



Marist Brothers East Asia



Marists  
of Champagnat

# News Bits

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November 29, 2021

## *Provincial's Message:*



*Dear Marists of Champagnat:*

*Greetings!*

*As the Liturgical Calendar turns anew, we are filled with grateful expectations for the newness of hearts made ready for the coming of Jesus, our Messiah.*

*As the Season of Advent begins, we are once again invited to the calls of renewal, of renewing vitality, and daring in hope, call to renew our way of manifesting the creative Spirit's birthing in and among us.*

*Fellow Champagnat Marists, in this Season of Advent, let us pray for one another and in the likeness of Mary, may we all remain faithful in this journey of hopeful waiting.*

  
BR. ADOR SANTIAGO, FMS

## NOVEMBER MOVEMENTS IN KUCHING

*By: Br. John Emil Alada, FMS*

Advent greetings from Kuching.

The month of November has been like a circus in Kuching; a great deal of activities has been made and celebrated, either in community or in the school.

To start with, St. Joseph International School teachers and students have been fully vaccinated. Teachers and staff, with the arrangement of Br. Robert, worked closely with the government for the speedy and easy process. Since all students received their vaccine, this paved the way for the examination classes to return to school to take their examinations-IGCSE and A Levels. The exam ran for almost a month which needed thorough and careful planning regarding the invigilation schedules and health safety protocols. Br. Robert had to keep in touch with the Sarawak Education Department to make sure that there are no loose ends during the preparation process. This was a big toll for him as amendments happened at the last minute.

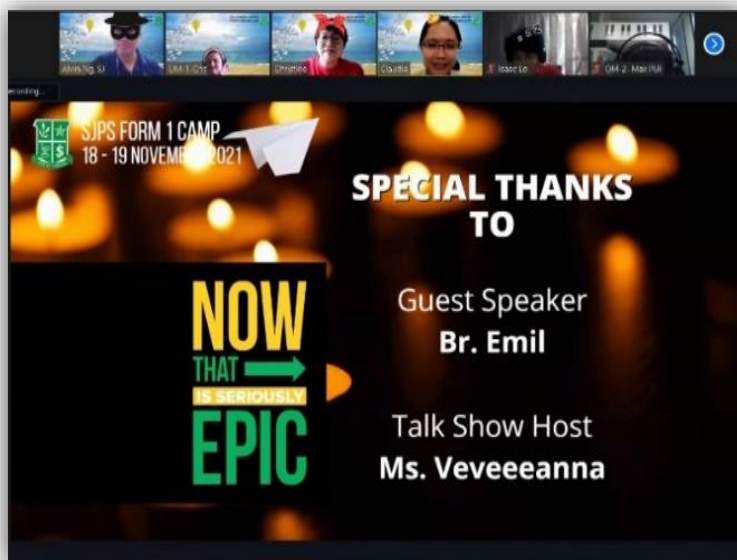


Figure 1. Br. Emil in his online camp session with SJPS students

Online Camps and Talks has been the “in thing” this pandemic. To develop holistic development of the SJIS students, the school conducted a series of online camps. With some limitations, it turned out successfully maximizing the potentials offered by online materials. Br. Emil was involved with the lower secondary students and at the same time with the Form 1 students from other school. He also journeyed a hostel student in his formation to be baptized as Catholic and to receive the initial sacraments. Aside from that, Confirmation Mass for some Catholic students were celebrated in school. It was officiated by Fr. Stanley Goh, a Jesuit priest, Principal of the St. Joseph Private School, a sister school under St. Joseph’s Family of Schools, who was delegated by the archbishop. There were 10 confirmed students, two of which are our students staying in the Hostel





*Students receiving the sacraments of confirmation.*



*Br. Emil with the students.*

Final Examination for lower secondary was scheduled last 22-25 November. The school ended with an Online Mass Celebration which was streamed online and was joined by students from the St. Joseph's Family of schools- St. Joseph's Primary School, St. Joseph's Private School, and St. Joseph's International School. After which the year 11 graduation was held physically in school which was attended by the graduating students, teachers and staff, and the invited guests. His Grace, Archbishop Simon Poh, was present to bless the new covered court building, and to witness the graduation ceremony as well.



*Grade 11-IGCSE students during their graduation ceremony.*



*Mr. Christopher Chua, School's CEO, Archbishop Simon Poh, and Br. Robert.*



*Archbishop Simon Poh while giving his speech.*



*Br. Robert during the presentation of award to the student.*



*Students after receiving their scrolls.*

November itself is indeed a celebration!

Br. Emil had his birthday last November 2. The community had a simple birthday dinner together with Priests celebrating Mass in the community. He is occupied with his Online teaching during weekdays, and Online Class on Saturdays. He usually goes hiking on Sundays together with his Filipino, Malaysian, and Thai friends in Kuching.



*Community meal out with the hostel students after their examination.*



*Community meal out with Fr. Ramon, SDB.*



*Br. Emil's Homeroom students.*



*Hiking at Mt. Singai with Filipino, Malaysian, and Thai friends in Kuching.*





*Brothers took a tour of the Mary's Shrine in Sibuan.*



*Brothers together with some lay people in Sibuan during lunch.*

The community had a chance to fly over to Sibuan community to visit Br. John Heng. Bros. Andrew and Joachim happened to be there, so it was great opportunity to gather and check on each one.

The community is technically on its vacation mood by next week. *(Just see Br. Emil's posts in FB for further updates)*. However, preparations for the incoming school year must be made. The community members are preparing their reflection video for the advent season.

To end the school year and to appreciate the efforts of the teachers, to gather as one Marist family, and to celebrate the gift of life, the community had invited all teachers and staff of SJIS. Despite of the restrictions, *(hopefully no one gets positive)* it was a great time to see the excitement on each one's faces to get together after a long time of being away from each other.

Despite of the uncertainties and complexities of the academic year, we thank God for sustaining the community and all the teachers the necessary strength and ability to adapt. Kudos to Br. Robert in ensuring all things can be safely done for the benefit of the students' welfare without compromising teacher's welfare as well.

*2022, here we come! Advance Merry Christmas everyone!*



*SJIS Family at the Brothers' Residence for a night of thanksgiving and gathering.*



## NDDU Welcomes Br. Manuel V. de Leon as New President

*By: Gabriel L. Estocapio III, NDDU Student*

NDDU formally welcomed and invested Br. Manuel “Manny” V. de Leon as the 19<sup>th</sup> School Head and 12<sup>th</sup> President during his Investiture Ceremony at the Br. James McKnight Auditorium last November 25, 2021.

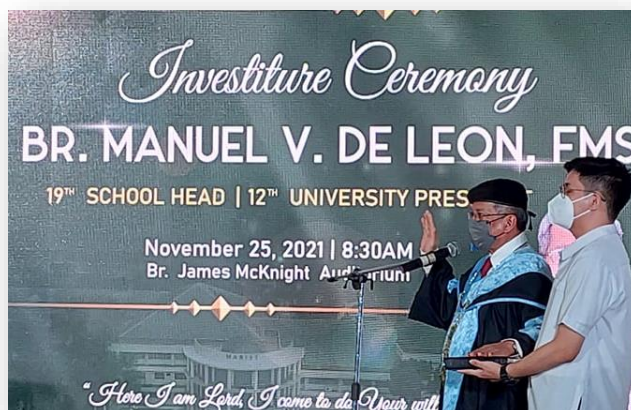
The said ceremony was attended by the representatives of the different sectors: the Marist Brothers, lay mission partners from the University and other Marist schools, religious congregations, students, parents and alumni, government officials, distinguished guests, and his family. It was also livestreamed through the official NDDU Facebook page for the general NDDU community to witness.

Before the ceremony was held, a Eucharistic Celebration took place that was mainly presided by Fr. Angelo Buenavides, DCM, Vicar for the Diocese of Marbel, and co-celebrated with Fr. Francis Zabala, president of Notre Dame University of Cotabato; Fr. Joemar Candido, the University Chaplain; and Fr. Louie Fuentespina, CP, the Provincial Superior of the Passionist Fathers.



The ceremony started by revisiting the history of NDDU to look back on the beginnings of the institution and legacies of previous presidents, dubbed as seven decades of making a difference. Messages of support and greetings were also given by the Regional Director of the Commission on Higher Education, School Division Superintendent, fellow educators, parent and student representatives. His life story was also narrated looking back at his humble beginnings, religious formation and educational training. His excellence in academics, achievements and continuous community services were highlighted.

The investiture ceremony was formally opened by Br. Dominador Santiago, FMS, the Marist Provincial Superior and Chairman of the Board. He was assisted by Br. Paterno S. Corpus, FMS. This was followed by the presentation of the University Mace and the imposition of the Presidential Chain by Dr. Nelia A. Alibin of CHED and by Bro. Crispin Betita and Bro. Rustico Lumbo respectively. Afterwards, Atty. Tomas C. Falgui led the administration of the Oath of Office as the President of NDDU, while Fr. Angel led the giving of charge and the blessing.





Br. de Leon revealed in his inaugural address why he had personally picked the theme, "Here I am Lord, I come to do Your will." Aside from being a significant line from the Bible, it was something remarkable for him. According to Br. de Leon, when he was asked to be the president, he realized that it only takes courage and trust; the bravery to perform his duties faithfully and be able to rise up in times of challenges, and the trust and confidence that was bestowed onto him filled his heart with gratitude.



In his message, he highlighted only three priorities. He said that the number being analogous to a term of presidency. First, he highlighted to build the university as a "sacred space". It is in our mission and vision the role of evangelization, promote the core values, and do things through Mama Mary. We are also reminded of the school's hymn, "Life of Thanksgiving", that we are to be of service for others and be the heralds of hope. Yet, all of these things could not prosper if we do not experience the love of God and that we must have the desire for active participation in the mission of Jesus.



Secondly, he emphasized his priority on the significant student experience of academic quality. He associated education to the relationship between the sun and the seed; the sun is only there to shine bright but the potential and growth comes from the seed. The goal for basic education is to open the door of untrained minds. It is to develop a total person. This hope would stem from redesigning learning paradigms, provide interventions, and to promote training to work for excellence. Moreover, he stressed on the point that we must promote liberal arts as the foundation of knowledge. He quoted John Paul II in the Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Higher Education that "academic freedom is an essential component of a Catholic University" that

tells us that academic quality is not possible without it. Thus, we must take steps to ensure the free flow of inquiry, expression, and built learners on the foundation with others; trust, empathy, and collaboration.

The third priority is the University as the service of the country. He believed that transformation of the nation begins in inner transformation of the individual. We do not need to be in the highest positions to make a difference. Yet, the injustices, we are damaged as a society. He thought of the youth when he saw the informal settlements all the way to Espina and asked himself, "What would their future be?". With all the noise in this world, NDDU is challenged to create educational experience for the students that would bridge the gap between the privileged and marginalized. It is committing people to the service of the Church and country. We have a

beautiful country, that is a fact. We can be world class and all we need is to instill love of country through our school curriculum.

He concluded with a story way back in 1999. When his spiritual director asked him that without the trappings of success all powers and titles, what will make him remain as a Marist Brother. He pondered on this thought for a week and when he came back, he told his purpose. What gives reason to his being are two important things: the children and the earth. He felt happy with young people and energized by the environment. Whatever assignment he will have, these would keep him grounded. We must love the youth as they are the heirs of a wonderful world.

The program ended with a closing remarks from Dr. Jose Dagoc, Vice President for Academics, who said, “how NDDU community is truly blessed to have Br.Manny as its president.” It is a new dawn for the institution to have a president who advocates for excellence and believes that he is able to shepherd everyone to be at their ultimate best in executing the school’s mission. *Mabuhay ang NDDU, mabuhay ang laing Marista!*



### Photos:





## PHILIPPINE SECTOR MARIST SCHOOL STATISTICS

NAME OF SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY		SCHOOL YEAR 2021-2022						
		PERSONNEL (Brothers & Lays)				STUDENTS / BENEFICIARIES		
		Male	Female	Brothers	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	ND Cotabato	38	60	3	<b>101</b>	1,127	1,050	<b>2,177</b>
2	NDDU	142	225	6	<b>373</b>	2,346	3,614	<b>5,960</b>
	NDDU - MTTP	2	2		<b>4</b>	4	49	<b>53</b>
3	NDKC	57	101	5	<b>163</b>	1,209	1,530	<b>2,739</b>
	NDKC - MTTP					14	9	<b>23</b>
4	ND Jolo	25	48	4	<b>77</b>	801	329	<b>1,130</b>
5	NDMU	213	253	5	<b>471</b>	2,771	3,887	<b>6,658</b>
6	Marist School, Marikina	63	92	4	<b>159</b>	2,008	311	<b>2,319</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>540</b>	<b>781</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1,348</b>	<b>10,280</b>	<b>10,779</b>	<b>21,059</b>

### *Information:*

1. Vincent Celeste signed the Indult to leave the Institute on November 27 at the Province Center in Lagao.
2. Dr. Norma Segocio, (Affiliated Member), former NDDU Vice-President for Academics, died on November 28 at the age of 72. Her wake is at Room 108, St. Peter Chapel, Apopong, GSC. The burial is scheduled on December 2, Thursday at 9:00 A.M. at Forest Lake.
3. Br. Jick de Leon, FMS passed the LET Examination 2021.

*Congratulations Br. Jick!*



# THE ARCHIVIST'S CORNER

## #58

Br. Romulo L. Porras, FMS



### THE BEGINNINGS OF NOTRE DAME OF KIDAPAWAN

As Midsayap out of the picture and the new Marists in the country were led to Kidapawan<sup>1</sup> in 1954. The Oblates had established their presence there in 1945, covering barrio Kidapawan from Pikit parish, quite a distance away. In 1947, a parish was established with Fr. James McSorley as resident priest, including present-day municipalities of Magpet, Makilala, Matalam and President Roxas. The Annals of the Brothers report that Fr. Mongeau was the founder of the parish.

A co-educational school was established in 1948, starting with 264 students and handed over to the Marists in 1954, while the girls were entrusted to the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVMs). The school campus was a two-hectare terrain needing clearing and was far from ideal for a school; but the school did grow and grew under the direction of Oblates Joseph Milford, Matthew Casey and John Harrington over the next six years, the last one handing the school over to the Marists. Parish and school concerns just had grown too much for the parish priest to pay attention to the needs of both.

The Provincial Council of the United States deliberated upon the acceptance of Dame of Kidapawan in its session of Dec. 12, 1953 and asked the General Council to the following terms: the school would be financed and owned by the bishop, the Brother would manage the school and received a monthly salary (200 pesos, equated as 100 USD) without financial accountability for the operations and only of such type of school arrangements would be accepted as an experi. Incidentally, the point made of such arrangement being the “only one” re-enforces the view that the provincial leadership in the States did not consider Dadiangas to be a separate entity. The General Council in its session of January 4, 1954 responded that in spite of the apprehensions caused by the establishment of a co-educational school in the Philippines, approval was granted provided that:

1. There be not less than three Brothers,
2. That the community residence be absolutely independent from that of the parish priest;
3. That the need of traveling of the parish priest not deprive the Brothers of sufficient religious services;
4. That the Brothers manage the school according to our Rules and customs;
5. That boys and girls would be in separate classrooms and that the Brothers be responsible for the instruction of the boys;
6. That a contract be written foreseeing the conditions of the foundation: among them the salary and manner of adjusting it, in case of need, to the cost of living.



In the April 1952 issue of the Bulletin of Studies, we find reproduced a long description or “review” of the Philippine Mission, written by Bishop Gerard Mongeau. He refers to “a large Notre Dame High School taken care of by one priest who is also parish priest. An assistant is always out in the barrios of which there are “one hundred”. One can well imagine the relief of the parish priest when the Brothers accepted to take over the management of the school.

The first Marists to be assigned to Kidapawan were Brothers Maurus James, Norman Cyril, aka Norman Roy and Peter Cassidy. Maurus James was the director for the initial semester and was succeeded by Norman Roy.

The curriculum was standard for the time, English as the medium of instruction, but Spanish and the National language being required. Vocational subjects are part of each year’s curriculum. The Marists handled all religion classes as well as some English, mathematics and science subjects.

In 1955, Bro. Leonida visited the Kidapawan community and school. He certainly must have taken notice of the poor accommodations. Bernard Curtin recalls that during his first visit to Kidapawan upon his arrival in 1956, that “the Brothers lived in a bahay kubo (a rustic house) and at night the footlong rats had a fine time running from beam to beam, but the welcome from Brothers and students was warm and hearty.”

The Annals, tell us that the school opened on June 14, 1954 under Marist management with enrollment of over 300 boys. The school buildings are three in number. Only one of them could be called permanent as the other two are built of bojo, a type of bamboo, which lasts only four or five years. The bishop built an addition to the old nipa or bamboo house which has served as convent for the priests. In this addition, which is made of wood, the Brothers have a sala, living room, which is also used as study room and oratory and three bedrooms. In the old part are the dining room, kitchen, and two spare rooms for visitors.

The Provincial Linus William had visited Kidapawan for three days in October of 1954, observed classes, saw the Brothers in direction and was treated to a program of native dances and songs. He definitely must have experienced the quasi daily downpour at 2 p.m. Even ten years later, the writer was informed about that feature of the Kidapawan closeness of Mount Apo, the highest peak of the country.

When Bro. Louis Omer, the local superior, visited and stayed with the Brothers in November 1955, a Notre Dame meet brought seven schools to the campus, eighty-nine students made up the first Marist old-boys’ group, some personnel changes and .... “we are trying to secure five hectares of land to build a bigger school with better buildings.....”

And this brings us to a decisive change. The school was located near the present day cathedral and Girls’ Department, offered little space for outdoor activities so that the Marist decided to acquire a new campus 1957. On April 29, 1957 the Provincial Council of the United States petitions the General Council to approve the request of Bro. Maurus James, Provincial Visitor, and his Council for permission to secure a piece of property in Kidapawan upon which a Novitiate will be constructed with the \$10,000 granted them by the General Council. Cost of this property is 3,000 pesos; and the grant of \$15,000 (Bingo money) to build their own school in Kidapawan. The General Council approved both requests and endorsed the new school site to allow for a more complete separation of boys and girls. We will see that the “novitiate” project was later constructed in Tamontaka, not in Kidapawan.

Incidentally, right now our school is located on Datu Ingkal Street. According to Br. Herbert, he was informed by “the” or “a” Datu that all the land visible from the campus of Notre Dame, which was located on the uppermost elevated portion of the town, was his as far as eyes could see. Possibly a slight exaggeration”?

As things worked out, the Marist did move to a new campus on Datu Ingkal Street, a muddy road well-embedded in the memory of many Marists who hiked it up and down for daily mass till they final got a jeep, (shortly after Reginald Theodore was named director in 1964) to save time and keep the cassock clean.

IN 1959, the Bulletin of Studies will feature the building and faculty of Notre Dame of Kidapawan and state that it was built under the supervision of Br. Dennis Herman and was financed by the Marist Mission League. Bishop Gerald Mongeau, OMI officiated at the ceremony, with numerous Marist Brothers in attendance. Such occasions would bring together the whole local clergy, all religious, not just Kidapawan: an expression of the sense of solidarity in the founding years.

On Dec. 3, 1959, the Esopus Province Council authorized the school branching out to tertiary level, offering first year college level courses as a co-educational institution in 1960 for Liberal Arts, Commerce and Secretarial courses. A laconic statement in the Bulletin of Studies merely informs us that it will have only limited enrollment during the first. Indeed, fifty-eight students formed the first group and six dropped out by the second semester while the High School counted 381 boys. But, the Marbel Annals record the fact that Bro. Henry Ruiz went to Kidapawan to help Br. Norman with college matters. Henry had learned a few things about college life.

In 1961, the District Council of the Philippines requested permission to spend 15,000 pesos to build two classrooms for day time use by the college, an armory and a “tienda (small store).” As was the case in Marbel and Dadiangas, most college-level classes were held in the same facilities used by the high school.

Incidentally, by now reports about the Philippine District become practically nil and soon the Bulletin of Studies will cease to be published. # # #

Source: Copies from *The Marist Brothers of the Schools in the Philippines- The Mission Period: 1941-1960 (A Compilation of Essays)* by Br. Paul J. Meuten, FMS, 2014, Folder 1, pages 341-352.

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<sup>1</sup>Kidapawan is the capital of the Province of Cotabato (also referred to as North Cotabato). Kidapawan is almost equidistant from Davao City (107 km.) and Cotabato City (122.3 km). Its population is 160,791 according to 2020 census. The city is divided into 40 barangays..

*Shown in the next page are the present photos of NDKC including that of the Elementary and the High School buildings.*



## NOTRE DAME OF KIDAPAWAN COLLEGE KIDAPAWAN CITY, PHILIPPINES



## *Birthday Greetings to:*



December 2  
Br. Dionesio D. Acosta, Jr.



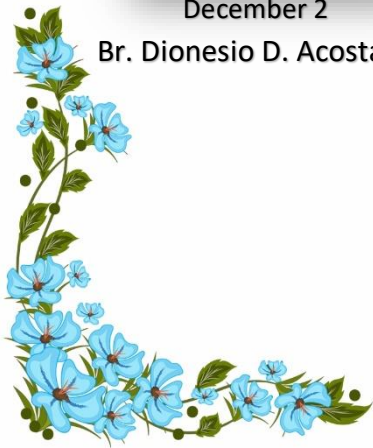
December 2  
Br. Robert Teoh T Khiang



December 3  
Br. Eugene R. Pius Tajo



December 5  
Br. Jick J. de Leon



## *Death Anniversaries:*

November 29, 1903 - Br. Pierre Pascal died in Chungking.

November 29, 1956 – Br. Marius Bressoud died in France.

November 29, 1978 – Br. Lece Clet died in Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

November 30, 1961 – Br. Louis Honore died in Hellongjiang.

December 1, 1916 – Br. Marie Abel in WWI died in France.

December 1, 1927– Andre Zchang, a junior died in Beijing.

December 1, 2005 – Br. Emile Francois died in Donglu, China.

December 2, 1940 – Br. Mathias died in Beijing.

December 4, 1956 – Br. Marcel Albert died in Varennes, France.

December 5, 1940 – Br. Francois Ignace died in Beijing.

December 6, 1941 – Br. Marius Louis died in St. Genis-Laval.





*Let us pray...*

- For the eternal repose of the soul of Dr. Norma Segocio (Affiliated Member), former NDDU Vice-President for Academics, who died on November 28.
- For the sick brothers, affiliated members, benefactors, family members, friends and students.
- For all essential workers, that God will protect them as they continue to serve others.
- For those most susceptible to the Coronavirus, that God will protect them from illness and surround them with the peace of knowing that they are loved and cared for beyond measure.
- For all our birthday celebrants, may they receive God's abundant grace in their lives.

*"Advent is a time of waiting for our Lord, who will visit us all in our own hearts."*

*"The Lord is coming! Let us wait for Him!"*

- POPE FRANCIS