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May 2016 - News from the Province of Our Lady of the Assumption Philippines-Uganda-Hawaii

Corpus Christi Celebration



*Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo leads the Eucharistic procession on Corpus Christi from Sta. Cruz Church to Manila Cathedral on Sunday, May 29, 2016.
(Maria Tan – CBCP News)*

The Province of Our Lady of the Assumption through her different established parishes and mission areas celebrated meaningfully the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. Most of the celebrations are parochial though a few are diocesan or archdiocesan. Basically, all had the usual animated or simple Adoration before the exposed sacrament which culminates with solemn benediction and the holy celebration of the Eucharist, which is the day's highlight. Majority, before or after the Mass, had the

grand procession of the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance either held aloft by a priest or placed on a makeshift altar in a pick-up vehicle.

In some of the SSS parishes and mission areas, moreover, there were eucharistic inputs especially on the topic, "The Filipino Family: Missionary Disciples of the Eucharist", the theme of the celebration of the Year of the Eucharist and the Family in the Philippines. There were also overnight vigils to anticipate the grand celebration, Holy Hour, which centers on Jesus as the Bread of Life, and praying of the rosary, which reflects May as the month for Mary.

The different SSS parishes and mission areas especially the parishioners were able to deepen more their faith on the Real Presence and were challenged to aggressively promote this truth.

14 Postulants for the Philippine Province



Fr. Marlon Reyes, sss, POLA National Vocation Director, together with the incoming Postulants batch 2016-17.

On May 29, 2016 (Corpus Christi Sunday), during the 12:00 noon solemn celebration of the Eucharist on the occasion of the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, at the Church of Sta. Cruz,

14 incoming Postulants of the SSS Province of Our Lady of the Assumption were sent-off to begin their formal pre-novitiate training.

The Mass was presided by Fr. Provincial with some SSS concelebrating priests. In order to show their support, the families and relatives of the incoming postulants were present, together with the different family members of St. Peter Julian Eymard, including the Asia-Oceania scholastics preparing for their Perpetual Profession.

The following day, May 30, the incoming Postulants were flown to Davao City, which is the venue for the POLA Postulancy program. These young lads will be accompanied by Fr. Andres Malawis (Postulant Director) and Fr. Ronnel Fulo (Asst. Postulant Director) on their continuous search for God's will. They will also be under the supervision of the local superior of Davao community, Fr. Randy Vergara.

Asia-Oceania International Preparation for Perpetual Profession Program (IP4)



The 25 SSS scholastics from the Asia-Oceania Conference who are participating in the International Preparation for Perpetual Profession Program (IP4) being held in the Philippines.

The Asia-Oceania Conference agreed to hold an International Preparation for Perpetual Profession Program (IP4) this 2016 during its meeting which took place in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, from January 19-21, 2016.

With the arrival of the Vietnamese last May 30, the total number of the Asia-Oceania for IP4 is 25 comprising 5 Filipinos, 1 Sri Lankan, 6 Indians and 13 Vietnamese. The brother Sri Lankan arrived on April 14 and the Indian delegates on April 27. Unfortunately, there is no candidate from Australia.

At present they are receiving lectures from Sr. Maria Fe Magbanua, the current Provincial Superior of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament in the

Philippines, on the topic 'The Vow of Chastity in Celibacy', the aspects of which are the following: to re-discover our physical bodies in relation to the vow of chastity; to identify which are the aspects of our psychological character that block, stop and paralyze us in the transformation of a true image of the body of Christ; and to stimulate and help in freeing the selves and becoming the body of Christ for others.

Emphasis on the Youth in SSS Parishes



Some of the parish youth and youth ministers of Sta. Cruz Parish during their Summer Camp in Zambales.

The past summer time gave the opportunity for the parishes and shrines being administered by the SSS to stage different programs of animation for the youth. This shows the commitment of the Congregation in preparing the youth to take up a more active role in the future of the country and in arousing in them the interest to serve God and the Church.

Last May 13, 14, and 15, 2016, the Sta. Cruz Parish Youth Ministry (PYM) had their Youth Camp at Lia's Beach Resort in Iba, Zambales. With the supervision of their Parish Priest and Spiritual Director, Fr. Rudsend Paragas, SSS, the Parish Youth Camp took off with the goal of empowering the youth to say 'yes' to a life led by God in spite of the many struggles they face.

Team building activities such as Blind Faith Walk, Fill me up, Pick me up, Caterpillar Walk and Tower Building made the youth camp an opportunity to instill some important values to the youth participants - camaraderie, cooperation and unity. Of course, the participants together with the organizers of the event didn't miss the chance of enjoying the place through swimming and boating activities.

FR JOSEPH MATITU, SSS
PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR



First Eucharistic Week

As the *Rule of Life* n.1 states: "... *Our ideal is to live the mystery of the Eucharist fully and to make known its meaning, so that Christ's reign may come and the glory of God be revealed to the world.*" In endeavouring to respond to this objective the SSS Community of Maputo in Mozambique undertook during this Jubilee Year of Mercy to arrange for the first time in its history a Eucharistic Week in the parish of Saint Ann of Munhuana from **23 to 29 May 2016**. The theme was: "Eucharist, Sacrament of God's Mercy."

Our initiative was much appreciated by Dom Francisco Chimoio, the Archbishop of Maputo, and Dom João Carlos, an auxiliary bishop, who in the Archbishop's absence, presided at the opening Mass. In his homily Dom João Carlos strongly insisted on the relation that exists between the Eucharist and God's Mercy. As he stated, God gives himself to us in the Eucharist and pardons us our sins through love, through mercy. All the sacraments as well as the apostolate are oriented to the celebration of the Eucharist – source and summit of the whole Christian life. He also spoke encouragingly of the initiative to organize a Eucharistic Week, in particular adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which in these days seems to be neglected or quite simply sidelined. This is ignorance and indifference that St Peter-Julian spoke of in his day.

One of the important guests of this Eucharistic Week was Dom Edgar Peña Parra, the Apostolic Nuncio of Mozambique, who honoured us by presiding at the Mass of closing the occasion on the solemnity of "Corpus Christi". In his homily he first of all underlined the origin and meaning of this Feast, then he went on to encourage the organization of the Eucharistic Week as a preparation for the great Feast. These were his words: "*I am certain that these days of adoration, prayer, union with the Lord who is really present in the Eucharist will be an inexhaustible source of blessing for this parish, for the Church and for the people of Mozambique.*"

The presence of the faithful at the hours of adoration, celebrations of the Eucharist and catechesis about the Eucharist shows the interest that they have in this event. The organisation of a Eucharistic Week thus corresponds now to a hunger, a thirst, a real need of the local Church. And, as a confrere stated: "*It is time that Blessed Sacrament religious allowed their 'eucharistic voice' to be heard at the level of the Archdiocese.*" The Eucharist is an immense treasure that cannot be jealously kept to oneself... it isn't to be

locked up in tabernacles as in a chest, but it must be unveiled, revealed to all in a way that Jesus in the Eucharist may be known, adored, celebrated and lived.

To conclude, the first Eucharistic Week was an historic event for us and for the local Church. It had a good attendance of the faithful and it entailed commitment of the confreres, the members of the Aggregation and faithful of our two parishes, Saint Ann and Saint Joachim. On behalf of the Blessed Sacrament religious, Father Agostinho Maholele, superior of the community, expressed gratitude to all those who contributed to the smooth running of this historic event, particularly to the bishops, Apostolic Nuncio, priests and religious, the 'Heralds of the Gospel' ('Arautos do Evangelho') with their fanfare and to the laity for their generosity and availability. This is not to forget confreres who coordinated the activities of the Week.

May the Lord sustain this zeal in us. Entrusting in the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, and St Peter-Julian Eymard, apostle of the Eucharist, we ask the Lord in his faithful love to grant us to commit our whole life to the service of Christ Jesus present in the Eucharist and at the service of our brothers (cf. RL n. 102,5).

FATHERS BERNARD TINE AND MATEUS VIDIGAL
DIRECTORS OF THE EUCHARISTIC WEEK



Eucharistic Week of the Archdiocese of Fortaleza

With joy and gratitude to the Good God we held in the period from **22 to 29 May, 2016**, the 78th Eucharistic Week of the Archdiocese of Fortaleza. This is a story of faith about the coming of the Eucharistic Work to the State of Ceará in Brazil through the efforts 78 years ago by the Religious of the Blessed Sacrament, who with dedication to the Holy Eucharist undertook their mission in this Archdiocesan Shrine of Adoration. The theme was "**Eucharist: Food of Mercy**".

Many brothers and sisters, youth and children, have visited in these 78 years, and daily visit Jesus in Eucharistic exposition and have drunk and drink from

the font of true wisdom in order to live well in this world suffering from discord and human evils.



Thanks to this continuous movement to the Lord's House we carried out another week entirely dedicated to eucharistic reflection as a real experience of plunging into the riches of the Paschal Mystery of Christ. This is a week consecrated to celebrating, reflecting and receiving

the eucharistic treasures revealed by Our Lord.

The Blessed Sacrament family is celebrating 78 years of the Eucharistic Work in the Archdiocese of Fortaleza as a family: Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Brothers, Sisters and Blessed Sacrament Laity, all these gathered in praising the Father through Christ, with Christ and in Christ for all the graces that have been received in these days.

Welcome! May Jesus Eucharistic bless you!

FR JACKSON FROTA, SSS
FR ANÍZIO FERREIRA, SSS
FR MAGALHÃES DUQUE, SSS
FR ALEX BENTO



The Ordination to the Priesthood

Along with fourteen candidates from the Diocese of Saigon, three from the Society of Alexandre de Rhodes and one from 'La Vierge des Pauvres', five deacons SSS of the Province of Vietnamese Martyrs have been ordained to the priesthood in the Notre-Dame Cathedral Basilica of Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City, on **May 30th 2016**.

This day was the happiest of 23 deacons who after being through many years living and studying in their Congregations, and Dioceses now committed themselves wholeheartedly to the service of our Eucharistic Lord by imposing hand to be ordained to the priesthood by the Most Rev. Archbishop Bui Van

Doc, Archbishop of Archdiocese of Saigon. Especially for our confreres SSS, this joy would have been doubled by the presence of Rev. Fr. General Superior, Eugênio Barbosa Martins.

Here are our Deacons: Peter Mai Quoc Anh, Dominic Dinh Cong Chuc, Joseph Tran Minh Hieu, Joseph Le Huu Phuoc, Dominic Nguyen Dinh Thuc.

In the joy of local Church, of the Societies and of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in Vietnam, there were many priests, including Sacramentino priests, Spiritual Fathers, Superiors, Parish Priests presented in the great ceremony, along with Brothers and Sisters, parents, relatives and friends of the deacons. This joyful event was prolonged with their thanksgiving mass in their own parishes, especially in Khiet Tam Church, the principle church of the Province of Vietnamese Martyrs on June 5th 2016.

Through Ordination rites, through intercessions of Mother of the Cenacle, Saints, especially St. Peter Julian Eymard our Founder, we pray that our newly ordained priests would have courage to commit themselves for the Eucharistic Kingdom by realizing the words they have received in the Ordination rites *"You received the Word of God in joyful, so let you share it with everybody. When you contemplate the Word of God, believe what you read, teach what you believe, and do what you teach"*; by being always aware of the teaching of Rule of Life number 21: *"The celebration of the Memorial of the Lord is at the center of our personal and communal life. It is the starting point for our understanding of the Eucharist and inspires our prayer and ministry"*.

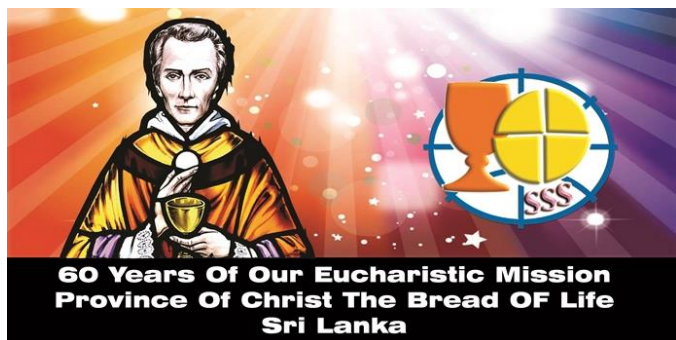


From left to right Frs. Joseph Phan Ngoc Tro, Provincial, Dominic Dinh Cong Chuc, Joseph Tran Minh Hieu, Dominic Nguyen Dinh Thuc, Eugênio Barbosa Martins, Superior General, Peter Mai Quoc Anh, Joseph Le Huu Phuoc.



60 years of our Eucharistic Mission

We, the Religious of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation, have the joy of announcing the 60 years of our Eucharistic Mission in Sri Lanka.



Upon the invitation of His Eminence, Servant of God Thomas Cardinal Cooray OMI, then Archbishop of Colombo, who had contacted the Superior General of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation, Very Rev. Fr. Godefroy Spiekman SSS in Rome and invited him to open a foundation in Colombo, the Pioneering group of the Blessed Sacrament Religious comprising of three priests and two brothers, namely, Fr. Enrico Polini (Italian), Fr. Patrick Fitzgerald (Australian), Fr. James Poyerd (North American), Bro. Stephen McKenna (Australian) and Bro Kevin Gallagher (Australian), arrived in Sri Lanka on the Day of Pentecost on 20th of May 1956.

Accompanied by their provincial leader Very Rev. Fr. Len McKenna, the pioneering group boarded the ship *Iberia* on 8 May 1956 at Port Melbourne, the Congregation's scholastics, their loved ones and well-wishers were present to bid them farewell. After a twelve-days of voyage, when they reached Colombo harbor, they were greeted on board and welcomed by Rev. Fr. Clinton Anandappa OMI (Secretary to Archbishop) and Rev. Fr. Charles Sentilvel OMI. They were accompanied to the Archbishop's house, where they were accommodated as the guests of the Archbishop for almost one month. The first community of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation in Sri Lankan soil was opened at St. Philip Neri's Church on **11 June 1956**. The foundation established in Colombo became the Congregation's first community in Asia, in the hundredth year of the Congregation's existence since the first foundation in Paris.

While thanking God, we gratefully remember the past, as we mark the 60th milestone in the history of our presence in Sri Lanka. We are also thankful to God and the human instrumentality through various

Bishops and priests and religious for providing us the mission places in seven dioceses in Sri Lanka, so that, we, while being aware of the need to work in collaboration with the pastoral vision of each diocese, may primarily inculcate the Eucharistic Spirituality in our pastoral ministry. There is no doubt that we can see the trace of God's powerful presence with us, in every stage of our journey during these past 60 years, since 1956, in providing us, though not in big numbers, local vocations to work in the vineyard of the Lord as humble servants. We too thank God for the gift of these individuals for our Congregation and for their valuable contribution rendered to the life and the mission of our Congregation for last 60 years, holding responsibilities in various capacities.

We are happy to mention that in our Eucharistic mission and journey, we have established separate formation houses for each level of initial formation such as: Study facility and Aspirancy at Havelock town; Postulancy in Colombo community; Novitiate at Halgashena and the Scholasticate in Kandy. These structures provide us with the suitable atmosphere for the initial formation of our religious. Apart from formation houses, we have established ten ministry houses in seven dioceses. We are also happy to mention that five religious of our province are also in mission in USA, Ireland, France and Australia.



In preparation to celebrate the significance of 60 years of our Eucharistic Mission in Sri Lanka and in combination with the Year of Mercy, we organized various activities and celebrations.

A gathering of the parish council members of our parishes with over 140 parish council members present for the programme. This provided an opportunity to talk to the lay faithful about the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation and its "Project of Life" which intends to be a proposal of Eucharistic life for the lay people associated with our Congregation.

The publication of the book on the History of the Congregation in Sri Lanka completed by Late Rev. Fr. Alfred Alexander SSS, two months before his unexpected death in June 2011. There was a special requiem mass for him and for other religious, who pioneered the mission in Sri Lanka.

A special Congregational Pilgrimage to Madu Shrine in April 2016 together with the parents of our religious. It provided one of the most uplifted spiritual experiences for all of us to be with all our parents and immediate family members, praying, adoring and celebrating the Eucharist.

A special thanksgiving Mass celebrated along with the celebration of the solemn feast of the Most Precious Body and Blood of Our Lord on Sunday 5th June at St. Philip Neri's Church by His Lordship Rev. Winston Fernando SSS, the Bishop of the Diocese of Badulla. Our Superior General Very Rev. Fr. Eugênio Barbosa Martins SSS was also present with us.

Fr Kevin Gallagher, only living member of the pioneer community, was also present. Here are some extracts of the message he penned down by for our 60th year celebration. "It is indeed a privilege, having been asked by Dilan, to send a message to you on this wonderful occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the SSS foundation in Sri Lanka. Our ship, the Iberia, moored in the Colombo harbor before dawn on the 20th May, 1956, the feast of Pentecost. We had no idea of what lay ahead, but we were filled with excitement and enthusiasm. We were very conscious of the fact that we were making the 100th Foundation in the 100th year of the Congregation established by Peter Julian Eymard in 1856. We were aware that this was the Congregation's first community in the Asian region.

We were very proud of the loving bond we quickly forged with the people, the Diocesan Priests, and the Religious Orders of women and men. St. Philip Neri's Church and monastery became a haven for workers, travelers, and souls seeking solace.

But this celebration is not just about the past, but very much about the present, the "now", the flourishing Province of "Christ the Bread of Life". All of you who make up the SSS family in Sri Lanka are to be congratulated on this momentous occasion for your adventurous spirit of spreading our apostolate throughout Sri Lanka. Fr. Eymard was well ahead of his time when he began the Congregation. If he were alive now, in our era, I believe he would be ahead of our time. Along with Aquinas, he would remind us that the Eucharist is nothing, if it is not a sign. May Peter Julian continue to inspire you in the years ahead.

Personally, I will forever consider Sri Lanka, the land that nurtured me in my youth, my adopted homeland, and her people my people. I would not be who I am today but for my sojourn in that beautiful land, and for the love and acceptance I received from her lovely people."

Last on behalf of the Province, we wish to record our sincere gratitude to his Eminence, late Servant of God Rev. Thomas Cardinal Cooray OMI for inviting the Blessed Sacrament Fathers to Sri Lanka and to all other past and present Archbishops and Bishops of various dioceses for their valuable guidance, support and encouragement rendered to us during past 60 years.

We too appreciate the invaluable support and service rendered by the diocesan clergy, other religious congregations and lay faithful with a sense of fraternity, enhancing and encouraging our Eucharistic Mission. The stability and the success of our life and mission do not result from mere human efforts. Our efforts are in vain, if the Lord has not commissioned us with his Grace. We invoke God's choicest blessings and the intercessions of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and St. Peter Julian Eymard. *Adveniat Regnum Tuum Eucharisticum.*

FR. DILAN FERNANDO, SSS
PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

