

September 26, 2015

Columban Sisters in the Philippines Celebrated 91st Anniversary of our Foundation, Launching of the Book of Sr. Inday and the 1400th Death Anniversary of St. Columban



Today is a great day for all of us, because we are blessed with three important celebrations: 91st Foundation anniversary of the Columban Sisters presence, Launching of the book of Sr. Inday, “**Pagsangyaw sa Mindanao**”, and the 1400th Death Anniversary of St. Columban. The seed that was sown 91 years ago today has grown, blossomed and bore much fruit. Was it not for the nurturing by each one of us and most especially by the Columban Sisters, there would not have been these beautiful fruits that we have reaped at this very moment of God’s grace and constant divine presence. We cannot but be amazed at the missionary spirit of the Columban Sisters, more so at how strong they are physically and spiritually in their efforts and impulse to mission and evangelization. It is of no coincidence that this year’s theme on the Eucharist challenges us to live a Christian life for the mission.

One of the important documents of Vatican II, **Ad Gentes**, underlines the urgent need to reaffirm the central idea of mission of Jesus Christ. This ideal demands the total gift of oneself to the proclamation of the gospel. On this point there can be no compromise those who by God’s grace **accept** the mission, **are called to live the mission**. The proclamation of Christ in the many peripheries of the world becomes our way of following him, one which more than repays us for the many difficulties and sacrifices we make.

However, it presupposes an intimate encounter with Christ. Knowing that we need to **know Him** in order to proclaim Him, as the Latin dictum would say, “**nemodatum non habet**”, gives a sense of peacefulness and meaningfulness. For, we cannot give what we don’t have. When we are passionate about Jesus, we would not get tired of looking at and gazing toward

Jesus. This challenge is translated into becoming enthusiastic missionaries, true and authentic witnesses and effective tellers of the story of Jesus because we have been with him in the first place.

Then we are assured that we do the mission of Jesus (not ours); we work for Jesus (not for ourselves); and we bring (Not ourselves) to the people to whom we are sent.



Ultimately, like the Columban missionaries, we will be conscious that Jesus has been present in the heart of the people before we have reached out to them.

This is the true spirit of the mission, and the Columban Sisters are one of the many who have shown us the way and have challenged us till now to do the same.

Congratulations and May God bless us all.

Homily given by: Fr. Tony Sagrado
Parish Priest
San Lorenzo Ruiz Parish
Ozamiz City

**Sharing by Sr. Teresita Bernad
Sept. 26, 2015**

Good morning everybody. Welcome again. We really appreciate your presence with us today. It's like the good old days in our schools, how we enjoyed each other's' company.

Today, we are celebrating three Columban Sisters events:

1st event – The 1400 years death anniversary of St. Columban a great missionary.

He was an Irish Monk. He left his home land and went to Europe to spread the Good News of Christ. There he founded 40 monasteries and converted countless of people to Christianity. Many of his monasteries still exist as places of pilgrimage. Our founder Fr. John Blowick wishing his missionaries to be like St. Columban named his Society of Priests and Congregation of Sisters after him and made him our patron saint.



2nd event: - Today marks the 91st anniversary of the founding of the Columban Sisters Congregation.

With the Columban Fathers our first mission was China but when the priests and sisters were expelled from China by the communists, they were invited by bishops from different countries including the Philippines. The old parishioners of the Columban Fathers and those from the Sisters schools acknowledge with gratitude the big contribution of the Columban priests and sisters to the church in the Philippines. In Mindanao particularly here in Misamis Occidental, Oriental and Zamboanga del Sur. The late Mgsr. Cronin, our Columban Archbishop is considered by all as a saint and his priests – Frs. Chapman, Lellis, Murtagh were giant missionaries. They penetrated the furthest barrios riding on horseback or in the jeep going through rough and uneven trails, not roads. As to the Sisters, in the beginning they managed several Catholic schools. They were noted for their strict discipline but with a

heart. True to their missionary vocation the Sisters also engaged themselves in outreach projects. In ICC Mother Teresa for example asked me to invite some women for catechetics. I gathered some mostly women vendors. As soon as she thought they were ready for first communion, they were advised to be in church at such a day for confession. One woman said “Day” (Maam), I’ll be very busy that day, I’ll just tell my sins to Sr. Teresa and she can tell them to the priest. – Such simple trust – confess your sins to one another.

Many ICC graduates are in high position in government and in private sectors. One bank manager said to me - I was a working student of ICC. Others from our different schools would say - “ Sister I won’t be like this but for the promissory note “ – This is the promise made before the examination – a promise to pay after the rice or corn is harvested and sold or after the sale of the copra. The solicitude of the Sisters for their students especially for the poor is always remembered with gratitude.

After the Sisters turned over the schools, they did pastoral work. At present, in Luzon some Sisters are in spiritual direction and retreat, prison ministry, feeding program in squatter areas, and with the elderly poor. Here in Mindanao we have the Community of Hope working with children with disabilities. You can visit the COH center in Catadman. Sr. Cecilia will be happy to welcome you. We have other outreach programs in the barrios. This is done with the help of Columban Associates and the Mother Mary Patrick circle. In Midsalip, Zamboanga de Sur the Sisters are still working with the Subano tribe helping them with the care of the environment. There are 6 day care schools for the children.



3rd event – Today is the launching of Sr. Inday’s book “PAGSANGYAW SA MINDANAO”.

Sr. Inday had collected quite enough data from our different schools for her book when suddenly she got very sick and was rushed to the hospital. In my panic, together with some help we started cleaning her room – to have it ready for her return – dead or to die. But Sister got well. Being a woman of great

determination and courage she started to work on the book, only to discover that many of the data were gone. In our hurry we must have thrown away some papers. I volunteered to be the runner – collecting new data from different sources. That’s one of the reasons for the delay of the book. With the help of Kelly and Ronald the books are here. Thank God. We hope you will enjoy reading it and see how the Sisters worked very hard, and as Sr. Inday said “to spread the kingdom and All for the Glory of God.”



Sr. Inday with the Parish Priest

Tribute to the Columban Sisters by Carmencita Aldana Viscocho

I am a pure breed product of schools runs by the Missionary Sisters of St. Columban; my elementary and High School at Malate Catholic School, in Manila, my college and graduate studies at Immaculate Conception College, Ozamiz City. I taught at ICC and remained with the Sisters for 25 years despite offers of higher pay from other schools both private and public because my heart and my conscience would not allow me to leave.

I saw the dedication and sincerity of the Sisters to their mission. I witnessed how they sacrifice and even risked their lives just to get to the remotest areas covered by their mission. Their life is far from easy. I have been to Midsalip, Zamboanga del Sur, during the time of Sr. Ita Hannaway and noticed their not so comfortable living but they were very happy educating the Subaneens. Once on my way to school, I saw Sister Clement riding behind the motor cab driver because nobody offered her a seat. Even our Sister Inday and Sister Teresita in their old age, used to travel to different parts of the archdiocese in uncomfortable transport bearing dust and heat because they don't have limousines or luxurious cars to carry them around.

These are but a few of the manifestations of the Columban Sisters' dedication to their evangelical mission that I will cherish and for this we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



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