



Missionary Benedictine Sisters
ST. SCHOLASTICA'S PRIORY
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MALATE, MANILA, PHILIPPINES

COMMON LETTER NO. 193

November 20, 2011

PEACE!

Dear Sisters All Over the Priory and Overseas,

Once again we are entering into the

BLESSED SEASON OF ADVENT



The Gospel of the First Sunday of Advent can be the theme of the whole season : WATCHFULNESS. In the events of these past days this injunction seems to be very appropriate since GMA and Co. are trying all means to escape the consequences of their actions by getting out of the country by all means. And if the government is not WATCHFUL, they may just succeed.

1. BEING AWAKE

On a more spiritual level, this attitude of watchfulness begins with first being awake. We cannot be watchful if we are not awake. Jesus takes this opportunity of this Advent season to call us out of slumber. He says; “Be on your guard, stay awake...” To illustrate his injunction of staying awake, he narrates a parable of a man going on a journey after assigning tasks to his employees with no indication of a return date. The employees have no idea when their master will return. All they know is that their master will return. It is only a foolish employee who will drop his guard and not watch out for his master’s return

Today we also have to awaken to the realities of our society—the continuing poverty and hunger, the involuntary disappearances, the extra-judicial killings, the destruction of our environment with the continuous logging and mining, the continuing violence against women and children, human trafficking and of course the latest events –the desperate attempt of GMA to circumvent justice by getting out of the country.

2. VIGILANCE/ MINDFULNESS-

In our religious community, being watchful takes on the nuance of mindfulness about our monastic –missionary life—maintaining an atmosphere of silence, watchfulness of our tongue from murmurings, negative talk, gossip, watchfulness of our temper, irritability, attention to our body language which might indicate disdain, lack of concern, passive aggression, etc, It is mindfulness or vigilance regarding our way of treating others with respect especially those we think are lower than us in anyway – because they are lay, less educated, of lower social standing, etc. etc. mindful that they are made to the image of God just as we are. It is mindfulness about our words and actions whether we are hurting others, causing them to lose their self-esteem, etc.

3. PREPAREDNESS

Another nuance of watchfulness is preparedness. Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. For Advent, this means preparing for the birth of Jesus in our hearts by “leveling the mountains and filling the valleys” of our lives. During this season we could reflect on what mountains there are in us which we have to level down—arrogance? pride? stubbornness? self-righteousness? And what “valleys” need filling—lack of compassion? unfriendliness? lack of generosity? lack of the spirit of sacrifice—remaining in our comfort zones? Discontent?

As we prepare ourselves this way every Advent season, perhaps we are already also preparing ourselves little by little so that we will know “the time of our visitation”.

A VERY BLESSED ADVENT SEASON TO EACH AND EVERYONE OF US !

❖ CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY ELECTED PRIORY COUNCILOR
FOR 2012-2015—SR. ANGELICA LEVISTE, OSB



Sr. Angelica Leviste, OSB

❖ VISITATIONS

OCTOBER 21-27- ST. AGNES ACADEMY, LEGAZPI

This is the last local house I visited. The Agnesians were lined up along the driveway to greet me. And of course they had a typical “Agnesians Got Talent” welcome program. Aside from the usual conferences I gave to both the community and school staff, we went to the lot that the Sisters are thinking of buying for their Centennial housing for their lay partners. For our outing we went to Bacacay to a private beach resort owned by Mrs. Moraleda. We enjoyed the quiet, the swimming and playing Phase 10 game and of course eating and sleeping. We had also a very pleasant visit with Bishop Baylon.

❖ DAYS OF RENEWAL IN THE PRIORY HOUSE- NOVEMBER 2-16

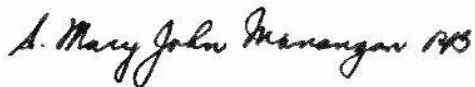
According to the Generalate, a Prioress can not make a visitation in her own house so we had Renewal Days instead of Visitation days. But I actually did the same activities such as conferences. Individual interviews, common lectio and common recreation. The difference is that the end document was not a recess that consisted of my recommendations. Instead we had Proceedings and Community Resolutions. For our outing, we went to Matabungkay beach in the house of Marietta Adriano Roces, my classmate. Aside from my conferences, an alumna, Myra Limgenco Simon and her colleague talked on Health issues warning us about the ingestion of synthetic vitamins which can actually harm our internal organs. They demonstrated some health gadgets to purify and energize water and a crystal which could diminish pains, etc. After the reading of the Proceedings we went as a Community to see “ The Sound of Music “ in the fabulous theater of NEWPORT.

❖ SOME ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Sr. Leah Ann Sison has been transferred permanently by the Generalate to the Norfolk Priory.
2. The election for the delegates to the General Chapter will happen immediately after the election of our new Prioress. So I am asking those who want to wave their passive rights to do so now till December 15.
3. VERY IMPORTANT- You have been sent papers regarding the General Chapter. Please fill the form: EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER 2006. PLEASE FILL IT AS FAR AS YOU CAN. I WILL SUPPLEMENT WHAT IS LACKING. PLEASE SUBMIT THE FILLED SURVEY BY DECEMBER 15. (I have to include it in my Prioress report in January. It will also be used in the Prioress' Report to the General Chapter)

This is all for now. The other events will be reported by the Priory Newsletter.

Lovingly yours,



Sr. Mary John Mananzan, OSB
Prioress