

Friends & Disciples

Official Bulletin of the Community of the Missionaries of Jesus-USA
Year 2008

Missionaries of Jesus



First Easter Vigil in the New Mission of the Missionaries of Jesus in
El Petén, Guatemala

INSIDE

Messages From Here and There

Weaving Stories in Liturgy (El Petén, Guatemala)

Family Day 2007 Photos

Indigenous Sunday Celebration (Digos, Philippines)

San Miguel Mission Parish (Marahan, Philippines)

Dance for Mission 2008 (Los Angeles, USA)

Estate Planning Can Benefit you and the Missionaries of Jesus

[Ad usum privatum]

Messages from here and there



Warm greetings from Baguio! I am presently working as superintendent of the Diocese of Baguio. The focus of the diocesan schools is threefold: integral evangelization, transformative education and reclaiming the indigenous wisdom.

While facilities and resources are not adequate to respond to the needs of the students, the administration and the teachers are doing their best to educate them to become the positive agents of the nation. It is a hard battle given the deteriorating state of education in our country. However the commitment of the teachers is laudable. While some leave for better income, most remain to make teaching not simply a job but a passion to make a difference in our country. Their contribution maybe small but rather significant – believing that our nation has a future with the youth formed and transformed by integral and liberating faith and grounded by the wisdom of the ancestors.

Fr. Percy Bacani, MJ, was a missionary in Cameroun, Africa. He was Provincial Superior and President of MST in the Philippines. He is presently the Superintendent of Diocesan Schools of Baguio-Benguet in the Philippines. He is the Vicar Superior of the Missionaries of Jesus.

The Chinese ideogram for 'forgetfulness' is a composite of two characters -- 'heart' and 'death'. To forget is to have a dead heart, and none of us ever want that, do we?

As we celebrate the anniversary of the Missionaries of Jesus, we remember the man from Nazareth, whose living heart remembers us all the time and, in so doing, keeps our hearts alive, too.

May we keep on trying to do as he did -- proclaiming the good news that God is always giving us another chance; being one with the poor in the assurance of God's justice; and praying always to the God who is with us all the time.

To celebrate is to remember ... this is proof that we are all alive in God.



Bro. Ramon Coronel, MJ was a missionary in Taiwan, studied in Louvain, Belgium, was Vice President of SLU and a professor of Systematic Theology in various schools in the Philippines. He is a Council Member of the Missionaries of Jesus.



“Wind Beneath My Wings” is a lovely song of someone paying tribute to a friend. I cannot but think of the families of each and every member of the Missionaries of Jesus as I recall this song. “Did you ever know that you’re my hero?” This line from that same song, says exactly what our families are to us MJs: they are our heroes. When the struggle was on to make our MJ dream come true ... they stood by us, they believed in us ... they kept our spirits up!

Six years later, after 2002 when it all began, we continue to be in flight with the wind, strong and constant as ever, beneath our wings! Our families, relatives, friends, and partners are still there breathing out that wind that keeps us on course, on our missionary course, that is! THE JOURNEY GOES ON ... thanks to you!

Yes ... THE JOURNEY GOES ON ...! This is our guiding thought as we celebrate the Family Day this year of the Lord, 2008. As we look back, our hearts are filled with gratitude to say: “What a journey it has been!” However, our hearts are full of longing and excitement as we continue to say: “And what a journey it still is!” All because in this journey, we have with us our families, our friends, our partners ... holding us up with their prayers and encouraging us with caring support. Thank You ... Maraming Salamat ... Gracias ... at higat sa lahat: MABUHAY!

Fr. Manny Gacad, MJ was a missionary in Nigeria. He was a formator in the seminaries in the Philippines and studied Liturgy. He is the Superior of the Missionaries of Jesus in the United States of America.

Assalamu alaicum!

I'm Efren 'Peng' Reyes, MJ working as dialoguer here in the Islamic Capital of the Philippines, Marawi. The Christians are a minority here, around 4%. In the parish where I'm working, it is more than 10%. Moreover, I am also involved in Mindanao Sulu Pastoral Conference-Youth Secretariat as Youth Director since May 2007. More and more, my world revolves around the youth of Mindanao in general and Marawi in particular. They are our Hope and our Present (not only our future) since 53% of the Philippine population comprises of Youth!



Fr. Efren “Peng” Reyes, MJ was a missionary in Congo (Africa). He was Assistant Novice Master in Taytay, Philippines and is presently involved with the Dialogue of Life in Mindanao.



Greetings of peace from MJ Mindanao!

We are one with all of you in this momentous and significant gathering of families and friends of MJ! While the country is in another tumultuous period, we remain steadfast believing that God is disclosing his power and reign as more and more people struggle to uphold the truth and to seek for social justice.

We know you are with us as you are people of the truth. Let us unite our hearts and minds, pray fervently and act conscientiously as friends and disciples of Jesus called ever to be living witnesses of truth, justice and peace. Mabuhay ang pamilyang MJ!

Fr. Stanley Young, MJ was a missionary in Congo (Africa) and was the Rector of the Seminary in New Manila, Philippines. He is the first Pastor of San Miguel Mission Parish in Marahan, Archdiocese of Davao, Philippines.

As we celebrate with you the Sixth Anniversary of the Foundation of the Missionaries of Jesus we look back and remember:

- *the Lord who called us to take leave and form a new community to be called the Missionaries of Jesus;*
- *our families from where we originally had to take leave and learned to journey with other families and persons who welcomed us to be part of their own and treated us as friends; and*
- *the communities of the different mission countries where we were missioning whose members shaped us as we are now by their care, concerned.*



We are especially grateful on this day, to all of you, for your constant support and encouragement which give us the impetus to move in our journey of becoming true witnesses of Him who call us all to become his disciples.

We continue to believe that as we allow ourselves to be inspired by His spirit that we can together build a new humanity rooted in Jesus.

Fr. Melchor Villero, MJ was a missionary in Guatemala and in Mozambique. He was the Rector of the Formation House in Baguio City, Philippines. He is the Pastor of both Precious Blood Church and St Kevin Church in Los Angeles, California, USA.

Weaving Stories in Liturgy

My arms that held the Pascal Candle had gone weary. I was clasping and holding it high, supposedly in great honor of the resurrected Christ. But seven minutes had gone by the religious elder has not finished his prayers, being said aloud. The crowd behind me with the lighted candles followed him with their own prayers also in a loud voice. The flowers arranged in six vases held by elder women had already sagged – unable to tolerate the heat emitted by hundreds of candles burning all around us. Moreover, amidst us was burning intensely the bonfire that lighted the Pascal candle. There was a vessel, made of clay, filled with copal pom (resin from a tree that is used as incense in religious Maya rituals). Sweat flowed profusely from our bodies and soaked our clothes. It was only after twenty minutes from the Pascal Candle ceremony that we could move in procession into the church of El Rosal.



There was no ritual text in Q'eqchi' for the Easter proclamation. I was to read it in Spanish but then I knew that the people would not understand it. However, in that Saturday afternoon, sitting with the elders, they had asked me if they could

do their traditional prayers said at the four cardinal points (Maya worldview conceives the world as being safeguarded by four mystical beings of which center is the Divine Creator) during the Easter Vigil liturgy. I had to consult mentally what I had understood in Liturgical Theology about their suggestion - since "inculturation" of liturgies are not simply about amalgam and toleration of beliefs but stories woven into one. On the one hand is the story of the resurrected Jesus and on the other are the hope and gladness of the Q'eqchi' people as perceived through their history and day to day human struggle, death and sufferings.



The Triduum liturgies had been a patient preparation through dialogue with the elders of the church in El Rosal village. It was for the first time that the people celebrated the Triduum Liturgies. Priests came to visit them three or four times every year to celebrate mass with the people. Ministers of the Word presided prayers with Holy Communion every Sunday.

It is a common celebration, during Holy Week, that the Maya people highlight the suffering and dying Christ through popular religiosity. These ceremonies are very much elaborated through the leadership of the Mayor Domos ("Chinamil"; religious leaders of confraternity of Maya families). The Nazarene procession (Christ

carrying the burden of the cross) before Good Friday draws penitent crowds. Good Friday apparently climaxes this contrite religious expression with the erection of a dismal wooden cross with the Christ nailed on it. In the afternoon, the religious leaders bring down the nailed Christ and lay him on his usually glass-covered casket. Here, the people continue to watch over it in vigil led by the somber image of la Señora de Dolores (Our Lady of Sorrows). People do not usually feel at ease removing these images from the church even in Easter Sunday.



The long somber history of the Maya people, and of Latin America in general, where hope remains shrouded by today's poverty and misery, violence, injustice and oppression, sickness, hunger and all forms of signs of death shares with the heart (sentiment) of La Señora de Dolores.

This is one part of the story that I was aware to be told during the Triduum Liturgies. However, in dialogue with the community elders, I had to tell the story of the living hope that the first disciples had personally and communally experienced after the death of Jesus. These were all told in signs and symbols.

Thus, the patriarch of El Rosal proclaimed, through his prayers, the greatness of God through creation and the resurrection

of Jesus. He prayed for the destructions of all signs of darkness that intends to envelop their lives as persons and communities. His petitions became the Easter Proclamation joined by all the people, each time, praying facing the four cardinal points of the Earth (universe). After the prayers, candles were placed representing the four cardinal points. During the Easter vigil, the Pascal Candle, brightly burning, became the central symbol of the liturgy.

Fr. Joseph Guerrero, MJ
March 24, 2008



Joseph G. Guerrero, MJ had been a missionary in Guatemala prior to his works in northern and southern Philippines. He is now back in Guatemala as a member of the pioneering team of MJ in Petén.

You can write to Fr. Joseph
Email: josephricguerrero@hotmail.com

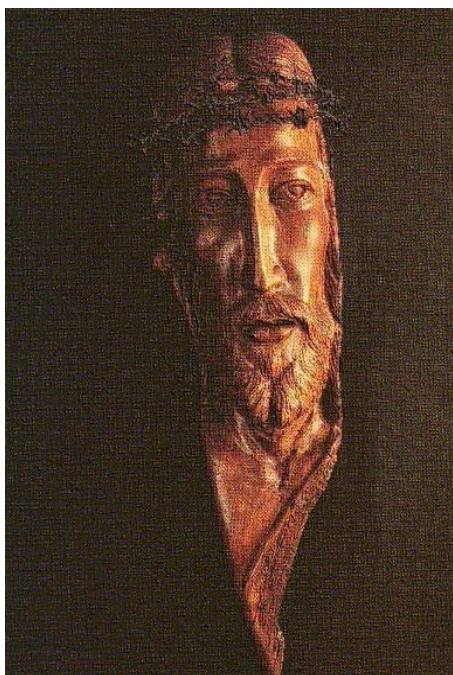


Enkindling the Light in the Midst of Darkness

How can you help?

- 1) Include the intentions and mission of the Missionaries of Jesus in your daily prayers and Eucharistic Celebrations.
- 2) Promote the mission of the Missionaries of Jesus among your family members, friends, co-workers and acquaintances. Multiply this flyer for distribution.
- 3) Pledge a monthly, quarterly or yearly donation for one or more of the following: Seminary Funds, Missionary Projects Funds and MJ Health and Retirement Funds.
- 4) Include the Missionaries of Jesus, Inc. in your living will; last will and testaments; make the Missionaries of Jesus as one of the beneficiaries of your life insurance, annuity, etc.
- 5) Help the Missionaries of Jesus organize regular fund raising campaign and raising other people's consciousness about the Mission and about the Missionaries of Jesus.
- 6) Become one of the Missionaries of Jesus' friends and co-disciples.
- 7) Join the Missionaries of Jesus!

We promise that any monetary donation will be acknowledged with a letter which can be used as a receipt for your income tax refund since the Missionaries of Jesus is registered as 501(c)3 – non-profit organization. (see page 19 for more details)



Prayer of Friends and Co-disciples

Look upon us, Jesus.

Give us the patience to sit down and
marvel at your wonders — alive,
yet hidden, in cultures and beliefs
other than our own.

Grant us the grace to discover you in
the midst of our busy lives.

Instil in us the patience of a
woodcarver in carefully removing
the things that hide your face.

Shape us into more devoted
missionaries eager to make you,
and not ourselves, known.

Mold us so that we become better
and more worthy
friends and disciples.

Photos of Family Day 2007



Frs. Ike, Mel, Mike, Manny, Rey, Ver



Theme of the day



For the MJ-Guatemala Mission



The Dream Catcher



Filipino Folk Dance



Filipino Folk Dance



Dance and...



... More Dance



Games and...



... More Games



Winner and...



... More Winners



Preparing the Table Fellowship



Preparing the Eucharistic Table



Indigenous Sunday Celebration

One of the missionary priorities of the MJ-Digos Team is the inculturation of the Word of God. Last September 30, October 7, and October 14, 2007, we had a series of Indigenous Sunday celebrations. We organized the celebrations according to the theme *“THE WORD OF GOD AND THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES,”* proposed by the Episcopal Commission on Indigenous peoples (ICIP) of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CPCP).

One of the ways the Tagakaulo people interpret and celebrate the Word of God in the indigenous communities is by means of dancing. It is through the indigenous dance that they see, feel and experience the significance of the Word of God in their life.

Coming together as indigenous people to celebrate their day, they became aware of the richness of their culture, as well as their oneness with nature and with “Tumanem” (God the Provider). Celebrating together, they also expressed their thanksgiving to “Tumanem” – the source of their life and their ancestral land. At the same time, they also rely on Tumanem for protection and guidance, especially in times when their ancestral domain risks to

be taken away by some politicians and businessmen in the name of what they call “progress and development”.

Thus, the Tagakaulo people are inviting us to journey with them and also to learn and be able to dance their own indigenous dances.

Fr. Naz Sawey, MJ was a missionary in Nigeria, in Benguet, Philippines and is now working among the Tagakaulo in Digos in the island of Mindanao, Philippines.

Email: nazsawey@yahoo.com



It is through the indigenous dance that they see, feel and experience the significance of the Word of God in their life.



Short history of the Mission Parish

On Jan. 30, 2005, San Miguel Mission Parish was formally established as the thirty second (32nd) parish of the Archdiocese of Davao under the leadership of Most. Rev. Fernando Capalla, D.D., Archbishop of Davao. Three years prior to this event, Fr. Stanley Young, MJ and Fr. Joel Canuel, MJ, began the tedious task of journeying with the communities of the area. With the assistance of the Missionaries of Jesus, the parish is oriented towards dialogue between Visayan immigrants and indigenous peoples specifically the Matigsalug-Manobo tribes in the struggle to defend and protect the ancestral domain, in promoting self-identity, faith and culture and in search for truth, prosperity, justice, peace and harmony.

At present, Fr. Stanley Young, MJ and Fr. Bernard Maes, MJ continue the journey beginning with the Visayan immigrants who are the predominant members of all seventeen small Christian communities or GKK (Gagmay Kristohanong Katilingban) comprising the parish. Along the journey, the parish took the option to advocate healthy lifestyle and ecological farming as a concrete alternative to promote life and defend the environment. This option is inclusive since the parish does networking with other church groups and especially with indigenous peoples in realizing this very important endeavour.

Description of the context

Our parish is set within the mountain slopes found Northwest of Davao City. It is some 925 meters above sea level. A cool place and often engulfed by fog and soaked in torrential rains, the whole area is surrounded by timberland and vegetables farms. Livelihood is predominantly dependent on vegetable farming with livestock such as pig, chicken and goat raising as supplementary source of living. Majority of the resident farmers earn two thousand pesos (2,000) average monthly trying to eke out the daily needs of a family of 4 to 6 children.



It is hoped that the piggery would provide a jump-start financial assistance to the parish to become self-sustaining to carry on financing its mission about catechetical work and formation.

Within this agricultural context, the mission parish is committed to promoting agriculture through ecological farming. One constitutive aspect of this commitment is to cater to the formation of the youth and children by providing Gospel values catechetical instructions in nine (9) non-sectarian schools. More particular focus in this catechetical teaching is given to developing and nurturing stewardship of creation which is inalienably embedded in our nature as being created in the image and likeness of God. This is a gift, a task and a responsibility each generation has to own and live by.



The mission parish is at the moment encountering financial constraints to assist its catechists financially to realize this noble and valuable concern for the youth and children of the whole area. The mission parish catechists, who have to work for their family, sacrifice extra time to teach in the said schools three times a week with the expenses coming from their own meager earnings. Unfortunately, the mission parish could hardly assist them financially being new and only having limited resources. Thus, we started the piggery. It is hoped that this project would provide a jump-start financial assistance to the parish to become self-sustaining to carry on financing its mission about catechetical work and formation.

San Miguel Mission Parish Vision Mission

Blessed by the enormous wealth of creation;

Blessed by the gift of life and the gift of faith in God;

Blessed by the population of people originating from various tribes;

How we wish that we all remain blessed this way forever!

However, we witness and experience today:

- Abject poverty
- Destruction of the environment
- Threat to life
- Greed on power and money
- Dwindling faith in God
- Lack of understanding and unity

- Lack of respect and appreciation of Filipino values and traditions and most of all,
- The aggravating agony and suffering of our indigenous brothers and sisters, Matigsalug-Manobo who are the pioneers and former stewards of our land;

We, the followers of Jesus Christ in San Miguel Parish, Marahan, Marilog District, Davao City envision to sustain and form ourselves into a community where concern and care for each other reign between Lumads and Visayans together with the environment.

We are resolved to translate this into reality together with our Matigsalug-Manobo brothers and sisters through:

- Caring and nurturing of the environment
- Being generous and by humble service of each other,
- Strengthening of faith in God, the Creator and Giver of life and creation.
- Consistent and constant search for just and upright means to achieve unity and understanding,
- Owning and promotion of Filipino values and traditions,
- Faithful and steadfast conviction to defend and promote truth, justice and peace.

O God, walk with us and help us to fulfil all these for without you we can do nothing.



Fr. Stanley Young, MJ was a missionary in Congo (Africa) and is now the pastor of San Miguel Mission Parish in Marahan in the island of Mindanao, Philippines.

You can write to him: symj1764@yahoo.com.ph

“God has created me, to do him some definite service; he has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for nothing.”

– Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890)

Dance for Mission 2008

The Missionaries of Jesus has set up the Mission Promotions Office here in the USA. The objective of the office is to fill up the **three buckets** of the Missionaries of Jesus: (**Initial Formation** or the seminarians; **Missions** – existing and new ones; and **Membership** – on going formation and retirement/health fund).

Our three missionaries in Guatemala need at least \$50,000 as they begin the new mission with the indigenous people of the Diocese of Peten. Our missionaries in Papua New Guinea are also involved with the indigenous people in the Diocese of Lae. The MJ's in Davao, Philippines have embarked in the literacy program among the indigenous people in their parishes.

For each of the 12 seminarians we have, we are spending \$1500 a year for the tuition fee and other expenses related to their studies (books and school supplies, transportation to schools, etc.). Each seminarian is required to contribute for their board and lodging. Some are able to give the full amount but most of them can only give a fraction of that amount.

On August 23, 2008, Saturday at 6:30 P.M., the “Dance for Missions 2008” will be held at the Almansor Court 700 S. Almansor St. Alhambra, CA 91801. *Tickets for the dinner dance will be sold at \$40. All the proceeds* for this event will be used to fill up the **three buckets** of Missionaries of Jesus. For this purpose, **we invite you to be a sponsor for the Souvenir Program booklet** that we will be publishing for the said event: (whole page: \$100; half page: \$60 and quarter page: \$35).

Please have your page ready for printing on or before June 30, 2008. If anyone wishes to **contribute beyond the set deadline** any other amount **or would not like** to have their **names be printed**, you are also welcome to do so.

Not everyone can go to the mission places but anyone can contribute for the mission. Please take advantage of this occasion to become partners in God's mission. Be the friends and co-disciples of the Missionaries of Jesus!

Fr. Melanio R. Viuya, Jr, MJ

Estate Planning Can Benefit You and MJ

Through creative gift planning you can secure your own financial future, as well as the people and organizations you care about. Planned or deferred gifts may include the following:

- 1) **Bequests:** Write your will! State laws determines how your properties will be distributed if you die without a will. You need to name specifically in your will your favorite charities – like the *Missionaries of Jesus*.
- 2) **In writing your will** (with appropriate advice), make sure that you include a paragraph that describes each bequest (a specific gift) to a family member, friend or to the *Missionaries of Jesus*. You may choose to set up a **living trust** to avoid probate. As in a will, you can list specific gifts from your estate to *Missionaries of Jesus*.
- 3) **Your estate consists of** all the assets you own at the time of your death: cash, securities, jewelries, art, your home or other real estate. Any of these assets would be an acceptable gift to make to the *Missionaries of Jesus*.
- 4) *Missionaries of Jesus* can be named as one of the beneficiaries in your life insurance policy.
- 5) You can establish a **charitable gift annuity** with *Missionaries of Jesus* as a beneficiary which will provide you with an immediate charitable deduction and lifetime income for you (and another person if you wish). At your death, *Missionaries of Jesus* benefits from your gift.
- 6) *Missionaries of Jesus* can be named as a **beneficiary of your IRA or other retirement account**. Please consult with your tax advisor for ways you can receive favourable tax benefits in this regard.

For more information, please contact
Fr. Melanio Viuya, MJ
435 S Occidental Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90057
missionaries_of_jesus_usa@yahoo.com
tel: 213 389 8439 ext 19; 213 327 8793





435 S Occidental Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90057
231 389 8439 ext. 19

Mission Statement

We, the MJ-USA, friends and disciples of Jesus, heard and responded to God's call to mission.

As a community, we partner with institutions and all peoples of goodwill in their passion to address issues brought about by exclusion and dislocation, fear and resignation, isolation and marginalization.

The multi-cultural context of the USA colors our particular approaches to the challenges confronted by the communities entrusted to us.

Together with them in the dialogue of life and culture,

we build inclusive communities of faith that celebrate and witness to the values of the Reign of God.

May the Spirit of God burn within our hearts!

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