



Marist Brothers East Asia Province



Marists  
of Champagnat

# News Bits

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## IOBELEIUS

*Greetings of a Happy New Year!*

*This, indeed, is the time of the year when we look back with gratitude to the people and events that shaped our lives in the year 2021. As we look back, we can sense that in those challenging times, we arose with unswerving trust and confidence in God's loving Providence. In what seemed to be darkness and uncertainties of the pandemic, we became steadfast in our faith and ever hopeful in this trying circumstance. Indeed, the spirit of the Marist in us; in the likeness of St. Marcellin, we continue to experience the presence of God in all these.*



*God has blessed us, Marists of Champagnat with the Jubilee Celebrations for 2020 Br. Crispin Betita (60 years), Br. Lindley Sionosa (25 years), 2021 Br. Rosendo Yee (50 years), Br. Alfredo Herrera (50 years), Br. Christopher Gorit (25 years), Br. Arnel Alfanta (25 years). Their gift of faithful commitment to their vocation is a powerful testimony of how God stood with the ones He chose and how generously our jubilarians responded in IOBELEIUS, "shout for joy", in their response to His call.*

*IOBELEIUS, the Latin derivation of the term Jubilee, encompassed the Hebrew experience where "slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts would be forgiven, and the mercies of Yahweh would be particularly manifest". It is the moment of great joy when the "trumpet blasts liberty".*

*Our jubilarians witnessed through the years the unfailing love of God and the manifestations of His mercies. May their lives be our inspiration. We pray that we, too, can celebrate the jubilee of our own respective vocations and furthermore, make ourselves the "jubilee message" to others in doing God's mission. That is, we become instruments of freedom to those in prison, agents of forgiveness and channels of His mercies and compassion.*

*May God bless us all!*

*In Mary and St. Marcellin,*

*Br. Dominador A. Santiago, FMS*  
Provincial

# *The Jubilarians*

**BR. CRISPIN P. BETITA, FMS**  
**1960 – 2020 (60 Years)**



## **GREAT MIND, COMPASSIONATE HEART AND A MAN OF PRINCIPLE**

By: Br. Manuel de Leon, FMS

Bro. Crispin Paez Betita was born on October 28, 1942, in Upi Nuro, Maguindanao to Dr. Crispin Betita, Sr. and Estrella Paez. He is the second child among 10 of 4 girls and 6 boys. His father re-married and bore 3 children, all boys.

He went for his elementary at Notre Dame University Training Department and graduated in 1954 and continued his high school education at Notre Dame of Cotabato Boys' Department where he was a member of the school's marching band. He played the saxophone.

After high school in 1958, he joined the pre-novitiate program in Lagao under Br. Louis Omer Duprez and the following year proceeded for his novitiate formation in Tamontaka. He belonged to the first four Filipino Marist Brothers trained in the Philippines: Claro Precioso, Isidro Saranillo, Samuel Geveso and Crispin Betita. The three left the Brothers and married. Two of them are now deceased. Only Br. Crispin persevered.

Br. Crispin had his scholasticate in Lagao (1961-1964) under Br. Bernard Curtin, who was a strict disciplinarian.

He was assigned in Kidapawan from 1964 to 1967 and to Marikina from 1967 to 1969 as a teacher. In 1969, he was transferred to Marbel until 1973 as a high school principal. In 1973-1975, he was appointed the high school principal at Marist School, Marikina and later made school president and at the same time high school principal until 1979. He was a full-time president in 1979 up to 1982. While in Marikina, he started to take courses at the Ateneo de Manila University but shifted to De La Salle University for his Master's Degree in Educational Management.

After Marikina, he was transferred to Notre Dame of Dadiangas Boys' Department as Principal and a year after, he was made Director/Principal of Notre Dame of Lagao Boys' Department until 1988. As school director and Principal in Lagao, he also assumed the position as Community Leader in 1984-1985. He was made President of Notre Dame of Dadiangas College in 1989 to 1991. In 1991, he decided to answer the radical call of caring for the children and young people who were considered "at risk" and "in conflict with the law." They were known before as "street children". He put up a "pasilungan center" or dropped-in center for these children to have a safer place to stay at night. Eventually, the number grew that he needed to transfer to a bigger place with home facilities. Thus, he managed to acquire a property in Katangawan and called it Marcellin Homes.

In 1999, he was appointed President of Notre Dame of Marbel University and at the same time working at the Marcellin Foundation until 2006. After which, he devoted his time again to Marcellin Foundation but assigned in either Lagao or Dadiangas Community. In 2019 under Br. Ador Santiago as Provincial, a community of Brothers was established in Katangawan. Currently, he serves as the Community Leader.

I have not lived with Br. Crispin in the community nor worked with him in a particular ministry to be able to know him up close. But as a former Provincial, I had the chance to listen to his stories and concerns especially running the Marcellin Foundation, dealing with children and young people coming from different backgrounds. If there is one person who believes in the Divine Providence, it is Br. Crispin. I still wonder how he can run the Foundation for more than 25 years considering that it has no stable source of funding. Everything was dependent on donations from generous people.

Br. Crispin has always been hands-on in dealing with the cases of the children entrusted to his care. Although, he gets help from professional social workers and other volunteers, he actually micro-manages Marcellin Home even to the extent of making himself available as a “house parent”.

With his work at the Marcellin Foundation, he received many awards and citations. The Eugenio Lopez Foundation, Inc. awarded him as “Bayaning Filipino Award”. He is the founder of the Juvenile Justice Network in the City of General Santos. He headed the People’s Law Enforcers Board or PLEB which handles cases of policemen involving civilian complaints. He is a permanent representative to the Regional Juvenile Network.

In spite his age, he is still very active in the very difficult ministry of caring for the children in the “fringes of society”. In fact, there is no slowing down. He still able to tap donors and sponsors to make sure that the children are provided food, shelter, education, and interventions to make them productive members of the community when they become adults. Some of the “boys” are now working as OFWs while others have their regular employment after finishing high school or college education.

Br. Crispin was very laconic during my interview with him. I sensed that he was not comfortable giving him the accolade deserving of a jubilarian. He prefers to remain humble rather than speak about his achievements. That speak highly of a man of great mind and talents. In his younger days, besides being an A-1 school administrator, he is a man of principle. He is very uncompromising with his convictions. One time, he was charged with “contempt of court”, and he was put under house arrest by a Regional Trial Judge. Br. Crispin was also a member of the Provincial Council and a Vice-Provincial.

To Br. Crispin, CONGRATULATIONS and MORE POWER!!!

### *Photos through the years...*





## **BR. LINDLEY H. SIONOSA, FMS** **1995 – 2020 (25 Years)**



### **BR. LINDLEY; A MAN OF MANY TALENTS**

By: Br. Paterno Corpus, FMS

Brother Lindley was born on July 1, 1974 in Polomolok, South Cotabato, Philippines. He is the eldest of 5 children of Santiago Sionosa and Hermogena Halago Sionosa.

He finished his elementary, secondary and tertiary level education in Notre Dame of Dadiangas College. As a student, he always excelled and most of the time on the top of his class. He graduated Salutatorian and received the Notre Dame medal when he graduated from Elementary in 1987; Valedictorian and recipient of the Notre Dame Legion of Honor award when he graduated from high school 1991. In College, he enrolled for a BS Nursing degree but later pursued a BS Accountancy where he graduated Magna cum Laude in 1995. During his last year in the college he joined the Aspirancy and Postulancy programs of the Marist Brothers. Then he was admitted in the Novitiate as a novice, and in 1997 he took his first profession as a Marist Brother.

I have known him since 1991, when he joined the Aspirancy Program of the Marist Brothers. and competitions, such as the national press conference and as school representative in City Hall during meetings. His student peers recognized his leadership ability. Many times he would be elected as officers of his class and department. And his leadership inspired other students to excel as well. Success comes because he led by sharing responsibilities with others.

Brother Lindley is a humble person despite his being a man of high intelligence. Through his good example, quality service and humility, Brother Lindley gains the respect of his students, peers, teachers, fellow religious and people he works with and for. He relates not with dominance but with gentleness and respect.

He is a man of many talents. An artist by heart, loves music and paintings. Among his other interests are riding a mountain bike and playing table tennis. His command of the English language is quite advanced. He writes well. Whenever he was asked to be the secretary of meeting, he would always have the minutes completed right after the meeting.

Brother Lindley always showed focus and determination to excel in everything he does, may it be in academics or co-curricular activities. He ably represented the school in the local and national forums.

In 1998, he did his post-novitiate formation at the Marist Asia Pacific Center (MAPAC), in Marikina, Metro Manila. While at MAPAC, he enrolled at Notre Dame of Marbel University to finish his BS in education major in Religious Education. After graduation, he joined the Brothers in active ministry as Campus Minister and teacher and Parish worker of St. Vincent Ferrer Parish, Buda, Davao City. He made perpetual profession on May 20, 2003. Subsequently, he attended the Formators' Course in Nairobi (Kenya) and L'Hermitage (France) between 2005 and 2006.

His other assignments included the following: Master of Aspirants and Postulants (2003 – 2009), Master of Novices (2010 -2016). and Sector Bursar (2017 – 2018). He was a member of the Leadership team of the Province as: Religious Superior, Provincial Councilor and Vice-Provincial of the East Asia Province.

His involvement included being part of the commissions of the Marist General administration. In 2007 – 2009 he was appointed a member of the Preparatory Commission for the XXIst General Chapter of the Marist Brothers; International Commission of Brothers Brother Today; Asian regional team for New Models of Animation, Management and Governance; Secretary of the Marist Asian Conference of Leaders.

He worked as an aspirant teacher from 2003 to 2005 and as a postulant teacher from 2006 to 2009. He was also a member of the Preparatory Commission for the XXI General Chapter (2007-2009). He was master of novices from 2010 to 2016. As a member of the International Committee of Brothers Today since 2016, Br. Lindley is given the opportunity to show his many talents and leadership.

### *Photos through the years...*





## **WRITTEN INTERVIEW WITH BR. LINDLEY H. SIONOSA, FMS ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SILVER JUBILEE (25 YEARS) OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION AS A MARIST BROTHER**

By Dr. Alma S. Hordista

12 January 2022

### **1. How old were you when you thought of becoming a Marist brother? Who influenced you? What were the circumstances?**

The decision to undergo formation as a Marist Brother came during the 1993 Summer Vocation Workshop in Lagao. I was about to turn 19 years old then, having just completed my second year in college.

However, the story began a year earlier, when my friend and classmate in some subjects, Tyrone Villegas shared to me his experience of the 1992 Summer Vocation Workshop. I thought it was a nice way to spend the summer break, so I asked him when would be the next and that I told him I was interested to participate. (n.b., Tyrone, went to the novitiate in 1994, right after graduating from BS Accountancy. He only stayed 6 months. He is now a CPA and has a family).

At the beginning, my interest was only the workshop. Although I knew about the Marist Brothers, having studied since Grade 1 at Notre Dame of Dadiangas University, it never then crossed my mind to be a Marist Brother, although once when I was in elementary, I dreamed of becoming a priest.

The schoolyear 1992-1993 was the year of the big question, "Lord, what do you want me to do with my life?". It was the year of searching. I did one semester of Nursing, then shifted to Accountancy. But then, something was missing. During the 1993 Summer Vocation Workshop, what I thought to be the answer came. My prayer then was, "Lord, I am available; send me."

### **2. Did you ever have doubts? When was the moment you were certain, "This is what I want to be."**

Yes, there were moments of doubt, temptation, and failure. I learned in formation that the commitment must be renewed every day. When I decided to make first profession in 1997, I was only certain of one thing, that Jesus would be "a shepherd to me, he knows my name; he knows the heart of my story" ...a message I received through a song.

And all throughout my life, every time I feel unsure, he tells me, "We are in this together, remember?". In other words, I am not alone. God is there always. The poem, Footprints in the Sand illustrates this very well.

### **3. As a Marist Brother what are the joyous and fulfilling moments in the past 25 years?**

- a. After the workshop, I volunteered in the Operation Head Start Program of Br. Rosendo Yee. We went to Sinayawan, Bukidnon. There I developed the love for teaching and being with children.
- b. In the aspirancy house, I developed the love for manual work, discovered my musical abilities and changed from being reserved to be more sociable.



- c. When I was a novice, I realized how accompaniment has helped me a lot in growing as a person. That is why I openly expressed my dream of becoming a formator myself. It came true; I was formator from 2003 to 2016. The best part of being a formator is to share in the religious experiences of formands. Religious experiences are moments of profound encounter with God; such encounters became a privileged place for me to feel God's presence in my life as well.
- d. In the Marist Asia Pacific Center (MAPAC), where I did my post-novitiate formation, I learned to live with brothers of other cultures.
- e. Among the Filipino brothers, there are those whom I have developed wonderful friendships and whose companionship and brotherly support have also nourished me. Of course, there are also brothers who challenge me a lot; they too help me grow.
- f. My first ministry was in Marbel. There I learned to collaborate with our mission partners and be made to feel part of the Marist family. It was also in Marbel where I came to appreciate my gift to easily connect with children.
- g. In 2005, I had the opportunity to stop by the General House in Rome enroute to Kenya for the Formators' Course. In Rome, I realized that the Marist world is not limited to the Philippines and that I belong to a global family.
- h. The 10 months in Nairobi, Kenya and 1 month in L'Hermitage in France for the Formators' Course not only equipped me for this special ministry but also strengthened my identity as a Marist Brother.
- i. It might have been in 2008 or 2009 when I facilitated the retreat of the personnel of Notre Dame of Dadiangas University Integrated Basic Education Department – Lagao. At that time the prayer of Marcellin to our Good Mother became real to me, "If this work should perish, it is not our work that fails, but yours, for you have done everything for us." This prayer has since then become a source of my strength.
- j. My international exposures – the Formators Course of 2005, the membership in the Preparatory Commission for the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter (2007-2009), being in the Provincial Council, the membership in the International Commission of Brothers Today (2016-2019), my participation in the 22<sup>nd</sup> General Chapter in Colombia in 2017, and now living and working in the General Administration – were and are beautiful moments of encounter with brothers and lay Marists from all over the world. They too help me fortify my own Marist identity and my sense of Institute.
- k. It is also great to learn another language, especially that which is widely used in the Institute. My first steps in learning Spanish were with the Mexican brothers who were my companions in the Formators Course of 2005. Then I was sent to Spain in July and August of 2020 to have formal classes in an academy in Salamanca. Finally, in order to sharpen it, I spent the Christmas break of 2021 in Colombia.
- l. My encounters with young people throughout my ministry, especially outside the classroom and as Table Tennis coach are all experiences of being close to them in their real-life situation.
- m. It is also a consolation for me to have brothers from other administrative units and countries with whom I share wonderful friendships.
- n. I am also happy to have established friendships with several mission partners, with such closeness extending to their respective families as well.
- o. During my journey, I also met many religious sisters, brothers and priests who are also sources of inspiration and support.
- p. My family has always been there for me.
- q. Above all, it is simply the living of a life in constant search for God, the life of a God-seeker.

4. **What accomplishments are you most proud of? I am proud of...**

- a. Having accompanied many young men, some are brothers now, while most others chose a different direction.
- b. Having touched and became part of others' lives in my own simple way, just by being who I am.
- c. Having given hope to those who have come to share their worries with me.
- d. Having been one of the teachers or the coach of young men and women who are now professionals.
- e. My little contributions in the Province and to the Institute.
- f. Just being a brother to whomever I meet.



5. **How do you want the Lay Marist to treat you? How would you want them to remember you?**

- a. I would like to be treated as somebody who is human, not perfect, with a lot of faults and failings, but nevertheless trying to do the right thing in the right way.
- b. I would like to be treated simply as a brother, as family.
- c. I would like to be remembered as somebody who lived his life to the full according to what God wanted him to be, as somebody who loved as Jesus loved, as somebody who obeyed as Mary obeyed, and as somebody who believed as Marcellin Champagnat believed.

6. **What are your significant learnings in your varied assignments? In terms of faith, commitment, service, or being Marist?**

- a. Before deciding: Discern. Pray.
- b. We cannot control every outcome. Things happen as they will.
- c. Every problem has a solution. If there is no solution, then it is not a problem. Just live with it.
- d. You cannot solve a problem by creating another problem.
- e. We can only help the person as much as he or she is willing to be helped.
- f. The ministry of helping is not about making the decision for the person. Rather, it is about empowering him or her to take the best option.
- g. Believe that every person is good.
- h. We are all God's instruments.
- i. No matter how bleak the situation is, the sun will still rise tomorrow. Keep believing, keep hoping.
- j. We cannot win every ballgame. What is important is that we give our best every time.
- k. Keep your sense of humor. There is always a bright side.
- l. A ministry may be difficult and challenging, but when seen as service of God and of his people and done with great love, it is worth the sacrifice.





**BR. ROSENDO J. YEE, FMS**  
**1971 – 2021 (50 Years)**



**DETERMINED, SIMPLE AND HUMBLE BROTHER**

By: Manuel de Leon, FMS

Bro. Rosendo was born on the Year of the Dragon, June 18, 1952, in La Paz, Iloilo City. He is the 5<sup>th</sup> child among eight (8) – seven (7) boys and one (1) girl. He has also two (2) stepsisters. His father, Serafin, was a pure Chinese and his mother, Leonarda, was an Ilongga. The family migrated to Dadiangas (the downtown area of General Santos) in 1955. He went to Cotabato Chinese Institute for his Grade 1 -4 and transferred to Dadiangas North Elementary School for his Grade 5-6. In high school, he studied at Notre Dame of Dadiangas Boys' Department from first year to second year. Then, he joined the Marist Juniorate in Lagao for his third and fourth year which was the beginning of his early formation as a Marist Brother. After high school, he went to the Marist Novitiate in Tamontaka for his postulancy and novitiate formation in 1970 to 1972. He took his religious habit on June 28, 1971 and made the first profession on June 29, 1972.

In 1972 to 1976, he was a scholastic or a student Brother at Notre Dame of Marbel College (now University) where he finished a Bachelor's Degree in Education Major in Math and Physics.

For his ministry assignments, he has been to Notre Dame of Cotabato Boys' Department, Marist Aspirancy House, Marist School, Marikina, Marist Novitiate, Notre Dame of Marbel University, as Vocation Recruiter, Buda, China, Malaysia (Sibu, Sarawak) and Bacusanon, Bukidnon. He was a teacher, formator, administrator, vocation promoter, pastoral worker, youth minister, catechist and a foreign missionary. During summer vacation, Br. Rosendo would spend his time organizing Operation Head Start (OHS) and Summer Marian Camp in different places such as Notre Dame of Jolo Boys' Department (1977), Lagao Aspirancy House (1986 and 1988), Matuber (1989), Bawing (1990), Sinayawan (1993), Pinanubuan/Kitaotao (1997), Sagundanun (1998).

In January and February 2000, Br. Rosendo underwent an Orientation in Korea with Bros. Iggy In and John Tan Buan to prepare them as part of the joint project of the China Province, Philippine Province and the District of Korea to send Marist Brothers to Mainland China. They first landed in Changchun and started learning Chinese language at Jilin University for three (3) semesters. He came back to the Philippines in July 2021 for his family visit and vacation.

While waiting for his next assignment in China, he was assigned as School Director of Notre Dame of Cotabato Boys' Department for two (2) months to replace Br. Wency Calimpon who was called to Rome to be the Director of the International College of the Marist Brothers at the General House.

After a short stint at Cotabato, he went to De La Salle University in Manila to join a group under the Association for International Teaching Educational and Curriculum Exchange (AITECE). He also took some courses in Makati as part of his preparation to teach English as a foreign language in China.

In April of 2002, he flew to Hong Kong and then Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu Province, to see the possibility of joining Br. John Lek to teach English in the same university. But in that same month while in transit in Hong Kong, he received the news of the death of his father. He came back to Manila and General Santos to join the family for the funeral. Few months after, he returned to China to get a teaching assignment in Hetao University in Linhe, Inner Mongolia. While in China, he experienced being quarantined due to the outbreak of SARS.

His contract at the Hetao University ended in the summer of 2004 and he decided to come back to the Philippines. But in November of 2004, he went to Zhangye, Gansu Province to help in the Star of the Sea Learning Center. In 2005, he got a teaching job at Hexi University and spent more than two years. He came back to the Philippines during the winter holidays in 2007 but decided to return in August 2007 to teach at the Star of the Sea Bilingual School. In 2008 until 2010, he got another teaching job at Hexi University. In January 2010, he returned to the Philippines and was assigned at NDMU Community. After 10 years in China, he was granted a sabbatical leave where he spent some months in the United States and the Hermitage, France.

In August 2012, he decided to return to China and taught at Guizhou University for one (1) year. Then he returned to the Philippines and was assigned to Buda as community superior from September 2013 to December 2015. In January of 2016, he attended a program at the East Asia Pastoral Institute, Ateneo de Manila.

In July 2016, he was assigned to Sibuyan, Sarawak, Malaysia at the Catholic High School as teacher, chaplain and catechist. In December 2017 to April 2018, he was assigned at the Dadiangas Community but teaching catechism in the public schools. In May, he was transferred to the Sacred Heart Formation Center, Lagao and taught catechism classes in different public schools in the city.

He attended the Third Age Program at Manziana, Italy for three (3) months and then visited the Brothers in the US before coming back to the Philippines. In June 2020, he was assigned in Bacusanon, Pangantukan, Bukidnon for five (5) months and returned back to General Santos City at the Dadiangas Community on December 22, 2020. In the absence of Sr. Iosefina, SMSM from school due to her sickness until she died, Br. Rosendo took over the responsibility as the Director of Campus Ministry of the University. Starting Academic Year 2021-2022, he decided to concentrate on his plan to teach catechism in the public schools by coordinating with the DepEd officials while “face to face” classes are not yet allowed. At the same time, Rosendo, finds time to teach English to the nuns of the Trappistine Monastery.

I knew Br. Rosendo when I was still in first year high school at Notre Dame of Lagao Boys’ Department. He was in fourth year then. As a Marist Junior, he did not join the Preparatory Military Training or PMT (later known as Citizens’ Army Training or CAT) as required of the high school students. Instead, he was involved with the Boys Scouts of the Philippines. As a Boys Scout Leader, he was elected the Scout City Mayor of General Santos City.

I lived with Br. Rosendo in Cotabato City as my community superior. It was after I got out of the scholasticate and my first two years in active ministry. He was also teaching Religion and Math in the higher years. Rosendo is a very strict teacher but kind. He was a champion coach of softball.

What impressed me about Rosendo is his consistency. He is very consistent in doing the things that he believes in. He is very consistent in observing the religious exercises such as attending Masses, daily prayers, meditations, religious studies, recollections, retreats; in preparing for his classes and other school responsibilities; or doing personal things such as washing clothes or feeding the cats. He puts his whole being into the things that he is involved in. Lately, I have observed his deep concern for his family. He makes sure he visits his friends regularly especially those who are sick. When he learns someone is sick, he makes sure he visits him or her. With modern technology, he is able to get in touch with friends all over the world.

Many times, I visited him in China as a Provincial and I spent time just listening to him about the many challenges, difficulties, happiness and hopes about his life as a missionary. I truly admired how he survived the loneliness of living alone without a community, the harsh weather condition especially the 25 degrees centigrade below zero, the language difficulties, different cultural background, etc. But Rosendo survived with sheer determination and strong faith in God.

As a Marist Brother, he is fun to be within the community. He has a good sense of humor (always clean and holy jokes). He is very simple, humble and always exudes a “holy” presence. He loves to roast peanuts for the enjoyment of the community. He also joins the community during happy hour with a few renditions of his favorite songs.

I love Rosendo for his authenticity. He is a genuine Marist Brother. Although I must admit he finds me irreverent sometimes when I make subtle or “off the cuff” remarks here and there. But I assured him that my “irreverence” is actually a form of endearment.

*Congratulations* Br. Rosendo. Happy Golden Jubilee.

*Photos through  
the years...*



First Profession June 29, 1972  
Marist Novitiate, Tamontaka



Renewal of vows 1972



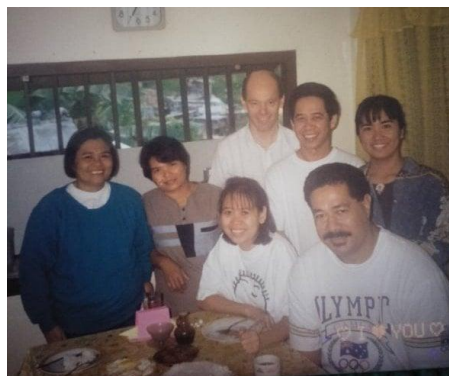
Final Profession  
July 2, 1978



Final Profession  
July 2, 1978  
With Hernane Yee, his eldest brother,  
putting the cross



Coach of ND Cotabato  
Boys' Dept Softball varsity





**BR. ALFREDO HERRERA, FMS**  
**1971 – 2021 (50 Years)**



**BR. ALFREDO: A MEXICAN MISSIONARY**

By: Br. Juan Castro, FMS

**Some thoughts about Alfredo**

*Dear Brothers:*

*Brother Provincial Br. Dominador Santiago, offered me the opportunity to say some words today in behalf of Br. Alfredo. He is celebrating his 50 years of religious life.*

*I had the opportunity to know him from early age. When he was a middle school student at the Marist Formation House "Juniorate" that welcomed boys interested in the Marist life. There, we followed middle and high school programs; I had the opportunity to be with him those years.*

*During that period one of the things that impressed me was his dedication to music. He has a beautiful voice and the study of piano made him a member of the music band during high school and novitiate. He and his companions used to play not only in our celebrations; sometimes they were invited to perform in the celebrations of other congregations. In those days, he was also a good basketball player and a goal-keeper when the selection used to play soccer.*

*After the Novitiate, we were together again for one year at the Scholasticate where every Sunday we had a lively Liturgy. Every Sunday we used to invite not only relatives but also neighbors. He was the singer during those Masses. And a very good one.*

*I lost contact for some years, since I went to Korea, and he started to teach in one of the Marist schools of the Province (Celaya)... It was three or four years later that, when we received the good news that he was coming to Korea to be part of the mission.*

*He arrived and he had to go through the difficult time of learning and practicing a new language, Korean. Some years after the learning, he was sent to the small city of Andong where the brothers had an Educational Center. I remember with happiness the years we were together working in that city. In the city, there were some high schools, two universities and one especial school for deaf children. During those days, the Mexican brothers living in that city were all working in different schools.*

*Alfredo was every morning in his bicycle going to work at the special education school, his love for the children with impair disabilities started to grow in his heart. Maybe, that was the reason behind the election of major when, after some years working in that city, he return to Seoul for University studies... He chose Special Education with the idea to dedicate his life to those children... but the Superiors had another thought and Br. Charles Howard invited him to study accompaniment at the Gregoriana University in Rome. He followed the program accepting the challenge that was going to come to his life. Instead of working with groups of young students, his work starts to be the work of a mentor giving accompaniment to formands and religious that were looking for it.*

*I had the opportunity to meet him again in the Formation Houses of our Sector and we were able to prepare seminars and work-shops for formators and formands. Life moved on and the Congregation, too. Korea became part of the East Asia Province and Alfredo decided to continue as a member of this Province.*

*Congratulations, Alfredo, for this first 50 years. We give thanks to God for his fidelity towards you and we pray that He continues blessing your journey.*

*Faternally,*

*Hoan*

## A ZEALOUS MISSIONARY

By: Br. John Oh, FMS

### *Just Like a Violet*

*Brother Alfredo Herrera celebrated his Golden Jubilee this year. I think Jubilee is a time for reflection, for celebration, and a time for gratefulness—gratefulness not only for his vocation as a Marist of Champagnat, but also for everyone who has met Br. Alfredo. I was very privileged to spend some time together with Brother Alfredo and to hear his story of 50 years of great journey. Story is one of the best ways to enter one another's life in a very gentle way—and so I have come to know more of his life as well as himself as a person.*

*Brother Alfredo made his first Vows on July 3, 1971 and came to Korea in 1975 with a young heart full of missionary zeal. Since then, he has dedicated himself in various areas of ministry such as education for the hearing-impaired, teaching Spanish in universities, formation work at different stages, and District leader. He has also worked outside of Korea in places such as at MAPAC, the Novitiate in Tamontaka, the Mission Ad Gentes team in the Philippines, and in Maziana in Italy. It has been a nonstop, long, and great commitment for him that has been made and kept from the beginning till now.*

*The Korea-Japan Sector was not able to have a grand Golden Jubilee celebration for him due to the covid-19 pandemic. However, Alfredo has quietly prepared his Golden Jubilee in a special year of reflection, repentance, and giving thanks to God. His answer was very simple, straight, and full of confidence when I asked him how he feels about celebrating his Golden Jubilee: "I am just grateful to God for his grace and guidance that has made my 50 years of Religious journey possible." In my conversation with Br. Alfredo, I was able to see once again some qualities that I would like to learn and live out throughout the rest of my life.*

*Br. Alfredo is a man of prayer; I think this value is one of the best gifts that Br. Alfredo has given to the communities wherever he belongs. His strong presence in prayer would become a great support and inspiration to the communities as well as individual Brothers. He is a man of listening: a lot of people, especially the Religious, have visited him to seek counsel, discernment, and wisdom. He was once my accompagnateur in the early stage of my formation, and I was able to experience through him God's unconditional love for me. He is also a very simple and humble man who does not like to parade and boast his achievement. He said, "I just simply walked my path with faith in God. There have been a lot of mistakes, failures, frustrations as well as joys and happiness in my life, but it is God who has walked with me and done everything for me."*

*I asked how he wants to take his life from now on, and if there is any message to the Brothers who follow in his footsteps. He said, "I do not have a particular plan, but I would like to continue what I have been doing as long as I am able to. And I know my role now as a supporter to the communities as well as to individual Brothers." "The Religious life back then is really not the same as the present one. There are so many aspects that it is, for me, quite challenging to understand and catch up with. However, I trust that God always works in a changing world and time, and that is why I want to support the Brothers, especially the younger Brothers and the new generation. I learned this from the elderly Brothers in Mexico when I was just beginning my religious life. In addition to these, I wish that the Brothers restore, renew, and live the deeper value of community life with life giving manners rooted in prayer, especially in personal prayer. I think this kind of quality community life and human relationship are the ones we need to show the world of extreme individualism, competition, and brokenness. We need really to keep Pope Francis' advice, 'Consecrated life is an expert in communion; consecrated life is a promoter of fraternity.'"*

*I cannot quantify here all the great stories, some of them I had not heard previously, of 50 years of Religious journey of Br. Alfredo. However, it is truly a moment of inspiration and blessing for me to hear and see the path of someone who walked ahead of me. I hope many more Marists of Champagnat have a chance to hear his story. Br. Alfredo, for me, is as a violet that has quietly bloomed in a rather rough and hidden path.*

*However, the fragrance of that flower would continue subtly to reach far away with gentle wind saying 'return, return to where we began—with Fr. Champagnat and his prayer about all to Jesus through Mary, loving one another, and remembering why we came.'*

*I hope that Brother Alfredo knows that he has been a unique, priceless, and a true blessing to the Brothers of Korea, to Marists of Champagnat, and to the world, and this marks the beginning of another 50 years of joy, love, and the grace to love the works of God even more. Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Brother Alfredo.*

### *Photos through the years...*





**BR. CHRISTOPHER C. GORIT, FMS**  
**1996 – 2021 (25 Years)**



**BR. CHRIS A SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCATE**

By: Br. Manuel P. Uluan, FMS

*One of the most outspoken Marist Brothers of the East Asia Province is Br. Christopher C. Gorit. He speaks his mind in any subject that is presented to him. Due to this trait, he is often misunderstood and judged harshly by some of the Brothers and even of the outsiders like lay workers and personnel.*

*Yet for those who know him well and intimately, he is one of the kindest persons I have encountered. His stock knowledge on different subjects is enormous. One can discuss with him anything from the mundane to the sacred. He can also be “crazy” among friends. He can cut jokes left and right with dry humor. This side of him is very rarely seen by those who only know him casually. But one thing that he is passionate about is social justice. I am sure if he is not a Marist Brothers, he could well be in the forefront of activism in this country.*

*Lately his advocacy on ecology and environment is really widespread. I know many are amazed by how much he knows about these issues. Those people who are with him in the ecology task force can attest to what I am saying. His brilliance in this area is not only academics but practical and very concrete actions. I might be bias on his behalf but I can attest to his enthusiasm about this line for I have lived with him in the community for a year in Notre Dame of Cotabato and three years here at Marist Marikina Community.*

*Another passion he has right now is to encourage people especially the lay Marist personnel to have financial education and freedom. However, many of them are still doubtful of the possibility of having financial freedom in this time of the pandemic. I think if people will only listen and learn, they might have some lessons to learn about finances.*

*Born to a modest family in Libungan, Cotabato, Br. Chris has seven siblings. Unfortunately, one of his brothers died two years ago. His father has already passed away and only his mother is alive today. Although he is from Libungan, he spent his younger days in Tulunan, Cotabato.*

*Br. Chris went to Tulunan for his high school education. He graduated from Notre Dame of Tulunan under the administration of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Sienna. After high school, he joined the aspirancy program of the Marist Brothers (Philippine Province at that time). He took his habit in 1996 as a novice in Tamontaka, Datu Odin Sinsuat Municipality and he professed in 1998. He finished his college at Notre Dame of Marbel University and later did his Masters Degree in Missiology at ICLA (Institute for Consecrated Life in Asia) under auspices of the Claretian Congregation and the University of Sto. Tomas in Manila. Currently he is finishing his Doctoral degree on Missiology at Tagaytay City.*



*Photos through the years...*



John Malina (90)  
Kieran Fern (16)  
Christopher Gort (1)





**BR. ARNEL S. ALFANTA, FMS**  
**1996 – 2021 (25 Years)**



**BR. ARNEL AN AVIATOR AND A HEALTH ENTHUSIAST  
WITH A COMPASSIONATE HEART**

By : Br. Teodolo Fernandez Jr, FMS

*I have observed Br. Arnel's life as a Marist Brother right from the onset of formation through his apostolate and quickly so, at the recent assignment as president of NDKC, his present assignment during the pandemic times of his 25th year as a Marist Brother.*

*I would simply categorize his life experience in three movements: His struggles in life; secondly, his passion, and the third is his pre-occupation; simply stated as "his present hobbies".*

*Growing up with an identical twin brother and considered as the "eldest" in the family, Br. Arnel faced the stark reality of losing his father at an untimely demise with his two brothers and two sisters still in their childhood. His mother struggled through any kind of work just to support a growing family. However, what was most challenging to the family was when Arnel decided to join the Marist Brothers right after high school. Arnel was strong in his insistence to have his siblings continue their schooling; and that he did by encouraging them to be working students and avail of different scholarships among several schools in Gen. Santos. Through his effort in praying, encouraging, and his authoritative way of convincing them, they were able to finish college, find a job and for 3 of them, established a stable family life, while at the same time looking after their mother, who, now a senior, is fully involved in their community local church activities and barangay services.*

*To be a pilot, he admits, was not a childhood dream; and anything aviation was somewhat strange to him. He claimed that it was only after his first aircraft ride from General Santos to Manila in 1997 that his interest in reading anything about aircraft and aviation in general triggered this fascination to fly. In fact, he joined an aviation enthusiasts' group forum like the Philippine Flight Simmers Group to satisfy this yearning. His passion in this area of aviation which is "Flight Simulator" started in 2005 when he was gifted with a computer software called "Microsoft Flight Simulator 2004". After installing it on the lowly desktop computer in Marikina where he was then assigned, he was ecstatic by what he had seen, and since then, he has been hooked up with flight simulation.*

*Asking for clarification on flight simulation, Br. Arnel has this to say:*

*"Flight Simulation is an imitation of an aircraft and flying experience on an ordinary desktop computer specifically designed to run a computer program that imitated an aircraft, its systems, and operations in the world environment with computer-generated images and scenarios. It simulates the pilot's view, and the ability to manipulate aircraft systems, instruments, and flight controls by the click of a mouse, and for some advanced set-up, by a consumer flight control hardware like flight yoke, rudder pedals, and throttle quadrants. With the modern flight simulator, you can fly virtually all over the world with real-world depiction"*

*He then admits that "flying virtually to different destinations with advanced aircraft systems has been a good brain exercise activity". He further claims that*

*..." throughout the years into simming, I got to know people from different places; enthusiasts like me who started with simming and are now in the real-world aviation industry as pilots, air traffic*



controllers, ground crew, aircraft mechanics, airline marketing, etc. Because of flight simming, I have experienced actual flying maneuvers on a Cessna 152, owned by a fellow member of the Philippine Flight Simmers Group, several times.”

As Br. Arnel reaches midlife, he notices that a lot of his contemporaries are already into taking maintenance medicines. He started bicycling in Kidapawan during his short assignment in 2013. This was to divert himself from the urge of smoking as he was a heavy smoker back then. It was a struggle until he finally stopped smoking on April 21, 2014. Biking became an important part of his routine to stay healthy and to avoid taking maintenance medicine like people of his age.

He claimed that “it was only in 2018 that I got the interest to further my sports interest by including running and swimming in my sports.”

In March 2019 his interest into triathlon became stronger when he was invited to join in a relay category of the Davao Alveo Iron Man Triathlon, taking on the 21.1 kms. run.

The triathlon sport is an endurance body exercise in multi sports that include swimming, cycling and running over various distances. These are measured by standard distances (1.5 km. for swimming, 40 kms., for biking and 10 kms. for running). Because of the strenuous nature, this is usually organized by a local government inviting groups from all sectors of society and organizations. Relay participation is usually encouraged in these events. From “standard distance” you can be promoted to the “iron man” category, the distance of which is increased.

Br. Arnel is not following the usual protocol set by the local government. Instead, he organized his own group among the interested personnel, making it a school-based organization. For the group, this is a test for both mental and physical stress.... a diversion Arnel feels the most in his NDKC executive position.

Along with his singing prowess and deep baritone speaking voice Arnel is gifted with a compassionate heart that resonates towards his family, particularly his nephews and nieces. The mother’s closeness enables him to deepen his faith and offer a strong support to her in her old age.

May his 25th year with the Marists trigger on a meaningful journey in deepened faith and guiding hand towards his 50 years of religious life experience.



## RETROSPECTION OF A MARIST BROTHER

By: Br. Arnel S. Alfanta, FMS

It's been 25 years since my entry into the Marist Novitiate, and 21 years since I started my first assignment in an active ministry at NDKC in the year 2000. Indeed, time flies so fast. It felt like it was just yesterday when I began to fight all the odds out and be where I am right now in my journey as a Marist Brother. I can recall that my curiosity about religious life was cultivated from the time that as a young boy, I had been a favorite companion to the church of my Boholana grandmother, and it became a real interest during my altar-server years at the Dadiangas Parish.

I still remember how hard it was for me to fit into a group of aspirants who were products of private education and were all aiming for a spot in the Dean's list because we were told, that since we are joining a teaching congregation, we must always excel in academics. And while my batch mates were always on the Dean's list, I was right there hoping to even just pass every subject, because academic failures would mean sending you back home.

I always try to pull out all the stops to leave up to the expectations and to prove myself. I've learned to set my expectations based on the ideal lives and standards of the Brothers who we kind of idolized before. However, it seemed to me then, that whatever character **you've** got, **you're** always going to be "too much" of something for someone and learned the hard way that you cannot just please everyone.

But my years of formation helped me let go of living up to others' expectations by speaking my mind and expressing myself. It's been a blessing when you are surrounded by people who believed in you and accept you as you are and help you become the best version of yourself. I now learn that recognizing my limits and enabling my strengths are two great tools to carry along to a long journey to self-actualization; that is knowing, embracing, and taming my limits and weaknesses, and taking advantage of my strengths and capabilities to wherever and whatever ministry they put me in.

There's never been a difficult or easy ministry area because as I recall and honestly reflect, we are supposed to "grow where we are planted", and those ministry areas have been the rich and fertile land upon which the certain level of personal maturity and confidence flourished and enabled me to become who I am at the moment. There were ups and downs; turmoil and doubts, frustrations and disappointments but these did not overshadow the love, support, and encouragement that I received and continue to feel. And yes, I will continue to have this kind of perspective, to be always grateful for everything that God has given as a person and as a Marist Brother instead of being an ingrate and a complaining person.

After 25 years or more, if I am to start counting beginning my entry into the aspirancy, all I feel is a great deal of gratefulness. Gratefulness to God for giving me people who supported and believed in me despite my limitations and inadequacies. I am grateful because of the many things that God gifted me throughout the years even at times I don't feel I deserve them.

Specifically, I thank God for my formators who took the time to journey with me from aspirancy in General Santos up to the second novitiate in Manizana, Rome. I am grateful to my community superiors who accompanied and supported me as I continue to learn and grow as a young Brother, the former Brother John Anthony Tan, my first community superior, Br. Ted Fernandez, Br. Paterno Corpus, Br. Eugene Pius Tajo, and Br. Manuel de Leon. I thank the Brothers in the provincial administration for the leadership support and pastoral care of the Brothers. And the Brothers who have a real influence on me positively. I also thank the women who left a mark in my heart as they journeyed with me during the critical stage of my formation, my spiritual directress, advisers, and contemporaries at the different stages of my vocational and religious journey.

To my friends and people who have come and gone in the different ministry areas I was assigned or to places I had been: Buda, Marikina, Marbel, Jolo, NDDU Espina, and Kidapawan. I remember especially the three brothers who also celebrate their Golden Jubilee this year, Br. Rosendo Yee and Br. Alfredo



Herrera, FMS, and my classmate and batch mate Br. Christopher Gorit in Marikina. I also thank my family who is a source of support and inspiration. I thank the NDKC community for giving me wonderful years especially when I was just starting as a young Brother in 2000, for the great friends in Marikina, for the adventure in Jolo, and the lots of 'first times' and great mission partners at NDDU IBED Espina Campus and NDDU. I thank the mission partners who contributed a lot to my growth as a Brother and as a teacher, middle-level administrator and now an educational administrator. I didn't think that I would become what I am now and I am proud not of my academic and professional achievements but by how I was able to touch other peoples' lives by simply being a Brother to them. I guess, as a Marist Brother I can only count as my greatest achievements those times and moments where I was able to genuinely live, share and witness to others the kind of character expected of a Marist Brother.

It takes the hand of God to see this day, and as I celebrate this anniversary it is a time to look back and thank the Lord for His goodness! Jubilee is not celebrating an accomplishment but an opportunity to express gratitude for the gift I have received. I thank the Lord for the life that he has given me. I thank Mother Mary for the inspiration as I see and experience her guidance in the life of every woman who remarkably contributed to my growth as a Brother. I thank the Lord for the inspiration of St. Marcellin Champagnat for this wonderful vocation and the opportunity to serve him as among the Brothers of Champagnat. As I look ahead to the future, may this jubilee drive me even more to be God's faithful follower through our Marist charism and mission and be always ready to serve than to be served, always seeking what God wills and seeking to be remembered as such!

### *Photos through the years...*







***Congratulations Brothers!  
God bless you!***