

A NEW PRIEST IS BORN - Fr. Howard Tatel's Ordination

by Nobuhiko Yagi

I had the chance to attend the Priestly Ordination of Howard Tatel at the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Bagong Barrio, Metro Manila (Philippines) last August 24. It was the first ordination in that big parish which the Oblates started 30 years ago. The whole parish came in full force to witness the ordination of the first priest from their community. People overflowed to the open space outside the church and even to the main road fronting the church.

Howard looked very tense before the ceremony. Two things were very impressive: First, the ordaining prelate Bishop Socrates Villegas, auxiliary bishop of Manila, in very soft and gentle words, explained to the candidate and the vast crowd the meaning of Ordination to the Priesthood. The young bishop in his forties is a national figure in the Philippines having been involved in the People Power Movement, the popular revolt in the country that has toppled two Presidents. Secondly, after the parents of Howard came forward to carry his vestment and after vesting him, they all hugged each other and cried. We all sensed that this was an extra special day for them and they showed their joy unabashedly. After the ceremony people lined up in a long queue to receive the new priest's blessing. For somebody coming from Japan, I found the length of the line too long, something unthinkable to happen in Japan. It took over an hour for everyone to come forward and receive the new priest's blessing. When everything was over, it showed in Fr. Howard's face that he was exhausted but the joy of being a priest showed even more powerfully.

(N.B. Fr. Howard Tatel, OMI spent two years of missionary exposure program in Japan, 1998 to 2000, with Fr. Jerry Villas, OMI who was also ordained a priest last August. Both were scholastics at that time.)



Bishop Socrates Villegas, ordaining prelate imposes hands on the candidate.

Fr. Frank Santucci, retreat master.



Retreatants listening to the "Meditations."

ANNUAL RETREAT

Father Frank SANTUCCI, the new Postulator General, preached the Vice Province's retreat held at the Passionists' retreat house in Fukuoka, Sept. 2-6. Frank describes his work of postulation as ten per cent devoted to follow-up on the causes for canonization and more effort spent on the animation of the whole congregation on the charism of the Founder.

The retreat itself centered on the charism of the Founder. Everyone appreciated Frank's propensity in bringing the Founder's charism face to face with the challenges of today. The use of images, diagrams, labyrinths, etc. is characteristic of the way Frank preaches his retreats. He just finished giving the annual retreat of the Spanish Province before coming here. After the retreat, Frank spent some time in Korea. Thank you very much Frank for the wonderful retreat!

From the Provincial's desk:

Dear Brother Oblates,

Summer went by fast! Most of my Summer was spent running back and forth the hospital where Mike YAMASAKI was confined for almost two months. With two kind ladies in the parish, we took turns in looking after Mike. I also had to look after the parish while Bradley was on homeleave. In between pastoring and caregiving, with two young people to help, I gave our 50 year old kitchen a new coat of paint. During this year's vocation camp which was held in Itami, the parishioners worked hard to make the three-day camp meaningful for the young people who attended. Again, with the help of three parishioners, I made pizza for

about 60 people!

In early July, I went to Davao (Philippines) to attend an on-going formation meeting of OMI mid-lifers, all of them were my contemporaries in the seminary. Phil ESTRELLA, one of the organizers of the meeting, has been inviting me to attend, after all, our ordination group of 1976 was the one who made the first proposal that we continue to have meetings when we become priests. Now, on-going formation groups of different age levels (first five years in the ministry, pre-midlife, midlife, the oldies and the goldies) meet regularly several times a year. Physical wear-and-tear was obvious among my former classmates. Two have had triple by-pass operations, two have serious case of diabetes, one was suffering from severe back pains, etc. I considered myself

among the healthier ones!

Our heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Frank SANTUCCI for sharing with us the wealth of the Founder's charism during this year's retreat. Frank taught us "how to pan for real gold" in life. During the retreat, I made the announcement that I will be "knocking on your doors and your hearts" as we try to implement some minor changes in assignment to take effect in April, 2003. In fact, this year's retreat which was centered on the charism of the Founder was a good prelude to it. For the Founder, the mission of Jesus Christ and his Church took precedence in his ministry, from the early times of the Missionaries of Provence to his days as Bishop of Marseilles. I must admit that as Provincial (and thank God my term finishes in a couple of years!), one of the most difficult task is moving people. When we cling to our own "missions" we start to think that we are indispensable. In our small Vice Province, the problem is complicated by the smallness of our number and the limited number of established ministries available to us. I share the pain of those being uprooted by the change along with the invitation for us to see it as the pruning process that the Lord of the harvest does to make us even bear more fruit not only for ourselves but for the Kingdom (Amen!). Let me thank all of you who have been cooperative in this endeavor. I will make the official announcement on an appropriate time.

Your continued prayers are requested for our sick brothers, Mike YAMASAKI and Jerry NOVOTNY. Mike has regained some weight while Jerry says he lost some 16 kilos. Leo KAWAGUCHI needs our prayers, too. Also for the sister in law of Jan VAN HOYDONCK, Annie (whose husband died early this year), who died recently. She was 77. Heard from: Jack DEELY from his sabbatical. Jack is asking us to pray for his brother Jim who has throat cancer and will have laser surgery on October 1st.

Provincial's schedule:

- ◆ Symposium on Missionaries to Secularity, San Antonio, Texas. Will be away Sept. 30 - Oct. 10
- ◆ International Consultation Meeting on the Filipino Ministry, Singapore. Bangkok and Manila after. Will be away October 17 - 28.
- ◆ Provincial Council Meeting, Itami. November 8, 2002.

Wency Laguidao

17th OBLATE VOCATION SUMMER CAMP

Nobuhiko Yagi

This year's Oblate Vocation Summer Camp was held at Christ the King Church and Kindergarten in Itami from August 2-4. With value-formation as its goal, this year's camp had for its theme: *The Most Important Thing*, which the thirty five participants discussed for three days. Young people from the Oblate parishes of Zendana, Itami, Tokushima, Nakajimacho, Koga, Yoshizuka and from Hirabari (Nagoya) a non-Oblate parish attended. Including the Oblates who attended, there were 43 participants in all taking part in lively activities for three days.

For some serious group discussion, I had made a text entitled *The Life of Christ* (in Japanese). It became the basis for the groups' sharing on what Jesus Christ taught as "the most important thing in life." Each

participant shared what he or she considers as the most important thing in life based on the teachings of Jesus.

The camp was not all study. There was also time for swimming at a nearby pool, games, fireworks, barbecue, etc. which deepened our friendship.

We are deeply indebted to the parishioners of Itami parish for taking care of our needs during the camp and helping make the camp a success. They put out wonderful meals, had a barbecue party for us and they did everything to make the camp run smoothly. We would like to thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

On the last day of the camp, we attended the Sunday Mass at Itami church and in front of everybody and in beautiful harmony we sang different songs we had learned together. Before all the parishioners, each participant shared what he or she considers the most important thing in life. Each one received a big round of applause. With that this year's camp came to an end.

After the camp, for those interested, a trip to USJ (Universal Studios Japan) was organized. Others headed back for home.



Participants of this year's Oblate Vocation Summer Camp

The Reactions of One Participant Hamamoto Haruka (First year High School from Nagoya)

For me it was the first camp that I have attended. I knew none of the other participants, so I was kind of fearful and wondered what I should do. However everybody was having so much fun and were all good people, I was able to make friends right away. Everybody was from a different part of the country so the use of the language and accent was different and that was interesting. I've always been attracted to the patois of the Osaka area and so being able to learn a lot of it made me very happy. In the work sessions, we all read about Jesus and then we exchanged views which was very meaningful and interesting for me. Some voiced similar opinions to my own but others brought in angles that I had never thought of so this was a very good experience for me. We had a lot of great fun at the pool and during the fireworks. Taking part in this camp I was able to make a lot of new friends and pray together with them. During this camp we thought about the most important thing for us. We also looked into what Jesus himself considered as the most important. In my group we decided that what Jesus says is the most important is to love others. I learned a lot from this camp and intend very much to attend next year.

Block Arrangement

Bradly ROZAIRO

Refreshed after summer break and our annual retreat, I am back to my base. Life in the parish of Itami is going on as usual. I am sure most of you are

aware of the block arrangement that we have in the archdiocese of Osaka. Why this arrangement?

In order for the church to serve society and also for the collaborative evangelization of laity, priests and religious, the archdiocese has introduced the block arrangement. This block arrangement permits the cooperation of several parishes in moving beyond the framework of Chiku(district), parish, religious congregations and the present disposition of priests. Hanshin Chiku has 9 churches and they are divided into 3 blocks. Itami forms a block with Takarazuka and Nigawa. The concrete plan of our block is to concentrate on the youth of our parishes and make them participate in camps, world youth gathering (Toronto), meetings etc. We are also planning to have retreat, confirmation service, bible study etc in block level.

The religious atmosphere of our block is strong, because there are different religious congregations (Oblates, Franciscans, Carmelites etc.) and also catholic schools (Nigawa Gakuin and Obayashi Seishin). We hope and pray that, this block arrangement will not only unite laity, priests and religious but also the diocese at large.

CLIPS FROM BERT SILVER'S SUMMER

A great summer!

After having spent a few weeks in the States it was a relief getting back to Japan. In July we had the

Annual YMCA "over-night" camp



Had some "free time" and was able to get to the "workshop" to do some "serious" scroll work. In preparation for the school bazaar.

Naturally, I played the drums at the Naruto Awa Odori. It took place on the 10th of August. A lot of fun. That just about ended the summer!



PROMISED LAND

Maurizio and Mauro

Will we be able to meet the deadline for this Newsletter edition? We are not sure, but we really hope so, in order to express our unity with you all. The last few months have been quite busy for us in Anyang. The search of a piece of land, together with the necessary work to present the project and have it

approved, has taken our time and energy for months. We could literally write a book with all the episodes, the last moment problems -that were waiting for us also at our return from the retreat in Fukuoka, few hours before the last payment was due- but also the names of all the many people who have helped us. More recently, we are fully immersed in the drawing of the new house. Just before we sat down at the computer to write our contribution for the Newsletter, the responsible person of the Architect's Office has visited us to put our seal to the last documents needed for the approval of the construction. We will keep you post with this project... which now faces a lack of funds to go on.

The good news is that our community is going well. People who have visited us recently have found a good spirit among our students. Please... keep praying that our new house will always be crowded with many young people!

HOSPITALIZATION

(reprinted from the Itami Parish Newsletter)

Mike YAMASAKI



I am very grateful.

A month has passed since I left the hospital. I am deeply grateful to many people, especially to Mr. Shoji, for the moral and material support from the beginning until the end of my hospitalization. I would like to beg your pardon in expressing my gratitude in this space instead of thanking you individually.

"I was born naked from my mother's body and I will die naked," Job said after his ordeals, as written in the Old Testament. These words symbolize human loneliness. But I realized that from the day we were born with nothing and die with nothing, but in between we all have the company of other people. To tell the truth, I was so surprised because many people visited me in the hospital and sent me letters. All the while I thought that I would be forgotten when I retired from the parish five years ago.

In the past, my aunt who was a doctor took care of me in her house. When I had children's dysentery and beriberi complicated by jaundice. The first time, I was 3 years old and the second when I was in the 6th grade.

My recent first formal (?) hospitalization made me badly bewildered. Upon arrival at the hospital, I had many sorts of checkups. First of all they brought me somewhere so far to have a CT scan. Actually, it was not very far but I felt like walking for around 5 kilometers. After that, they took my blood sample nine times, checked my cardiopulmonary functions, took an X-ray, and checked the time it took my blood to curdle and stop bleeding. I was really tired as if I ran in a marathon race. I could then understand the feeling of Miss Arimori, a marathon runner who got a place fit the Olympic Games, when she said, "I want to praise myself." Patients have to be strong. They removed around 30 centimeters of my colon which swelled 5-6 times the normal size. Thus, my belly became cleaner than before (which means I am no longer black-hearted).

This has been my experience and in gratitude, I would like to thank everyone again for all the support.

TIME HAS CHANGED

Wency Laguidao

Southern Philippines (Mindanao) used to be a place known for its pristine rain forests and where nature was in harmony with its inhabitants. When I lived there as a child, it was then unthinkable that there would come a time when people will have to order bottled drinking water to be delivered to their homes from stores. Air-conditioners were only for the rich. No longer. It has become almost a necessity for many people. As children, we knew which family owned a motor vehicle and we knew which cars are from other towns. Now, even in Cotabato City where there is hardly a traffic light installed, people talk about traffic jams and pollution! Time has changed!

Movie houses? They are becoming a thing of the past in most parts of the Philippines. Those who can afford (including some Oblate houses) have their own "home theaters" with the latest in DVD technology to bring Hollywood (and Bollywood) in the comfort of their homes. And for those who can't afford this latest technology, there is always the cheaper option: bootlegged copies of the latest flicks (local and foreign) for about two dollars per disc (VCD). They are good reproductions for those who are not willing to pay the original which costs about \$15 a piece and for those who have their own interpretation of "intellectual rights." People can now watch movies when they want and where they want. Video cassettes (VHS)? They are fast becoming museum pieces. Time has changed!

And yes, there is that ubiquitous cellphone that everyone carries around. They come in different models with a range of prices depending on what one can afford. Sending messages by cellphone, called "texting" is the national past time in the Philippines. It is the cheapest way of communication used by people of all age levels, rich and poor. My grand nephews and nieces would text their parents who might still be at work, to help them with their homework through "texting." Time has changed! But what did people do before the advent of all these gadgets?

Many remote areas in the Philippines now have access to cable television. CNN, BBC, even the Japanese NHK plus some forty other channels to choose from have become part of the Filipino household. In schools, students must have computers to do their schoolwork. "I wasn't able to do my homework because my computer broke down!" is an acceptable excuse by a Filipino student. But despite the modern conveniences such as cellphones, cable TV, computers, internet, and other advances in the information technology, there is so much dis-information that makes the Philippines the "rumor-capital of the world" according to many Filipinos. Even public officials in the high places can be stymied by the dis-information that goes around. Remember the incident when the President of the land "accepted" the resignation of the minister of foreign affairs and the minister denying that he offered his resignation? Sifting through what is true and what is not is a daily task among public officials. Crime rate is high and many of them remain unsolved because (lack of technology is not an excuse because of what is said above) of cultural barriers. In the Philippines, "truth is relative" and is dependent on who you are trying to investigate. On this aspect of daily life, time has not

changed at all. Not a bit!

"Malling" is a newly coined word in the Philippines to mean whiling ones time at large shopping malls that have mushroomed in big cities in recent years. There is everything under one roof, dentist, post office, banks, money changers and a host of illegal trade too, so they say. One thing that is typically Filipino are the daily Masses usually celebrated at the very central area of a shopping mall. In the Filipino psyche, where people congregate, the celebration of Mass logically follows and after that, merchants of daily necessities will come and do their trade. On Saturday afternoons and Sundays, people fulfill their Sunday obligation right at the shopping malls. I am not sure if there are baptisms allowed nor have I seen weddings officiated nor funerals, not yet! But the eucharistic celebrations at the shopping malls are not only for the shoppers. Storekeepers and sales clerks tend their stores while "hearing" mass (or is it the other way around?) Also, at the strike of 12 noon or 6 in the evening, loud speakers at big stores in the malls play the sound of tolling church bells and invite everyone to stop and pray the Angelus. Everyone stops from doing the cares of this world to meditate on the Incarnation. It is a beautiful religious custom that has withstood the test of time in the Philippines, carried from the countryside to the big cities. It is also a good reminder of how vulnerable we are as mortals and how we are completely dependent on the mercy of God which is beyond time and has not changed and will not, through generations past and yet to come.

Br. KENICHI FURUKAWA LEAVES FOR ROME

Br. K. FURUKAWA finally left for Rome last August 28. He will be part of the International Roman Community in Via Aurelia and will pursue his studies at the Gregorian University. He is now burning his midnight candle studying Italian.

Kenichi's departure has been delayed to enable him to finish his B.A. at Nanzan University. Last August 26th, he was informed by the university that he has successfully finished his requirements, *cum laude*. Congratulations, Br. Kenichi and may you enjoy your stay in Rome!

Anniversaries

■ Birthday:

October

05 1973 Ken-ichi FURUKAWA
10 1923 Jan VAN HOYDONCK
13 1963 Akio HORIUCHI
27 1927 Xave TOSA
30 1964 Bradly ROZAIRO

December

20 1970 Varam ANTHONYSAMY
24 1934 Mike YAMAZAKI

■ Ordination / Final Vows:

October

01 1988 Mauro CONCARDI
19 1991 Maurizio GIORGIANNI