



Following our Human Formation sessions with Ate Orett, the novices were once again paired off and sent to spend a week with Marist communities throughout Mindanao: the sm Fathers in Digos; the sm Sisters in Mintal; and the smsm Sisters in Damulog, Maitum and General Santos City (Gensan) respectively. Lesley and I were selected to go to Gensan, and so, on the 6th of January 2019 five pairs of novices set out from Eden in search of new opportunities and ministries. Arriving at the Lagao Market, Lesley and I were met by Sr Sela and after a quick tricycle ride, we were home. We took advantage of a quiet Sunday afternoon in the community which was appreciated after the demanding schedule we had in the weeks prior.

The sisters' ministries are based around the Peace and Religious Education offices at Notre Dame of Dadiangas University (NDDU) in Gensan City, and the Marcellin Foundation working with abandoned and at-risk boys. Our first two days were with Sisters Sela and Teresa at NDDU. After various tours around the campus (including a guided tour of the on-campus museum dedicated to Gen. Paulino Santos and featuring a display of memorabilia belonging to Manny Pacquiao) and a lunchtime Mass, Lesley and I were put to work in the office doing some of Sr Teresa's typing. This was partly to fill time so we wouldn't become bored, and partly because it was work that needed to be done. As I was typing away over those two days, I couldn't help but reflect on the idea that this might not have been the exact type of pastoral work that the founders and pioneers had in mind, but it was nevertheless an important contribution to the apostolic work of the school.

The next two days were spent at the Marcellin Foundation, doing upkeep and maintenance work on their musical instruments, and teaching guitar lessons to the boys alongside Sr Kateia. There were varying levels of musicianship within the group, but by the end we were able to put together a rousing rendition of *Side By Side Marcellin*.

NDDU runs a satellite campus in Maitum, and since the College had a vehicle heading there on Friday, we were able to catch a ride with them to visit our brother novices and connect with the smsm community there. Though our visit was short, we had a lovely lunch and it was nice to meet the community and see a little of their work. The next day was at NDDU for a Professional Development lecture alongside Sisters Sela and Teresa, and then meeting once again with our brother novices from Maitum – this time in Gensan, as they would be staying the night in our community to make their travel easier.

Overall, the time spent with the various branches of the Marist Family was an enlightening experience. Our time in Gensan gave us a broad feel for the pastoral responsibilities within the Society, and I am sure that the experiences of the other novices at their places were equally as educational. Our profound thanks to all of the religious communities who housed us at this time.

Orientation to Filipino Language and Culture

PAUL CROKER



Our Filipino language and cultural classes were on Week 4 (10th to the 21st of December). These classes were vital to help us new comers to understand the ways of the local people. The classes were carried out at two separate locations: one at a caregiving home for the elderly while the was done in our novitiate house.

The Filipino language classes mainly focused on Cebuano, a language spoken here in Davao. Our Cebuano classes was mostly taught by Ate Joann with the help of Ate Linda, Ate Merelita and Kuya Chris. The classes I found were quite a tough because I was told that they tried to squeeze a one year syllabus into two weeks. Our classes started at 8 am and finished around 4 pm. After classes I found myself completely drained even though we had homework to complete. I am surprised to have noticed that there are a lot of words that are similar to the languages of Oceania, most notably for me was the similarities found in Fijian and Samoan.

The Filipino cultural classes were carried out by Sister Lilly Beth, who belongs to the Society of Mary. The lesson touched on the colonial history of the Philippines, which included the occupancy by the Muslims, Spaniards and Americans.

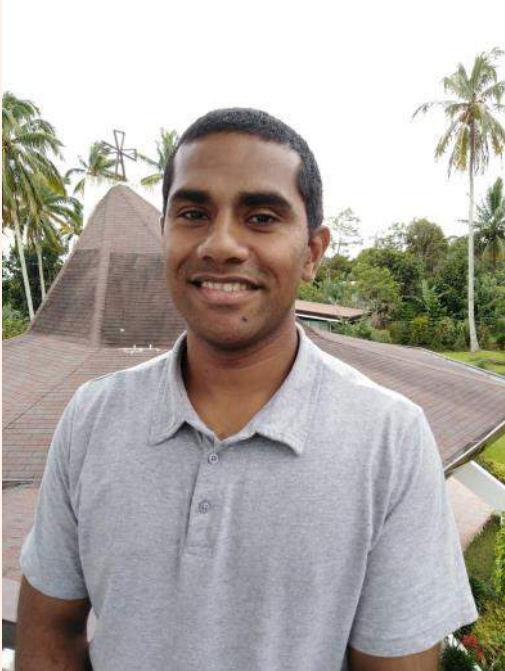
Our classes explained what to do and what not to do especially how we should dress and greet those who are older than us. Again I found similarities between Filipino and Oceanian culture, for example, we both value extended families and cherish communal sharing. We are both very much concerned for the person other than ourselves.

To conclude, my experiences of the language and cultural classes were very positive. Although they were at times a lot to absorb and tiring, they helped me to appreciate the beauty that the local people possess which is special and unique. From our classes I have learnt that the Philippines had a tough colonial history, often treated unjustly by those who came and colonized them. Filipino culture itself is a mixture of these colonial cultures, which is a fusion of Islamic, Spanish, Chinese, American and most recently Korean music and fashion. One of the outstanding attributes of the Filipino culture is the ability to smile through adversity, especially with frequent cyclones. The local people are very humble, friendly and quite shy at times. All these qualities are very similar to the people of Oceania, for this reason I feel quite at home amongst them, we are not very different.



HUMAN FORMATION

SEREMAIA TURAGABECI



After a week with our foster families in Digos we found ourselves back in Eden with three days of Human Formation Led by Ate Orett who is a freelancer working with religious and lay people. She hails from Luzon but grew up in Davao and this was her first time to accompany the Marist Father novices.

This was her 27th year in formation and so we were honored to have her. Our time spent with her included topics such as; our discoveries and learnings from our time with our Filipino family, the topic of Human formation and finally the stepping stones of our lives so far and how it has been a factor in our human formation.

Our first day together, Fr Fernando reminded us in his homily that what God wants from us is our best version of ourselves. That we were to imitate St John the Baptist, who knew who he was and was able to say that “he must decrease and Christ must increase”. The homily concluded with the notion that self-knowledge leads us to delight in ourselves and so avoid making comparisons. The Holy Spirit was amongst us as the homily was relevant to our session with Ate Orett.

This human formation session is one of many sessions that we will have with Ate Orett in months to come. We as a group discussed what human formation looked like and what came out were words such as discovery, learning, growth, and deepening, which then allows us to enter into the process of preparation, openness and empowerment with the goal of coming to know our true-self. The purpose of these three days was really to reflect upon our life journey so far and to see if we can pick up some new discoveries of what has impacted us and formed us as a person. We were encouraged to be open as self-disclosure helps others to understand us and are able to give feedback, which is a vital element of human formation.

Ate Orett was a great facilitator allowing us to understand that formation is ongoing and that journal writing is an instrument we can use to reflect upon the questions and discoveries of our daily lives as we are influenced by one another in the process of self-awareness. We look forward to meeting with Ate Orett and discovering more of our true-selves. Lastly I will conclude with a passage from Fr Colin. *You must work hard at achieving the aim of the novitiate which is first of all to get to know oneself, and then to unite oneself to God, to become men of prayer, and men of faith. I have known some develop a taste for prayer and the interior life, who later on worked marvels in Oceania (FS 140.5).*

ORIENTATION TO THE NOVITIATE

SOUGA PAUL FABRICE



The Orientation to the Novitiate which is a stage very important for a future religious, was led by our formators from the 15th of January to the 17th of January. The program for the orientation to the novitiate consisted first by presenting to the novices the goals and objectives of the Society of Mary and also the aim of the Novitiate which

directly responded to that of the Society of Mary. During this time, we were also given the timetable of the daily activities with explanations of the different aspects of life in the Novitiate. For a smooth atmosphere during the novitiate, some guidelines and recommendations were also presented and elaborated. We were told what is accepted and what is not accepted in the novitiate. After two months of orientation and getting comfortable in our different rooms and community functions, it was time to get out of our

comfort zones. All the Novices had a change of rooms and responsibilities which will be kept for four months and after that another set of changes will be adopted. This aspect of change can be seen as preparation for Mission and the call for changes that comes along with it.

At the end of our novitiate orientation, the novitiate formation team presented to the novices a draft of the calendar of the year and highlighted the vital elements of the first semester. The program for our studies was also presented. After all these preliminaries, we had one more thing to do before ending the orientation and that was liturgy practice for the celebration of the initiation into the Society of Mary. It should be noted that, the knocking on the door by the Novice for admission into the Novitiate is the key for this initiation. A short practice was done and before going to bed all were aware of how to respond to the questions of the Novice Master.



MARIST INTERNATIONAL NOVITIATE

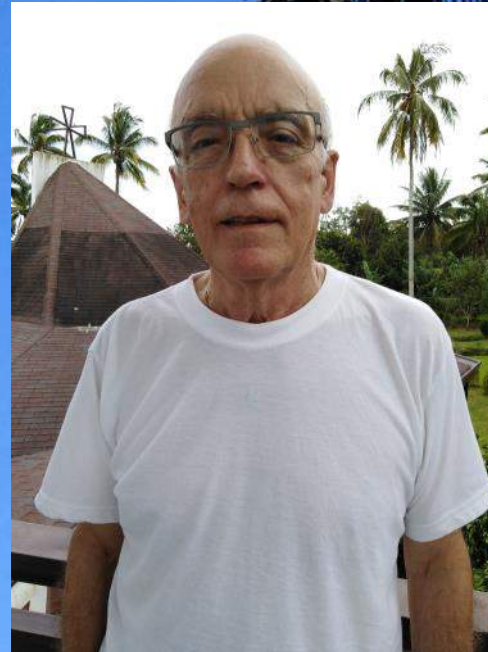
EDEN - DAVAO PHILIPPINES 2019 - 2020



FR FERNANDO INGENTE, SM
NOVICE MASTER
DISTRICT OF ASIA
(PHILIPPINES)



FR JACOB ABA, SM
SOCIUS
PROVINCE OF OCEANIA
(SOLOMON ISLAND)



FR JOAQUÍN FERNÁNDEZ, SM
ASSISTANT
PROVINCE OF EUROPE
(SPAIN)



HEMI ROPATA
PROVINCE OF NEW ZEALAND
(NEW ZEALAND)



PAUL ROGER CROKER
PROVINCE OF OCEANIA
(FIJI)



PAUL FABRICE SOUGA
DISTRICT OF AFRICA
(CAMEROON)



NIKLAS RODEWALD
PROVINCE OF USA
(USA)



SEREMAIA TURAGABECI
PROVINCE OF NEW ZEALAND
(FIJI)



CLINTON ASUNWAIN KUBE
DISTRICT OF AFRICA
(CAMEROON)



LESLEY KINANI
PROVINCE OCEANIA
(PAPUA NEW GUINEA)



LEONARD AMORA
PROVINCE OCEANIA
(PAPUA NEW GUINEA)



JOEL AMA
DISTRICT OF AFRICA
(CAMEROON)



MARK EMZEE LAZAGA
DISTRICT OF ASIA
(PHILIPPINES)