

Marist International Novitiate



EDEN - DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES

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For the Greater Glory of God and the Honour of the Mother of God



EDITORIAL

FR FERNANDO INGENTE, SM



Greetings from the Marist International Novitiate.

It is my pleasure to share with you the first newsletter of the novitiate 2019-2020. The newsletter focuses on the two-month cultural orientation program of the novices before they formally began their novitiate formation. The program was designed that the novices to-be will have a good landing and adjustment to the new environment before the novitiate starts.

There was no novitiate last year. The house was empty. Yet this year is exactly opposite. It is a great joy for the whole Society of Mary to have a novitiate again here in the Philippines. The house is full. There are lots of life and movements. There are ten novices and three formators. The novitiate community is composed of eight nationalities from six units. Three novices from the district of Africa, two from the province of New Zealand, three from the province of Oceania, one from the province of United States of America and one from the district of Asia.

I am being joined by two new formators: Fr. Jacob Aba, sm, from the province of Oceania, and Fr. Joaquin Viejo Fernandez, sm from the province of Europe. We thank them for their generosity and commitment. With the novitiate team, it is a joy and privilege to live and journey with these novices.

As we celebrate the year of the youth, we join the whole Society of Mary in prayer that some would join our little congregation.

Thank you for all your constant support and prayer.

In Mary's work.

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THE WAY TO 'EDEN' AND FURTHER UP



FR JOAQUÍN FERNÁNDEZ, SM

After so many years living in big cities, here I am now in a small place, a little village, in the middle of the bush, surrounded by equatorial foliage and fighting cocks singing day and night. Yes, this is paradise, a little paradise called 'Eden', the name of the village.

If you want to come to the novitiate house, you have to come to Eden. And Eden is not in the city of Davao, but it belongs to another district called Toril, at about 20 kms towards the south of the city. And then, from Toril, you go up to the mountains for another 10 kms to reach 700 m. of altitude. Then you are in Eden!

You read in this Bulletin the many experiences of the novices in this house and you see also the beautiful picture of the building. From the house there is a fantastic view of the coast, Davao City, Davao's Bay, Samal Island... And the colourful sunrise we see from the chapel is part of the contemplative prayer we do every morning starting at 5.30. I can add that the temperature, at least until now, is very acceptable and much cooler than in the city... thank God! All this makes of the house an exceptional place for the novitiate experience.

Life in the house is less paradisiacal than you may expect from the previous description. I do not mean that is not comfortable or that we do not enjoy living together. No, I mean that sometimes we are short of water because it does not rain enough and we use only rainwater, except for cooking and drinking. Other times the power goes off, not for long time, and the internet connection is slow or is cut, for the frustration of users of modern technology. I should mention also that a few times we have felt our house trembling, shaken by the power of earthquakes, some of them of big calibre: degree 7 and 5.9 the last ones. But all this does not affect our spirit and the conviction to be in the right place searching for the will of God.

Our novitiate journey counts only 15 days. We will go down and up in our spiritual life during the months ahead of us, as we go down and up from the house to buy material provisions at the market or to participate in formation programs or to do pastoral ministry. But we are sure that the Lord and Mary are guiding our way and they will show us the marks where God is writing his will for each one of us. At the moment, in the horizon, we see the Society of Mary.