with the theme “Timeless Message, Timely Methods, Preach Youth, Reach Out.” The event started with a doxology by the Dominican Sisters of Blessed Imelda, followed by a performance of the Joyful Friars.

The second part of the gathering was a talk from Rev. Fr. Norman Quilaquil, OP, the Director of the Postulants in Calamba. He explained the theme of the said event as to how to connect to the youth. He explained that the best way to preach to the youth or their “password” is presence. It was followed by a Eucharistic celebration.

During lunch, the young Dominicans shared to their prayer-partners their vocation and personal stories, and their reflections and realizations during the talk. The traditional exchange of tokens among the pairs also left smiles on their faces.

Afterwards, the younger members of the Family were energized by the performances and games prepared by the brothers and by the different congregations of sisters. The fun-filled and grace-filled event was capped by a sumptuous merienda and exchanges of adieus and messages of perseverance among prayer partners.

PRESBYTERAL AND DIACONAL ORDINATIONS

At three in the afternoon of August 28, 2019, the ordinations of our dear brothers Rev. Fr. Reynor Munsayac, O.P. and Rev. Michael Sales, O.P. for priesthood and deaconate respectively took place. They were ordained by Most Rev. Fr. Socrates Villegas, O.P., D.D. upon presentation
of by Rev. Fr. Napoleon Sipalay Jr., O.P, the Prior Provincial. Most Rev. Fr. Deogracias Iñiguez, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Caloocan, was also present in the said event.

In his homily, Archbishop Socrates challenged the ordinandi by asking, “Who are you?” He continued as he added, “You are not what you possess; you are not what you do; you are not what others say of you; you are not your failures and you are not your success... for you belong to Christ... and you are Christ.”

Towards the end of the ceremony, Archbishop Socrates reminded the two newly ordained to always be humble.

The whole ceremony that lasted for two hours was filled with so much joy for everyone!
Batan, Ph.D, another new professor for IP, and the brother-postulants whose courses are also under PDCIS, were also present during the Mass.

In his homily, Fr. Sipalay reminded the students that they should not be afraid in their pursuit of learning. Study is highly revered in the Order; hence, students have to learn to be assiduous in their studies.

IP is blessed with twelve students this academic year. Seven are to take up the Certificate Program for IP and five are MA in Preaching. Classes in IP, both certificate and MA programs, are held every Friday and Saturday. The six student brothers who are for the Certificate in Preaching Program are also into teaching at the Holy Rosary College Foundation in Tala, Caloocan City every Wednesday.

Amorio O.P. as Himura Kenshin of KADAUPAN likewise received numerous titles such as Most Photogenic, Darling of the Crowd, and Best Video Presentation.

Br. Joseph Gabriel Lopez O.P. as Nobita of MUKHA AD was awarded as Cosplayer of the Year, Best in Talent, Mr. Articulate and ranked as 1st runner up; Br. Hendrick Albina, O.P. as of KAPATID ranked 2nd Runner up; Br. Mark Laurence Gianan, O.P. as of DSMC ranked 3rd Runner Up; Br. Wilson Nucum, O.P. as of PST ranked as the 4th Runner Up.

The competition was judged by Rev. Fr. Paul Reagan Talavera, O.P., Rev. Fr. Arden Xerxes Dacuma, O.P. and Rev. Reynor Munsayac, O.P.

MISTER SAINT DOMINIC ANIME EDITION 2019
By Br. Simon Peter Ramos, OP

Mister St. Dominic, one of the anticipated annual competitions in the Dominican Studentate was held last August 24, 2019. Inspired by the celebration of the Year of the Youth, this year’s theme featured the Anime characters that once lured the young hearts of the coristas. The contestants together with their respective Apostolic Groups showcased their talents, brains and wits that made the whole night worth remembering.

The crowned Mr. Saint Dominic 2019-Br. Vermeer John Amorio O.P. as Himura Kenshin of KADAUPAN likewise received numerous titles such as Most Photogenic, Darling of the Crowd, and Best Video Presentation.

Br. Joseph Gabriel Lopez O.P. as Nobita of MUKHA AD was awarded as Cosplayer of the Year, Best in Talent, Mr. Articulate and ranked as 1st runner up; Br. Hendrick Albina, O.P. as of KAPATID ranked 2nd Runner up; Br. Mark Laurence Gianan, O.P. as of DSMC ranked 3rd Runner Up; Br. Wilson Nucum, O.P. as of PST ranked as the 4th Runner Up.

The competition was judged by Rev. Fr. Paul Reagan Talavera, O.P., Rev. Fr. Arden Xerxes Dacuma, O.P. and Rev. Reynor Munsayac, O.P.

A FRATERNAL VISIT OF FR. MICHAEL DEEB, OP
By Br. Mark Christopher C. Biscocho, OP

Fr. Michael Deeb, OP (from the General Vicariate of Southern Africa), the Order of Preachers’ Permanent
Delegate to the United Nations as well as the Order’s General Promoter of Justice and Peace, visited the Studentate community last August 24, 2019 to share some insights about religious life and social justice. Fr. Deeb is here in the country for the JPCC’s Workshop on Human Rights and UN Mechanism to be held in Iloilo City.

In his talk, Fr. Deeb accompanied the brothers in reflecting about the current issues about justice and peace and how they are related to the life of the brothers as religious and as Dominicans. Fr. Deeb drew from his experiences and shared his fresh insights about religious life particularly on the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and what do these evangelical counsels mean in the pursuit of justice and peace as Dominicans. For him, the evangelical counsels are not pursued for their own sake. Instead, they are pursued so that we Dominicans, can identify ourselves with the poor and the weak.

The participants were graciously welcomed by Sr. Nemia Daral, OP, Superior General of the Dominican Sisters of the Most Holy Rosary of the Philippines (Molo Sisters). The participants appreciated very well the hospitality of the staff of the Reflection Center who attended to their needs during the entire session of the seminar workshop.

During the first day of the seminar-workshop, Fr. Mike Deeb, OP, discussed the history of the United Nations Council of Justice, Peace and Care for Creation and its relation to the same ministry handled by the Dominicans as an integral part of proclaiming the gospel for the least, last and lost. In the process, Fr. Deeb and Ms. Blattmer also allowed each participant to briefly share their active involvement in the justice, peace and care for creation...
advocacies that they are involved in. The second day of the seminar workshop allowed the grouped participants to clearly identify specific issues and cases of justice, peace and care for creation realities in the different parts of the Philippines. The identification of these specific issues was later on connected by the speakers on how the UN System conducts its ministry on justice, peace and care for creation. The highlight of the second day centered on the UN System Programs on Protection of Human Rights and how such can be applied to Philippine setting.

The third day of the seminar workshop directed the grouped participants to present the three major identified issues such as Human Rights, Labor Relations and Care for Environment. They were given ample time to do action plans that will address issues on human rights, labor relations and environment protection in the Philippine context. The last day of the seminar was spent in the presentations of the action plans on the previously mentioned three major issues. The entire seminar workshop on justice, peace and care for creation emboldened the participants to face the impending present pressing needs of the Church and society in handling various ministries related to their respective advocacies.

THANKSGIVING MASS OF REV. FR. REYNOR E. MUNSAYAC, OP

By Br. John Sealtiel Abarquez, OP (Photos by Mr. Davy Chioa, OP)

“Wala pong imposible sa Diyos. Kung kagustuhan niya, magaganap, kahit may humarang, malalampasan.” Those were the words of Rev. Fr. Reynor E. Munsayac, O.P. as he expressed his gratitude to God, to St. Dominic, to his family, to the Order, and to everyone who supported him throughout his journey.

Last August 31, 2019, Saturday, Rev. Fr. Reynor E. Munsayac, O.P. celebrated his Thanksgiving Mass at the Holy Angel’s Parish, San Jose Plaridel, Bulacan. Present were the Dominican Family, his family, relatives, and friends, who shared the joy of the gift of priesthood with him. It was Rev. Fr. Clarence Victor C. Marquez, O.P., then Master of Students and Thesis Adviser of Fr. Munsayac
who delivered the homily. In his preaching Fr. Marquez, elaborated the motto of the present administration which is Build, Build, Build, and invited everyone that we should build ourselves, our souls, our identity as Filipinos, our identity as Christians, that we should “build our morals, our sense of honor and shame, of right and wrong, our sins of integrity and respect. For we build on what is given, upon the default goodness of each and every one.” He challenged everyone to nurture ones blessings, so that in the end we can give back to the Lord a hundredfold what is entrusted to us, in grain of goodness and holiness.

Meanwhile, Rev. Fr. Rico L. Trinidad, the parish priest of the Holy Angels Parish welcomed everyone and expressed his great joy as a parish priest on the ordination of Fr. Reynor. It was then followed by the thanksgiving message of Fr. Reynor who shared the difficulties and struggles he went through in the course of his journey. But he was able to overcome all of these not because of his own strength, but because of God’s grace. Fr. Reynor considers himself as one being called and that he just responded to that call with full confidence and trust in Him; because he believed that with God nothing is impossible.

As a tradition Fr. Reynor handed over the manutergium to his mother, Mrs. Noralyn E. Munsayac. A manutergium is a hand towel or a linen cloth used to clean the priest’s hand after having been anointed with the chrism during the ordination by the ordaining bishop. It is given to the mother on his son’s first Mass which, tradition says, she can present it at the time of her judgment. It is considered a special honor, a symbol of a mother’s sacrifice and contribution in the formation of her son.
After the Mass, reception was held at the Parish Function Hall coupled with a brief program and messages to the delight of everyone!

September in DPP History
(Culled from the Archives of the Province)

1989 September 9 – The construction of the new novitiate house was inaugurated on September 9, 1989 at Manaoag, Pangasinan. Due to an inclement weather, the ceremony (the blessing and laying of cornerstone and time capsule), which would have been held outdoors, was integrated in the Mass in a simple but more solemn rite led by Bishop Pedro Magat, DD, Bishop of Urdaneta. It was highlighted by the symbolic offering and insertion of different articles into the time capsule by some officials of the Province and other distinguished guests, to wit: Fr. Quirico Pedregosa, OP, Vicar Provincial, and Fr. George Moreno, OP, Prior of the Priory of Our Lady of the Rosary, a copy of the New Testament; Mrs. Felicidad Viray, the incorporation papers of the AEAPSI; Dr. Kelvin Chiong, coins; Dean Augusto Concio (for UST Architecture and Fine Arts Dean) and Mr. Ronnie de Jesus, architect and designer respectively, the plan of the building; and the Dominican Novices. Br. Francisco Tuaño, OP, who was the project director concelebrated in the mass. Other members of the brethren were also in attendance including the Postulants from St. Albert’s House and some Student-Brothers. Fr. Enrico Gonzales, OP, delivered the homily. The services of Dean Augusto Concio and Mr. Ronnie de Jesus were offered gratuitously.

1975 September 30 – In response to the repeated requests of the families of Filipino technicians in Tehran, Iran, for a Catholic Dominican School, the Angelicum School of Quezon City opened an international branch in Tehran, Iran on September 30, 1975. Site of the school was at St. Abraham’s Church and Convent of the Dominican Irish Fathers. The all-Filipino teaching staff was headed by Fr. Jose Rizal Dimapilis, OP, who served as Assistant Director of Angelicum School, Tehran, Iran on April 23, 1976.

1991 September 16 – On September 16, 1991 Archbishop Nicholas Marcus Fernando, the Archbishop of Colombo, Sri Lanka, gave a favorable response to the proposal of Fr. Jayalath Balagalla, OP, to establish a Dominican House in Sri Lanka under the care of the Dominican Province of the Philippines. The Archbishop was supportive to it because he himself believes that most likely India will not be able in the foreseeable future to establish such a house due to the existing political differences between the Indian and Sri Lankan people.

On January 27, 1994, Fr. Quirico Pedregosa Jr., OP, informed Fr. C. J. Sebastian Condodikary, OP, Vice-Provincial of India that the Provincial Council in its meeting on January 25, 1994, has officially approved the acceptance of the mandate for the Dominican Province of the Philippines (DPP) to establish the Dominican Order in Sri Lanka, on the following conditions: (1) that the Vice Province of India approves of it and (2) that the Master of the Order grants it.

In a letter addressed to Fr. Kevin Toomey, OP, Socius of the Master for the Asia-Pacific Region, the Vice-Provincial of India expressed the willingness of his brethren in general to relinquish their jurisdiction over Sri Lanka to the Dominican Province of the Philippines “because of political reasons.” The transfer of jurisdiction was officially done by Fr. Timothy Radcliffe, OP, Master of the Order on May 15, 1995. (Source: Thesis of Fr. Joseto Bernadas, OP, “The first twenty five years of the Dominican Province of the Philippines 1971-1996, pages 112-113)

2001 September 11 – St. Dominic’s House was officially erected in Kandy, Sri Lanka by virtue of a decree from the Master of the Order, Fr. Carlos Azpiroz Costa, OP. A prior ecclesiastical approval was granted by the Bishop of Kandy, Most Rev. Vianney Fernando, DD, on July 18, 2001 for the canonical establishment of the House. (Source: PHILDOM September 2011)

2011 September 2 – The groundbreaking of the Holy Rosary Seminary, the Province’s juniorate house in Sri Lanka, in a five-acre property in Kandawala, Negombo, Sri Lanka which was acquired by the Province in 2010, was held on September 2, 2011. The groundbreaking was led by the Prior Provincial, Fr. Quirico Pedregosa Jr, OP, who was in Sri Lanka for the canonical visitation to the community of St. Dominic’s House in Kandy from August 29 to September 3, 2011. The said groundbreaking ceremony was well attended by the community members of S. Dominic’s House and the other members of the Dominican Family Sri Lanka – Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, Dominican Sisters of Malta and some members of the Dominican Laity. There were also some Franciscans Friars (OFM), Somascan sisters, the Parish Priest of Kandawala, and representatives from the building contractors headed by Mr. Jude Fernandopule. (Source: PHILDOM September 2011, pages 2-3).

2011 September 24 – The Solemn Blessing and Dedication of the San Lorenzo Ruiz and Companion Martyrs Parish Church took place last September 24, 2011 with the Prior Provincial and the Bishop of Kalookan presiding, in Kaunlaran Village,Navotas City. Parishioners and members of the Province...
supported the event through the initiative of its head pastor, Fr. Allan Lopez, OP, Parish Priest for a decade (2001-2011). (Source: PHILDOM September 2011 page 3)

BROTHERS ON FOREIGN TRIP
(Continued from page 1)

23 Sep-3 Oct – Italy and Germany – Br. Johanes Robini Marianto, OP, and Br. Mingdry Hanafi Tjipto, OP – To accompany Abp. Agus with the Islamic leader for a meeting with PCID Office, PISAI and audience with the Holy Father; and thereafter, to proceed to Germany to visit the Dresden University and KAAD (Catholic Academic Exchange Service) to formalize the MoU with Dresden and visit the trainees from Ngabang who are currently in Dresden.

FOR OUR DECEASED BROTHER
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 September.

September 17 + Br. Domingo Nacion, OP
26 + Br. Ramon Salinas, OP

Thanks to our Brothers and friends who contributed articles and pictures for Phildom.

We in the secretariat will do our best to publish the PHILDOM newsletter monthly for all the readers. We apologize for any inadvertent mistake in the content of this newsletter.

Help us by sending your:
» Creative comments
» Articles and news
» Thoughts to ponder
» Suggestions for improvement

Fax to:  732-4652 or
e-mail to: opphil@phils.op.org

All articles sent to the Secretariat/Phildom shall be given due consideration. Due to some limit in space however, we may not be able to print them all at once. It may come out at the forthcoming issues. Just the same we are grateful for the articles and newsbits. Please continue sending them; they will be most welcome.
August 22, 2019 – The Colegio de San Juan de Letran and the Dominican Justice and Peace and Care for Creation (JPCC) inked a deal that will be resulting in a number of human rights initiatives.

Fr. Victor Calvo Jr., OP, the JPCC Provincial Promoter, worked with the Colegio’s Center for Community Development to make the partnership possible. Signing the agreement were Fr. Clarence Marquez, OP, and Rev. Fr. Michael Deeb, OP, the General Promoter of Justice and Peace of the Order of Preachers and the Dominican’s special envoy to the United Nations.
Presbyteral Ordination of Br. Asanka Melroy Adikari Arachchige Don, OP
on 17 August 2019 at St. Sebastian’s Church, Negombo, Sri Lanka
and Thanksgiving Mass on 18 August 2019 at St. Nicholas' Church, Bopitiya, Sri Lanka
Lay Dominican Fraternities Formators' Convention
(Under the leadership of Dr. Belen Tangeo, OP, and Fr. Giuseppe Pietro Arsciwals, OP)
24 August 2019 at Aula San Pio, San Pio V Building
Sto. Domingo Church Compound, 537 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City
Jalan-Jalan in Bahasa Indonesia means to go for a walk or to visit and tour around places. We have visited a lot of places in our summer exposure in Indonesia. The aim of this exposure is mainly to know and appreciate the Indonesian culture since many of us could also be assigned in the future in our mission houses in Indonesia and a way to see the culture of our Indonesian brothers, who are growing in number. This summer exposure in Indonesia is a way to know and love the culture of our Indonesian brothers and to be exposed to our mission in Indonesia. In turn, we were able to visit the houses in Surabaya and Pontianak and other places in Indonesia like Jogjakarta, Jakarta, and Bandung. We were able to visit some of the convents of the Dominican sisters in Indonesia and to meet the Lay Dominicans of Indonesia. We were oriented with the grandeur of Indonesia: their Borobudur, the trains that go from province to province; the Nasi Goreng, Mi Goreng, and other spicy foods; their fast, cheap yet reliable Internet service; their hospitality and their love for coffee and tea.

Our visit in Ramah Santo Tomas Aquino in Surabaya made us see the pastoral work of the brothers in the Redemptor Mundi Parish. The Parish and the Formation house are the two main apostolates of the brothers there. The Parish community of Redemptor Mundi is an inspiration to us to be able to see how vibrant the spirit of volunteerism and the lay-involvement in the Parish. Although the brothers in formation help in the Parish, the active ones in the organizations and activities in the Parish are actually the lay leaders especially the youth, which is a mixture of students and young professionals. They are the ones in charge of the Sunday School of kids and the Catechumens. The Parishioners are international in character. Our Parish in Surabaya is a place where most OFWs and other foreigners hear Mass because of the English Masses scheduled solely in Redemptor Mundi. And the celebration of the Mass is well participated by the faithful with special liturgy for the kids. The Parish is also known in Surabaya because of the preaching of the brothers. We also joined in the visit to the Sick on Sundays by their Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Although most of the brothers are busy working in the Parish, the community is still a good place for the formation of our young brothers in-formation. The community pray the Liturgy of the Hours with the faithful every morning except Sundays, and they pray as one unified community for the Vespers. Although, we noticed the need for more brothers and priests since there are only four brothers in-charge of the Parish, the House, Formation House and the school. We were also able to visit the school and learned about the plan to have a new formation house and a Shrine of Our Lady of Manaaoag in Surabaya.

Our visit in Pontianak is also very memorable since when we arrived after our flight, we travelled immediately to Ngabang, Kalimantan Barat, a three-hour travel from our House in Pontianak. This is the usual plight of our brothers in Pontianak to be able to reach our place of school apostolate. In Ngabang, we have a school, named STKIP Pamane Talino, which is owned both by the Archdiocese of Pontianak and our Province. It is our hope that our involvement in STKIP will be our main contribution to the
Archdiocese of Pontianak under Archbishop Agus who is very supportive to our Dominican brothers. Recently, the brothers in Pontianak together with Archbishop Agus laid the foundation of the new site of the school. Aside from the school apostolate, the brothers also help in the Archdiocese as officials of the Archdiocesan Curia and in the Regional Seminary of Kalimantan.

The visit to these two houses made us see how bright our future in Indonesia is. Our brothers there are giving their best to establish our presence in Indonesia. It is a realization that our trip to Indonesia is not much about us giving talks, but about us learning from the people of Indonesia especially from our Dominican brothers. The mission in Indonesia is indeed an inspiration for us brothers in-formation to study-well, to be in our best once assigned in these mission areas. The trip to Indonesia did not only help us see and appreciate how beautiful Indonesia is, but it was also a great inspiration and a call for us to appreciate our missions and to help our brothers in the missions. The summer exposure is a way of molding our hearts to love the missions! The dream is big in Indonesia and it is a promising future that awaits us young brothers. The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so, let us pray to the Lord of the harvest to send us more vocations so that we can be able to sustain the needs of our missions. We also pray that more brothers will work together in Indonesia not only as Foreigners and Tourists but as missionaries walking together with the faithful in Indonesia. Together, let us JALAN-JALAN in Indonesia!
It was in 2018 when the Dominican Studentate’s mission exposure abroad was introduced. Last June 4-30, 2019, five of us student-brothers had the opportunity to visit Sri Lanka, being one of the mission areas of the Dominican Province of the Philippines (Br. Roberto Castellano, Jr., OP, Br. Jerone Geronimo, OP, Br. Mervin Lomague, OP, Br. Siddharta Chiong, OP, and Br. Ian Joeffrey Melendres, OP). For all of us, it was a first-time experience to go abroad. Hence, excitement was one common feeling but a predicament was no less felt.

2019 is rather a tragic year for Sri Lanka, not only for Christians (though greatly for them) but for every Sri Lankan. It was in the morn of the celebration of Christ’s resurrection—Easter Sunday—that a tragedy shocked the whole world. 259 died and at least 500 others were injured when bombs blasted in three Christian Churches—two Catholic and one Christian—and in three luxury hotels. That is why orphaned families and individuals still are at pain because of the heart-breaking loss that they had. Tensions, hurts, and fears were still being harbored and a process of healing and reconciliation is still a struggle. Such was the situation when we were about to visit and when we were actually there in Sri Lanka. As expected, therefore, a tight security was implemented and almost everywhere, men in uniform stood in patrol.

In spite of these, Sri Lanka remains to be a wonderful place with wonderful people. With few tourists coming in, we almost had the exclusivity of many travel destinations. With that, we were able to catch sight of the rich cultural and historical treasures Sri Lanka is blessed with. Equally heartwarming were the people we met especially the Christian faithful. Quite interesting and inspiring was their remarkable zeal in living the faith. Families flocked many of the Churches, especially Shrines, during Sundays notwithstanding the recent incidents, not to mention that their regard for clerics and religious is quite special. What is more, thousands of children surprised us when they eagerly attended regular Sunday catechesis. And by children, I mean boys and girls from around 7-18 years old smartly lining up in their uniform. This eagerness was no less responded with a good number of passionate catechists—and volunteers at that! For a very short while, we also had the chance to take part of one catechesis held in a certain parish.

The role of the clergy and religious is indeed indispensable. Their shepherding of God’s flock and witnessing are characterized by a similar fervor. We were able to at least take a glimpse of that upon visiting some of the local ordinaries where we paid courtesy as well as in some seminaries and houses of formation and as well as in various shrines and pilgrimage sites.

With the limited time we had—a 28-day exposure to be precise—we can only observe unpretentiously on our mission in Sri Lanka. Though we had traveled from the country’s southernmost part to the northernmost tip, with long trips, some brisk walking, chase of buses and trains, they nonetheless comprised a modest experience of sort.

We had the opportunity to visit St. Dominic’s House in the UNESCO Heritage City of Kandy located in the Central Province of the country. We also stayed for some time in our formation house in Katana, Negombo located in the Western Province which caters to the formation of four (4) pre-novices at present. Our mission as carried out by six (6) abléd brethren by the time we were there constitute teaching in the Diocesan and religious seminaries and government school, active participation in interreligious
dialogue, formation of candidates, administering the sacraments—especially celebrating the Holy Mass—to the Dominican Sisters as well as to other congregations of consecrated life, or at times in various parishes. Other apostolates also include administering to the Filipino community in Sri Lanka. In one way or another, our brethren in their own varied capacities contribute to the fostering of faith of the Christian faithful in Sri Lanka.

Worth mentioning also as regards the Dominican presence in the country are the Dominican Sisters, namely the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena and Dominican Sisters of Malta whose hospitality towards us during our visit is something to be truly grateful for. Our sisters found and manage Catholic schools, establish and run orphanages, and some of them also teach in government schools. Actually, we had the chance to visit a number of their convents and observe some of their ministries.

Indeed, we, the visiting student-brothers, were very fortunate to have gone to such a wonderful country. The experience gave us not merely memories to cherish but more so learning and lots of inspiring realizations. Hence, our gratitude extends to our brethren, sisters, and other generous individuals whose accommodating presence made our stay homely and memorable. Of course, adjustments are necessary as part of any missionary journey. Nevertheless, compared to the blessings and opportunities we were undeservedly bestowed, a gracious and humbled heart can only be the most suitable response.

FIRST YEAR IN THEOLOGY: THE RETURN OF THE COMEBACK

By Br. Laurence Ryan V. Mata, OP

It was only few months ago that I finished my Bachelor’s degree in Philosophy at the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters. I can still remember the excitement of telling my mother the good news that I will soon graduate in college. Thank God, that her desire of collecting all graduation pictures of all her siblings will be fulfilled. Though, I have given her a lot of headaches and heartaches in my pursuit to finish a degree. She nonetheless strives to believe in God and in me. More so, the reason for my strength during those times of difficulties is her motherly wisdom and unceasing prayer.

The words that my mother told me once were still very clear. She said ‘the only inheritance that I could give you is your education.’ I believe my mother has given me more than the inheritance that she promised. She gave me more than I could ask for and that is faith and freedom to follow my vocation: Wherever and whenever God calls me to be. Furthermore, finishing a Bachelor’s degree in Philosophy is just another single step to what I really want my mother to witness; and that, I hope is my ordination to the priesthood. The summary of my holy perseverance to this vocation is perhaps having two mothers who are always at my side: one is my Mama and the other one is the Mother of God, who is our Mother too.

I am now in the second phase towards priesthood. I pondered this thought when I entered the UST Arch of the Centuries the second time around, now, as a freshman in Theology. Being a theology student at the UST Ecclesiastical Faculties is new to me. Yet there is also this sentimental feeling that makes me think of old memories. Most of these old memories are difficult to forget. However, I will not delve into these memories to experience headaches but to seek inspiration and hope. The beauty of time is that it gives opportunity for memories and experiences to grow. Time is not just something that is lost; but it is also the measure of growth and maturity, for those who know how to examine themselves. The Book of Ecclesiastes says that there is a time for everything. This verse comforts me as a freshman in Theology. Even though I am two years behind my first batch and a year behind my second batch, I believe that my time is still perfect in accordance with God’s plan. Anyway I can always ask them for advice in any subject in Theology now. As for the moment, whatever God’s plan maybe, may everything be for the glory of His Name.

My return to study at the Ecclesiastical Faculties is a
comeback. My days in the faculty of Arts and Letters are now over. Yet I can still remember vividly the days I spent as an Artlet. I can still hear the noise in our corridors and still remember colorfully the faces of my classmates and friends. How can I forget the time when I entered the doors of the Dean’s office asking them to accept me? I confess that I was excited, though a bit scared during those times. I just realized now that God has just granted me my heart’s desire. I want to remain in His love yet I also want to be independent as a man. I want to know more about myself. I want to know my potentials, my skills, limitations and capacity to love. I thought that in knowing myself I might find some answers why God is calling me for Himself. I want to know what God saw in me. Only to find out that he filled me with His love. Without Whom there will be no Lau, OP.

Looking back at my past brings me so much joy. The memories of my past experiences also give me courage to face the new challenges that will come my way. My most important realization is that God has never abandoned me, not even for a moment. Never in my life did He leave me behind.

(I think your experience with God is far more interesting to tell, my dear brothers. So please forgive me if I talk too much about myself. I just want to pour myself out since Fr. Roy gave me the freedom to choose whatever topic I should write. Let me take this opportunity to thank you my dear brothers, especially my superiors, who in your own way believe that God is really calling me in this life. Thank you for your trust and your prayers! May our God bless us all the days of our life! Amen.)
The Legislations from the Dominican General Chapters of 1977 and 1988 on Cooperator Brotherhood

The General Chapter of the Order of Preachers held in Quezon City, Philippines in 1977 is considered the hallmark in the renewal of the role the cooperator-brothers at that time. It dedicated one fifth of its work to cooperator-brothers. This was clearly expressed by the Chapter in saying:

"In the name of the whole Order, the present Chapter confesses that we have too often ignored the rich heritage of St. Dominic, that we have omitted to promote the specific vocation of the cooperator-brother and we have neglected his role in the apostolate of the entire community. We declare that one of the priorities of this Chapter is to repair this neglect; we also ask all the friars, clerics, and cooperators to revive the knowledge and esteem of this special vocation and to work together in rediscovering its value for the life of the community and for the salvation of the human race."

The Chapter also expressed the necessity to uphold the vocation to cooperator-brotherhood since it is truly part of the primitive inspiration of the Order of Preachers and truly part of her charism:

"The brethren of the Order of Preachers both clerics and cooperators always worked together in the preaching of the Gospel and together watch in prayer. We affirm that where the clerics and cooperator-brothers are seen and were together, there the Order is present truly and fully. Although only a few receive the name of brother cooperator, all of us are called and are real cooperators in the mission of the Order."

The General Chapter in Bologna in 1988 defined again the identity of the cooperator-brothers in terms of religious profession and in terms of participation in the mission of the Order. It affirmed that the presence of cooperator-brothers is a reminder that what binds the friars together is not their Ordination but their religious profession. When it comes to the mission of the Order, the Chapter has widened the perspective of the Order in the way the lay brothers were being seen. The Chapter accepted the fact that it is not enough to say that they cooperate in the mission of the ordained friars since they can already engage in explicit and direct preaching. The Chapter of Bologna affirmed once again, with respect to the mission of the Order, that all the brethren are cooperators participating fully in its life and mission, as the Order of Preachers consists equally of ordained and non-ordained friars.

For the Dominicans in the Philippines, the door for receiving native vocations was opened through the chapter of the Dominican Province of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary in 1926. The chapter stipulated to open a novitiate in the Philippines and thereupon the admission of Filipinos. The call to receive natives to the Order did not die down. It gained momentum as reflected in the succeeding Chapters of the Dominican Order. In the General Chapter in Rome, fostering of native vocations was given considerable attention as it said:

"Finally, legislations for fostering native vocations to the Dominican Order was concretized by the Dominican Order in the past, we have been content to say that the brothers "co-operate" in the mission of the ordained friars. This response is no longer adequate since it relates the mission of the brothers to that of the priests. Today, the brothers can engage in the direct and explicit preaching mission of the Order which at one time was reserved for the ordained friars. The entire range of apostolic work available to the ordained friars is also available to the non-ordained except that which directly and explicitly requires the Sacrament of Orders."

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1 Acta Capituli Generalis 1977, 62 no. 3.
2 ibid., 62 no. 2.
4 ibid., 136 no. 2.
5 ibid., 137 no. 3.
6 Dela Rosa, 161.
The Entry of the Filipino Cooperator Brothers in Rosaryville, Hong Kong

On 9 March 1936, Gregorio Hontomin was the first Filipino ever to be admitted to Rosaryhill. He was at the same time the first Filipino to enter as a cooperatore-brother. From its opening in 1935 until it was closed in 1958, when the formation house was transferred to Sto. Domingo in Quezon City, there was a total of seven Filipinos who entered Rosaryhill as cooperatore-brothers. Only two were able to profess, Gregorio Hontomin (professed 2 January 1938) and Teofilo Maximiano (professed 5 February 1947). A total of eleven Filipinos entered as cooperatore-brothers and all were able to make their profession from 1959, when the formation program started in Sto. Domingo, Quezon City until 1969. However, five of them left the Order.

When the Philippine Dominican Province was born in 1971, there were fifteen solemnly professed cooperatore-brothers. From the fifteen solemnly professed cooperatore-brothers in 1971 when the Dominican Province of the Philippines was established, the number was reduced to eleven in 1996. This is despite the upliftment of the status cooperatore-brothers in the legislations of the Order and the Philippine Province as well. Since the birth of the Philippine Province, Filipino Dominican cooperatore-brothers have been urged to acquire academic degrees. The Province has strongly emphasized the equality between clerics and cooperatore-brothers. There was even a move to ordain as deacons some qualified cooperatore-brothers to be able to help in the pastoral ministry of the Province. This suggestion did not materialize since no cooperatore-brother had agreed to the idea.

About formation, the novitiate for clerical and cooperatore-brothers has been one and the same since the birth of the Philippine Province. Only ample distinctions were made, such as the assignation of a separate Master of Students for cooperatore-brothers in simple vows. Slowly, Filipino Dominican cooperatore-brothers began to be given more significance in the succeeding Chapters of the Philippine Province. They were asked to participate more in the life of study of the Order and were encouraged to participate more in the preaching ministry. They were also asked to take up theology courses at University of Santo Tomás. The present structure of formation provides that there is one Master for both clerical and cooperatore student-brothers. The eighth Provincial Chapter still maintained the provision for cooperatore-brothers to pursue academic degrees. The Fifth Provincial Chapter in 1992 was significant for the Filipino Dominican cooperatore-brothers since it had the longest legislation devoted to cooperatore-brothers and their formation.

The Philippine Province has always maintained the unique role of its cooperatore-brothers, together with their competence in the various aspects in the ministry of the Order. An evidence of this is when Bro. Rolando Granada preached in the Seven Last Words on Good Friday of 1974 at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary in Manaog. It was a clear gesture of the capability of the cooperatore-brothers to preach in the pulpit. It was the first time in the history of the Philippine Dominican Province that a cooperatore-brother preached before a church crowd. Another significant moment in the history of cooperatore-brothers in the Philippines was the assignation to Santa Sabina by, Fray Raymundo Bayaras and Fray Jose Francisco. Bro. Raymundo Bayaras holds the distinction of being the first Filipino Dominican to be assigned to Santa Sabina. The crowning glory of the cooperatore brothers was when Brother Gregorio Hontomin received the ecclesiastical award for Service ‘Pro Ecclesia at Pontice’ on 9 May 1977. More importantly, the Provincial Chapters beginning 1988 until the most recent, made provisions for opening the cause of his beatification. A renewal program for the cooperatore-brothers was held in 2004. In the said event, the Filipino cooperatore-brothers arrived at two resolutions. The first resolution was to pursue the beatification of Bro. Gregorio Hontomin, the first Filipino to enter the Dominican religious formation and the first Filipino Dominican cooperatore-brother.

The Life and Ministry of Bro. Gregorio Hontomin, OP

Gregorio Andres Lima Hontomin was born on 21 November 1909 in the barrio of Sawidug of the small island town called Sabtang in the Batanes Islands. His parents were Ángel Hontomin and Anatolia Lima. Gregorio was the first-born of the six children. His siblings were (from the eldest) Bienvenida, Emilia, Evaristo, Juana Bibiana and Jorge. Ángel and Anatolia, the parents of Gregorio, were farmers as most of the natives of Sabtang were. The couple were devout Catholics and among the respected leaders of the town of Sabtang.

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8 Dela Rosa, 166.
In his early twenties, he left Batanes and went to Manila to find a living. In Manila, Gregorio was employed as a worker in San Juan de Dios Hospital in Intramuros. It was also in Manila where he was recruited to enter the Dominican Order as a cooperator-brother. Hence, on 19 March 1936, Gregorio arrived in Rosaryhill, the Dominican House of Formation in Hong Kong, together with some Spanish missionaries from the Philippines. He was turning twenty-seven years old that time. The following day, on March 20, he was formally admitted as a candidate for cooperator-brotherhood after getting unanimous approval from the conventual council.

Less than a year after his admission, on 1 January 1937, Gregorio received the habit of a cooperator-brother. On 2 January 1938, Gregorio made his temporary vows and six years after, on January 1944, he made his solemn profession. Gregorio is considered the first Filipino native in the 20th century to be admitted to the Dominican formation and the first Filipino Dominican cooperator-brother.

An evidence that Gregorio was still in Sabtang at least before 1931 i.e., when he was twenty-two years old, is the appearance of his name in the Church records of Sabtang in Padron General 1931. Also from the written testimony of Dr. Florentino Hornedo dated September 12, 1982.

In Rosaryhill, Hong Kong, Bro. Gregorio served as an all-around and always on-call handyman of the Dominican brethren. He displayed remarkable talents on almost everything, if not all, which required technical and manual skills. He was the friar who was mainly responsible for keeping the convent in tip-top shape. This was astonishing especially for a person who did not undergo higher studies in any technical field of specialization such as electronics or engineering. His ingenuity in fixing things was so impressive to the amazement of his Dominican brothers in Rosaryhill.

He was also impressive in terms of providing food for the brethren. He devotedly performed his chore of preparing meals for the brethren so much so that the brethren knew if it was Bro. Gregorio who prepared the food for them or not. As witnesses would say, “With Bro. Gregorio, best food was always served.” Furthermore, he is also always remembered as the community in infirmary who never found it tiresing to nurse anyone who got sick. In addition, the ingenuity of Bro. Gregorio was instrumental to the survival of the Dominican community in Rosaryhill and the continuance of studies of the Dominican students during the World War II. During those years, he was practically the one feeding the community.

In 1959, when Dominican House of Studies in Rosaryhill was closed down, Bro. Gregorio was assigned to the University of Santo Tomás in the Archdiocese of Manila. In UST, he took the post of head of the General Services Department of the hospital. It was in the said hospital where Bro. Gregorio spent the second-half, or twenty-three years of his Dominican life. The ingenuity of Bro. Gregorio blended with a deep spirit of service was clearly seen when he served the University of Santo Tomás Hospital. He was not only good in repairing broken hospital apparatuses but also in inventing various kinds of equipment for the benefit of the patients and the rest of the health care workers.

Despite the respect and admiration, he was enjoying, Fray Hontomin still remained humble and charitable. He extended whatever help he could give to the needy patients. Sometimes, in the afternoon, he would visit the poor families around the University and distributed bread, especially to street children. His extraordinary life and service did not go unrecognized. On May 9, 1977, he was conferred with a pontifical award for outstanding service to the Church, Pro Ecclesia et Pontificie.

On 6 July 1982, Gregorio was found leaning on his table. He was working on several watches and other apparatuses he was entrusted to repair. His frail body had given up, something that he knew was imminent since he was first hospitalized in 1979. Apparently having had collapsed while working, Bro. Gregorio was rushed to the emergency for medical treatment. His physical decline was inevitable. Before six in the evening he joined his Creator.

How Bro. Gregorio lived as an exemplary cooperator-brother, besides being the first Filipino Dominican cooperator-brother, is a legacy to be regarded. The status...
of the cooperator-brothers in the Order today is evolving as a result of the changing needs of the time. Along with this evolution of status is confronting the dearth of vocations to the cooperator-brotherhood that is being experienced by the whole Order, especially the Philippine Province. Bro. Gregorio could be considered a modern-time persona that serves as a strong reminder of the attractiveness and uniqueness of the vocation to the Dominican cooperator-brotherhood today.

When the possibility of cooperator-brothers being ordained deacons in the view of helping the priests in their ministry was being floated, the other Filipino cooperator-brothers first pointed to Gregorio and said, “Ordain first Bro. Gregorio and we will follow.”¹⁹ Since the life of Bro. Gregorio affirmed what St. Dominic and the Dominican Order have envisioned from the start i.e., cooperator-brothers, being non-ordained, have their unique role in the preaching ministry of the Order, which is clerical in nature. Vocation to the cooperator-brotherhood is part of the rich heritage which St. Dominic handed on to his brethren which the brethren today should continue to promote for the Order to remain strong. Citing again what the General Chapter in Quezon City said, “Where the clerics and cooperator-brothers are seen and were together, there the Order is present truly and fully.”²⁰ That is why it would be hard to imagine for instance if the downtrend in the number of cooperator-brothers in the Philippine Province will continue, since having cooperator-brothers is a constant reminder to the brethren, that what really binds them is their common profession as religious brothers. Again in the word of the Quezon City General Chapter, “When the cooperator-brothers are not fully present and active in the apostolate of the Order . . . our Order as St. Dominic intended it to be is diminished and also the nature of our common profession is obscured.”²¹

²⁰ Acta Capituli Generalis 1977, 62 no. 3.
²¹ ibid.