

# *The Inter-Provincial Novitiate Community*

*Phuket, Thailand*

THE 5TH ASIAN INTER-PROVINCIAL NOVITIATE YEAR (2017-2018)

SEPTEMBER 2017

*Remembering  
the First Community  
at the Stimite.*

Inside: The First Community , The Apostolic Missionaries, Sunday  
Activities in the novitiate and more



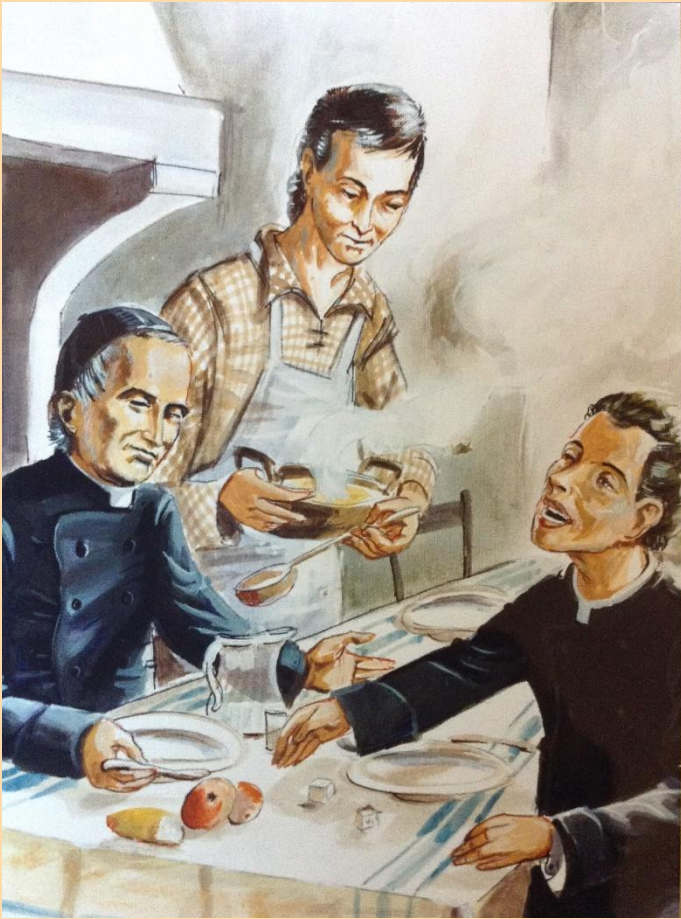


**NOV. CORNELIS, INDO:** "No pain there is no gain". Perhaps this is a good expression to describe how Fr. Gaspar and his companions struggled to establish a new congregation and started a new life to live together as a community. At the beginning of establishment, of course there were so many difficulties and challenges faced by the founder and His companions but because their strong belief in the power of God and strong willingness, which guided them to establish the congregation. By their enthusiasm, they kept going despite the problems of the unsafe atmosphere of the country because of the war at that time. The main purpose of establishing the congregation is to help those people who were suffering, the marginalized and persecuted especially the young. Despite the limitations and shortcomings they have had, they were always trying to give the best service they could do. This story should be a lesson or reflection for us as followers of St. Gaspar and members of this congregation. Although our problems and difficulties are various but we must learn how to solve them. To achieve everything that we want

is not easy. Our congregation can continue on and develop until this time not without struggle and suffering. Therefore, we should be grateful to those who dedicate their lives to developing this congregation such as our priests and missionaries. We as the successors, hopes and future of the congregation, in our hands, there is the responsibility to continue the work and ideals of the congregation. We must realize that without willingness and hard work we will get nothing. Always remember that all great things always start from the small ones. If we want to run, we must learn how to work first. If we want to swim, we must learn how to float first. Don't give up when faced with adversity, think of it as a challenge to try even harder. Don't ask what the Congregation can give to us but what we will give to the congregation. Let us join our hands and walk together to build up our congregation for now and for the future.

**NOV. JOMON, IND:** The first community of Stimate was opened on November 4, 1816. In the beginning there were only four members in the community. They lived together in the community. They shared everything in common. They did not do anything for themselves but they did everything for the glory of God. They were less in numbers but they could do many things as a community. As the followers of Saint Gaspar Bertonni let us try our best to make our community as the first community of Stimate. Let us not seek for the personal glories instead let us try to do everything for the glory of God.

**NOV. CRIZALDY, PHIL:** The first is always been the hardest. This saying was an undeniable reality for the courageous pioneers of the Stigmatines. They had a tough and humble beginning, such as, the time of the French Revolution and the small number of their members. However, with zealous hearts and fraternal love, these circumstances did not stop them in performing their ministry and in building their community. This serves as an inspiration for us as future Stigmatines. We must always remember that a community is not only built by metals and bricks but also bounded by joyful



spirit and brotherly love; not only resided by superiors and confreres but also occupied by harmony and prosperity. Thus, building a community out of love is also building an earthly kingdom of God.

**NOV. SONET, IND:** The first community of Stimata was initiated by St. Gaspar. St. Gaspar was on a divine call of God. St. Gaspar took eight years to discern the divine call. Therefore it is not a human intention but God's. At the proper time, on November 4, 1816, St. Gaspar begins his community at the chapel of the Stigmata of St. Francis in Verona. Fr. Gaspar, Fr. Giovanni Maria Marani, Bro. Paulo Zanolì were the first members of the community and later on joined by Fr. Michelangelo Gramego. They were called as the 'four cats'. Even though they were least in number they lived a good model of religious life. They lead their life according to the Word of God and kept obedience, poverty and chastity towards God with great humbleness. They never complained or became discouraged in their nothingness but trusted in the providence of God. They used whatever they had for the glory of the God. At the beginning their ministry was to teach morals and Christian teachings to children who were abandoned and affected by

war. They used their chapel and the rooms for that purpose. St. Gaspar had no worries about the future of congregation because he had great faith that the congregation belongs to God and God himself is the founder. Therefore He will lead His congregation according to His will. Then St. Gaspar teaches his disciples about the Holy abandonment and trust in the providence of God. St. Gaspar entrusted his congregation to the Holy Spouses and those who like to join this congregation have to study from them and totally entrust themselves to their care and protection.

**NOV. TOM, IND:** God calls everyone to serve him. "So whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God." (1Cor.10:31) Love for God and the search for His glory is the meaning of community life. The main goal of religious life is to foster and support community life. Thus every work of religious must be done through love. The first Stigmatine community members were Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, Fr. Giovanni Maria Marani and Bro. Zanolì. Later Fr. Michelangelo Gramego also joined with them. In the beginning they faced a lot of difficulties. They had deep faith in God. They lived poor and self-sacrificing style of life. Their rooms were simple. They used their own house as a public school, where a good number of young people are educated free of charge. They won't accept gifts of any kind from anybody. They began their community in the most absolute poverty. They were lacking even the necessities. But they were happy to continue their mission which God entrusted to them. The first community of Stimata managed to use the time properly. Time is a precious gift given by God. Every Christian and especially every consecrated person must divide the hours of the day in such a way that there is no time which is not well used. What you do with your life is your gift to God. We should follow Jesus in whatever we do, in our service to others and respecting others. From his life we can understand that there is no holiness without temptations and suffering. Great temptations are the way to reach great holiness. We have to possess his spirit and his sanctity in life. The first members of our congregation worked very hard just like



laborers. Now it is our time to work hard. Our congregation is really designed by God. As we are aspiring to become religious we should be faithful to God always, admire and respect the pioneer members of our congregation and pray for them every day. That is the best thing which we could do for them.

*"They were called 'the four cats'. Even though they were least in number they lived a good model of religious life. They lead their life according to the Word of God and kept obedience, poverty and chastity towards God with great humbleness.*

## The Apostolic Missionaries

### REFLECTION



**NOV. ABDON, INDO:** As an apostolic missionary, Fr. Gaspar wanted the people to go back to God, to live properly according to the will of God. Fr. Gaspar serves the people with humble heart. He believes that God never let anyone to go alone. This spirit inspired him to continue the mission of Christ as an apostolic missionary. To continue the mission of Christ, Fr. Gaspar never surrendered amidst situations he faced. He has more enthusiasm to serve the people even with ailing leg. He could stop totally his mission to undergo medications but the power of love to suffer strengthen him to spend a lot of time for those who come and need to talk to him as spiritual director even in the bed. To serve the people, Fr. Gaspar became available to all, to children and the youth to the old as well.

He was an active man: he loves everybody, he serves everybody. He gave catechism to the children and the youth, inspired people to have devotions and pray the novena to our Blessed Virgin Mary. He created the Mariam oratory, helped the sick, visited and consoled those who were in prison to come back to God. By doing these, he trusted in the Lord that everything will be provided. So for him to be a servant of the Lord is to serve people with "*gratis omnino*", believing that God will provide everything for the need of the people and receiving nothing from them. In his life, for me as a follower of Fr. Gaspar I have learned more how to serve the people with the same spirit.

**NOV. ZACK, INDO:** Fr. Gaspar is a great missionary. He was ordained a priest age of only less than twenty three years however ever ready to serve God through neighbors. Fr. Gaspar immediately exercised his priestly ministry to people who are near to him. He didn't stay at a convent as a monk, but immediately went to out and preach the Good News to the peoples. He went to help the poor and those who are losing their faith and help them come back to God. As a followers and children of Fr. Gaspar, we should obtain the same readiness to go everywhere we are called to go and carry out God's work. Let us imitate our dear founder St. Gaspar Bertonni who amidst serious illness didn't stop proclaiming God's word to the people.

**NOV. ABIN, IND:** Apostolic Missionary is being always ready and available to do any service. St. Gaspar is a good model of Apostolic Missionary. When we look through the life of St. Gaspar we can see that he was a man of God who seeks the





will of God in everything. He was ready and available for God in order to be his instrument. St. Gaspar was ready to go forward if it is the will of God and trust himself in the providence of God. As a result he could do various ministries according to the needs of the time. St. Gaspar was ready to give his whole life for the glory of God and it is the greatest sign and spirit of an Apostolic Missionary. Like him we invited to share in the same spirit of our founder to be ever ready and available at all times. Then only we

can go anywhere and do whatever God has commanded us to do.

**NOV. TOM, IND:** God gave strength to Fr. Gaspar to exercise ministries in spite of his illnesses. He did everything for God. He conducted Popular Mission and retreats in St. Fermin Church and many parishes inside and outside the city of Verona. Because of his exemplary mission works the Pope grant him the official title of an Apostolic Missionary. He never wasted his time. Like St. Gaspar we also should give our maximum to God. He waited the sign from God to begin the congregation. He asked the will of God. We need to possess his spirit and his sanctity. We should not perform things not out of duty but we should do everything for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. We should be humble in all things. We should sacrifice our interests, our conveniences and our time to imitate Christ. Our congregation is designed by God and established by St. Gaspar under divine inspiration. There is no holiness without temptations and sufferings. Great temptations are the way to reach great holiness. Always remember that we are Apostolic Missionaries. We must abandon ourselves to God and follow Him faithfully, steadily and with all humility. Then God showers His graces upon us.

*(Paintings from San Leonardo Community, Verona, Italy)*

## *Sunday Activities in Novitiate House*

### ACTIVITIES

"In the health of the body there is strong spirit". This sentence motivates us novices to take good care of our personal health. For this purpose activities were done to help us fulfill this goal. Apart from football, our favorite game at the novitiate, the following games were done especially on Sundays in the afternoon. Some neighboring kids also join us.

**Basketball.** A nice basketball ring stands at our front perfect for a small group like us. Although we are not that good in playing but it is perfect for exercise once or twice a week. Divided by







two groups, the game is more fun with our limited knowledge of the rules and little skills unlike the others who play well.

**Swimming.** The school provides us a good place for swimming on weekends. And the best time is on the afternoon of Sundays. Swimming helps us stay fit and healthy like any other sports. But most importantly we enjoy each other's company, a way of a healthy community life.

**Zumba.** Zumba is a new craze in the novitiate. Master Zumba Renren, one of us has introduced us to this healthy and enjoyable dance sport. Zumba is perfect for us who like dancing too. Like other sports, creative movements from head to toe makes us really fit, enjoyable and healthy.



**Local games.** Different local games too or national games were introduced in our Sunday afternoon activities. Our friends (our co-novices) from the **Philippines** introduced us to local ball game called *dodge ball*. There are two teams competing and both teams take turns in throwing ball. Hit by the ball one member is eliminated until the last member of the opposing team. The **Indonesians** novices too has introduced us to their own local game called *nails-bottle* game. It is putting nails on thread on an empty bottle. Each player has thread with nails held on his back while putting it inside the bottle. The faster the better giving way to another player. Punishment awaits the losing team by running around the football pitch three times. Our **Indian** friends too has introduced us to another exciting local game – filling empty bottles with water using our hands. Three teams are set with a bottle to fill. The losing team receives splashing water from the winners. **NOV. ABDON, INDO**



## Spiritual Direction

## ACTIVITIES

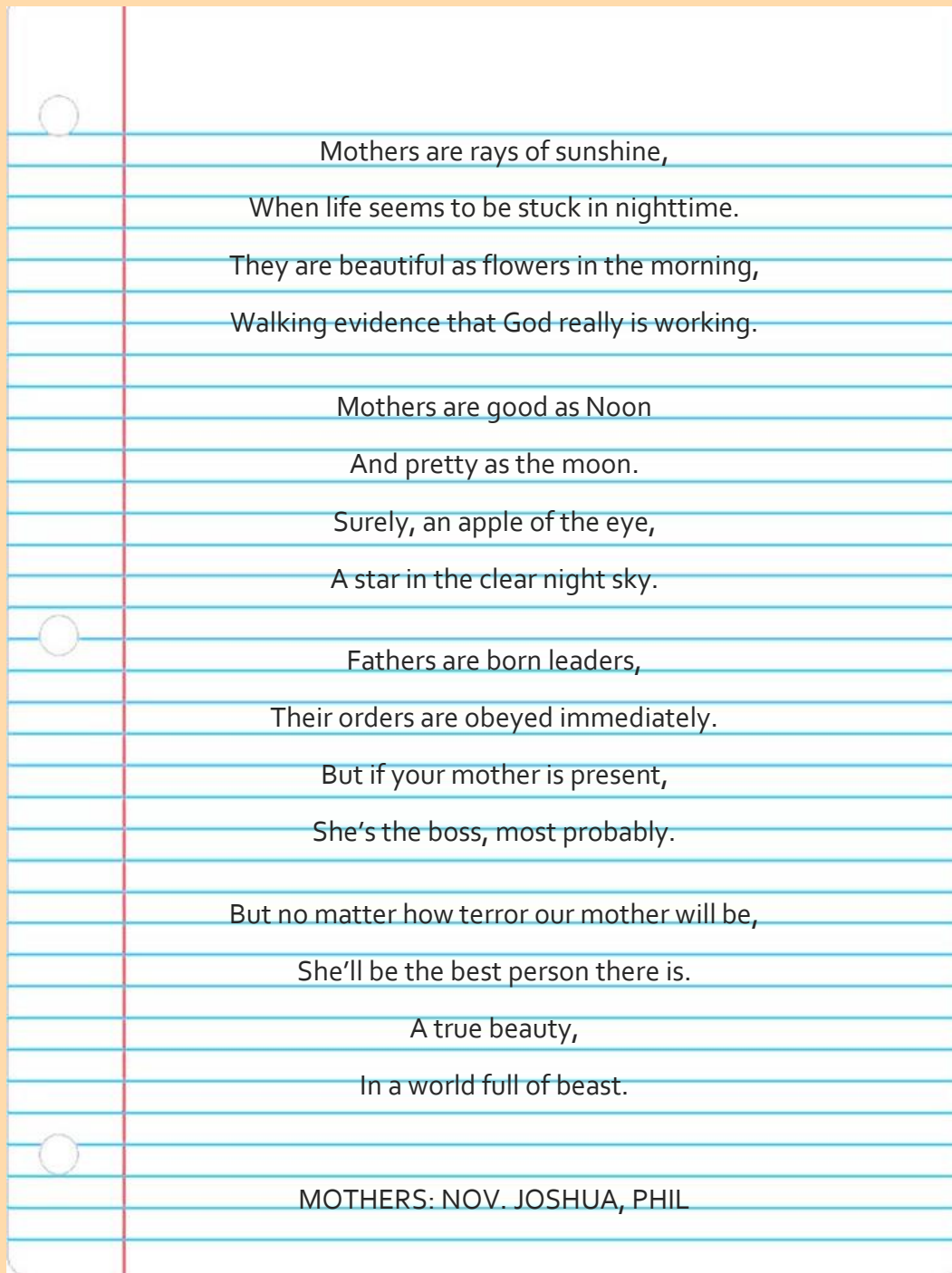
We cannot be happy always in our lives. Some times in our lives we have to go through difficulties. Whenever we face difficulties in our vocation we must not run away from them instead we must face them courageously. So spiritual direction is very important in the life of a novice because it will help him face the problems and difficulties in his vocation. For our community we have spiritual direction every month and we are blessed to have Fr. Paul

(Pastor of Assumption Church, Phuket) and Fr. Dominic (Pastor of St. Martin of Tours Parish, Pang Nga) as our spiritual directors. They help us go forward in our vocation through sharing their experiences. As novices we realized that through their participation they educated us how to build our good relationship with God and with others for developing our vocation. We can say that they are also good shepherd for us, to bring us to the true and authentic way to reach

what we all wanted – to be good Stigmatines in the future. Every month we spent with them for an hour or more. In those times we share our

difficulties, our problems to them counting them as our elder brothers. They help us to form our life fruitful. **NOV. JOMON, IND**

## LITERARY



## VOCATION STORY

It was not in mind to become a priest or religious from the beginning. When I was child, before receiving first Holy Communion I told my parish priest that I wanted to become a priest so that he would be proud of me. After graduating in senior high school, I don't know where I should go to further my education. I want to become a teacher. I began to find high-quality universities to follow test but my parents would not allow because the school I chose is very expensive. Once the time in the senior high school my religious teacher recommended that I should apply in the seminary instead. Unable to decide, I hesitated because I do not know if I wanted to be a seminarian. It has not occurred to my mind even. When I went home for vacation one time, I met Brother Abdon, a seminarian. He was my senior in elementary school and we came from the same village. Hearing from him that he is a member



of a congregation and just opened a seminary in Indonesia, I became interested and decided to join him just for an experience. Again it was not my intention to become a priest or religious from the beginning. However, things changes, events happen for some reasons and I think it is God's will. For that time being I have decided to join a congregation just to try and experience. I then registered and took the test and was accepted. When I told my parents about my decision to enter the seminary, they were very excited. I was a little bit guilty after seeing my parent's excitement. They must have wanted me to become a priest. After I joined the seminary of St. Gaspar Bertoni, I felt very happy and found that I really like the way of seminary life. I felt proud and moved when seeing the respect given by people to us as seminarians. Something that was built on the basis of a less powerful certainly will also quickly collapsed, therefore I started to change my motivation being a seminarian not only to try and experience but really wanted to become a religious and priest. My vocation to become a priest grew stronger when I attended the ordinations of new deacons and priests in other seminaries around us. I promised to myself that one day I must also become a priest like them. With the Stigmatine's motto "*Euntes Docete*", I want to become a preacher, to announce the Good News of the Kingdom of God all over the world. When undergoing in the period of formation, there are so many challenges from my family and from outside and from the community but I kept trying to stay and trying not to give up. I believe in God that everything will be fine someday. I took the motto for my life the words of our Mother Marry, one of my favorite Saints, her words; "*Fiat Voluntas Tua*". I am sure that if God is the one calling me, then everything I face, trials and sufferings, will quickly pass. Be it done me according to His will. Now that I've been accepted in the Novitiate, a very important phase in the seminary life towards religious life, I am very thankful for my formators who allowed to proceed until this time. I want to be a Stigmatine religious and priest and may God bless my intentions. I thank the Lord for having called me in this place. May I do everything according to His will. **NOV. CORNELIS, INDO**



## Marriage Renewal

NEWS



"This is my commandment that you love one another as I love you" (John 15: 12). This passage from the Gospel of St. John is a basic law for us Christians. God created human beings out of love and so we all have love and need to love. And that love was given to us with a command: to love one another as the Lord has loved us. On evening of September 9, Saturday, a special event was held at our Novitiate community – the renewal of marriage vows of Mr. Carl and Mrs. Bee, parishioners of Assumption Parish. The couple has



renewed their promises and witnessed by some guests from the parish community. On this special occasion we are asked to reflect on this: Husband and wife is blessed by God with purpose, to love each other and their offspring and to cling to each other in good times and bad. In these ways they fulfill God's command. We entrust them finally to the care of the Holy Spouses Mary and St. Joseph, models of total love and abandonment to each other that they may become more responsible couple and become good and loving parent. **NOV. ZACK, INDO**

## *The Memorial of our Lady of Sorrows*

NEWS

On September 15 we the Stigmatine novitiate community honored Mother Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows. On this day the Church reminds us that our Mother suffered for Christ, whom the salvation of humankind comes up. And it was her merit that she could share in the Passion of Christ. There are seven sorrows of Mary; the prophecy of Simeon (Lk. 2/34, 35), the escape and flight into Egypt (Mt. 2/13), the loss of the child Jesus in the temple of Jerusalem (Lk. 2/ 43, 45), the meeting of Mary and Jesus on the Vita

Dolorosa. The crucifixion of Jesus, on mount Calvary (Jn. 19/ 25), the piercing of the side of Jesus, and His Descent from the cross (Mt. 27/57-59), and the Burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea (Jn. 19/40, 42). After the great sorrows she was crown as the queen of heaven and earth. The feast of our Lady of sorrows gives this message for us: do not be afraid to suffer for Christ. Suffer with Jesus, so that you can may receive reward as our Mother was rewarded. **NOV. ABIN, IND**

## *Ordination day of St. Gaspar Bertoni*

NEWS



Each day is a miracle and a gift given by God. As we know that Fr. Gaspar was ordained as a priest on September 20, 1800. This day is very important for Stigmatines. Not only this day but all other days related to St. Gaspar are very important for us after all we are his followers. It is our duty to celebrate all these days more beautiful and memorable than other days. It is also very helpful for our spiritual formation.

Our novitiate community celebrated the 217th priestly ordination day of St. Gaspar on 20th September. We had small celebration. On that day we had solemn mass presided by Fr. Reby. In his homily he said that there are two values we

can see in his life. Those values are courage to go forward in his vocation and daily struggle for holiness. After his diaconate his parents were separated. He faced a lot of difficulties in his life. The problems in the family did not stop him. It is because of his strong commitment he succeeded his dream to become a holy priest. He had very strong courage and enthusiasm to go forward in his vocation.

Like him we also need courage and enthusiasm to go forward in our vocation. In our community life we have to face many problems. Sometimes we feel that it is very hard for us to become a true follower of Christ. God allows everything in our lives in order to glorify Him. If we compared our sufferings with the sufferings of Jesus our sufferings are so small in front of Jesus. What we should do is that we should share our sufferings with the sufferings of Jesus. Always remember that there is no glory without pain. We have to learn many things from our founder. We must have the courage to face the challenges and difficulties in our lives.



On the ordination day of St. Gaspar, Fr. Joseph told us that it is the best day for us to give something to our community with our effort. He proposed to make brooms for our community. So after breakfast we made brooms. Fr. Reby

also joined us for broom making. Then we went for swimming. We all enjoyed swimming. At 6:30 we had delicious dinner provided by our novice master. Fr. Paul and Bro. Sujin also joined us for our dinner. After dinner we selected one number from the spiritual journal and spiritual writings of St. Gaspar and we shared our own reflections about that particular sentence. It gave us the enthusiasm to learn his life and imitate him so that we can also give ourselves fully to God. And it gives us the inspiration to become a zealous missionary also. After our reflections we sang a song about St. Gaspar. After our song Fr. Joseph gave us a message that it is very difficult to become a portrait of Christ and to become another Christ. We can say it very easily. In order to follow Jesus we must have endurance, patience and perseverance. God does not want our success but He needs our effort to follow Him. And try to keep walking together for your priestly formation. We concluded our celebration with the words of Fr. Reby. I feel that it my first time to celebrate the ordination of St. Gaspar with great solemnity.

**NOV. TOM, IND**

## *Recollection with Sr. Lakkana*

**NEWS**



Novitiate life becomes more joyful when a day is dedicated for the growth of Spiritual Life. And so, on September 27, 2017, we had our monthly recollection in our community house. After our breakfast the grand silence immediately began. We had personal meditation around the community. Some of us spent their time walking around the compound; others were in the grotto; while other novices chose to stay in the

chapel. By 9:30 am, we were all in the chapel and had a spiritual contemplation and inspirational reading. Our personal time with the Lord was then followed by creative rosary. The prayer was even more delightful when we offer songs to our Blessed Mother. At 10:30 am, the spiritual talk started- with Sr. Lakkana as our speaker. The theme of her sharing was about her vocation and life as a missionary. She counted her tough times when she was just starting her mission. She shared her experience of God's grace and guidance in her earthly duty. And she concluded with the progress and success of her mission in the present time. We were deeply moved and truly motivated by the experiences our dearest speaker. And as a sign of our gratefulness, we gave an inspiration book and offered her a religious song "My Heart's Thanksgiving". Then the community had a picture taking with Sr. Lakkana. **NOV. CRIZALDY, PHIL**

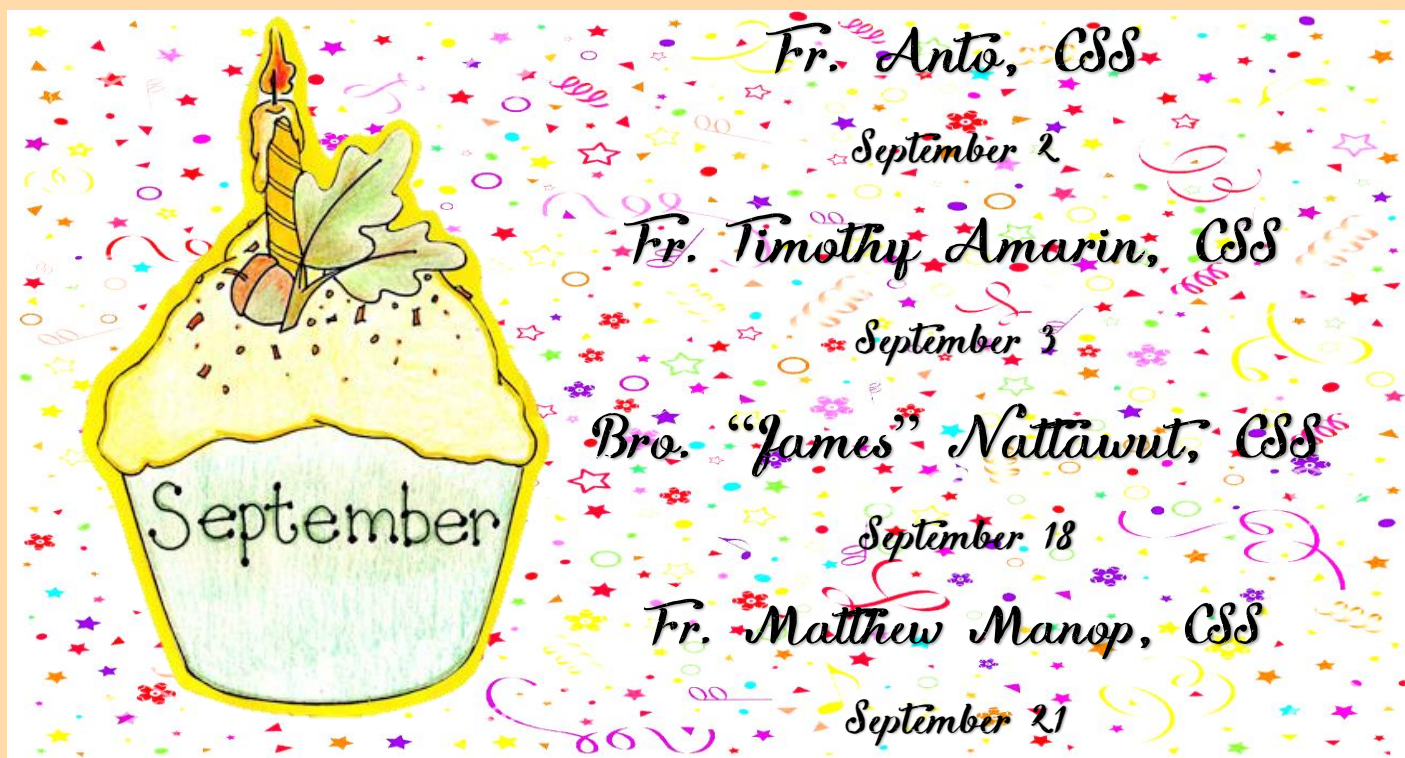




The vocation of Christ by Nov. Sonet, IND

BIRTHDAYS OF THE MONTH

## Happy birthday September Celebrants







**Fr. Rocco Leotilo, CSS** was born on August 21, 1926 in Harlem (PA), USA, he made his perpetual profession on June 13 1950 and was ordained priest on February 2, 1953. He spent the whole of his priestly life for the development of the mission in Thailand. He worked with passionate dedication for the foundation of schools, parishes and house of formation. He was also renowned for his preaching, his commitment and dedication brought to the constitution of the Thailand province of the Lady of the Morning Star. He died on September 3, 2002 in Cambridge (MA) at the age of 76.

Eternal rest grant to our departed confreres, benefactors and relatives, O Lord. And let your perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

## NEWS

With immense joy and profound gratitude to God Almighty,  
the **Stigmatine Community**  
(Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of our Lord Jesus Christ)  
invite you most cordially  
to thank and glorify God on the occasion of the

**Ordination to Diaconate**  
of our Brothers  
**Jobin Joseph Thayyil, css**  
**Nidhin Devassia Kottavathukkal, css**

To be conferred by  
His Grace **Dr. Abraham Viruthakulangara,**  
the Archbishop of Nagpur  
on **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at 05:00 pm**  
at **Bertoni Seminary** and to the reception thereafter.

With warm regards  
**Fr. Sajan Parackal css**  
**Bertoni Seminary, Kurumassery**  
Mob: 9447811832, Tel: 0484 2471568

With joy and in thanksgiving for the gift of vocation,  
The Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ  
Invites you to join the

**CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST**  
on the occasion of the  
*Perpetual Profession of Vows*  
of  
**Bro. DENNES T. ATO, CSS**  
and  
**Bro. ROMEL B. LIBRE, CSS**

Rev. Fr. Abel L. Maglines, CSS  
PRESIDER  
Thursday, 19 October 2017, 6:00 in the Evening  
Shrine of the Five Wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ  
Talon 1, Las Piñas City

*"On the end, in one's nothing, God is found" - Gaspar Bertoni*

The Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata  
of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Cordially invites you to the

*Presbyteral Ordination*  
of  
**Rev. JESSIE DABLO MASONG, CSS**

Through the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the imposition on of hands by  
**His Excellency Bishop Jesse Mercado, DD**

Date: 20 October 2017  
Time: 6:00 PM  
Venue: Shrine of the Five Wounds of Our Lord Jsus Christ  
Talon 1, Las Piñas City

*"Do you love me?  
...feed my sheep."*  
-John 21:17