



Congregation News

Notícias. Nachrichten. 소식지

Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing

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Blessings upon all you have undertaken during this season of preparation for Easter – as “each one of her own free will and with joy of the Holy Spirit, offers to God something over and above the measure appointed for her”, and as together, we “look forward to holy Easter with joy and spiritual longing” (RB 49:5-7). Happy Easter!

Studying the Rule in the Land of St Benedict

By Sr. Ma. José Vasconcelos, OSB



This course was for me a rich experience, knowing better the life of St. Benedict and the Benedictine life.

Sister Aquinata in her wisdom and, at the same time, simplicity, humility and patience, knew very well how to guide the group with her interesting method of transmitting the knowledge of the Benedictine Rule.

She always affirmed that Saint Benedict had his feet on the ground and with attentive ears to everything.

In his criticism and flexibility he knew how to choose what was

better for the monks so that they could live the Benedictine spirituality. He shows the qualities and virtues that a monk needs to have. However, he doesn't forget to speak about the addictions they must avoid.

Humility, obedience, charity, patience, respect are the qualities and virtues the monks should exercise themselves, besides many others. Saint Benedict exhorted the community to stop the work and to rush for the Divine Office, reminding that nothing should be preferred to Christ's love.



A better course of the Benedictine Rule could not exist, than in the proper land of Saint Benedict. This was our great privilege. Besides receiving the content, we could put our feet where he walked; visiting the city of N rcia, where he and his sister Scholastica were born; the place in Rome, where he lived during his studies; to enter in the Grotto in Subiaco, where he spent 3 years as hermit; to go to the monasteries of Saint Scholastica and Montecassino, founded by him; and to enter the cell, where he concluded the Benedictine Rule.

For me, all those places were of a profound reflection. I would have liked to stay for more time, meditating on all that beauty that exists in the life of that courageous, human and Saint. Certainly, it is not possible to speak about everything we heard and learned, I hope it is engraved in our minds and hearts, so that we can live and pass to other people, a little bit of Benedict's wisdom.



Many thanks to Mother Angela who gave her support so that this course could happen in Portuguese language; thanks to Sister Aquinata who shared with us the teachings of the Benedictine Rule with so much wisdom and who made all effort so that this course could happen.

Here are the testimonies of some the participants, indicating what this course meant for them:

For me, beyond of that concrete and fascinating fact to pass on the roads where Benedict traveled from N rcia to Montecassino, I would like to register also two very

significant spiritual moments:



- The first moment was to know about the real existence of Saint Eut zio in the life of Benedict, where he discovered the beauty of the search of God, only living to please him, in a life of prayer and withdrawal. That is the importance why we visited the place where Saint Eut zio lived in his grotto.

- The second moment was the visit to Subiaco, where it was possible to feel Benedict's presence in that holy place. It is as if everything had begun in that grotto.... Finally, I was amazed in noticing that the beauty of the mountains is a

common element to the three cities, I dare to say that the mountains were extremely familiar to Benedict, they were part of his life's horizon, and, therefore, exercised a deep influence on his

person and doctrine. Everything in the Rule is an exhortation to look at the heights to love God and men, reaching the summits of charity, of the biblical doctrine and the perfection of virtues. Finally, the Course taught me to discover under the text of the Rule, Christ's human face, marked by a deep realism, balance, openness, merciful, and, above all, a man of God, impassioned with Christ.



It is "necessary to enter in Saint Benedict's world, into the context he lived and then study his Rule." Such were the words of Sister Aquinata, while opening the Course. And these words were for me the motivation and perseverance to know more about this Saint Benedict who always impelled me.

Without any doubt, I always had an image of Saint Benedict with a spiritual wealth in its full accomplishment, but never with his feet so firm on the ground and his eyes and arms open for the brother and the reality of the world that it surrounded him.

From the prologue to chapter 73, Saint Benedict never appeared to me so human, conscious of his qualities, but also of his weaknesses... a man who lived the fragile and limited side of every human being, and then, later, to write his Rule. And it is like this that he became the man of peace and mercy. Now I understand why we call Saint Benedict as the man of balance, flexible, full of a great ideal, courageous, mature...

Finally, to step in Benedict's land, to experience this atmosphere full of light and silence was as opening one more window of the RB, that before was obscure and closed. I will take for my community everything I learned and I only have to say: "That in everything God may be glorified."

Daegu Oblates in Rome 5 – 9 Jan. 2011



From 5th to 9th January 2011, the Casa community was happy to welcome to Rome a group of Oblates belonging to Daegu Priory. They had organized their group tour with a Tourist Agent who provided a Korean Tour Guide and a Bus Service for the trips. But

they had their accommodation in our guest house and shared some important moments with us, like the Eucharist together, and a time of sharing with a group of Sisters on one of the evenings.



Sr Angelica Hwang, the Oblate Directress and her assistant Sr Simeon Hong, coordinated everything. The group had visited the holy places in Israel before they came to Rome.

The Oblates Group used the big hall in the basement as refectory and meeting room. They had to bear with some inconveniences about their rooms because it was a time when the Casa was also hosting a group of 33 participants for the Rule of St Benedict Course in Portuguese under the guidance of Sr Aquinata. But this did not hinder them. The most important were their experiences of the holy places and the meeting with the Sisters here at the Casa, Generalate of Missionary Benedictine Sisters, and hence a symbol of touching the center of the Congregation to which they have affiliated themselves.



Israel and Rome summed up the touching of the roots of our common faith and common religious heritage as Missionary Benedictines. We shared their joy and were inspired by their enthusiasm, as we recognized in them our brothers and Sisters in Christ and in the Benedictine way. The days of visiting holy places and sharing experiences will remain forever for them and for us grateful and life-giving memories.

Campers Encounter Jesus in Zarevbrod

By Sr. Maria Jose Esperanza, OSB

“Let the children come to ME...” Jesus said to his disciples and placed his hands on them. (Matth. 19:14). This is exactly what we did in our summer camps.

Every Summer Camp’s objective, I strongly believe, is for the campers, children of any faith, to grow mentally, socially, physically

and most of all spiritually in an adventurous way together.



A camp is not only all fun in the form of food, excursions and games, but a camp is a place and a time of fun and adventure in meeting Jesus. So in our summer camp program, the exhortation of Jesus is included and *obeyed*.

I invited our first group of campers (August 9 - 13) who were non-Catholic Christians to see our church one afternoon. As I asked the children what things they see inside our church, I was not surprised to hear correct answers. I explained to them that the things they see are Christian symbols. I was sure the Holy Spirit revealed new truths to these children. And when the time came for them to light a candle as their symbol of belief that Jesus is present in our midst I felt the desire of these children to pray. I encouraged them to say their prayers aloud which they did. I carefully listened to their prayers ... child-like prayers like: give us bread, bless our family, give our parents work so we will have money, give shelter and homes to children without parents, bless our friends



... Something happened to these children as they prayed. They became aware of one another and discovered that they are not alone as they hear their petitions. They learned to trust and believe that God will provide for our needs.

I planned that our second group of campers (August 16 - 20) join the Sisters for Holy Mass. The majority of them were Christians. Last 17 August 2010, fifteen (15) children together with us six (6) mobile Benedictine Sisters in Bulgaria, and special friends encountered Jesus in the Liturgy. After the Gospel Reading a simple choreography to praise God was danced by our new future "animators". They are: Joanna Asenova Petrova and her sister Iliana, Radost Gansev and his twin-brother Galin.

Rosi Mihaylova, and her mother, who were also the facilitators of our camps and Sister Beate, OSB introduced them and presented them with tokens.



Joanna, Iliana, Isaac, Bok, Fr. Adalbert, CR

All of us present in the church witnessed the eagerness and enthusiasm of the children to know more about Jesus when each one of them received a copy of a *Children's Bible* handed to them by the officiating priest, Father Adalbert, CR.



Surely Jesus placed his hands on these children who were given the chance to approach and meet him in all the fun and adventures in and out of the monastery.



Rome: Casa Santo Spirito
Course on the Rule of St. Benedict
By Sr Marianna and Sr Rosa

We started our course on the Rule of St. Benedict on January 3 January 2011 after a simple and beautiful reception by our Sisters of the Casa Santo Spirito Community. We are 33 participants from Angola, Brasil, Portugal and Denmark.

The course is directed by Sister Aquinata Böckmann. Her skilfulness is undeniable. The simplicity of her message is compelling and captivating. We feel her love for the person of St. Benedict and his Rule. We also see the dedication she has in her efforts to transmit to us something that goes deeply into our lives and even touches into our woundedness. As a German her punctuality can be seen clearly. She answers all questions patiently and promptly.



For those questions which apparently do not have an answer, she gives a warm hearted word in the way the Cellarer in the Rule of St Benedict is to do: a good response and on time. With all this, our "hearts are on fire" with gratitude for many things. The tour to Norcia the birth place of St Benedict and St Scholastica was very good. The pleasant sensation of stepping on the same land trodden by Benedict and St Scholastica was indescribable. We visited what remains of their father's house, accompanied by a Benedictine monk of the Monastery which exists in the same place. Our group plunged into the monastery store and bought many articles. We think that the monks there were grateful for the visit of

these "distinguished guests" brothers and sisters.

We realize and appreciate the hospitality of the sisters of the Casa Santo Spirito. We feel at home here. We appreciate the work of Sr Salete, Sr Cristina and Sr Maria José for the practical management like selling to us the bus / train tickets whenever we need them.

The Course is really intensive. Now we know under our skin what it means to make an intensive course! Sometimes the fatigue is great. The weekly tours help to give us the needed relaxation. We cannot see so much beauty without becoming relaxed. We hope to return to our monasteries more converted and more simple. We feel it would be so nice if others could also have the same experience as we have had.

Learning from our Elderly Sisters
By Sr. Monica Nabirye, OSB

I worked for 6 years accompanying our sick and elderly sisters in Baguio and in Marikina and enhancing my own aging process. In that time, I learned especially from two great women. Sr. Aida Villareal, OSB still living, at 102 years old, when asked the secret of her long and healthy life, says "It is God". And ends with a piece of advise "drink plenty of water and be happy. Never keep a grudge. Leave everything to God". Wow! Sr. Aida Villarreal, OSB is among the first sisters who entered Manila Priory. She speaks only English as she says that her companion in the novitiate were both from Germany and China. Tagalog was not spoken that time but Spanish. She is a woman of wisdom and integrity with sound mind and body. She gives joy to every body with her sense of humor. Often she could wheel her wheel chair and go to the next room to visit her companion, semi bedridden Sr. Camilla, 101 years old. And the two can engage in holy conversation. I was so much inspired by them.

In Baguio I had the chance to be with the very oldest Sr. Magdalen Dietz who died 3 years ago. I was with her for two years when she celebrated her 100th birthday on 29 May 2006. That was the very year that Manila

Priory celebrated 100 years since the first German Sisters came to the Philippines. Sr. Magdalen was a holy woman. She was blind and deaf, and in the sick bed for 5 years. She often said, "Please pray that I may die". Indeed God's ways are not our ways. Every sister who could visit us in Baguio would tell Sr. Magdalen "Please do not die yet, you are our centennial gift, we have to celebrate". She would simply say, "if it is the will of God". And so it was. Sr. Magdalen died three months after celebrating her 100th birthday.

An 8 weeks experience in the immersion community Marihatag Surigao del Sur

By Sr Monica Nabirye, OSB

In May 2010, I got a chance to go to the Community at Marihatag for my immersion experience in the Social Pastoral Apostolate (SPA). At the same time I got the news from Mother Mary John that the Sisters in Rajkot have expressed their request for me to help them. While processing the document for that mission I stayed 6 complete months in Marihatag.

Indeed it was a tour and adventure in the beautiful land of Mindanao where the poor are the majority despite the land being the richest in minerals for mining and natural resources like forests for logging. The tribal Filipinos stay in the mountains, their ancestral land. But these are the areas most rich for mining. The rich and well organized multinational companies from far and from neighboring countries are paving their way to mining and logging in large scale there. The native people try to resist but they are less powerful. The Lumads and the Mahaba people are often driven out of their home areas by the military who are on the side of the miners. In such a situation these people find refuge in Marihatag. Last Sept there were more than 1000 evacuees. The Sisters of Marihatag Community, together with other well wishers helped together to feed them for 3 weeks before the necessary arrangements were made for them to return to their homes.

St. Scholastica's College Manila is one of the benefactors for the evacuees in Marihatag. The students donated all kinds of things as a group, such as sandals, umbrellas, writing materials and others, even rice and canned foods. We accumulated enough goods for distribution to the Mahaba people, the Lumads as and the Marihatag.

On Jan 18, Sr. Edita Eslopore, a social worker, myself and ten other volunteers, set off to bring the goods first to the Mahaba. It was rainy season and the roads were less traveled as there are no public vehicles that go there apart from the motorcycles. We got a dump truck strong enough to climb the mountains in order to reach to the Mahaba people. There were deep ravines on the left and on the right. Just about 17 kilometers to our destination, the dump truck could not go over the rocks. The driver tried all his techniques and after 45 minutes he was able to gain momentum and to bring the truck uphill. We were all the time praying to Sr. Reinolda May to help us reach the poor we intended to visit and bring them the goods donated by St. Scholastica's College.



We went on till about 2 kilometer before our destination, and then it became just impossible to cross the ridges that had been cut by the running water from up the hill. Our volunteers went on foot to signal the Mahaba people to come down and receive there goods. They were happy and we were happy.



Then on Jan 22 we went to another place to the Lumad people. The truck we got was not as strong as the one we used going to Mahaba. The road was equally less traveled. With our sacks of rice and other goods we reached a certain place 7 kilometers to our destination, then the dump truck got stuck deep in the mud.



There was no instrument of good works like a hoe or a spade to clear the way. After two hours a good Samaritan came but he too could not cross since the truck had taken up the entire road and on both sides were deep ravines. He had to drive in reverse, backwards for 7 kilometers to look for other motorcycles. They came in full swing to unload the truck and load it all on the motorcycles. The volunteers had also to find a place on the same motorcycles in order to continue the journey.

Sr. Edita and I were given the expert motorcycle driver as they teased us because the road ahead was very bad. Indeed the man was expert. It was there that I had to learn to seat on the motorcycle in a different way,

securely, as the driver was like flying over the rocks and muddy places.



After 4 kilometers the rain started and we got a nice shower. We had to take shelter in the nearby house. After twenty minutes we continued with our journey. Our companions with the goods were already ahead of us and we found them at a damaged bridge on a river. From where the motorcycle drivers had to transport the sacks of rice and other goods on their back across the muddy river, then maneuvered the motorcycle by itself across the river, and then re-load the sacks on the motorcycles. Everybody was more concerned about how the two sisters would cross the river. Luckily, the water was dried up on one side and we could cross with the help of our volunteers and continued our journey. It was more than excitement when after just about half a mile, the river was slightly deep and slippery and the motorcycle could not cross. There was a friend, a Carabao (Buffalo) used here as a domestic animal. The Carabao knew where to step and off I had my first experience of riding on the Carabao. Before that I had only seen in pictures that our first four sisters from Germany in 1906 were riding on Kalesa Horse and Carabao.

The community both in Mahaba and Lumdas were happy to receive some goods and said that it is rare. These schools are non government and they do not have formal education.

In the photo are youth posing with their school supplies.



The Lumad children choosing and fitting on the sandals.



It was nice when I joined the group on Sunday for the bible sharing. Indeed the youth are waiting to listen to someone about the word of God.

I was very much impressed by the monthly Tithing Remittances of each family in the 17 Chapels (Small Christian Communities) in Sto Nino Parish, their effort to help their Parish, and the Bishop, not taking from plenty but from the little they have. The monthly financial report of Tithing and other parish matters brought together more than 80 persons every first Saturday of the month. In this gathering I had the chance to share about "Health as a Wealth" in the Aging process.

In those eight weeks there was practically a funeral mass every week. There was also mass wedding or single couple wedding every week. I often participated in this mission of Christ by joining the parishioners in their joys and sorrows.

The month of May is the most eagerly awaited by the little children in Marihatag. The children sing songs to Our Lady and offer

flowers to Mama Mary, a daily activity since around that time there are no classes. For the whole month the Oblates gave a token for the children to have snacks and they loved it very much. On the last day May 31, there were not only the prayers and the offering of flowers but also parlor games and eating. It was nice to see more than 170 children ranging from 2 years old to 13 years old participating in giving honor to Mama Mary in their simplicity of heart.

On 26 November, 2010 when I had submitted my application to the Indian Embassy for visa to India, I was told the process might take more than 7 months or a year. I was ready to wait and ready for whatever the will of God would be. Only two months later, on 23 January 2011 I got a call from the office of the Indian ambassador to prepare my flight ticket to India. It was hard to believe. After all our interesting trips to the people of Mahaba and Lumada, it was not easy to say good bye to the people in Marihatag. We had gotten used to each other and felt at home.

Some of the youth in Marihatag who came to say good bye.



Some of our Oblates whom I worked with in the parish.



I handed over my little work in Marihatag community and the parish and off I went to Manila to get ready for India.

These have returned to the Lord

Sr. Berchmana Hodapp, OSB

12 December 2010 in Tutzing

Sr. Melchiora Kaspar, OSB

*13 January 2011 in Haus St Benedikt,
Tutzing*

Sr. Zelia de Almeida, OSB

16 January 2011 in Sorocaba

Sr. Andrea Haver, OSB

20 January 2011 in Windhoek

Sr Deocara Rink, OSB

31 January 2011 in Peramiho

Sr Iliana Panova, OSB

9 February 2011 in Zarevbrod

Sr Bernadita Bernas, OSB

28 February 2011

Sr. Alphonsa Oh, OSB

17 March 2011 in Daegu

May they rest in peace!

We express our sincere gratitude to all who have contributed to this *Congregation News*. Special thanks are given to Sr. Ruth Schönenberger for the German translation, Sr. Walburga M. Volkhausen for the Portuguese translation, Sr. Marie Paul Sung for the Korean translation, and to the proof-readers.

Sr. Terese J. Zemale, OSB,
Via Dei Bevilacqua, 60, 00163, Roma, Italia.

Congregation Website:

<http://www.osb-tutzing.it>

Rome: <http://www.casa.osb.-tutzing.it>

Final Profession

Daegu: 10 February 2011

Sr. Marie Amos Yang, OSB

Sr. Rosaria Yoon, OSB

Sr. Sion Lee, OSB

Sr. Marie Lazaro Kim, OSB

Sr. Genia Park, OSB

Sr. Marie Sophia Lee, OSB

Sr. Bella Kim, OSB

Sr. Nazareth Choi, OSB

Sr. Agnetta Jin, OSB

Congratulations Dear Sisters!

First Profession

Olinda: 8 December 2010

Sr. Karla dos Santos Nascimento, OSB

Tutzing: 12 December 2010

Sr. Veronika Sube, OSB

Argentina: Los Toldos: 22 Febr. 2011

Sr. Laura Noemi Gauna, OSB

Daegu: 9 February 2011-03-06

Sr. Franze Kim, OSB

Sr. Marco Choi, OSB

Sr. Matteo Cho, OSB

Sr. Lois Choi, OSB

Congratulations dear Sisters!

Inter-Priory Sharing and transfers

10 December 2010:

Sr. Felice Imaya Calingayan, OSB

From Angola-Iberian, returning to Manila

2 March 2011:

Sr. Ursula Fuchs, OSB

*From Angola-Iberian to Haus St Benedikt
GD*

24 March 2011:

Sr. Rosa Maria Santana, OSB

From Iberian to Bulgaria, GD

29 January 2011:

Sr. Monica Nabirye, OSB

From Manila to India, GD

**God bless you and your mission
dear Sisters!**