

EVANGELIZARE

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After flood, there's war



GRACE IN THE MIDST OF WAR – Sr. Luchie Singco, OND registers both Muslim and Christian beneficiaries of the joint relief operation conducted by the St. Mary's Academy and Sto. Niño Parish, Midsayap, Cotabato last August 16, 2008 at Panganiban Elementary School in Brgy. Bual Norte of Midsayap town. There were more than one hundred families from Brgy. Palongogin who were affected by the flood and armed conflict that were given relief goods. (*Midsayap Parish Office*)

The floodwaters in most parts of the Archdiocese of Cotabato have barely subsided since July this year. Up to now many families are still in the evacuation centers, yet another major problem is looming the archdiocese – armed conflict. Reports from the Social Action Ministries of the different parishes show that until today thousands of families are still struggling from the damages brought about by the natural disaster yet another disaster threatens not only properties but also and most importantly lives of people.

Santo Niño Parish in Midsayap, North Cotabato, reported that since July farmers in the low-lying areas have suffered so much in the flood. Most of them lost their livestock and their newly planted rice fields as everything went underwater. Rev. Fr. Hilario Asilo, OMI, parish priest of Midsayap said, it was already disheartening to see people suffer their losses in the flood and now armed conflict is added to their [*WAR...p.4*]

KNOW OUR MISSIONARIES

THE RELIGIOUS OF THE VIRGIN MARY

Venerable Ignacia del Espiritu Santo was 21 years old when God called her to be a special “handmaid of the Lord” in the year 1684. She was a Chinese mestiza who grew up in Binondo, Manila and was baptized on March 4, 1663. Her devout practice of the faith paved the way to her decision to follow the “finger of God” by remaining “in the service of the Divine Majesty.” This meant her decision to choose to live a religious life rather than entering married state of life.

The community founded by Mother Ignacia was earlier known as the *Beatas dela Campania de Jesus*. Through them, Spanish and indigenous children learned the basic skills for literacy and household management and women pursuing religious perfection found a home.

On September 10, 1784, Mother Ignacia left the religious family she founded, now known as the Religious of the Virgin Mary. At present there are 736 professed RVM sisters who are running 69 schools, 9 dormitories, 8 retreat houses, 23 Social Ministry Centers and they are present in 5 Seminaries nationwide. They also have overseas missions in the US and Canada, Indonesia, Ghana, West Africa, Italy, Taiwan, Papua New Guinea and Pakistan.

The RVM sisters first came to Cotabato upon the invitation of the Jesuit Fathers when they returned to Cotabato in 1865 establishing a Catholic Mission in Tamontaka, Cotabato. The Jesuit Fathers put up a school and home for boys and realized the need to have the help of women religious to [*RVM...p.3*]

APA VI on its 7th Phase

After the Archdiocesan Vision-Mission Statement was officially declared in May 2008, APA VI Process has now reached its Implementation Phase. This phase, according to the APA VI Coordinator, Rev. Fr. Mario Combong, DCC, is a challenging phase because “we are now appropriating in every parish what has transpired during the Archdiocesan Pastoral Assembly VI.”

It must be recalled that the Archdiocesan Pastoral Assembly VI, held at the OND Convention Center, Tamontaka, Shariff Kabunsuan, last May 27 – 28, 2008, also selected Diocesan Priorities for the year 2008 – 2009 which included Faith Formation for all the faithful and Leaders’ Formation. These diocesan priorities should be set as the primary priorities in all parishes including the different Lay [*APA...p.4*]

Family: common ground for Christians and Muslims

VATICAN, Sept. 19, 2008-- The Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue said in its traditional message to Muslims as they end the Season of Ramadan that family is indeed a common ground for Muslims and Christians. The council affirmed that both Christians and Muslims have a high regard to the family giving them "many occasions to work together in this field, from the local to the international level."

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the said council stressed that since both Christians and Muslims value family they should unite in defending it. Both Muslims and

Christians must "work together to safeguard the dignity of the family, today and in the future."

The council further emphasized that "Muslims and Christians must never hesitate, not only to come to the aid of families in difficulty, but also to collaborate with all those who support the stability of the family as an institution and the exercise of parental responsibility, in particular in the field of education." The council also stressed that the family must indeed be fostered and protected because the family is truly the first school wherein one can learn respect for others.

Rosary Heights Parish at 46

The Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish in Cotabato City celebrated its 46th Patronal Fiesta on October 12, 2008. The highlight of the celebration was the Fiesta Mass presided by Most Rev. Jose Colin M. Bagaforo, DD, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Cotabato. During the Eucharistic celebration, Bishop Bagaforo also inducted the newly elected Parish Pastoral Council Officers together with all BEC and Zone leaders.

After the mass, each parish cluster welcomed all who came to attend the fiesta celebration with free breakfast and lunch at their respective booths in front of the church. The happy and blessed occasion ended with a program where all the clusters made their respective presentations. (*Sr. FM, OND*)

Vicariate of Midsayap held Catechists' Meeting

On October 1 – 2, 2008, Midsayap Vicariate held a Catechist Coordinators' Meeting at San Blas Parish, Pigcawayan, Cotabato. Twenty-two catechists attended the said meeting including two observers from the Archdiocesan Catechetical Ministry. The Catechetical Coordinator of the Vicariate Ms. Melanie Magpili and ACM staff Sr. Marivic Ratilla, OND and Macris Mariano served as facilitators. Among their agenda were planning for the whole year, updates on the National Catechetical Directory of the Philippines and parish updates. (*AMC*)

Vocation Month Launched

Vocation Month in the Archdiocese of Cotabato is officially celebrated every September. The launching of the month-long celebration this year was held at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Cotabato City last September 7, 2008 with representatives from all religious congregations attending. The event started with a Eucharistic Celebration presided by Archbishop Orlando B. Quevedo, OMI, DD. A number of priests also attended as concelebrants including the Archdiocesan Vocation Director, Fr. Edwin de Gracia, DCC, and the Oblate of Mary Immaculate fathers who are assigned in formation

work, namely Fr. Zaldy Orola, OMI, Fr. John Palomar, OMI and Fr. Manny Mina, OMI.

The judging of the photo exhibits showcasing the life and ministries of the different religious congregations followed right after the mass. The Oblates of Notre Dame (OND) won the best booth while the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) was declared the most decorated booth. A simple table fellowship at the NDSAC Gym culminated the gathering. (*Sr. N. Sonsona, OND*)

NDTC Culminates Vocation Month

Members of the different religious congregations were invited to share a glimpse of their communities and the ways of life at the culmination of Vocation Month at the Notre Dame of Tacurong College last September 30, 2008. A Eucharistic Celebration presided by Fr. Edwin de Gracia, DCC, the Archdiocesan Vocation director and rector of the Notre Dame Archdiocesan Seminary started that special day. An open forum where interesting questions were posed to the religious and the clergy was conducted right after the mass. There was also a friendly basketball match between the diocesan seminarians and the faculty of the NDTC in the afternoon that concluded the program. Among the congregations who attended were the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Diocesan Clergy of Cotabato, Siervas Nuestra Señora de la Paz, Oblates of Notre Dame, Order of Preachers and the Missionaries of the Child Jesus. (*Sem. Rex Carnaso*)

KNOW YOUR SHEPHERD

REV. JOEVANY CENTINA was born on October 18, 1978 in Lebak, Sultan Kudarat. "Vany", as he is fondly called, is seventh of the eight children of Mr. Jose Centina and Mrs. Mila Raymundo-Centina. He finished primary education at Salaman Central Elementary School in 1990 and secondary education in 1996 at Notre Dame of Salaman College.

At the age of ten Jovany already felt the desire to be a priest especially when he became a Knight of the Altar at his home parish. According to him, his family, especially his mother, was very instrumental in rearing his priestly calling. After finishing high school he entered the Notre Dame Archdiocesan Seminary in 1997. When asked about the challenges while in formation

he confided, poverty was a struggle but he is grateful for the many people who supported him.



After his college seminary formation Jovany taught at Notre Dame of Tacurong College for two years. In 2003 he entered the Regional Major Seminary in Davao City where he successfully graduated in March 2008 and was ordained deacon on April 28 of the same year.

Rev. Jovany's ordination to the priesthood on November 18, 2008 is for him "a grace from God who is ever faithful, loving and true." He added, "I once wanted to be a soldier, now I have become a soldier of Christ."

The Sacrament of Confirmation

Confirmation is a sacrament given to the baptized in order to make them strong and perfect Christians and true disciples of Jesus Christ. The Sacrament of Confirmation completes the grace of baptism and bestows upon the receiver the full membership of the Church and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and thus obliges the person to spread and defend the faith by word and deed (CCC 1285).

Historical and Biblical Background

The Sacrament of Confirmation was originally part of the baptismal rite of the Church. However, due to the growth of the parishes and dioceses and the increasing number of baptisms, the bishop, who is the primary minister of Baptism, could no longer make it possible to confirm all. Thus, the anointing and the laying on of hands were made into a separate sacrament called Confirmation (CFC 1627).

Even though the Sacrament of Confirmation historically evolved in the Church, it still finds its origin in Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles (14:15-26). After his Resurrection, he breathed upon them and they received the Holy Spirit (John 20:22) which was completed on the day of

Pentecost where the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). We then find the apostles bestowing the Holy Spirit upon others through the laying on of hands (CCC 1287).

When the Apostle Paul met some Christian believers in Ephesus, he baptized them in Christ, laid hands upon them and "the Holy Spirit came on them" (Acts 19:2-6). In the same way, when Peter and John went to Samaria, they baptized and laid their hands upon the disciples there who also received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

Matter and Form

The Church recognizes the imposition of hands as the origin of the Sacrament of Confirmation (CCC 1288). The imposition signifies the descent of the Holy Spirit while the anointing of chrism with the formula "*Be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit*" represents the character that makes us united closely with Christ and gives us the grace to bring Christ to others (RC 9).

Effects of Confirmation

A person who receives the Sacrament of Confirmation receives the outpouring of the Holy Spirit like that of the apostles on the day of Pentecost. The

candidate is strengthened and confirmed of the grace he received in baptism, where, he or she is united more firmly with Christ; more perfectly united with the Church; and more strengthened by the gifts of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action (CCC 1302-1303).

The Recipient

All who have been baptized are eligible for Confirmation because it completes and perfects one's baptism. The Church suggests that the sacrament be received at the age of discretion (CFC 1634) i.e. a stage on the person's life when he or she begins to take an active part in the life of the Church.

The Minister

The Bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation. As successor of the Apostles and having received the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders, it is fitting that he administers the sacrament himself. However, he may delegate the administration to the priests if need arises keeping in mind the desire of the Church that her people be perfected with the gifts of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1313-1314).

(*Sem. Antonieto Tejero*)

[RVM...from p.1] help them in the supervision of women. It was in 1874 that the RVM Sisters came to Tamontaka in response to the Jesuit Fathers' invitation to manage the girls in the mission.

In 1902, the RVM Sisters left Tamontaka and opened St. Anthony's Elementary School, the first formal school in Cotabato. The sisters also maintained a residence for girls who attended the public school. It was only in 1948 that the RVM opened the Notre Dame of Cotabato (High School) for Girls at the actual site where it is today.

The school has rapidly grown and has now established an elementary department and a college department as well. Under the management of the RVM Sisters the school, with its modified name ND-RVM College of Cotabato (ND-RVM-CC), has acquired its status as a PAASCU-Accredited school in its basic Education. For the RVM Sisters it is a noble task to lead young people to a holy life through education. (*Sr. Estelita Padernal, RVM*)

The Catholic Church Opposes Reproductive Health Bill

CBCP, September 14, 2008 --- The issue on House Bill 5043 or the Reproductive Health Bill has brought many questions pushing as many Filipinos to either defend the bill that is pending in Congress or to quash the proposal. The CBCP says there are a lot of questions that need to be answered especially by the proponents of this bill whose key author is Albay Representative Edcel Lagman. The proposed bill aims at giving funds to sex education for students and funds for artificial contraceptives to avoid unwanted and untimely pregnancies so as to limit the growing Philippine population and alleviate poverty in the country.

In a statement released by Archbishop Paciano Aniceto of the Archdiocese of San Fernando, Pampanga, chair of the CBCP Episcopal Commission on Family and Life (ECFL), he said that the Church is opposing the bill because a lot of its proposed tenets are against the

Church's moral teachings. The Catholic Church stresses that artificial contraceptives are anti-life and immoral. The call of the Catholic Church is for married couples to practice only natural family planning methods.

Archbishop Aniceto also called on the Catholic faithful "to stand in solidarity and courage and reject false prophets who are trying to impose a new morality upon the nation, which offends all notions of right and wrong, good and bad, and rejects the very truth we have received from God."

The Archbishop also called on the members of the Congress to check on any interested parties who are making use of the proposed bill to enter into a permanent sales contract with manufacturers of contraceptives. He said that the Congress should check on lawmakers with vested interests in getting commissions from contraceptive manufacturers. (*CBCP News*)

[WAR...from p.1] suffering. "Our people already suffered so much trauma and confusion. Now they are desperately mustering hope safeguarding their salvaged properties and their lives." The Archdiocesan Social Action Ministry also noted "it is [indeed] demoralizing to see how the same people who struggled from the flood now fall victims to the raging war in most parts of the archdiocese."

"When one visits the evacuation centers, he/she will immediately see so much anguish in the faces of the victims," an archdiocesan Social Action volunteer said. Misery, pain and hopelessness envelope the victims as they wrestle to survive. Once one sees the plight of the people he/she can readily say, without a doubt there's so much to be done to respond to the needs of the people. This is especially true up to today because skirmishes and bombardments between the military and the rebel groups still make people seek refuge in the evacuation centers. Most of them obviously have doubts whether there's still hope that awaits them.

In an effort to keep the people's hope alive, the archdiocese took action by calling on all the faithful of the archdiocese to help by donating money or goods for the immediate needs of the victims. The Archdiocesan Social Action Ministry

and the parish based Social Action Apostolates spearheaded the said endeavor. The response of the faithful undeniably radiated God's providence as donations overwhelmed both the archdiocesan as well as the parish based Social Action centers.

The Midsayap Parish for example appealed to the different Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) who generously helped. Among these NGO's were the Aboitiz Foundation, NASSA-CARITAS, Assisi Development Foundation as well as the local government of Midsayap and the provincial government of Cotabato. Volunteers also swarmed Santo Niño parish, showing their desire to help especially in the preparation and distribution of goods to the different evacuation centers not only in Midsayap but also in the neighboring towns of Aleosan and Pikit. They also organized feeding programs for children in the evacuation centers. Medical Missions, in partnership with the Notre Dame of Midsayap College Nursing Students and the Barangay Health Workers, were also conducted especially in the barangays of Patindeguen, Namangkilan, Upper Labas and Sitio Tawi-tawi.

There may be a lot of dispiriting disasters that come our way in the archdiocese but the overwhelming goodness of people continues to radiate God's abiding presence and compassion. (Sr. Luchie, OND)

[APA...from p.1] Organizations, Movements and Associations (LOMAs) as these two priorities are hoped to lead all the faithful to active Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC) participation.

The next targets of APA VI are the parishes of the Archdiocese. This phase will be the ratification of each Parish Identity Statement and the formulation of their respective Parish Priorities that must be in consonance with the Diocesan Priorities. Action Plans will then be created to properly implement the Vision-Mission of the Archdiocese in the parish level.

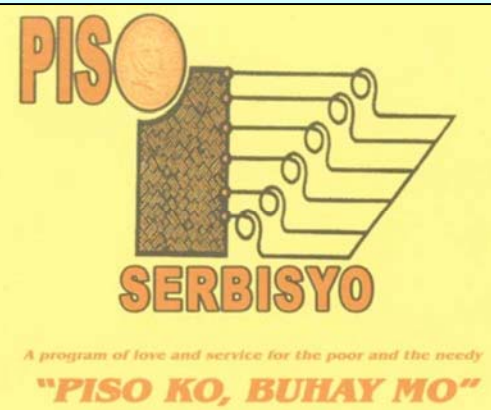
At present Pilot Parishes were already selected and their BECs serve as vehicles for APA VI implementation. According to the APA VI Team, "choosing 'Pilot Parishes' is a necessary step to reach the BECs." Organizing the BECs should be a real priority as they will be the primordial agents in concretizing the Diocesan Priorities. To make the BEC Organizing effective, two initial seminars were already conducted by the Bukal ng Tipan Team in October 2008. The purpose of these seminars was to equip the Organizing Teams and the Formation Teams in all BECs of the Pilot Parishes of Pigcawayan, Broce, Isulan and Esperanza with skills to effectively organize and sustain the BECs. (APA VI Team)



SOCIAL ACTION...IN ACTION – Not known to many even those who live in the elevated town of Sen. Ninoy Aquino, Sultan Kudarat were affected by the flood. Hundreds of residents rushed to seek refuge in the evacuation centers at the height of Typhoon 'Frank'.

Photos on the left capture the efforts of the Social Action Justice and Peace Ministry of the Archdiocese of Cotabato bringing assorted relief goods from the NASSA-CARITAS to the flood victims especially the Manobo tribes in Brgy. Medtungok and Brgy. Blangas in Senator Ninoy Aquino, Sultan Kudarat last September 17 – 19, 2008.

Fr. Arman Dice, DCC, Coordinator of SA-JPM expressed his gratitude to the volunteers and all who contributed financially and materially. "May you be blessed more and more," he said. (SA-JPM)



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