

From The Editor

This is the second publication of Volume II of the Congregational magazine "Brothers FIC" reaching you. The theme of this issue is "Community living, prayer and apostolate." We would like to share with our readers how the brothers try to witness to the love of God through these three pillars of our life. These are three broad topics, and we do not intend to treat them in detail; rather we wish to give you a gist of how we give each a place in our life as there is often tension in bringing a balance among them. There are times our life places an intense stress on community living; at another time we are consumed by prayer; and yet in a certain period, our whole attention is on apostolic work, sometimes to the near neglect of one or the other aspects. The struggle to strike a balance among them has often led to challenges in our living, but we wish to remain faithful to them in order to accomplish the ideals our founders left us.

Articles 6 and 59 of our Constitutions state the importance of these pillars in our life: *"In Jesus' name we form a fraternal community; in his Spirit we strive to be brothers to one another and to all humankind. Our Congregation is a pontifical, religious institute for male lay-religious who are dedicated to apostolic works"* (no. 6). *"Continuous concern for communal and personal prayer is an essential part of our life as religious. We intend to be people of prayer and to interlace our lives more and more with moments of prayer"* (no. 59). Thus we intend to pay equal attention to each of them as the essential ingredients of our life as brothers.

Beloved reader, you will be reading about some experiences of our fellow brothers regarding the theme stated above. We know we are still far from the ideal but in various ways we strive daily to reach the ideal as religious. Bro. Augustine, our General Superior, reflects on his experience in connection with the three ingredients. Bro. Raphael gives his impressions on the fundamental elements of these pillars, while Bro. Maarten Bouw shares a compilation of some important quotations on community living.

Dear reader, as usual we present some reflections, experiences and opinions of our brothers around the globe on the above theme. Two Brothers will provide their profiles: Isidore Aabeisie, headmaster of FIC Jubilee School in Nandom (Ghana) and Valentinus Naryo, headmaster of St. Johanes Senior High School in Ketapang (Indonesia). We believe that from their sharing, our young readers will be inspired and further discover the meaning in our life and work. Bro. Basilide Dong shares a brief reflection on *"Our call and mission to live the spirituality of the congregation."* The rest are news from our provinces and Religious House Netherlands, news in pictures, an article from the Vatican and a short piece about Mary written by Bro. Nimorious Ganee.

In the spirit of living together, praying together and working together, we FIC brothers wish to continue to reflect deeply on the three pillars as an important means of witnessing to the love of God among people. During this special period of Yuletide, allow us to wish you "A Happy and Blessed Christmas!" May the king of peace bring true peace especially to conflict areas of the world and may He inflame our hearts to enable us discover Christ in one another. Thank you for your attention and support to the FIC Congregation.

2 GENERAL SUPERIOR
Community Life, Prayer and Apostolate

4 REFLECTION
The Three Pillars of Religious Life

4 GENERAL COUNCIL
Report and Impressions
FIC Leadership Workshop / Con-Con
2019, The Netherlands

12 PROVINCIAL EVENT
Annual Retreat and First Profession of Vows
New Novices In Malawi
Launching the 100th Anniversary
of FIC in Indonesia
Celebration Jubilarians
Religious House The Netherlands

16 PICTURE NEWS

17 PROFILE
My Religious Life Journey: Bro. Isidore Aabeisie
I thank Thee, O Lord: Bro.Valentinus Naryo

24 SPECIAL COLUMN
Community Life
Our Call and Mission To Live
The Spirituality Of The Congregation

27 NEWS FROM THE VATICAN
On World Mission Day,
The Pope Urges Catholics to Share
Christ's Love With All

28 MARY
Mary and My Life
As A Religious FIC Brother



Community Life, Prayer and Apostolate



I have been living Community life for the past 27 years now. The Emmaus community here in Maastricht (The Netherlands) is my 10th official community since I joined the brothers in October 1992. For religious younger than me, they would expect that I know better how to live in a community. However, I see myself as a "continuing student" learning each day how to cope with challenges in community life and how to be a better community member. The basic elements of a religious community include, living, praying and working together. We form a community for a common purpose namely, to daily search for the will of God. As a community, we inspire, encourage and support one another in our being religious. To guide the common search, we

elect leaders to exercise various tasks (service in authority) that will keep the community united.

Members of a religious community are not born and raised by the same "mother". They even do not come from the same biological family, culture or geographical location on earth. We are a group of people with different personalities and cultural upbringings but only profess the same faith. Each member comes into the community therefore with varied gifts and experiences; with a mixture of good and bad, darkness and light, love and hate. It is best therefore when community members try to "help carry one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2) knowing that each one of us is a burden for others to carry. We are neither perfect nor do we live with flawless people. Yet a community is a place where each member voluntarily joins and desires freedom, fulfilment and life without fear.

Members of an evangelical community may experience a fulfilling community living if they are passing from "the community for myself" to "myself for the community" (Kaitholil, 2017). Sometimes weaknesses such as envy and jealousy tend to ruin community life. For example, a narrow understanding of the success of a community member or if a member so credits himself with great success without acknowledging the support of his community members this could lead to conflict. It will be necessary that during the initial formative period that we make candidates aware of this "destructive tendency" present within every one of us. The hallmark of a real community life is the ability to raise each member to the discovery of his best and most singular capacities. Also vital is the fact that prayer should be like a "belt" that always unites, inspires and encourages a healthy community living.

Prayer life shines a light on community life and its mission. It helps the community members to grow, to endure, to develop, to live better and fulfil its mission. By faithfully listening to the Word of God we could uphold our communion and the life of faith. As believers, we express and strengthen our

prayer life through liturgical and communal prayers. The Eucharist is the centre and the highest point of communion with God and fellow brethren. It is true, therefore, to observe that an intense prayer life sustains the community and its apostolate. When prayer life is weak, the quality of fraternal communion is not different.

Aristotle astutely observes that "we become builders by building and harpists by playing the harp" (Vost, 2017). Thus, one becomes a genuine community member by the quality of his contributions in body, soul and spirit. Individuals can appropriately moderate and control their passions through our God-given reasoning abilities which we get through prayer. We all need to seek a place and time where and when we can turn off all electronic distractions and be by ourselves to pray, to do spiritual reading, or to sit and to hear God speak to us. "The glory of God is a man fully alive, and the life of man is the vision of God" said St. Irenaeus.

The episode of Jesus' visit to the home of Martha and Mary (Luke 10: 38-42) eloquently draws a clear relationship between prayer and apostolate. Jesus rebuked Martha not because she was busy in the kitchen but for her inattentive interior attitude betrayed by her annoyance with her sister (Mary). This has heightened the contrast between the two women, to the point of seeing in them respectively

the example of an active (Apostolic) life that is too scattered and the model of the contemplative (Prayer) life lived out in silence, listening, and interior prayer. The unpleasant consequences of such a being emerged in the gospel account. They include the experience of panic, fear of working without help, inattentive interior attitude, easy irritability, the feeling that God or the Religious Superior is leaving us alone in our apostolate without help (Sarak, 2016). These are self-imposed suffering not for only an individual member but the entire community (FIC Constitutions art. 32 and also 1Cor. 12: 26). Thus, all activities of a religious must precede from an intense life of prayer, contemplation, seeking and listening to God's will.

Dear fellow brothers and friends let us keep striving harder to become the best that God calls us to be. As community members, we are great gifts to each other and no gift is more important than the other. The God who created us knows us best. He does not expect more than what we are. Our duty is not to save the world; that is part of the "job definition" of Jesus Christ. As Blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta once said, ours is to continue faithfully contributing as best as possible to the continuing mission of Jesus Christ till we meet God face to face.

Bro. Augustine Kubdaar, General Superior, The Netherlands



The Three Pillars of Religious Life

[Bro. Raphael Besigrinee]

Source: Published articles of Ernest Larkin
<http://www.carmelnet.org/larkin/larkin.html>

Our life as Brothers FIC is built on three fundamental areas of religious life, namely Community Life, Apostolate and Prayer. Sometimes, they are simply referred to as living together, working together and praying together respectively. These three elements further give support to the living of the three vows of poverty, obedience and Chastity.

Community Life: Community life is one of the pillars of religious life, so as brothers consecrated and sent to continue Jesus' mission we wish to imitate some aspects of Jesus' life as exemplified by the first Christian community recorded in Acts of the Apostles:

All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another. They would sell their property and possessions, and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed. Day after day they met as a group in the Temple, and they had their meals together in their homes, eating with glad and humble hearts... (Acts 2:44-46).

As part of our life in community, sharing of spiritual goods which includes our talents, ideas, our desire for good, the gift of our faith, our daily experience of God, our religious vocation stories and charism, among others, enriches our communion. By our consecration all religious are bound to God and also to a religious community. Members of a religious community are called to share common life in a number of ways. Spiritually, they live together by sharing their brotherhood, friendship and the spirit of their founders. Materially, their life is characterized by pooling their resources together and depending on the community for all their needs. Apostolically, every religious proves his commitment to the community by contributing to the work of Jesus Christ through the charism of their congregation. Displaying unity in community life is a clear witness to the presence of Christ among people and the world. Community therefore becomes one of the pillars because it is a non-negotiable



element of religious life; any kind of life without community is not to be called religious life.

There are individual as well as communal sacrifices on the part of religious brothers like FIC. Collectively, the brothers must not simply be spectators but actors, each with his part to play, each contributing his share to the growth of each and the building of fraternity. Each brother is responsible for the creation of community. The quality of life of a local community depends on the goodness of its members. The human, spiritual and religious development among its members depends heavily on the contribution of each member, and thus each is responsible in ensuring the wellbeing and happiness of the others.

Article 37 of the FIC Constitutions spells out one important way of building a fraternal community: "Forming a community means: to be near to one another in joy and sorrow; to be willing to understand one another; to appreciate, encourage, and inspire one another; to be ready to forgive one another again and again; seek to do good to one another and to all." So our Rule becomes an important guide to our formation of brotherly communion.

Community life is not always a bed of roses. It has its difficult moments, and a lot of joyful moments as well. What is important is to be able to talk openly about such trials and tensions, those linked to internal causes as well as those resulting from external causes. Both offer opportunities for growth in community.

Apostolate: As Christians and religious, we are consecrated and sent into the world to imitate Jesus' example and to continue his mission. We are therefore apostles of Christ. An apostle is a sent one, an ambassador, a delegate, one who is sent forth or commissioned and authorized by God to carry out His will and purposes. The content of our apostolic mission as FIC is spelt out in articles 15 to 18 of our Constitutions: First, to continue the work of Jesus, that is to do good, to witness to the truth, to serve, to redeem, to bring the liberating message (message of love) of the kingdom of God to people and to place ourselves at the service of His kingdom.

We engage in apostolate with the awareness that it is an assignment given by God and we are not so much concerned about rewards as with the growth of people in the knowledge of God. It is enough to feel satisfied when the dignity of the underprivileged is raised, and their life and hopes restored. It is through apostolate, defined by our Constitutions and through our contact with people that we seek to love and serve God. The 25th chapter of Matthew's Gospel is a keystone of our spirituality: "When I was hungry you gave me to eat. When I was thirsty you gave me to drink. "FIC wants to hear the statement: "when I was ignorant, you educated me."

Article 20 of our Rule gives us an important injunction on how to do apostolate. It starts by saying "*Apostolate is more than mere working*". The apostolate we do is a practical way of loving people; it is meant to raise people's dignity; and it is aimed at the betterment of the lives of the recipients. Far from glorifying ourselves or expecting external rewards, apostolate is meant rather to build the kingdom of love. To ensure that we are imbued with an apostolic spirit, all those whom we serve should see that God has entered their lives through our ministry. Do we FIC ensure

the presence of God in the work we do? In our ministry with students, do we sense that God is touching them? Do the children recognize FIC Brothers as people proclaiming God? If the Spirit is fully alive in us, our apostolic activities will surely be a striking sign in the world that the Kingdom of God is among us.

Prayer: As religious we need to pray. Religious consecration cannot be lived without prayer. In prayer, the religious concentrates his heart on God, so as to know and love Him more and more deeply. Our prayer life is meant to deepen our personal union with God, to prepare us to proclaim the Gospel and to enable us receive the grace to live our religious vows at each moment of our life. This is the reason why it is one of the pillars because the strength of the religious brother lies in prayer.

In prayer we open our hearts to the Father so as to have a personal experience of the one that has called us. In prayer we experience our littleness and weakness, all of which help us to understand and tolerate the weaknesses of others. Without prayer we run the risk of trying to prove to our brothers that we are self-sufficient. As religious our life is, above all, a God-centered life; the principal and prime duty of all religious is to have a constant union with Christ through prayer.

The Eucharist is the highest form of our unity as religious brothers, with God and fellow Christians. It is the sign of our unity in love for each other. At the same time it energizes and strengthens us through the bread broken and shared, hence it consolidates the unity and fraternal communion. Prayer/Eucharistic celebration is the bed rock of the brothers' life in community. Our prayer life is therefore very essential, and it is the spring from which we draw strength in order to perform other roles as religious.

Integration Prayer and Community life

Prayer and community life are the two supreme values in Christian and religious life. Prayer is the privileged expression of the love of God, the vertical dimension of Christian existence. In community we express fraternal love, the horizontal dimension of our existence. "The entire life of members of a

religious community like ours should be penetrated by an apostolic spirit, just as our entire apostolic activity should be animated by a religious spirit." Praying is tentatively seeking God in love. *The quest for God cannot be detached from our common life (Const. #61).*

Prayer and Apostolate

Prayer, in whatever form - contemplation or vocal, individual or communal is "the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." It renews the strength of the Apostle on his missionary journey of apostolate. The interplay of prayer and apostolate is often termed contemplation in action. Contemplation should be part of the religious identity. It is the energy of religious life. Without a strong and clear spiritual life, the best work in the world is purely social work, whether it is done by religious or not. *A constant danger for apostolic workers is to become so much involved in our work for the Lord, as to forget the Lord of all work*" (Pope Francis). However hard we work and in whatever situation we are it is necessary that there should be moments in our lives for personal and communal reflection.

Apostolate and community

Our life in community forms our most immediate apostolate since we are called to assist one another in charity and unity, by our prayers and support for one another. Moreover, living in community is itself a proclamation of the Good News to others. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13, 35). Living together is apostolate. This is because article 51 of our constitutions says that "...every brother should be concerned with the happiness of his fellow brothers. The better we live up to this apostolate at home, the better we shall together be able to spread happiness to the outside world."

Every religious community is a "formation house" for our apostolate. This is because it is in community we learn to love and serve our fellow brothers. Here, we engage in an internal apostolate of being hospitable to those who come to our community. "... fraternal communion, as such, is already an apostolate; in other words, it contributes directly to the work of evangelization.

(CICL& SAL, p.20). At the end of FIC General Chapter 1994, the General Superior issued the following message to help brothers foster the integration of the three elements of our life: The apostolate is meaningful because in action the contemplation dimension can get shape too. That is to say, in the encounter with fellow human beings you can also encounter God.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our apostolic life has a number of supporting systems which are closely connected. Apart from it being spiritually rooted, apostolate should be done in the spirit of Jesus who is the source of it and entrenched in the spirit of our founders. For brothers to be deeply infused with an apostolic spirit, they first of all need to have the personal experience of being sent to be a witnesses of God's love among God's people. We need to find a way of putting in place a system that will allow a continuous attention to the three pillars of our life. Therefore, a constant reminder to attend to all is vital in keeping a balance among them. The vows we profess are a fundamental support to building a brotherly community. The vow of obedience helps us to search for the will of God in our brotherhood. The vow of celibacy helps in promoting communion because brothers in one local community become each other's keeper. The vow of poverty develops in us a sense of openness and makes us aware of our brothers' needs as well as serve all people in charity, especially the poor thereby building the kingdom of God. All in all, the vows thus express our commitment in living this communion which is a model and source of communion for all Christians.



Report and Impressions of the Leadership Workshop / Congregational Conference 2019, The Netherlands

Bro. Raphael Besigrinee



A leadership workshop for all FIC Provincial Councils and Council of the Religious House Netherlands (RHN) was organized at the Carolus Borromeus (CB) Sisters convent "Onder de Bogen", in Maastricht, The Netherlands from 2 to 16 October 2019. The participants comprised 5 brothers from Ghana, 4 from Malawi, 3 from Chile, 5 from Indonesia, 3 from the RHN, and 5 members of the General Council plus the General Treasurer. The meeting was officially opened by the General Superior, Bro. Augustine Kubdaar and attended by fellow brothers from the RHN, associated members and friends around Maastricht. In his official opening address, the General Superior informed participants that the content of the workshop would be based on the Spirituality of FIC Leadership. He reminded the gathering that this international meeting was meant to fulfill resolution 8A of the General Chapter 2018. The purpose of the workshop is to provide help to leaders of the Congregation (both Provincial and General Councils) to better understand our mission and task for the coming six years.

The first eight days of the meeting was devoted to the workshop which is the spiritual dimension of our leadership. We focused on a variety of issues

including the official document of the church, issued by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, concerning religious leadership entitled "The Service of Authority and Obedience". The document comprised three parts and each part was treated in four ways, namely input, reflection, group work and plenary discussion. Other topics we attended to include team building, effective communication, servant leadership, dealing with differences, thinking with the church, leadership of our founders, eco-leadership and Canon Law for religious.

As religious we are called to accomplish the will of God in community. Love of God and love of neighbor provide the framework for the building of a fraternal community which is "one of the fundamental tasks of consecrated life." Persons in authority are expected to promote the growth of fraternal life through the service of listening and dialogue, sharing and co-responsibility, and the participation of everyone, among others. But a leader cannot build a community alone. We are called to discern and carry out the will of God in fellowship.

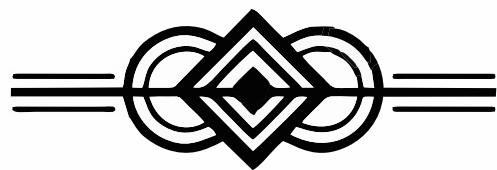
Another important element of our life is mission. Jesus reflects the mission of the Father. Our mission as religious is nothing more than the mission of Jesus. To collaborate in the mission of Jesus is to make ourselves the place of His presence and to create the possibility for others to meet Him in us. Supported by members of the community, persons in authority are responsible for the animation of the community while striving to maintain a balance between individual needs and the requirements of the community.

The last three days were dedicated to business matters, the so-called Congregational Conference. We dealt with issues concerning the policies of the congregation. Through discussions and sharing, we explored ways in which we could best implement the General as well as the

Provincial Chapter 2018 resolutions. We spent time to share provincial reports and discuss formation, communication, constitutional regulations and financial matters.

Not everything was about business. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, the saying goes! Thus, after eight days of hard work we had the opportunity to go out of Maastricht to breathe different air. The first place to visit was an old coal mine in Blegny, a town in Belgium. We were offered a guide and soon lowered in a cage 30 to 60 meters down the shaft. The one-and-a-half hour tour was exciting but also exposed us to the story of the very difficult and inhuman conditions that men, women and even children had to work, just to earn wages and look after their families. The next place of visit was Monschau in Germany, an old, small town usually flooded with tourists. The day passed quickly and soon saw us back in Maastricht, where we ended our day with supper at our country recreation house "De Schark".

During this encounter, we became aware that as an international family our source of unity remains our union with God through morning reflections that began the day and the Eucharistic celebration that concluded each day's deliberation. Even during our meals and recreation we experienced our being one despite our different backgrounds. On October 16, the encounter came to an end with a Eucharistic celebration led by Rev. Fr. Koos Janssen (SMA). In his closing address, the General Superior acknowledged that all the objectives of the workshop were fulfilled except the last one which has to do with testing and proving by the daily realities of our lives that we are true servant leaders. He called on all FIC brothers (not only leaders) to be open and guided by the holy "rule", the scriptures, Canon Law, chapter resolutions, our Constitutions and our Congregational/Provincial Statutes in all the decisions we make.



My Impressions of the Leadership Workshop / Congregational Conference 2019, The Netherlands

Bro. Gerard Langelaan



This Congregational gathering took place in Maastricht at the CB Sisters from the 2nd - 16th October 2019. Participants were the entire General Council, the General Treasurer, all provincial councils and the RHN Council. Support was provided by the secretariat in the persons of Leny and Willy, and finally Bro. Lo Koeleman who assisted in practical matters. The main theme of the conference was drawn from the vatican document entitled *"The Service of Authority and Obedience"* and for our daily reflections and prayer, we used the book of Bro. Bernardus namely *"Rules of Conduct for Superiors"*. In what ways did our founders visualize how superiors should lead our communities? And what qualities do they need? What does this mean for us in 2019? And what can we learn from them in our time? On behalf of the RHN, Bro. Johan Muijtjens gave a presentation on "Leadership of our Founders". He gave a very interesting exposure on the social, cultural and religious context within which our founders lived. The leadership style of our founders was based on fraternal love and a deep concern for the personal wellbeing of each brother. He touched on the characteristics of a good and effective leader to include vision, mission and strategy. Other values that can make

our leaders effective are communication, collaboration, delegation and accountability.

In addition, topics such as teamwork and team building, eco-leadership, spirituality and management of our goods, financial issues, insight into Canon Law, and effective communication were discussed. Given the number of topics, it can be said that we had a busy time. Much praise goes to Bro. Frans School who had prepared and worked out matters conscientiously for the RHN. Furthermore, ample time was given to the provinces to share their "worries and joyful matters" that play a role in our communities. Each province also had the task to put together a morning prayer service and preparing the Eucharistic celebration. Both the morning reflections and evening Eucharistic celebrations were very well prepared and were in line with the theme of the day.

My personal expectations

My first expectation was to meet as many fellow brothers as possible that I hardly knew or never met at all. It was also my desire to acquire some practical "tools / advice" to enable me become a better member of the RHN council as well as looking forward to deepening my motivation for being a functional member of the RHN Council. I realized that the responsibilities - in my case as member of the RHN council - are completely different from the responsibilities I had in my professional and working life.

Despite the cultural and religious differences, I experienced the spirit of unity within the group. Unity in diversity is a well-known motto in our congregation! In dealing with each other during leisure times and other informal contacts, I experienced our internationality, regardless of our nationalities. Each provincial group met several times to discuss issues on leadership. Apart from this, each of the provincial groups had the opportunity to meet the other to celebrate and pray together, share joys and worries, recreate together, among others. All these contributed immensely to strengthening the bonds of unity within the Congregation, building trust and the spirit of commitment to our leadership teams and to each other. After all, we are all members of the

same FIC Congregation. As a Council of RHN, we will certainly pay attention to some areas of the workshop in our living together as Religious House.

I would like to thank members of the General Council and Bro. Remy for the way the workshop was organized and presented. Apart from their individual presentations, all GC members took turns to lead the discussions during the workshop and this was very good. All discussions, presentations and group work provided opportunities to learn new things. Plenary discussions were very open and friendly.

Finally, I particularly want to thank one brother who helped me enormously during the two weeks' encounter. He gave me a lot of support anytime I consulted him, whether during the day or night. He was always there for me when it was necessary. Thank you very much Bro..... "Google Translate".

My Impressions of the Leadership Workshop / Congregational Conference 2019, The Netherlands

Bro. Trustful Mwachande



I really enjoyed the workshop because it was very insightful and interactive. It was an excellent way of bringing the leadership teams of our provinces together. The presentations were interesting and a real eye-opener for me, thus it was refreshing and motivating. There are many

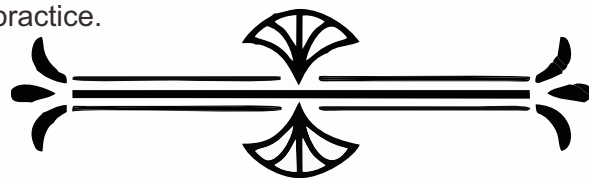
areas of my life I recognized from the encounter that can be made better with this experience.

The sessions that inspired me most were those on the document "The Service of Authority and Obedience", leadership of our founders, Canon Law for Religious, servant leadership, effective communication, dealing with differences, team building and thinking with the church. Central to all these were the practical presentations on eco-leadership and firmly supported by spirituality and the use and management of goods. Surely, all these inputs on leadership reasonably broadened my scope of knowledge.

All the presenters were very engaging and covered a wide range of topics which I feel appealed to everyone. I think everyone went away with some good action plans. I feel better equipped to manage after completing the course. This was my objective at the beginning. I would recommend the course to other brothers as it provides good learning points on how to render servant leadership efficiently and give simple yet powerful rules applicable to the life of all brothers.

Additionally, the workshop was practical yet intensive, with very useful team building exercises. The facilitators were enthusiastic and conscious of what they were presenting. It provided many skills to think about from a new perspective, thus all topics were relevant to the 'real world' with a lot to work on after the workshop. There was a realistic balance between theory and practice and the concepts were clearly and professionally explained. Above all the homely and social interactions among the brothers made me feel at home throughout.

My gratitude to the organizers for this wonderful encounter. The content was useful and very relevant to me in my personal, religious and professional life. I will definitely put these skills into practice.



My Impressions of the Leadership Workshop / Congregational Conference 2019, The Netherlands

Bro. Martinus Gendut Suwardi



There is a saying in *Bahasa Indonesia*, "**jauh berjalan banyak dilihat, lama hidup banyak dirasa**," which means the more people visit places, the more experiences and knowledge they gain. It has actually happened in my life. The proof is found in this recent event when we, the FIC provincial councils, gathered in the Netherlands to attend a workshop on leadership. During the workshop, we deepened our knowledge in several subjects including the document of "Service of Authority and Obedience, communication skills and effective communication, Canon Law and financial management. The materials were presented well by the General Council, the General Treasurer, and Bro. Johan Muijtjens.

I am grateful to God for the opportunity to attend this workshop in spite of my limitations in the English language. All the same, I could follow the proceedings of the workshop with adequate understanding of what was presented. Besides, the experience of having the opportunity to interact with fellow brothers from other provinces was very motivating. My limited knowledge in English forced me to check my cell phone to see the Google translation when I met with difficult words. Since I often employed Google translation, some brothers called me Brother Google. I enjoyed this joke as one way of being closer with others, and

when a brother called me "Brother Google" I answered by saying "pray for us." Though the Indonesian delegation experienced difficulties in speaking English, we felt the spirit of brotherhood and togetherness during the workshop. I believe when we open our minds and hearts to others and to God's providence, we gain many beautiful experiences. We also experienced it as a spiritual encounter when we went on pilgrimage to the cemetery of our brothers and prayed in several churches.

Another interesting experience during the workshop include to testify the serious participation and the dedication of participants from other provinces especially the Religious House Netherlands (RHN). In spite of their age, they sacrificed their energy and time to ensure that their brothers who came from abroad were comfortable. I think what the RHN delegation did was a demonstration of a good example of leadership. They confirmed their full participation by doing all the assignments during the workshop and participated in every activity. When the participants had the opportunity of meeting with

the Carolus Borromeus (CB) Sisters, the brothers of the RHN sang a song that was composed by themselves. That was a wonderful initiative! I think if there was a jury during the occasion they would have judged the RHN delegation as the winner. They were indeed an inspiration to the group.

Finally, we realized that at the end of the gathering, we had acquired some resources and we have been sent back to our home provinces, our communities, to spread the good news of happiness and God's providence in every life activity. We are sure that what have been planted during the workshop would grow in every activity we do. We are grateful to the brothers who gave presentations during the workshop. May God bless abundantly our efforts and the hard work of all brothers. Nevertheless, we apologize for our language limitations during the workshop. But we believe that we did not disappoint the brothers due to this limitation. We have surely gained something and will definitely put to use the fruits of the workshop in our lives and apostolate. May God bless our efforts.



Annual Retreat and First Profession of Vows

GHANA

The annual retreat of the Brothers FIC Ghana Province was held from 31 August to 6 September 2019 at St. Louis Community, Wa under the theme "The Importance of Community as a Home in the Life of the Religious". A total of thirty brothers attended it. In his welcome address, the vice Provincial Superior Bro. Clement Nangpiire commended the participants for the massive turnout for this year's retreat, and introduced the preacher in the person of Rev. Fr. Charles B. Kabir (OFM.Conv.).

In his opening session, Fr. Charles stated that every retreat offers the participants the golden opportunity of re-doing everything but in better ways than before. To be able to re-do everything in a better way after the retreat, one needed to be guided by the spiritual password "DOFT" which he explained as Docility, Openness, Flexibility and Truth, thus "The truth will make you free" (Jn 8:31-32). Participants were requested to do a practical exercise by writing down their expectations of the retreat. At the end of the retreat each should again make a resolution at the personal and congregational levels and pursue them, to enable them re-do things but in better ways, and do them in the spirit of our founders.

He then went deeper into the community dynamics that shape community life. A true religious community is one in which each one is true to his person and accepted despite one's weaknesses. There is no such thing as a perfect community. It is the love of God and love of neighbour that remains the foundation of every Christian community. For a community to be a home and not just a house, one must also pay heed to the four golden rules of courtesy which are indispensable in community living. These are the ability and willingness to say sorry, thank you, please and excuse me.

The preacher encouraged each brother to try and stick to the individual resolutions on their return to the communities. He warned that



living by these resolutions would not be easy but it is not also impossible to live by them.

On September 7, 2019 in the Chapel of In Service Training Centre (Wa), Bro. Seregeous Dery the Provincial Superior, accepted the first profession of two candidates, namely Callistus Yengdem and Prosper Ganye. The Eucharistic celebration that marked the event was presided over by Most Rev. Paul Bemile, Bishop Emeritus of Wa. The celebration which had the theme Called to Serve, was attended by fellow brothers, priests, religious men and women in and around Wa, parents and relatives of the candidates and the choir of St. Cecilia's parish. Welcoming the congregation, the Provincial was thankful to the parents of the candidates for generously offering their sons to religious life especially the FIC family. He acknowledged the fact that the celebration was made possible because of the positive response of the two young men to their call.

He added that first profession is just the beginning of their journey toward the permanent state of our life and therefore demands a lot sacrifices. The Bishop in his homily encouraged the two young men to take the word of God seriously in their lives. Drawing inspiration from the prophet Ezekiel, the Bishop enjoined the Candidates to "chew, masticate, digest and assimilate the Word of God, making it part of their lives." He presented a Bible to each of them and encouraged them to continuously study the Word of God. After the mass, all present were invited to In- Service- Training- Centre for refreshments and light entertainment.

New Novices In Malawi

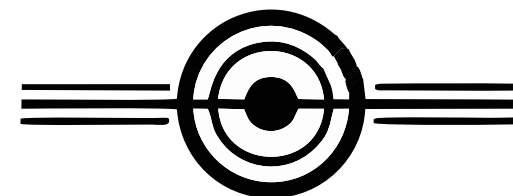
MALAWI

Sunday 8 September 2019, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was a significant day in Malawi province as two pre-noviċes were admitted into the canonical year novitiate to mark the start of life in our Congregation. They are Peter Samuel and Lucius Potiphar. Also, three other young men namely, Joe Muliya, Gasper Kalisto and Daniel Kanyadamoveda who have been in initial formation for the past two years, moved a step ahead on their initial formation ladder into the second year novitiate.

The Eucharistic celebration to mark the ceremony of transitions took place in the formation house in Mzedi and was led by Father Alfred Nsope, Parish Priest of Mzedi. The function was attended by a good number of FIC brothers, heads of FIC secondary schools in Mzedi, parishners and youth of the parish and a Sister of Carmelite order.

After the ceremony, all present were invited for supper in Mzedi community. It was all joy among the FIC brothers and parishners to witness the growth of religious life in Malawi and Mzedi parish in particular. We therefore thank God for the gift of these five young men who have shown particular interest in our beloved congregation.

Bro. Mike Mbato, Malawi



The two new canonical year novices



Three second year novices with the provincial superior and head teachers of FIC secondary



Outside the chapel

Launching the 100th Anniversary of FIC in Indonesia

INDONESIA

On Tuesday, September 20, 2019 the FIC brothers in Indonesia launched the 100th anniversary celebration of the arrival of the first brothers in Indonesia under the theme "Gratitude 100 Years of FIC Mission in Indonesia - Building Community and Apostolate". This official opening of the Jubilee year was marked in a Eucharistic celebration led by Mgr. Blasius Pujaraharja, Bishop Emeritus of Ketapang diocese and attended by FIC brothers around Yogyakarta, FIC community leaders in Java, religious brothers and sisters, priests, our co-workers and colleagues around Yogyakarta. The choice of Yogyakarta for the launching is significant because this became the first FIC community established in Indonesia in 1920.

As part of the launching, the Provincial Superior of Indonesia, Bro. F.A. Dwiyatno, delivered a speech in which he invited his fellow brothers to be grateful for the arrival of the first five FIC missionary brothers in Indonesia, namely Bro. August, Bro. Constantius, Bro. Lebuinus, Bro. Euftradius, and Bro. Ivo. Brothers were invited to relive the events of Sunday, August 8, 1920 in Maastricht. It was after the Great Mass in the main chapel of De Beyart that Bro. August was appointed the first brothers' house leader in the Dutch East Indies, namely Yogyakarta. St. Francis Xavier was the patron of this first house. On September 20, 1920, the five FIC brothers arrived in Yogyakarta and initiated the work of FIC missions outside Europe.

The Indonesian brothers need to be grateful because as it turned out, FIC became the first brother Congregation that specifically paid attention to native children. This is certainly in line with the spirit of Mgr. Rutten and Bro. Bernardus Hoecken, because they strongly emphasized that the brothers pay attention to those who are the poorest, weakest, and most forgotten in society. In the context of the presence of brothers FIC in Indonesia, indigenous children were the poorest, weakest and most excluded.



During this august gathering, Bro. Dwiyatno also announced a number of activities marking the Jubilee year. All planned activities are related to the resolutions of the 2018 General and Provincial Chapters, especially those calling our attention to the poor and care of the environment. By using 100 as a symbolic number, a series of activities were considered, namely scholarships for 100 poor students and assistance to 100 poor families. Regarding the movement of caring for the environment, 100 flowers and fruit trees will be planted. One of the chapter concerns is lack of vocations, and to respond to this, a meeting of 100 Catholic young men will be held with the aim of introducing the FIC brothers' vocation to them.

Various thanksgiving activities have also been earmarked in the area of our spiritual life. Through daily prayers, novena prayers, monthly reflections, and quarterly recollections, the brothers intend to express their gratitude to God for the special blessings of the jubilee. Another important activity to be held as part of this historic event is to reflect on our history. Thus, two gatherings will be organized. First, there will be a workshop on the presence and role of the FIC Congregation in the Church and the Indonesian society in the past and future. Second, there will be a provincial recollection on FIC Spirituality during the climax of the celebration on 20 September 2020. Bro. Dwiyatno is encouraging each brother to be actively involved in every planned activity as a way of expressing our gratitude to God as well as to the brothers who have gone before us. Two foundations within the province, namely Yayasan Pangudi Luhur (YPL) and Yayasan

Budi Mulya Semarang (YBMS) will also be involved in several Jubilee activities to mark this special event.

At the celebration, Bro. Dwiyatno also introduced and explained the Jubilee logo. There are three main facets in the logo: the "gunungan" (mountain image from the shadow puppets performance), FIC Cross, and the map of Indonesia. What is quite interesting is that the gunungan image, which is typically a Javanese symbol, has Dayak batik motifs. This illustrates the encounter of different cultures that were also experienced by the first missionary brothers, and will always be met by every missionary wherever they are sent. The hope is that every brother will always be ready take up his cross, to continue the mission of serving the poor just as was done by the first missionary brothers in Jogjakarta in 1920. Therefore, the logo also includes the Jubilee year theme, which is "Gratitude 100 years of FIC Mission in Indonesia - Building Community and Apostolate".

Bro. Theodorus Suwariyanto

Celebration Jubilarians Religious House The Netherlands

NETHERLANDS

On 14 and 15 August 2019 we celebrated the diamond jubilees of our fellow-brothers Kees van de Wiel and Johan Muijtjens.

In the afternoon of the 14th a meditative celebration took place in the Beyart chapel. The theme was "Being brother of God and people in humbleness and connectedness". Mr. Le?on Huybregts and Sr. Claudia Theinert led the service. Parts of the celebration were visualised on a screen. Psalm 8 was read (with images) and a prayer from Laudato Si' about the richness of creation. There was a reading from John about love. Sr. Claudia held a homily about the theme, with Spanish music and beautiful pictures from Chile where Bro. Kees had been working during fifty years. After the service the jubilarians were congratulated wholeheartedly and we enjoyed a Chinese-Indonesian buffet in the restaurant of The Beyart.

On the 15th we started with a solemn Eucharistic celebration in a full chapel. Pastor Huub Bovend'eerdts presided, assisted by the Brothers Henk van Lieshout and Yos



Berkemeijer. The Beyart choir took care of the songs, directed by Bro. Gerard Hermans with Mrs. Corrie Dam on the organ. Bro. Wim Luiten, superior of the Religious House, held the homily about "Mary, example of servitude". Together we renewed our vows and sang the FIC song "We honour both their names".

In the celebration were present: the General Council, the Brothers, members of the KGM (friends of the Brothers FIC), the staff of the GC and the RHN, all the residents of The Beyart, sisters and lay people. Also the new director of care home The Beyart, Mrs. Anke Huppertz, attended the festivities. After the Eucharistic celebration we came together in the hall for coffee/tea and a snack. The gathering was completed by a tasteful lunch in the restaurant.

In the evening the festive gathering was continued at The Schark, our country-seat, with a walking buffet. Enjoying the food we had ample opportunity for social contact. A group of students in Spanish dress presented Spanish folk songs and invited us to join them in a dance. Bro. Valentinus Daru showed us a Javanese dance and got a big applause. The General Superior, Bro. Augustine Kubdaar, addressed Bro. Kees and Bro. Johan with a personal talk, in which he expressed his great appreciation and shared with them some nice memories. Bro. Frans School and Mr. Leon Huybregts presented, together with all present, a suitable closing song on the two jubilarians, in which some highlights of their lives were revealed. All things together it was a nice and animated festive celebration, appreciated by everyone.

Frans School (RHN)



PICTURE NEWS



Bro. Frans Dwiyatno, Provincial Superior planting a tree in the garden of the Brothers in Jogjakarta to mark 100th anniversary FIC Brothers' presence in Indonesia (2019)



Participants of Leadership Workshop and Congregational Conference at Bezinningcentrum Carolus Borromeus (CB) Sisters in Maastricht, the Netherlands (2 -16 October 2019)



A joint meeting of the FIC candidates and temporary professed brothers in Muntlan, Indonesia (2019)



The Bishop of Wa, Most Rev. Richard K. Baawobr M. Afr. inaugurates Saint Louis Senior High School Sombo, in Wa, Ghana. (19 November 2019)



60th anniversary of Bros. Kees van de Wiel and Johan Muijtjens at the Schark, in Maastricht, the Netherlands, 2019.



Bro. Raphael Besigrinee is together with Bro. Diego Izquierdo Gallego (Provincial Superior of Chile Province) at the FIC week celebration during his working visit to Chile. (2019)

PROFILE

My Religious Life Journey: Bro. Isidore Aabeisie



Family background

I grew up in a Catholic family of the late Aabeisie Philibert and Innoncencia Gapag, both of blessed memory. I am the sixth born of seven siblings: three women and four men. My parents walked a distance of fifty-five kilometers from Nandom to Jirapa every Sunday to be taught catechism when the first missionaries arrived in this part of northern Ghana. As such they were very faithful, dedicated and committed Catholics. They were conscious of their religious and parental duties such as transferring their cherished faith to their children. No school existed at that time in this part of Ghana and so they were both illiterates. It was only their fifth born who was sent to school but he dropped out in primary three. I was the second to be sent to school and later, my younger sister Pauline.

They taught their children to say all the prayers they knew including morning and evening prayers and the angelus, which was said where ever we were at midday. A time table on our spiritual exercises was drawn for us indicating the day we should go for the sacrament of reconciliation. Woe betides you if you failed, as we were always reminded in the morning. It was the third Friday of every month. My mother supervised that. Each of us could be called at any time to lead the family prayers. This practice helped me to get used to leading prayers. I still remember when I was in class one, a Rev. Sister came to teach us

catechism and asked if any of us could say the angelus. I did it to the admiration of the whole class and I was given a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary which I took home to my mother. The family was very happy with this achievement. They also saw to the moral upbringing and good behaviour of their children. They inculcated in us the virtues of honesty, respect, hard work, truthfulness, among others.

My vocation story

In 1968 there was outbreak of an epidemic which killed three children in the nearby village and one in my village. I became a victim of the disease but survived miraculously. I say this because with the almost non-existent road and communication system at that time there was no way to access the medicine from the nation's capital except via airplane. The expatriate doctor managed to arrange for the medicine to be flown from Accra the nation's capital to Nandom Hospital where I was hospitalized. I still remember when I regained consciousness my father told me to be grateful to God for saving my life in such a miraculous way. I believe that was when the seed of my vocation was sown. My life would have ended there, and so the life I now live is a borrowed life. It therefore makes a lot of meaning to dedicate my life to the service of God.

As a boy growing up some elders made remarks that I would become a priest one day. I used to ponder on this daily. My companions at the teacher training college however, almost changed my plans. Through their influence, I was no more prayerful and dedicated to church services as I used to be. I suddenly wanted to be a banker after college. Like the prophet Jonah, I chose to teach in a remote place, far from my own people where I would not hear about going to the seminary. Surprisingly, soon after my arrival in that town, I was neck deep in church activities

again. I took two weeks to learn the local dialect and took up the teaching of catechism in the local parish. I also became the youth organizer and the parish laity and pastoral council secretary. With all these activities I reflected on my past and finally decided to write two applications, one to the seminary and the other to the Brothers FIC. It was FIC that gave me a reply and I started my aspirancy program that year. So like the prophet Jonah I wanted to run away but God brought me back.

I started my initial formation on 11th October 1991 after I had taught as a professional teacher for six years. I was then 33 years of age, against Cannon Law's maximum stipulated age of thirty. Due to studies at the University of Minnesota, Nairobi campus, I also had my final profession ten years after my first profession which is again a year more than the requirement of Cannon Law on temporary vows. All these for me are not just coincidental. I see the hand of God at work in all this. Some of the initial experiences in the congregation that helped me to grow and settle down as a brother were the warm welcome I received in the form of prayer service and the provision of my basic needs in St. Louis Formation Centre. These gave me the feeling of acceptance in the FIC family.

Life in the congregation

It should be noted that before I joined the brothers, their community life, prayer life and dedication to work were the source of my motivation. Above all, I desired to belong to a group that would assist me to be faithful to my God who has shown so much love for me. This has found fulfillment in the FIC family in the way the life is organized. Spiritually we have daily, weekly, monthly and yearly programs that provide opportunities for one to come close to his maker. These find expression in the morning and evening prayers, weekly prayer services, monthly recollections and the yearly retreats. The yearly or periodic evaluation of temporary professed brothers are for me fraternal guidance and moments of encouragement since they give an idea of who we are as persons and assist in our efforts to live our commitments. I am forever grateful to God for my vocation, the opportunity to serve him and the presence of my fellow brothers in community. I am mostly motivated and inspired

by two articles of the FIC Constitutions, namely 4 and 15. Growing toward Jesus: *Jesus reveals to us the image of a man who fulfils God's will completely. Consequently, to be a good person, to become a better person, means to us: to grow towards Jesus; to draw life from his life; to make the Good News of the coming of the kingdom of God our own message. We do this in a limited and impaired way, but also in the strength of Gods' grace which raises us above ourselves (art. 4).* This is the ideal I wish to pursue; it is a pointer, and daily I desire to model my life in this regard. I make the effort as best as I can knowing that I am limited. As expressed in the article, sometimes I marvel at what I am able to achieve by His grace.

Called together and sent out: *As brothers we know ourselves to be called together and thus sent out to continue the work of Jesus. He went round doing good, he was a witness to the truth, he came to serve, he came to redeem, and he brought the liberation message of the kingdom of God as a message of love. He invites us to place our selves completely in the service of this kingdom (art. 15).* Offering my life to God means to me being called to his service. I see all the favours I enjoy from him as an invitation to share my life with others. In this light, I see my fellow brothers as people who have had similar experience of God and together we wish to share this love with others and to be instruments of God. We need to support, encourage and inspire one another so that we may be strengthened to continue on our journey. When one is weak others provide him strength, when one is in despair the others give him hope, when in doubt faith, when in sadness others give joy, and in darkness others provide light. In this way we refill ourselves to go out and minister to God's people.

Community life

I have lived in four different communities in the province for twenty five years now. Community life is the bedrock of religious life. If community members are committed to duty, accept fraternal corrections and support one another, then every member would be encouraged to contribute to community building. There would be joy in this community and everyone would long to be a member. Our constitutions article 36 has this to say: *We are directed towards the happiness of our*



fellow beings; firstly towards the happiness of those with whom we form a community. We call one another brother and we try to live up to this word in our community. It is therefore the responsibility of each brother to work towards the happiness of other members of the community. I have also lived in a community where members cared very little about each other. Mistakes were easily identified while successes went unnoticed. Community meetings were full of tension as members were often afraid to make mistakes. Community meetings often lasted very long with some members partially participating. In such an atmosphere not all members are present at other community gatherings such as prayers, meals and recreation. There were difficulties in communication as it was not easy to get all community members together. One person can contribute to building or destroying a community. That is why the transfer of one brother to another community should not be taken for granted - not everything will remain the same. Steps should be taken to orient the brother into the existing climate of the community especially if the community is a lovely one. One senior brother ever said "the transfer of a brother is a blessing to the former community and a challenge to the receiving community". How do my community members perceive me? A community builder or one who ferments conflicts? I have lived with a brother who seemed to take delight in provoking fellow brothers

in the community, leading to quarrels; but there was one positive thing I learned from that brother: his humility! He was always quick to come back to the other to say sorry, and ask for forgiveness. I saw the spirit of humility in such behavior. Every brother has something very positive we can learn from. Acceptance of guilt and forgiveness if practiced well can quench fire in our communities. The common source of community conflicts surprisingly as I have experienced were mostly on material things like money, food and house car. We must from time to time examine our actions and inactions in terms of our contributions to the happiness of the community.

Leadership in community

Leadership in community has a big role to play in our life. I have been a house superior or assistant many times, and in all the communities I stayed. I have been a provincial councilor, a formator and a headmaster in many schools. All these gave me the opportunity to serve as leader and to play various leadership roles. As local superior I had a lot to contribute to community building. I had to be approachable, humble and sensitive to the needs of the individuals in the community. I was challenged to sacrifice my personal interest and work for the common good. I liked socializing outside but for the sake of the community I had to sacrifice and be present in the community always. I tried to be the first to do very essential things that many brothers in the community felt reluctant to do. I tried to live more by example than by words despite my own limitations. The few times I had to approach a brother for fraternal correction were my most challenging times, since I had to examine myself first and see if I have the moral courage to do so. The inability to face our own selves is the cause of our inability to correct others.

My apostolic life

One of the ways we witness to the love of Christ clearly is through our apostolate. We witness by our deeds. Like Jesus "Who went round doing good", FIC has been noted by many especially in Ghana province for our clear vision, dedication and the love we demonstrate in our apostolate. People have a lot of trust that whatever we do bears fruits. This was the evidence I got from many including Muslims when I started the first private

school in Ghana. Many came to share with me details on what they knew about the Brothers FIC. This was motivating and an acknowledgement of what FIC has done to the people of Upper West Region of Ghana and beyond. I thought people were ungrateful to FIC for our contribution in the church. They are not!

In my apostolate, I like to read about our founders, their vision and desire to make life better for others despite all the challenges they encountered. For me the congregation started the very day Mgr. Louis Rutten called together those two children from the streets of Maastricht to start his catechism lessons. This narration is my source of motivation, encouragement and desire to do what I have done in my apostolate for the past twenty-five years. One practical thing I did was to employ somebody solely to teach catechism in the new private school I started. This is in line with the spirit at the beginning of the congregation, since the moral standards of the Ghanaian society has fallen in our time. God has blessed this initiative because I was surprised that this became the source of attraction for many to come to the school. As said by our founder, "I laid the foundation; let each one take care how he builds upon it". Reflectively, let every FIC brother ask himself daily what he has contributed to the building of the congregation and that would be motivating enough to want to do more. I am sure our founders had no idea that what they did for those poor and neglected children of Maastricht would eventually become such a big congregation that many over the world would benefit from. We each need our personal conviction in what we do - that our efforts would bear fruits and the Almighty God will do the rest.

Conclusion

From my experience the success of my religious life is as a result of the support of my community. Community life is like a spring from which we draw our strength. It is from here we learn the unique culture of the FIC congregation. Community life is our spiritual life style, our support system and where we express our solidarity. It is here we witness the acceptable and unacceptable human conduct, where we socialize, practice fraternal correction, express our dedication to work, and learn to reconcile with one another.



The religious community is our new-found family. Just as every family has its cherished values and mode of achieving such values, FIC is also identifiable in the larger society by certain characteristics. Each of us has the responsibility to identify and live out this unique identity of the brothers. We represent the congregation wherever we find ourselves and we should be conscious that if one performs a desirable act the congregation is praised and all of us rejoice together. On the other hand if a brother causes a scandal in the society, it affects the whole congregation. That is why we should be each other's keeper in living this life.

With regard to our apostolate, if the community is lovely, the brother feels accepted and joyful, and this will radiate in his apostolate. However, if the brother is a worried person in the community his disposition at the apostolate is likely to be unproductive and disastrous. Let us look up to our master and Lord Jesus Christ for inspiration and good example in living our commitment and witnessing to the Good News.

[Bro. Isidore is the headmaster of the FIC Jubilee School in Nandom]



I Thank Thee, O Lord : Bro.Valentinus Naryo



My Family Life

I was born in Majaksingi village in Borobudur District in Central Java, a valley between two hills. You can imagine how cool and calm the village is. I am the 6th child in my family of 4 brothers and 3 sisters. One of my elder sisters is a religious in the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Notre Dame. We were born and baptized into a Catholic family.

Since childhood we were accustomed to praying and reading the scriptures together in our family. We took turns learning to lead the family prayers in the morning, at meals and evening, before going to bed. In our prayers every evening, my father always prayed asking that one of the children be called to the religious life. When we were kids, we visited the Sendang Sono Maria Shrine every week in May and October with our parents. On Sundays we always went to the church on foot, about 12 km from our house.

Since childhood we have learned to share with others. If we had food or

harvest from the garden we often shared it with neighbours; especially if they did not have what we had. Whenever guests came to our family, we were always told to greet and welcome them politely and in a friendly manner. So it was not surprising that our parents' families were always visited by our neighbours. Since childhood we have been trained to work hard. Farming became our occupation since childhood and my parents taught us how to work hard.

When I was in the 4th grade of elementary school, I was introduced to sell the farm produce at the market. So I got accustomed to selling the farm produce during holidays too. I was truly lucky that I was educated that way.

My Education

I went to Canisius in our village. During my childhood, at around the 4th grade of elementary school, I often imitated what the priest did after attending Mass. It was from then on I wanted to be a priest.

During my Junior High School education, I lived in the rectory, the priest's house. From here I got to know more about the life of priests. It was at this time that I felt more determined to become a priest. Since Junior High School, I was a member of the altar boys. Living in the rectory, I often had the opportunity to sell candles and serve the pilgrims in Sendang Sono Maria Shrine during the months of May and October.

After graduating from Junior High School, I continued my education at Pangudi Luhur Vocational School Muntalan (SMK). I lived a fully independent life during this time. Everything was taken care of by myself, including finding a student hostel. During this period, I used my free time to study the lives of traders in the bird market and the bicycle market. At one time after gaining enough knowledge from them, I carried out the practice of buying and selling, and trading in bicycles and pigeons. During my studies at the vocational school, I was able to save some money. My parents did not know what I was doing. Nevertheless, I finished my studies successfully.



and graduated with good results.

My Preparation for Formation

I had wanted to become a priest since I was in elementary school, yet after graduating from Vocational School, I decided to become a brother. To realize this goal, I always prayed the novenas to Mother Mary. I did the FIC brothers screening test with 53 young men. I was accepted with 14 of my fellow students as candidates for the FIC brothers. I was convinced that my acceptance in the entry test as a candidate for the FIC brothers was not by coincidence, but a call and choice from God through the mediation of Mother Mary.

The initial period as a postulant was a journey that was not easy as I had to adjust to various things and routines. I knew I could overcome all that by perseverance, loyalty, and patience in carrying out all activities such as prayer, Eucharist, studies, working and learning and accepting responsibility for the tasks entrusted to me.

As an FIC Brother

The event began when I was accepted to have the profession of vows as FIC brother. This meant that I had been declared a full member of the Congregation. Having this status, I began to be involved in the mission and apostolic work of the

brothers. From then on I learned to be responsible in real terms, able to contribute to our living together spiritually, and also in terms of the apostolic work of the FIC congregation. This I believe will actualize the values of the life revealed by the founders of the congregation.

The motto of my life as an FIC brother is "God is capable of doing far more than we can pray for or think of" (Ephesians 3: 20). This excerpt from the scriptures was originally my inspiration during the final period of my college studies. God has always been loyal to me in life and all the apostolic situations I face. God has always enabled me, frail as I am, to carry out my missionary work everywhere. As an FIC brother I have been very grateful because all this time God has always bestowed on me everything that I need to carry out His mission.

Never neglect the poor. This is one of the values of our founders that most strongly inspired my missionary life as an FIC brother, wherever I was sent, from the hinterland of Kalimantan to the Metropolitan city of Jakarta. Wherever there is FIC presence the apostolic work has always targeted the poor, in terms of material and non-material provision. In such a situation I was moved to pay attention to them. I am very grateful that I was trusted by the congregation to feel and experience the mission in these regions. Perhaps, because I come from a simple family and had a pretty good habituation in the family, I could adapt myself well in carrying out the mission anywhere I go. I have always found a "place" in my heart to pay special attention to the poor.

Life as a brother became increasingly challenging and more real, especially in living together, undergoing the task of further studies, and in carrying out apostolic work. "What I did not expect actually happened in my life". That was what I discovered since I started as an FIC candidate till the current time as a medior brother. During this missionary journey, so many things that I did not expect happened: sometimes life goes smoothly and with ease. At other times, failures and human weakness stare me in the face. At times I feel like a clay vessel that can easily be cracked, broken, and even destroyed.

However, I am grateful for all that has happened. I am very grateful that when I experienced failure in life, God loved me even more. God sent people, my fellow apostles as good friends, who strengthened and encouraged me to remain faithful, to persevere in the hope and love for the Almighty God. These are the experiences that make me rise and feel God's boundless love for me.

In carrying out my mission, I at times struggle to do it with the people whom God has entrusted to me. These could be brothers or prospective brothers, brothers in the same community, co-workers in the work unit, and relations. In times like these I was taught by God to be a humble person, who must rely on the power of God in my life. I was sent to build a community of brotherhood, so I had to be ready to face challenges. Life challenges and problems that I face, become light through self-awareness; awareness that my existence and presence everywhere is supported by my fellow brothers in the community and in the congregation. Besides, there are still many other support systems from those who love me with their prayers, such as the family, community of priests, brothers and sisters of my parish. I realize that I am being sent together with others; I am not alone.

I am fully aware that being an FIC brother means that I have an obligation to live up to the ideals and spirituality of our founders, Mgr. Louis Rutten and Bro. Bernardus Hoecken. That is the attitude of my heart and the actions that I always strive to realize wherever I am sent to do any mission.

My work as an FIC brother over the years

I pledged my temporary vows on July 2, 1990 and my final vows on July 2, 1998. The following are the duties entrusted to me over the years:

- July 1990 - June 1992 : teacher at STM Pangudi Luhur Muntilan.
- July 1992 - June 1997 : teacher at Pangudi Luhur Cawas Junior High School Klaten, while while studying for the first degree (S1) and having computer course, I worked also as a treasurer in the community.
- July 1997 - June 2001: head of Pangudi Luhur Tanjung Junior High School, West Kalimantan

- July 2001 - June 2005 : head of Pangudi Luhur Ambarawa Junior High School
- July 2005 - June 2010 : head of elementary school and coordinator of Pangudi Luhur Jakarta Kindergarten while studying for post graduate degree (S2).
- July 2010 - Dec. 2013 : head of Yogya PL 1 Junior High School
Dec.2013 - June 2014 : a call to reflection while preparing for accreditation at Tanjung PL Junior High School
- July 2014 - till now : head of Pangudi Luhur St. John Senior High School Ketapang

I am thankful to God for the gift of my vocation as a brother, and for which my parents prayed every day. The seed of my vocation has grown and developed in the course of time. I have experienced ups and downs; successes and failures. However, God's love through others has enabled me to continue to rise and to be faithful as an FIC brother. To give thanks for the gift of my vocation, I offer the following "Compliments of My Life as FIC Brother":

I thank Thee, O Lord

*Thou do great work in my parents.
They educate and teach me full of love.
I glorify Thee, O God.*

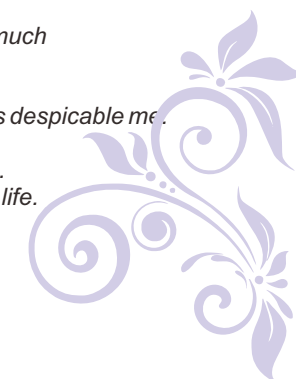
*Through them Thou plant the seeds of Christian life in me.
Through both my parents, Thou grow the seeds of consecrated life in me.
I thank Thee, O Lord,
for this blessing's call to live as an FIC brother.*

*In all my fragility and weakness,
Thou have chosen and sent me in the midst of this world.
Over and over again I fell into my fragility and weakness.
Yet, Thou always lift me up.*

*Through the leaders and my fellows
Thou sent to me.
Who loved me and accept me so much
Makes me strong and tough.*

*Miracles, Thou had done upon this despicable me.
Glorify Thee, O God.
Thou love and pity so much on me.
So that I love and pity others in my life.*

*In those Thou give me.
With all of Thy creation.
Blessed art Thou O Lord,
Now and forever.
Amen!*



Community Life

Compiled by Bro. Maarten Bouw



*"We call ourselves brothers and earnestly desire to be brothers to one another and to all humankind both in receiving and in giving love."
(Essential reflections)*

We want to remember what Bro. Bernardus said: "Brotherly love is the queen of the congregation." He has left it to us as our heritage. Have we honoured this heritage in the course of the years? (Bro. Bruno: FIC Heritage 1990)

'The Superior General (Bro. Bernardus), although heartbroken, spared neither trouble nor sacrifice to inspire the brothers with courage, confidence and submission to the will of God. Thus he arrived in Hasselt (Belgium) late in the evening on foot and, after having stayed with the brothers for some hours during the night, went back again on foot to Maastricht, not having enjoyed a moment's rest: just in order to comfort the brothers,

who truly needed consolation and encouragement.' (Annual Report 1858)

"Brothers! You find it difficult, raising many objections, to deny yourselves smoking for all time and offer it to the Lord as a sacrifice; well then, you know that I myself at times indulge in the habit, when I am travelling perhaps or visiting people or on other occasions. Well, I too shall give it up from now on, and we shall offer it up to the Lord in honour of the Immaculate Virgin Mother. You know that I love to share joys and sorrows with you." (Bro. Bernardus, 1860)

"And I beg herewith all members of the Congregation to forgive me for any scandal of offence I might have given them - for the little care I may have shown in respect of the Congregation and of each one in particular - for the displeasure I may have caused them, perhaps willingly and knowingly. I forgive everything and everybody for the love of Jesus and Mary - and I command myself humbly to the prayers of the brothers. Let us be one in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary." (Bro. Bernardus: During the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the Congregation 1865)

Nothing is more necessary for the purpose of fruitfully governing a community than love. Ah, if only every superior, or whoever he may be who is charged with the direction of souls, understood this well and was imbued with it: "Those who love God must love their brothers also." An ordinary love is not sufficient for a Superior: along with the love of a fatherly heart he must also have the deep tenderness of a mother.

Love does not demand that we waste our time or spinelessly give in, for this would rather presuppose weakness of character. Try to have the same love for all; this does not mean that for some you may or should not have special concern, as e.g. for novices; be especially considerate for them, since - as you know - they struggle with many difficulties and temptations; be for them like a compassionate mother; instil in them courage, patience and trust; encourage them to come and talk about their difficulties (Bro. Bernardus)

I may well say: I will always be ready to give love and I will always be ready to receive love, but I do not always manage, sometimes I fall short of my own ideals. My love is not perfect.

My love is deficient. I am and shall always be a weak and broken human being. I may be like that. God knows I am like that and still He loves me.

I dare say that in all those years that I have been a member of the FIC, I have met with many, many beautiful and good experiences from fellow-brothers. I am very grateful for it, and maybe as weak human beings we sometimes make life difficult for one another, but we go on with each other, we do not let one another go, do not abandon one another, hold on to one another, learn to forgive, and go on together again and again. (Bro. Bruno; FIC Heritage 1990)



Our Call and Mission To Live The Spirituality Of The Congregation

By : Bro. Basilide Dong

We are called first of all through our Baptism to follow Christ as Christians, and missioned to spread the Good News to the World, beginning from our own communities. My call to religious life, and in particular, to the FIC Congregation is a step to further deepen my call in a special way by making myself available to serve first of all my fellow brothers, and beyond that, the rest of humanity for the sake of God's Kingdom. This is made possible by sharing life with fellow brothers in community, sharing the same apostolic vision and living according to the spirit of our founders. So living a true community life therefore becomes the foundation of our encounter with Christ in the breaking of bread and in union with one another, having been nourished by the spirit to go out and manifest the love of God to people in my apostolate.

The FIC Congregation as a family seeks to protect the heritage of our founders wherever we find ourselves and try to promote human development in different ways. Our Commitment and sense of duty in our apostolate transcends ordinary work. We have a sense of being sent by God to carry out a mission. Our mission is none less than that of Jesus Christ. The Nature of Jesus' mission mainly turns its attention towards those who are in situations of greater weakness, and therefore in greater need. These are the target of Jesus' mission and therefore our mission as well. The content of our mission as FIC is spelt out in articles 15 to 18 of our constitutions: First, to continue the work of Jesus, that is to do good, witness to the truth, to serve, to redeem, to bring the liberating message of the kingdom of God to people, and to place ourselves at the service of His kingdom. Secondly, the content of our mission spring from the spirit of our founders, with a focus on our charism. We keep our charism alive by paying respectful attention to our tradition of education, formation and teaching, while keeping an open eye on the signs of our times.

In a more practical way, we wish to have special concern for the poor and destitute, for the underprivileged and disabled, for socially weak and forgotten groups and for those who experience little love. Our mission also entails transfer of faith, mainly done through our institutions: schools, centres of learning and formation. Wherever we are present, we are expected to transmit Jesus' Good News of God's kingdom to the people.



Our founders were committed people, filled with the spirit of Jesus. They were seized by his person and his message. They sensed a vocation and a mission to spread his Good News. They strongly encouraged the brothers never to lose sight of the poor. The evangelizing mission of Christ embraced by our founders at the beginning of our Congregation is still relevant in our time, even though the mode of operation may vary. Human needs vary with the changing world order but the word of God will always remain the same. We are using education and teaching as weapons to fight poverty and injustice. We are giving ourselves without reserve to the service of the most disadvantaged people in society, training future educators and leaders of society, so that they in turn will be committed to eliminating the structures of oppression. By providing education, we are also fighting to overcome hunger, diseases and their causes. There is always the need for people to show the fatherly face of God and the motherly face of the Church, people who spend their lives for others to enable them live dignified lives. The Church needs people who are willing to allow themselves to be transformed by God's grace and to conform themselves fully to the Gospel, and those people are we, the religious.

As experienced by many of our brothers, I had my elementary education and vocational training through the FIC brothers. The zeal and dedication to duty of the brothers motivated me to join the congregation. Since I became a brother in 1993, I have been teaching and working with the youth at parish level. It gives me joy to be able share what I received through

my own formation and training. Currently, I teach in Ndewura Jakpa Senior High Technical School in Damongo (Ghana). Apart from my teaching assignment in the classroom, I also give catechism lessons to Catholic students preparing to receive the sacraments. This is the way I express our mission as a member of the Congregation. But my most important witness to my call as religious is found in my contribution to the apostolic community of which I am part. Mission by nature is best performed as a group, the reason why Jesus called the 12 to assist in His mission; and our founder never tried to do this mission alone. There are fruits to be derived from this corporate mission as pointed out in article 26 of our Constitutions. The support derived from the community and deliberations about the choice of our apostolic activities and how to perform them, are some of the benefits. We are called together and sent out, thus our apostolic mission should not to be taken privately.

Our Congregation is under the patronage of Mother Mary, thus we give special attention to her. We do not want to forget her role in bringing into being our congregation. Therefore in our daily and communal prayers, we continuously invoke her intercessions. We try to emulate her faithfulness and her spirit of preference for justice and righteousness, and more to the point, we try to join her in singing the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-56), her anthem of joy for the achievements of the FIC congregation.



On World Mission Day, The Pope Urges Catholics to Share Christ's Love With All

By Hannah Brockhaus, Vatican City, Oct 20, 2019 (CNA)



Jesus Christ desires that all people know him and his love, and every Catholic has the mission of sharing this love with the world. "Those who bear witness to Jesus go out to all, not just to their own acquaintances or their little group. Jesus is also saying to you: 'Go, don't miss a chance to bear me witness!'" the pope said. "My brother, my sister, the Lord expects from you a testimony that no one can give in your place," he continued. "May you come to realize what that word is, the message of Jesus that God wants to speak to the world by your life.... lest you fail in your precious mission." He noted other occasions when scripture refers to God's desire for all people to be saved, such as in 1 Timothy, when St. Paul writes that God desires "all to be saved," and in Isaiah and the Psalms, when it says, "all peoples."

"The Lord is deliberate in repeating the word 'all.' He knows that we are always using the words 'my' and 'our:' my things, our people, our community... But he constantly uses the word all. All, because no one is excluded from his heart, from his salvation," Francis stated. He told Catholics to consider whether they take time to have a personal encounter with the people they run across in their daily lives. "Do we accept the invitation of Jesus or simply go about our own business?" he asked. The instruction Catholics have received from the Lord, to "make disciples," is simple, he said, but care must be taken to make people "his disciples, not our own."

The Church must live out this discipleship

herself in order to proclaim the Gospel well, he said, explaining that a disciple "follows the Master daily and shares the joy of discipleship with others." This does not mean "conquering, mandating, proselytizing," he stated, but "witnessing, humbling oneself alongside other disciples and offering with love the love that we ourselves received." The pope acknowledged that this is not easy, like climbing a mountain, but requires prayer and effort, as well as a shedding of the unessential. "To proclaim, you must first renounce," he said.

A credible proclamation of the Gospel requires striving after an "exemplary life," he said. "a life of service that is capable of rejecting all those material things that shrink the heart and make people indifferent and inward-looking; a life that renounces the useless things that entangle the heart in order to find time for God and others." Francis said: "We can ask ourselves: how am I doing in my efforts to go up? Am I able to reject the heavy and useless baggage of worldliness in order to climb the mountain of the Lord?" Catholics must think about God and about their brothers and sisters, because "this is our mission: to give pure and fresh air to those immersed in the pollution of our world."

Concluding his homily, he urged Catholics to "have courage!" saying "Jesus expects so much from you!" The Lord wants everyone to know they are his beloved children, he said. "Do you want to quell Jesus' concern? Go and show love to everyone, because your life is a precious mission: it is not a burden to be borne, but a gift to offer. Have courage, and let us fearlessly go forth to all!"

After Mass, Pope Francis shared a brief message and prayed the Angelus from a window overlooking St. Peter's Square. In his message, the pope said the day's celebration of World Mission Day is a good time for all the baptized to consider the necessity of their participation in proclaiming the Word of God, and to make a renewed commitment to do so. "Believers are called to bring everywhere, the good news that, in Jesus, mercy overcomes sin, hope overcomes fear, fraternity overcomes hostility," he said. "Christ is our peace and in Him every division is overcome, in Him alone is there the salvation of every man and every people." Francis added that to share Christ effectively, prayer is "indispensable," and asked Catholics to pray in a special way for the Church's missionaries, including those who go to far places to share God's Word.

Mary and My Life As A Religious FIC Brother



I believe that Mary indeed is the model of my vocation as religious. By her personality, spirituality and virtues she gave birth to religious life and has become an ideal model to emulate. Naturally, religious men and women who have dedicated themselves to live the Christian vocation in the most radical sense find in Mary their mother and model. Mary was the perfect contemplative, totally committed to the one thing necessary (Lk 10:42), yet fully attentive to the needs of others like Elizabeth, the couple at Cana and the disciples praying in the cenacle. Therefore dedicated to the active service of the church and having experienced the tension between the call to communion with God and the demands of ministry, I have in Mary a beautiful model to imitate.

By the profession and practice of evangelical counsels religious bear witness to the kingdom of God already in the present and to be fulfilled in the future. Religious willingly give up precious human goods: the right to possess and dispose of property, the right to establish and enjoy family life, the right of self-

determination. Here, the loving faith of Mary makes her a perfect guide to religious life. She is the greatest among the lowly and the poor of the Lord whose trust in him brings abundant harvest. Humanly speaking her virginity seemed to exclude her maternity; yet God made her the mother of the messiah. Her poverty seemed to exclude her son from the Davidic inheritance; but Jesus was the promised son of David. Mary's humble circumstances left little choice but to accept what life brought; but her splendid obedience made her an associate of her son's work.

For me, I am very convinced that we have the church and are Christians because Mary believed. We are found and have subsequently entrusted ourselves to this special way of life because we have a woman who through faith took to the word of our creator.

In my situation as religious of the day, the personality of Mary is a profound model as I strive to live daily as FIC brother. Her virtues are worthy of emulation for any Christian who enjoys peace, love, obedience, humility, self-emptiness, availability etc. In my life as religious I need to further open my heart to her virtues and let them lead me. As I reflect, I realize that Mary so much connects with any person or group of persons who are willing to accept her. Her total YES to the call of God brought salvation and the salvation of generations to come. She is indeed the first disciple and a trusted one who faithfully followed Christ from birth to Calvary. All these I think were made possible because of her undoubting faith, amidst the challenges of her time. It is therefore binding on me to take Mary in my life seriously and allow her to lead me in my daily life of prayer, apostolate and community life which are core in living the vowed life.

God created the world out of love. Mary manifests profound love worthy of emulation by consecrated people of all ages. I am also called today to genuinely love people (Rom 12:9). The magnificat is an expression of conscious manifestation of her love for humanity. Her total self-giving also expresses her pilgrimage of faith from Nazareth to Calvary. She becomes a mother of education, faith and love. She is simply a mediator of God's love for us through her readiness, humility, availability and love for people. Religious life is possible because God is closely at work with us through Mary.

Bro. Nimorious Dery Ganee, Teacher, St. John's Tech Institute/FIC Jubilee School, Nandom (Ghana),