

Provincial Update #30



MAY 20, 2017 BY DEV_ADMIN

Fr. Provincial on Bro. John Bourque, SSS

An ancient poem – Talmudic in origin – about the shortness of our individual lives goes something like this:

*We are like beautiful pottery that breaks,
The grass that withers,
The flower that fades,
The shadow that passes,
The cloud that vanishes,
The breeze that blows,
The dust that floats,
The dream that flies away.*

We are gathered here today to celebrate the life and to honor the memory of John. It is the death of our brother that has brought us together but his life that we wish to remember. We are drawn here by our common love, our common respect and our common grief. This is certainly an occasion for sorrow but may it also be an occasion for thanksgiving because we are thankful for the gift of life and we are thankful that John lived among us.

Our General Statutes 13.01 states, "In so far as it is possible, the celebration of the Mass for our deceased should be one in which the community takes part. The name of the religious shall be mentioned as well as the principal events of his life."

- Bro. John Andrew Melanson Bourque, SSS, is the person we are honoring today.
- Born on November 30, 1929 in Lynn, Massachusetts, USA, to Joseph Alfred Bourque and Sarah Lena Melanson; a brother to Fr. Leo Bourque, SSS (who was two years older than John and was one of the pioneering SSS religious in the Philippines).
- Baptized on December 1, 1929; professed on September 8, 1949.
- He was in different assignments in his original SSS Province of Saint Ann, USA. Then he became a missionary, first to Uganda then to the Philippines.
- In the Philippines, he was assigned in different communities but particularly remembered as Bro. John of the Novitiate.
- Returned to the Father on June 10, 2016 at exactly 7:45 in the morning.

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Our Communities



Cagayan de Oro

This Community administers Nuestra

ever joyful."

- *"He was stooped over, the result of age and a life of hard work, but he stood as tall as ever because of his goodness and his fraternal spirit."*
- *"He was a true son of Fr. Eymard because those who were lucky to have lived with him were truly inspired and enriched by his exemplary life as a religious of the Blessed Sacrament."*
- *"He was a kind and gentle man, a dedicated religious and always ready to do what he was asked."*
- *"He was an example of Saint Eymard's Gift of Self which he demonstrated in his own religious life."*
- *"He was a model, an inspiration and a source of encouragement. He had always been faithful in his prayers and, until the last, was so charitable that he never wanted to be a burden to anyone."*
- *"He was humble, simple and dignified, a true mirror of a eucharistic soul."*
- *"Bro. John was the holiest man I ever knew."*



Who do I say Bro. John was?

I had the privilege to be with Bro. John during my entire two years of novitiate. When I went back to Uganda for a month of renewal, he was there, and together we came back to the Philippines.

- He was a community treasurer who could be relied upon to take care of our temporal needs.
- He was part of the formation team who assisted novices by providing them an image of what a true SSS religious should be.
- He was a brother religious who was always ready to be of help in whatever way possible.
- He saw to it that fresh meat and produce were available to secure the health of the community when he had the wet marketing shopping duty.
- He was a cook whose recipes were followed, and every food he prepared was eagerly anticipated not only by the members of the community but even by retreatants.
- He was a baker who loved to prepare cinnamon bread, donut and apple pie, which was sometimes mistaken for sayote (or vegetable pear) pie.
- He was a fruit gatherer who climbed coconut trees wearing his rubber boots.
- He was a juicer who always prepared passion fruit juice or santol juice.
- He was a practical person who was always trying to do repairs first than immediately buying a replacement.
- He was a handyman; he could do carpentry, masonry, plumbing, electrical work, etc.
- He was a shopper who gave in to some requests of the novices especially if they are allergic to certain brands.
- He was a barber whose sole costumer was himself.
- He coped with the language barrier with patience and perseverance especially during times when community workers would ask for cash advance or emergency loan and when

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- He was a peacemaker, he particularly loved dogs and cats.

- He was a leader because he was a good follower.
- He was a man of few words, but he was a preacher because his good actions spoke louder than his words.
- He was a pray-er—somebody who was a walking prayer.
- He was an adorer in spirit and truth because it was for him a matter of the heart and not just an external act.
- He was a diurnal and nocturnal visitor of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reposed. He would not retire to his room without first spending a few minutes in the prayer room.
- He was a hero who demonstrated to us here at the Provincialate the sacredness of life; he fought for life and did not succumb to death easily.
- He lived life to the fullest.

In cremating the body of Bro. John, we do so with respect for that body which during life was a unique and much-loved person and we are reminded of these words of Socrates, "no evil can befall a good person either in life or after death".

Eternal rest, grant unto Br. John, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine on him. Amen.

A Very Busy Week for the Sacred Heart Parish

The dates from May 28 to June 3 were extra-ordinary for the Sacred Heart Parish (a.k.a. Santuario Eucaristico) because of the following very important, and equally successful, events:



1. On May 28, the Sacred Heart Parish Church once again hosted the Cagayan de Oro Archdiocesan Eucharistic Congress. Fr. Raul Dael, SSJV, a seminary professor, gave a talk on "Eucharist and Good Governance and Citizenship."
2. May 29 was the celebration of the patronal feast of the parish – the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, SJ, D.D., presided the concelebrated solemn Mass in the morning. In the afternoon, Fr. Boy Salvador, SSJV, SLD, the liturgist of the archdiocese, gave some inputs on "The Eucharist and *Amoris Laetitia*." Afterwards, a solemn Eucharistic procession to St. Augustine Cathedral followed.
3. On June 3, the parish celebrated its secondary feast, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and also the installation of Fr. Froilan Renato Briones as the new parish priest, replacing Fr. Joel Lasutaz. The ceremony wherein the former parish priest hands over the tabernacle key to the new parish priest was performed in the solemn Mass presided by His Excellency the Most Rev. Antonio Ledesma, SJ, D.D.

The New and the Former Pastors of Sacred Heart Parish

When we say "yes" to the will of God, we have to be ready to go, to be willing to move forward.

Our stay in our current communities may have enriched us and vice-versa, but we have to go if it is time to leave. We have to go despite any apprehension we may have about our next assignment.

University which will certainly help him in guiding his parishioners.

Fr. Joel Lasutaz, the outgoing pastor, was first appointed by then Cagayan de Oro Archbishop Jesus Tuquib, D.D., as chaplain of the Sacred Heart Church upon its elevation to chaplaincy status on August 2, 2005. On August 2, 2008, the chaplaincy was elevated to a full-fledged Parish of the Sacred Heart, and Fr. Joel was installed by the Most Rev. Antonio Ledesma, SJ, D.D., as its first Sacramentino parish priest and eventually as rector of the Santuario Eucaristico (an Archdiocesan Shrine of the Holy Eucharist).



Message of Archbishop Ledesma to the New Pastor



In his homily at the fiesta Mass of the Parish of the Sacred Heart, which was also the occasion of the turn over of pastorship of Fr. Joel Lasutaz to his successor, Fr. Froilan Briones, His Excellency Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, SJ, D.D., explained in a simple and concise manner some of the characteristics of the Good Shepherd. Archbishop Ledesma pointed out that to be an effective pastor, one needs to look at and follow the example of the Good Shepherd, who is humble, always with the flock, ready to lay down

his life and look to all especially the poor.

Liturgical Modules

After attending a liturgical renewal lecture titled *Summer Liturgy Module* at the Paul VI Institute of Liturgy in Malaybalay, Bukidnon, from April 18 to May 6, 2016, Fr. Joel is highly recommending this updating on Liturgy to the SSS religious especially since there is this presumed expectation that the SSS are experts in Liturgy. The next updating schedule is on:



LITURGY

July 12-14 – Liturgical Presidency (Paul VI Institute of Liturgy, Malaybalay, Bukidnon)

As a result of gaining more input on the Liturgy from the lecture, Fr. Joel was able to produce Guidelines on the Celebration of the Divine Office, etc. This will be subject to study before the printing.

Life in the Eucharist Seminar (LITES) Updates

- April 25 to 27, 2016 – LITES Team-Tacloban had a refresher. The refresher included the following topics: (1) Speakers' Training Program (2) Review on the Five Modules of LITES, and (3) Frequently Asked Questions on the Eucharistic Celebration.
- May 14, 2016 – LITES Team-Manila held its first outreach program to the indigenous Aetas in Porac, Pampanga. A mass was held with 10 First Communicants. This program is done twice a year in response to the concrete expression of the social dimension of the Eucharist.
- June 4- 5, 2016 – LITES Team-Manila gave a seminar to the selected parishioners of St. Dominic Parish, San Carlos City, Dagupan. It was well received and highly appreciated by the attendees and the Parish Priest himself, Rev. Fr. Allan Abuan.



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1. For our country – healing, reconciliation and progress
2. For more vocations to the religious and priestly life
3. For the speedy recovery of Teodoro Tomo (father of Fr. Dingdong)
4. For the speedy recovery of Fr. Randy Vergara and Fr. Arnel Martinez
5. For the repose of the soul of Honorio Nicolas, Sr. (father of Sister Cristy, sss)
6. For the repose of the soul of Lucena Federico (mother of Sister Beth, sss)



Fr. Joseph Matitu, SSS

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