




The Inter-Provincial Novitiate Community

Phuket, Thailand

THE 4TH INTER-PROVINCIAL NOVITIATE YEAR (2016-17)

MARCH 2017



REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE
DUST, AND TO DUST YOU
SHALL RETURN.

Ash Wednesday begins our 40-day period of prayer and fasting to prepare for the celebration of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. Many asks why we start the Lenten Season by imposition of ashes on our foreheads. Why do we need ashes? We do this because the Season of Lent is a season of prayer, fasting, repentance and almsgiving. In the Old Testament many prophets spoke of ashes and their association with repentance and penance. One of them is Job who spoke to God saying, "My ears have heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I

despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." Even in the New Testament, the gospels of Matthew and Luke teach us the same thing. While in the Letter to the Hebrews, we are told "The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean, sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean." Ashes therefore and their imposition symbolize mourning and repentance before God. We follow the wisdom and traditions of our ancestors in faith as we strive to turn away from sin and return to the loving arms of God. The imposition of ashes happens before Easter Sunday. In the 40 days of penance, reflection, self-examination, fasting and repentance, we commemorate the 40 days of Jesus' fasting in the wilderness where he triumphed over the luring temptation of the devil. Just like Christ we may triumph also over the deceit of the forces of evil. In our hunger for temporal goods may we remember that man shall not live on bread alone, but on the word that comes from the mouth of God. Amidst trials and challenging situations may we recall that it is also written "do not put the Lord your God to the test." And if we are blinded by the glitter of fame and power, let us

be firm and determined in saying “away from me Satan, for it is written: worship the Lord your God and serve him only.” Believing in these words we will be able to triumph over the evil one that constantly trying to divert our eyes of faith towards worldliness. It is only God who will give us infinite love. Let us not allow ourselves to be separated from him. Let us not allow sin to ruin our loving and living relationship with God and with our neighbors. Now you might notice that during the imposition of ashes the priest or minister can choose from two verses from the bible. “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel” from St. Mark and from the book of Genesis, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” This is so because aside from the call to repentance we are also reminded of our humble beginnings. Dust, from the lowly dust God created us in his likeness and breathe in us the breath of life, these should teach us humility and gratitude. Incidentally, “Humus” or humility means “soil”. The verse likewise reminds us of our common destiny – death, the transitory state of life on earth teaches us humility and teaches us to live our God-given life to the full.

I AM ONLY HUMAN

John C. Tormey from his book *“Only you who can make you happy”*

said: “Humility is a strong virtue; it helps us appreciate the words: I AM ONLY HUMAN.” The Season of Lent is a good time to reflect on

our existence as a human being. A being that is temporary and a being whose existence is dependent to the Necessary Being. Thus, the acceptance of our limitations and incapacities are much important, simply because we are just a human being. That is why

our Gospel passages since the start of this season are talking of

“Lowering ourselves.” Like; “Do not show your good deeds before

people, when we pray it must be in your room, not to show other that you are praying, when we fast we must not put on a gloomy face so that people can see us fasting”. Lastly, one of the invitations of Jesus in this season is to deny ourselves and carry our cross each day if we really wish to follow Him. In addition, we knew that we have three practices that we must do this Season of Lent. Those are Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving. Through Prayer, it helps us to be aware of someone who is the greatest of all and whom we are dependent on. Through Fasting,



it gives us the awareness that the world can give us happiness but just a temporary like money, honor, power, achievements etc. Fasting may also help us not to be obsessed of any kind of material things. Lastly, Almsgiving helps us to remember that we are born to love and share. It helps us to remember that we need other as they need us. We must not be proud of the skill and power of our very own selves. As a conclusion, this Season of Lent and its’ practices are grounded on the virtue of HUMILITY. And this actually a lifetime assignment to all of us. - Nov. Norielgar Hernando

POPE FRANCIS: RENEW YOUR ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST

We know very well that in every major event in the Catholic Church our Holy Father, Pope Francis has a special message to all of us. And this season of Lent he reminded us thus, "Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor". The Pope prays to the Holy Spirit to guide us in our journey in this season of Lent saying, "May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need." The Pope in his message uses the bible story of Lazarus and the rich man to reflect upon, so that we may have a deep and affectionate reflection for our encounter with Christ saying: "Lazarus teaches us that other persons are gifts", and continues; "A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value. Even the poor person at the door of the rich is not a nuisance, but a summons to conversion and to change." And, "Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable." The Pope also warned us about our attachment in the worldly things that the result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door. Thus, we ultimately see that the problem of the rich man is a "failure to heed God's word," Pope Francis emphasizes, "As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbor." On this note the Holy Father urges us to listen to Word of God for "the word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God. When we close our heart to the gift of God's word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters." As we start the journey of Lent, with its emphasis on fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, we have a chance at a new beginning in our own lives, the Pope noted. "This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God with all their hearts, to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord," he said, adding that "Christ waits for us patiently, ready to forgive us when we fall short". May the message of our Holy Father grants us a good idea of how to encounter our Lord Jesus in this season of Lent so that we can have a wonderful celebration of Easter. "Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor" the Pope concluded. Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter. God bless us ALL! – Nov. Jayson Libas



Lengthening Lenten Season

What is the most important season in the Liturgical year of the Roman Catholic Church? For sure many of us would opt Advent and Christmas Seasons because these are the seasons of awaiting for and the birth of our Lord Jesus Christmas amongst us. While writing this reflection, I realized that personally the most important season in the liturgical year is the Lenten season. It is so because for me this is the season that we were saved by Christ, on his suffering, crucifixion and death. He gave up his life for me, for you, and for all of us for us to be saved, for us to be liberated from the bonds of sin and Satan. He stretched out his arms on the cross and never complained until the end just to bind us to his love and embrace us altogether. He does this because he loved us even we are sinners. He did not look into density of our sins but look with love to us sinners. However, it is a sad reality that we sometimes don't give importance to this important season. It skips our attention and so we only do penance, abstinence and fasting only to follow the tradition and to show that we are Catholics and so undermining its real value. We lack love in our Lenten observances. But, still it is not too late, as long as we are still alive in this world there is still a chance to correct everything. In this season of lent we are also invited once again to clean hearts from the many hatred that we keep inside so that we can accept and put Jesus Christ at the center of our lives. And lastly, it is a good opportunity for us also to humbly ask sorry to God for all the sins that we committed and also for all the people that we hurt. Lengthen our observances of this season by making it fruitful and meaningful, make it truly a Lenten Season. – Nov. Ryan Mark Gabales



SEASON OF LENT



One of the parishioners asked us novices, "why there is Lent? What is it meant for?" We believed that he was not looking for a scholarly response. Rather, moved by faith, he was after of personal answer; "why there is lent for us? What is it meant for us?" We all know that Lent bears in its very nature penitential character. Lent reminds us that Jesus Christ, the God-man offered himself as ransom for our sins. In return, we do penitential deeds such as fasting, prayer and alms giving. It is as if we are refreshing the paschal mysteries of Christ and so we mourn. However, in doing so, we tend not to take

these observances seriously. We take them for granted as if like customs, and even worst, we do them just for fanfare; to show off. Be mean about it, yet do not cross the pendulum. Be sincere yet be moderate. Do not go to the extreme. We do fasting, we pray, and give alms for the sake of Jesus and only for him. We do these things because we want to return back the favor he had done for us. And these are the least things we can do for him. We do these things because we want to shoulder the suffering he endured which was supposed to be ours. Most importantly, we do all these things because we want to quench our wanting for God; to reconcile with Him once again and sin no more. St. Gaspar would say, "There are 3 kinds of cross. One is that of Christ which marks his glory. Second is that of the good thief which conveys consolation. Third is that of the bad thief which leads to the abyss of

hell". And he continues, "no one passes this life without a cross. Whoever chooses not between the first and second crosses chooses the third one. We observe lent because we choose to carry the cross of Christ and that of the good thief." – Nov. *Herbert Aninion*

Catechism Camp, Fun-filled Way of Evangelization



One of the challenges that the Catholic Church is facing now-a-days is the evangelization of the young generation who live in the milieu of technology and materialism. Today's young people might yawn upon hearing the words catechism, sacraments, scriptures and the likes. Great challenge indeed for everyone. Moreover, it is a greater challenge for those who live in a society where Catholics are few, like here in Thailand. Henceforth, a more creative and fun-filled way of evangelizing the youths is needed. To respond to this necessity, on March 21 – 30, 2017, a Catechism Camp was held in Dowroong Wittaya School, Phuket, Thailand with the theme: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35). The ten-day camp was attended by 43 participants who came from Phuket and its neighboring provinces. About half of which were non-Catholics. The kids enjoyed learning the Faith along with games, songs and dances. Aside from which, they also delighted

with a "Beach Outing" on March 27 that add up to the vibrant feature of the camp and ensures a more effective learning. Furthermore, on the night of March 29, a farewell party was held which gave an avenue to the kids to showcase their talents and what they had learned. The camp was spearheaded by Fr. Paul Krittapat, CSS (Parish Priest in the Parish of Our Lady of Assumption) hand-in-hand with the help of Bro. Fab, CSS, Bro. James, CSS, P' Disapong Jitbomrung, P' Wantanee Jitbomrung, staffs and facilitators. – Nov. *Joefrey Dantayana with P' Disapong Jitbomrung*

Formation for Formators in SA



A group of Stigmatine formators from around the globe have gathered in a congress in Pretoria North, South Africa from March 13 to 25. Among the participants were Fr. Reby delegated from the Asian Inter-Provincial Novitiate, Fr. Supachai from the Minor Seminary and Fr. Wasan from the Major Seminary, Samphan. They were among the 30 participants from Asia, Africa, Europe and South America. Fr. Reby who

have recounted his experience in a brief meeting with us said, "The meeting was memorable and successful – it was a formation for formators." It was brief and very precise because this time the topic was curtailed to the "First stages of Formation", he added. So what was exactly the congress is about? The congress was initiated with the core purpose of restructuring, updating and improving the Ratio of our Congregation. The Ratio is the main structure of every Stigmatine formation houses. The General Council has deemed it necessary to reshape our Ratio to answer the "signs of the time" after all our Ratio is more than 20 years old already. In a letter sent to the formators prior to the meeting, the General clearly pointed out; "The world is rapidly changing and today's youth (our subjects) live in a cultural and religious milieu which is very different from that of 20 years ago, when the present Ratio was promulgated. So a revision is deemed necessary." In our brief meeting with Fr. Reby, matters which are very important were emphasized, telling us; "these matters were brought to the attention of the group and were carefully thought of by the group and the whole assembly and were enlightened by the talks and experiences of the speakers who themselves are authority in formation, psychology, youth ministry and spirituality."

Here, few elements mentioned by Fr. Reby are highlighted. First, regarding Vocation Promotion. In vocation promotion it is very necessary to ask ourselves: how do we present our



Stigmatine identity to the youth of today? This, according to him is very crucial, unless we are very clear of who we are, we cannot present ourselves to the young. Remember that in formation we form our subject to be Stigmatines in the future. Second, in the Initial Stage of formation our candidates are to be formed according to the structure, the Ratio. However we do not deny that the candidates comes to us with formation already in hand. That means that they were already formed in the society and the way they were formed (functional or dysfunctional) reflects their attitude and behavior. On this piece of note an understanding *formation* and formators are needed for them to be open to be incorporated into the seminary formation. Third, regarding the formators; team work, cooperation (also extend to the confreres) and communication are the components of

good and able formators. It is very important, Fr. Reby says, that they are (the formation team) on the same page on what purpose or understanding about formation so as to prevent *subjective formation* and the obstruction of creativity in the formation houses. Authentic, companionate, present and an inspiration to the formandeas are other qualities. Lastly, good formation is built upon solid trust and the good example of formators. Formation, Fr. Reby pointed out, is the work between the candidate and God, guided by the Holy Spirit and this *covenant* is entrusted to the formators who in turn enrich it and let it mature for the future. On

a final note Fr. Reby made mention the rich sharing of the evaluation of the group during the last session. Just to mention one, he says, he want to re-echo the words of one confrere who says we should not leave here what we have learned but we should bring them with us, carry them in our hearts and apply them in our formation houses.

Viva St. Joseph, the Husband of Mary



March 26, Sunday at 11 in the morning, the Church of St. Joseph, Chaentalay, Phuket was packed with its parishioners and visitors on the occasion of its feast day! Viva St. Joseph, the husband of Mary. The celebration was presided by Bishop Joseph Prathan of Surathani Diocese. Fr. Winai the Provincial was also present together with other Stigmatine confreres. The novices were also present and helped as altar servers. The celebration was made possible by the efforts and labors of Fr. Peter Pakpoom, the pastor of St. Joseph Church. It is also worth mentioning the angelic voice of the St. Joseph choir which add to the solemnity of the celebration. Meals were served after the said celebration.



ANNOUNCEMENT

THE NOVITIATE COMMUNITY ANNOUNCES THE SCHEDULE OF THE NEXT MONTH'S ACTIVITIES

APRIL 21 (FRIDAY) – ARRIVAL OF THE POSTULANTS

APRIL 23 - 27 (SUNDAY TO THURSDAY) - RETREAT TOGETHER WITH THE NOVICES

APRIL 29 (SATURDAY) - ACCEPTANCE TO THE NOVITIATE

APRIL 30 (SUNDAY) - FIRST PROFESSION (ASSUMPTION CHURCH)

MAY 2 (TUESDAY) - DEPARTURE OF THE NEWLY PROFESSED TO MANILA

★HAPPY★ BIRTHDAY!

to all March birthday celebrants
especially to:

4th March - Fr. Marlon, CSS

10th March - Fr. Phillip, CSS and Bro. Herohito, CSS

14th March - Bro. Paul John, CSS

15th March - Nov. Norielgar

18th March - Bro. Carlos, CSS

21st March - Nov. Ryan Mark

31st March - Fr. Dennis, CSS and Fr. Jufer, CSS

