

May 20, 2010

Eve of the Feast of our Founder

Dear Brother Oblates
in the newly formed Delegation of Japan-Korea

IMPORTANT: Please find the letter from the Superior General attached below.

It was a rainy Friday last May 7th when I felt my cell phone vibrating incessantly (while some kindergarten kids were playfully pulling my both legs). The number displayed was unfamiliar and looked like an international call. I tried to find a quiet place to answer the call and heard the word "Congratulations!" from the other end. It was Fr. Clement telling me that I have been appointed the superior of the new delegation. My reaction was "What???" I asked Fr. Clement if I could have some time to think it over whether I would accept or not. He said yes but would appreciate if I could get back to him asap as they were having their council meeting. I called him back in an hour or so to tell him that I am accepting the challenge for the sake of the mission. I must admit that I really did not have enough time to think but Fr. Clement assured me that I have the vote of confidence of the group and I also have his and his council's full support. A day later, I received an email from the Superior General also assuring me of his prayers and support.

The restructuring process has indeed been a painful experience for many of us, the "pangs of childbirth" so to speak. We had our heartaches, the feeling of being abandoned that perhaps made us overlook the small rays of hope at the end of a long and dark tunnel. We can only express our gratitude to the Province of Colombo for "adopting" us with wide open arms. We are equally thankful to the Province of Jaffna for coming with its decision to send two of their men to shore up our personnel. Two newly ordained Oblates are waiting for their visa to come to Japan. Likewise, to the Provinces of Brazil and the Philippines, the delegations of India and Bangladesh also for sharing with us their valuable manpower resources. Despite the rough sailing, I think we can say that we have reached shore and are ready to disembark. Although we will have to continue to chart our future, all in all, we can fall back on an old saying "All's well that ends well!"

The joy of the season of Easter is still upon us and the words of the risen Christ as he appeared to the disciples who have spent all night without a catch continue to reverberate and give meaning to the seeming meaninglessness of our efforts "Fear not!" "Throw your nets on the starboard one more time!" Let us remind ourselves how the risen Lord sent out the disciples to the ends of the world to preach the Good News despite of their unbelief, their lack of faith and in many times their lack of intelligence. In a rough analogy, the risen Lord is telling us to cast our nets once more on that same unfriendly waters, despite the problems that we face such as aging and thinning financial resources, despite our getting "failing marks" perhaps in vocation recruitment, in restructuring and in the Immense Hope Project, etc. Even as we grumble with words like "I've been there, I've done that so what else is new?" the Lord's words are clear: "I have made all things new" and his command is "GO...." with the accompanying promise "I am with you!" So much for preaching....

I am thankful to Jude for keeping the helm through the stormy waters during the transition period. I would have hated to be on his shoes. Let us continue to pray for Ange Siani as he continues to recuperate.

A few business matters:

1. Please don't miss the deadline of sending your ballots to choose three new councillors by email or postal mail.
2. Once the councillors have been named, we will plan a simple installation rite (either in Kochi or Itami wherever is more convenient to the majority). We will let you know.
3. Soon after the installation, there will be a joint meeting of the outgoing and the incoming council members. After the formalities have been done, the new council members with the new superior will continue to meet to look over some matters that need immediate attention.
4. My personal request: To all district superiors, district bursars and to all members of the different committees of formation, finance, MAMI, newsletter and others that I may have forgotten, please continue your work until further notice. Your term of office is not co-terminus with that of the local administration, as far as I know and everyone is appreciative of your sacrifices.

5. I hope my email list for Japan-Korea is accurate. Please let me know if somebody has been overlooked.

Please find the time to read the letter of Fr. Steckling attached below.

Lastly, my gratitude to all of you for your show of confidence in me and may we mutually support one another as we discern what God wants us to do for his Kingdom in the local Church of Japan and Korea. Happy Founder's day to everyone!

Fraternally in Mary Immaculate,

Wency Laguidao, omi
Superior-elect
Delegation of Japan-Korea