

The Inter-Provincial Novitiate Community

Phuket, Thailand

THE 5TH ASIAN INTER-PROVINCIAL NOVITIATE YEAR (2017-18)

December 2017

*Christ is born for us;
come, let us adore him!*



Inside: St. Francis Xavier Parish Feast day
Laying-on of Foundation Ceremony at Dowroong
Christmas preparation and celebrations

FEAST DAY: ST. FRANCIS XAVIER PARISH IN TRANG



Our Catholic Church celebrates all feast days. Feast days are ranked according to their importance. Solemnities are the most important (commemorating Jesus or Mary), followed by feasts, obligatory memorials, and optional memorials. The most important point of a feast day is that they're meant to be celebrations, especially solemnities. The Catholic Church assigns one date out of the year for each and every canonized saint known as the saint's feast day. A saint's feast day can be the day of their actual death or a day assigned by the Church. Saints are celebrating their feast day in heaven together with God. On the 3rd of December we are celebrating the feast day of St. Francis Xavier. On 1st of December we went to Trang Province (South of Thailand) to attend the feast day of St. Francis Xavier which our Stigmatine parish church is dedicated to. Arriving at Trang early evening, we had dinner in the community

house. After dinner we played soccer together with priests at the school's artificial football at the top of the school. On the feast day of St. Francis (celebrated on December 2) we had solemn mass in the fifth floor of the school. Before the holy mass we had Holy Rosary with the parishioners. Bishop Joseph Prathan was the main celebrant together with Stigmatine and guests priests. After the holy mass we congratulated our three Stigmatine priests: Fr. Winai, Fr. Wichian and Fr. Valentino on the occasion of their 20th priestly anniversary earlier this year. After lunch we sang Christmas carols to the bishop and all the priests and nuns, wishing them Merry Christmas and a joyful season. They said that songs were excellent. While going back to novitiate house we stopped in Phangna and spend some time with Fr. Dominic. It was a nice feast day celebration in Trang. We all enjoyed the celebration. – Nov. Tom

A MEMORABLE DAY WITH THE BISHOP



On the 21st of December today we have had a valuable opportunity to stay recollected with Bishop Joseph Pratan, the bishop of Surathani diocese. It was indeed a memorable recollection with him: he shared to us his vocation story, his priestly life and his journey as a Bishop. He said as a religious, like every other religious he experienced not only joys but also sorrows in the community, family and society. But with a firm belief in God's power, he was able to deal with them all because of God's help. He advised us that by the power of prayer, we will be able to face all kinds of challenges in our life especially in our vocation. He also told us about his advocacy to spread Lectio Divina. He fall in love with Lectio Divina. And he urge us to practice it not only as part of our schedule but even in our free time. He said: let it become part of you,



share it to others and God will work wonders in you, in your community and in the society. Our recollection ended with a picture taking together and we also presented him a simple gift from our community – a Stigmatine cap with the initials LDS (*Laus Deo Semper*). Thanks also to our formators who have given us great opportunity to have a recollection with the first person and head of the diocese. – Nov. Kornelis

CHRISTMAS PREPARATIONS AT THE NOVITIATE

The spirit of Christmas is felt more deeply by seeing vivacious decorations around our house. Thus, the novitiate community have concerted its effort to make the Christmas Season more blissful and memorable. On the first week of December we started to decorate the interior part of the house by placing the Christmas trees and hung on them some colorful balls and lights. Aside from that we also put some spiritual and fraternal flavor on the trees in the ground floor. For instance, the decorations on Christmas tree in refectory was supplemented with our Christmas cards containing our messages for our so called "Buddy" (The recipient of our gift during our Community Christmas Party). The one in the Chapel served as our Spiritual Bouquet- a creative way of expressing our prayer and intention to the Lord by hanging a small gift box. The largest tree, which was placed in the main door was decorated with our individual picture that contained our personal wishes for Christmas. On the second week, we then started to put some decorations on our compound. We made star-shaped lanterns out of bamboo and plastic. Then we put light bulbs inside and hang them on the side of the road. To make the vicinity more alive, we also made a Nativity Scene by building a crib out bamboo and dried grasses and making the characters by painting them on a foam. By the half of the month, all the decorations were finished and we were so grateful and happy seeing the fruit of our efforts. On the first night lighting the lanterns and the crib, the community had a prayer in front of the Nativity Scene as a manifestation of our anticipation for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. – Nov. Crizaldy





FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY

On the same day 21st of December, after our recollection with the bishop earlier in the morning, the Novitiate community joyfully participated in the foundation stone laying ceremony for the new building in Dowroong Wittaya School, Phuket. Bishop Joseph Prathan was the main celebrant of the ceremony. The ceremony started at 9.30 am. Fr. Michael, as the administrator of the school welcomed us. The ceremony was attended by some Stigmatine Priests headed by Fr. Winai, the former mayor of Phuket and some parents and friends of the school. The ceremony ended at 10.30, then we had delicious lunch provided by the school. – Nov. Jomon



TEACHERS' CHRISTMAS PARTY AT DOWROONG SCHOOL



On December 23, Saturday evening we were invited to participate in the teachers and collaborators' Christmas party and family night at Dowroong School. This is a yearly event for the teachers and the collaborators to spend time together and enjoy as a whole family. While at dinner performances from each department is presented. We were also invited to present a dances performance which the

teachers and the collaborators liked very much. Gifts were also given through drawing lots. It was for us an enjoyable and entertaining night and our opportunity to know them and greet them merry Christmas and happy New Year ahead. – Nov. Jack



Christmas is best celebrated in the family, be it your biological family or in a community you now consider your own family. In the community the spirit of joy and sharing is always observed. Here in our community at Phuket we are glad to confirm this reality. On December 22, few days prior Christmas day we had our community Christmas party. A simple dinner was prepared – thanks to Fr. Michael, a suitable place decorated with spirit of Christmas was made available – thanks to Fr. Paul and Bro. Sujin and a well prepared program animated us all – thanks to the novices and co. We were also blessed with the presence of Fr. John and Fr. Dominic from St. Joseph and St. Martin parishes. We also had our exchanging gifts and sang carols to all adding to the festive spirit we all enjoyed.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING



Christmas is the season of fun and laughter. It is the time for the people to buy and give gifts, families to eat delicious food together, and children to sing Christmas carols. Here in the Novitiate Community we also prepared some Christmas carols for the people especially the parishioners of the Assumption Church. We grabbed this opportunity to greet them a Merry Christmas and wish them Happy New Year.

Singing Christmas Carols to them is also a sign of expressing our gratitude for their endless support in our community. But let us be reminded that singing a Christmas carol is not only for the purpose of bringing joy and happiness to the people, but it is also a sign of rejoicing because Jesus, who is the Word, was born into flesh and is now dwelling in us. – Nov. Joshua

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AT ASSUMPTION CHURCH



On the 24th of December, on the Christmas Eve, we Stigmatines had a grand Christmas celebration at Assumption Church in Phuket. It was the result of our earlier preparation for the birth of Jesus. We prepared our Church with flowers and decorations. We had a beautiful and big Christmas tree at the altar of the church. It was the attractive one of the Christmas of this year. We novices had made a beautiful and Holy Nativity Crib at the side of the altar, where people can kneel, adore and kiss the Baby Jesus. The Christmas celebration has begun with the narrative play of the Nativity Story of Jesus. Sis.

Lakkana and her students of Good Shepherd School take initiative for the performance. Then after, the Church was resounded by the heavenly voices of choir and the church was ready to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. The Solemn Mass was blessed by three Stigmatine priests (Fr. Paul, Fr. Michael and Fr. Joseph). The Church and its compound were filled with devotees. I could find in them a prepared hearts to welcome the birth of Jesus. While celebrating Holy Mass, their heart found the joy and peace, as the shepherd when they find their Savior. They also sang caroling to the mighty king with the heavenly choirs. After the spiritual celebration of Christmas there was Christmas celebration outside the Church. It was speaking about the practical way to give Jesus to others. Because Christmas is a gift to us from God the Father who gave his beloved Son for our salvation and so we as Christians ought to extend and share Christ too to others. While celebrating Christmas program at the stage there was

judging was going on to the crib making competition. Many parishioners and we novices also participated in the competition. Meanwhile of each program at the stage Fr. Paul CSS gave Christmas gifts to parishioners by taking lots. We novices also performed a group dance for the celebration. All these Christmas programs showed the unity of parish and which give joy and enthusiasm to Christmas celebration. At the end of the programs Fr. Paul announced the three winners of the crib making competition. Nov. Renren was one of them. He received a cash award from Fr. Paul. All our parishioners enjoyed our Christmas celebrations and shared their

wishes to each other. On the 25th morning, at 9'o clock we celebrated a second Christmas at our parish there was many attended the Holy mass. Most of them were foreigners. After the Holy Communion we novices sang 20 minute caroling to those who attended the Holy Mass. After the caroling all of them gave round of applause to us. All were happy and wish their happiness each other. Some parishioners encouraged us with their Christmas gifts. Therefore this Christmas at our parish gave us a great joy and color to our vocation journey. - Nov. Sonet

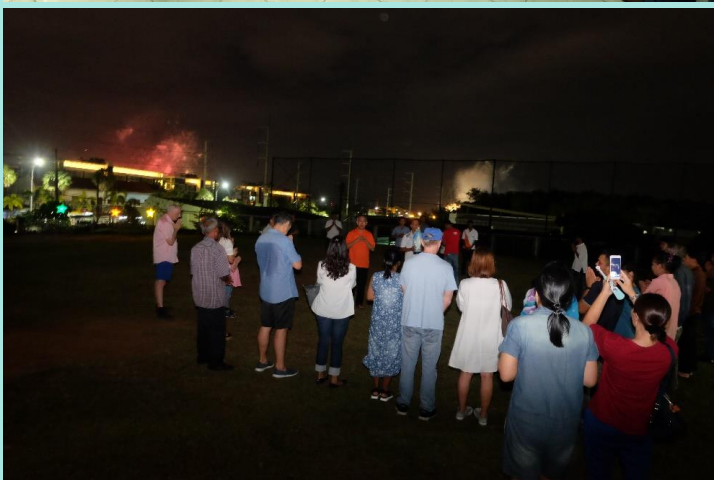


On December 31, 2017, we celebrated the last day of this year. In the morning at 11 we had Holy Mass in our Assumption church and celebrated the feast day of the Holy Family. Fr. Paul as the pastor of this church invited us to learn from the life and example of the Holy Family; Jesus, Mary and Joseph. It is good to learn from this family because they were planned by the Lord to be the model for all the families in the world. At the end of the mass, before the final blessing, Fr. Paul announced to all parishioners that all are invited to celebrate with us and welcome altogether the New Year at our novitiate community. Fr. Paul also invited our Stigmatine confreres nearby Phuket Fr. John Pipat, the Pastor of St. Joseph Church, and Fr. Dominic, the pastor of St. Martin de Tour in Pang nga. At 07:00 pm, we started our celebration. Parishioners were happy to come

and spent time together with us for our celebration. We started with the prayer and blessing by Fr. Paul then followed by dinner. Our dinner was very extraordinary because we had a lot of delicious foods. These foods were prepared by the parishioners themselves. They were to join this celebration so they brought the foods for us to have dinner together, share our love together as a family. Our refectory is not so spacious, so during taking meal we can eat inside and also outside the house. While eating, we enjoyed with the performances leaded by Fr. Paul, the novices and parishioners. Fr. Paul leaded the parishioners with the games while the novices leaded them the singing and dancing. For the games gifts were given to the winners. For Fr. Paul, time of Christmas is for giving and sharing to others. These actions reminded me as

a novice to give and share to others, share to the people as God gave to us His only son (the sign of his great love to us). At 11.40 pm we had ice cream to conclude our dinner and at 12.00 pm, we were out of the refectory to the football field to welcome the New Year 2018. Fr. Joseph as the novice master led us with the prayer and blessing then everybody were invited to light the

fireworks for welcome the New Year. We were very happy to welcome the New Year and shake hands each other's while greeting happy New Year 2018 and wishing each other a great new year ahead. After welcoming the New Year, the parishioner went home to prepare themselves for the mass dedicated to our Mother Mary, the Mother of God in the morning. – Nov. Abdon





Happy Birthday!

To our dear confreres:

Dec. 2 – Fr. John Pipat, CSS

Dec. 3 – Fr. Romolo Bertoni, CSS

Dec. 5 – Bro. Louie Aninion, CSS

Dec. 28 – Fr. Calven Banaybanay, CSS

Dec. 30 – Nov. Crizaldy “Ren” Suganob