

Provincial Desk October 2024 **Provincial Desk**

FORMATION IN THE PHILIPPINES AND HOW IT RE-ENFORCES A NEW OUTLOOK TO SPIRITAN MISSION



Manila: Formation community

Philippines History

The Philippines is located in the Southern East Asia, altogether comprising 7,461 islands, and with a population of about 109 million persons. The country went through a complex history of foreign invasions by the Spaniards in 1500s, the British in 1700s, Americans in 1800s, and finally the Japanese in 1900s until when it gained its second independence in 1946.

As such, the Filipino culture is hugely influenced by remnants of foreign practices, and languages, especially Spanish, which is widely seen in the local dialects here, particularly Filipino (Tagalog) and Cebuano (Bisaya) languages. The Spanish ruled over the Philippines for over 300 years, and the name was given after King Philip II of Spain then.

Filipinos' Faith

One of the legacies that the Spanish left here is the Catholic Faith. By the recent data, about 78.8 percent of the population here are Catholics. The *sensum fidei* is also strong and active, though in a different way, especially in terms of devotions to Mother Mary, the Saints, and the Angels. The Christian faith in general is deeply interwoven in the culture and public life. There are masses said frequently in government offices, police stations, etc.; There are big billboards with Biblical messages around the city, and there are even public trains that have big prints of Bible verses.

Even amidst poverty, especially for those in the cities, their religiosity is still hugely manifested by participating in Church, and also devotional prayers. In almost every household we see a statue of Our Lady, the Santo Nino, the child Jesus, and Jesus Nazareno, Jesus statue carrying the cross and dressed in red. Rosary is also very much loved alongside the Novena Masses before Christmas, called Simbang Gabi. Christmas is celebrated from October. All these devotions have historical churches linked to them which have a history of over 500 years, since the coming of the first missionaries here. This is to tell us that their faith is deeply rooted in the family setting, and the culture. Basic Ecclesial Communities (BCEs) started here as early as late 1960s (soon after Vatican II), the same time as in Tanzania.

Filipinos' Life

The Filipinos are known to be resilient, especially because they are often affected by natural calamities. Every year there are floods and typhoons which oftentimes claim lives and destroy property. With time they have developed a great sense of security and safety awareness. Filipinos are positive, welcoming, and curious, even more when one learns their language and appreciates their food/culture.

Filipinos are musical, as Karaoke is part of their culture, and are active on social media. Taking pictures and selfies here is part and parcel of life, so as much as one is outgoing, one will certainly see themselves posted online. The most popular social media is Facebook, and Facebook Messenger is used even in official communications as a mobile alternative (as we have WhatsApp in other places), hence we have many school and church apostolate groups on Messenger. Basketball is a favourite of most Filipinos, and we are often asked if we play basketball as many of them watch the NBA. The food is great, but is always rice, all you can change is what you eat it with.

Integral Formation

The Spiritan Formation Community of Manila is located in Quezon City, the largest of the 16 cities that make up the Metropolis of Manila. The house of formation has been occupied since 2015 in the temporary house, while the construction of the new house continued until 2018 with the help of the Spiritans abroad under the supervision of Fr Dan Sormani, CSSp, the first Rector. The last floor was completed when Fr Amandus Kapele, CSSp, of the Province of Tanzania, was Rector. So far, the house has had in the previous years, students from Vietnam, India, Kenya and Tanzania, and formators from US, Vietnam, Ireland, Tanzania and Nigeria.

The House is under the governance of The Union of Circumscriptions of Asia and Oceania (UCAO), comprising (Australia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam-India). At the moment we are 18 students, 16 from Vietnam and 2 from Tanzania, and two formators, from Nigeria and the United States. Our being here is enriching to all of us, and it fulfils SRL 141.1 which calls for students in initial formation to live in community with confreres from different cultures. It is our hope that the community will be more and more internationalized as the years go by. Our life, apostolate and programmes, also adapt to the available cultures in the community, a reflection of *Torre d'Alguilha* no. 6.9¹.

Our formation is also localized in the Filipino life, in that as much as possible we get to experience the life of the Filipino people and their faith more deeply in our pastoral work every week. During summer break we are sent for apostolate as well, some go to Mindanao, in the south of the Philippines where we have most of our

¹ In the light of the trend of living mission in international communities and of the increasing diversity of our commitments, our formation programmes will be adapted to this style of mission and community living.



L-R: Scholastics Peter Mallya and Pastory Shimbo

Spiritans missions. The society here, especially in the cities (like Manila) is hugely divided socio-economically, the gap between the rich and the poor is wide. We do our apostolates

in the poor squatter areas: visiting the sick, bringing communion to the housebound, teaching catechism, tutoring, and even helping with house repairs, as we have many confreres here with technical knowledge backgrounds.

In the same regard, our study of theology is contextualized in the Church in Asia in order to deepen the here-and-now appreciation and appropriation of what we learn. This year we have also a course that is

rooted in African cultures, and is taught by a South African professor. As such, there is need on our part to be open, practical and understanding, not being judgemental and not remaining too rigid with the culture and things we have known before. Yet, this does not mean to diminish our personal sense of value and morals in the particularly highly debatable issues which are looked at differently here from their cultural lens. Among the Filipinos respect is a highly valued virtue, and deliberately shaming others is frowned upon.

The Jesuit Loyola School of Theology where we study is widely internationalized with students and teaching staff from over 40 nationalities. Filipinos form just over a half of the whole population at the LST. The two Tanzanians at LST (Peter Mallya, CSSp. and Shimbo Pastory, CSSp.) are also the only Tanzanians at the Ateneo de Manila University, which has a student population of over ten thousand students.

All in all, we can say the formation is holistic and integral leading to maturity and a better moulding of who we are as instruments of God's love intellectually, spiritually, pastorally and psychosocially. We get from this holistic approach a new way of looking at life and mission, and mostly becoming more and more compassionate missionaries.

Pastory Shimbo, CSSp. & Peter Mallya, CSSp.

CONGRATULATIONS



October 11, 2024: Sixteen Spiritans from Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Tanzania (4), and Uganda were ordained deacons at St. John the Evangelist parish in Nairobi.

BUDGETING SESSION 2024



Participants: Mr Nicholas Duhia (1st row -centre)

In accordance with the requirements of the *Resource Management Guidelines* for the Province of Tanzania, a budgeting session is held before the end of the financial year. Members of the Provincial Council and the financial staff of our various institutions gathered at the Provincialate on 29-30 October for this exercise. As we know, Bagamoyo II, chapters 11 and 12, is very specific about the financial management. The budgeting exercise that we have just completed was not just a matter of routine, it was in accordance with these guidelines. Capacity building was an important aspect of the session. Some of our finance staff are highly qualified and have a wealth of experience. They were more than willing to share their knowledge and experience of the intricacies of budget preparation. We adopted the long-awaited common chart of accounts for our educational institutions which is crucial for the consolidation of accounts.

We invited CPA Nicholaus M. F. Duhia to give us a presentation on the taxation of charitable and religious organisations in Tanzania. His professional presentation, although highly technical, was comprehensive and provided valuable guidance on how to comply with government tax regulations. This is an important step as we intend to apply for charitable status, which will be beneficial in managing our economic life.



VACATION

- + Gilbert Tairo
- + Mathew Assenga

Welcome back home and enjoy your stay with family and friends.

BEREAVEMENT

Fr Renatus Assenga, (Mother) Bibi Olympia John Samba, 26 October, 2024

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.

NECROLOGY

+ Joseph	Kilasara	21 November 1987
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BIRTHDAYS

NOVEMBER

- Amandus KAPELE 23
- Raymond RIZIKI 29

WORKSHOP



The poster for the ICT Workshop for ICT Teachers, organized by Spiritans Bagamoyo, is dated November 11th, 2024. The workshop features a 'Launch of Dr. Computer' and covers topics in Artificial Intelligence and a Coding Project using Scratch. The facilitators are Dr. Po-Yuan Shih, Dr. Ji-Ling Hou, and Fr. Raymond Joel, CSSP. The event is supported by TAISA (Taiwan Africa International Service Association) with the goal of promoting digital literacy in education.

Fraternally,



Florentine Mallya, CSSp.
Provincial Superior

