



M 28 : 19



Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit

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THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE VOTING



Days after the Philippine Election of 2010, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) is luckily being assisted by its reinvigorated citizens' arm, the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV). This is a national, parish-based, political but nonpartisan, lay organization actively supported by the Catholic hierarchy.

Most Salesian Parishes have its own PPCRV volunteers especially when the season of election time comes. It is primarily entrusted to ensure clean, honest, accurate, meaningful and peaceful elections. The PPCRV has grown to earn the respect of both civil society and ecclesiastical bodies in its initiatives of transforming the electoral culture of the country.

It is good to note here that the PPCRV was organized in response to Resolution 28 of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) which, in turn, was the Philippine "echo" of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II). This Resolution asked Catholic lay leaders to "help form the civic conscience of the voting population" and "to promote the election to public office of leaders of true integrity."

The PPCRV's best-known activity is poll watching. In the Salesian scenario as in any other diocesan Church, it taps volunteers among the young people involved in Church ministries; it likewise invites its parishioners where young professionals freely volunteer themselves to join and participate in this exercise. The PPCRV taps about 250 volunteers from each of the 2,700 parishes in the whole country.



We were able to gather some volunteers in one Salesian Parish and inquired from them reasons of volunteering. One reason why volunteering is important according to one of them was that "it give others hope; A person feels uplifted when he or she realizes that there are people out there who will help them out. It makes them aware that not everything is about money."

The selfless act of helping people and the country through volunteerism provides a spiritual boost as well. Knowing one did something good brings an emotional upliftment that can never be matched by money or fame.

These are just some of the reasons why volunteering is important. Not only does it bring hope and happiness to people, but it leads to spiritual and emotional growth too. It is an experience that cannot be bought.

Lay Person in Volunteer Service Ad Gentes Ad Extra

This is a service that extends for a year or two in a mission of the Church overseas. In this ever-expanding group, opportunities are available for people to render service in numerous areas of Church activity. Religious communities affirm that lay extensions actually intensify their charism of service. People representing every type of service are incorporating positions for lay volunteers into the work they give in the Church. Young, old, married and single are responding to this challenge. The personal rewards for a lay volunteer begin with the immeasurable gratitude expressed by those who are served. The blessings continue in ways bestowed by the Spirit and unique to each person.

Contact the Missionary Animation of the Salesian north province (Ronaldo Lora – Mission Animation Lay Delegate) for more information.

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BY: FR. ROEL SOTO SDB



A home visitation to the family of one of our student boarders in Prey Veng Province with two of our lay youth volunteers and a teacher last April 17, 2010 during the Khmer New Year celebration.



The blessing of the semi-parish church in honor of Mary, Our Help by his Excellency Bishop Emile Destombes last December 8, 2009. Present in the occasion were Fr. Thepharat Pitisant, Provincial of Thai Province, and some clergy of the diocese of Phnom Penh.

1. What is the story of your missionary vocation?

Ever since I started entertaining the thought of becoming a priest I also had in mind going to the mission. The initial spark started when I was a kid. I had the chance of watching the movie of Fr. Damien, the leper priest. The movie left a strong impression in my mind of a priest's total dedication, service and life offering to those neglected in society. My vocation became clearer as I entered Don Bosco Academy, Bacolor Pampanga. The story of Don Bosco, taking care of marginalized youth, the stories of missionaries visiting our school, the dedication of the Salesians in their teaching, work in DBYC and their presence among us as friends and guide made me realized that this is the kind of life and mission I've been looking for. The late Fr. Felix Glowicki was an instrument in allowing me to experience in concrete the joy, hard work and fatherliness of Don Bosco. So, when I entered the seminary and later professed as a Salesian I always kept the intention of going to the mission someday. The irresistible and persistent call came after I attended the First Asian Youth Day in Hua Hin, Thailand in 1999. The youth in my group were all from Laos and Cambodia. My encounter with them made me realized the great need of Asian youth to be evangelized and have someone to journey with them.

2. What are your joys and hurts in the mission?

I've been in Cambodia for a year and a half now. The greatest difficulty I encountered was the adjustment to the culture: language, mentality, value system and ways of doing things. I had to give up my expectations, take things as they are patiently, understand the people and learn from them. The joys are the people who support me: my confreres, volunteers, lay mission partners, and the slow, but gradual response of the people to our mission.

3. What is Ecclesiology of mission for you?

My ecclesiology of mission is a total immersion into the life of the people we serve. It is incarnation into the life and culture of the people in order to be one with them, like Jesus who humbled himself to become man. Only through this can a missionary become relevant and effective in forming and guiding the lives of the people he serves.

4. A simple message for aspiring religious and lay missionaries on how to nurture or discover a missionary vocation

A life of dedication, service, generosity and self-sacrifice is necessary and important in the mission. Whereas how one can discover the vocation to missionary life, God has His very unique way of showing us individually the way. One has to be open and sensitive to His promptings. Time will come when the call can't be resisted and what God just asks of us is to abandon our will to Him and say: "I am all yours." With prayers we will find ourselves giving up everything daringly, even to the point of overcoming our fears and anxiety.

5. What is the future of the mission work in Cambodia? How do you assess the Salesian work in Cambodia?

The Salesian work in Cambodia is abundant and challenging. The marginalized youth is growing bigger as the country's development, in the midst of poverty, goes by leaps and bounds together with other neighboring countries in the Sub-Mekong region. Despite our few in number (8 Salesians with 7 settings) we work in the technical and literacy schools, oratories, boarding houses, Children Fund projects, and in a semi-parish (a new pastoral work because of the need of a growing church). Aside from our local staff we rely so much on many foreign volunteers who help us in our mission. We also try different approaches in sowing and nurturing the seed of vocation in the hearts of our young people, and are looking forward to having our own formation center in the future. We would be happy if some young Salesians would come and share in our life and mission in Cambodia.