



We have a new Prior Provincial-elect

The highlight of the afternoon activity, of the second day, was the election of the new Prior Provincial of St. Ezekiel Moreno Province. So sacred is the activity that it needed for the capitulars to seek first the intercession of the mother Mary by praying the holy rosary. They likewise asked for divine guidance to exercise with prudence this responsibility to the province.

When the capitulars were gathered at the chapter hall in their white habit, the president of the chapter Fray Miguel Ángel Hernández, read the provisions of the *ordo capituli* on the procedures of the election of the prior provincial. He gave a short admonition inviting the participants to seek the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by singing the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*.

The outgoing prior provincial, Fray Dionisio Selma, handed over the seal of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno to the prior general to symbolize the transfer of authority from the out-going prior provincial to the president of the 8th Provincial chapter.

Fray Selma, then, expressed thanksgiving to the province before the capitulars for the support and cooperation received during his seven-year term as prior provincial. He likewise asked forgiveness for his shortcomings. At the end of his message, he prayed for the

next prior provincial to guide the province and “embrace the cross” for the next term of office.

After the message of the outgoing prior provincial, the president asked the chapter secretary, Fray Jose Ernil Almayo, to read the shortlist of the ternary for the election of prior provincial. These ternary were elected by the religious members of the whole province—Frays Leander Barrot, Bernard Amparado, and Ian Anthony Espartero. They received the highest votes during the elections done prior to the provincial chapter.

By way of a secret ballot, the capitulars elected the prior provincial. After three rounds of voting, Fray Bernard Amparado is elected as the new prior provincial of St. Ezekiel Moreno Province. Congratulations Fray Bernard Amparado.

Since Fray Bernard is not a capitular, he was summoned to enter the chapter hall



and was asked by the president if he would accept his election as prior provincial. “Lo acepto” (I accept it), he responded.

The chapter hall burst in applause. As a sign of fraternal support and encouragement, Fray Miguel and all the capitulars embraced the new prior provincial-elect. For the succeeding days of the provincial chapter, Fray Amparado will sit beside his “paisano” Fray Selma as the capitulars are arranged according to simple profession.

Fray Bernard will be confirmed as Prior Provincial when the different stages of the provincial chapter are completed and the new Life and Mission Project of the province is approved by the provincial chapter.

Congratulations to the new prior provincial-elect—Fray Bernard Amparado, OAR.



ELECTION OF PRIOR PROVINCIAL BEGINS. (Left) Fray Selma, outgoing prior provincial, handed over the seal of the province to the president of the chapter, Fray Hernández. (right) The tellers, Frays Campomanes, Pecson, and Bangcaya, announced the result of the election for prior provincial.



The capitulars with the Recollection speaker.

Fr. Elias Ayuban, CMF delivers the homily on the 2nd day

Many years ago I happened to read this book by Joyce Rupp entitled “Praying Our Goodbyes,” which became one of my favorites. In that book, she said, “Life is but an alteration of saying hello and goodbye.”

Obviously, from the time of our birth, we say goodbye to the most comfortable place and we say hello to an unfamiliar world. This pained us and made us cry a lot. Maybe today, the newly born would cry a little more with the over-twelve-trillion debt our country incurs and with the kind of senators we have placed in office. We said goodbye to our homes when we began our elementary years and we said hello to new friends. When we joined the seminary, we said goodbye to our old friends and embraced the new seminary environment. When we were ordained to priesthood, we said goodbye to lots of opportunities and possibilities of enriching ourselves, of having a family of our own and we said hello to a celibate life—a life of poverty. The same is true when we were assigned to new assignments. We said goodbye to our familiar home, silence, environments, and friends and we said hello time and again.

In this year’s chapter, we said goodbye

to a lot of things and we are going to say hello to new dreams and aspirations as a province.

My friends, I’m saying this hello and goodbye because in today’s Gospel the Lord also says goodbye. Indeed, love involves proximity and distance. True love involves being so near and also being far, of saying goodbye and moving forward.

When I reflect on the theme “Walking Together,” I know that we neither mean walking together literally nor physically. Walking together is having a line of dreams and aspirations even if we are far from one another. There’s a beautiful African saying that goes, “If we want to go fast, we walk alone. If we want to go far, we walk together.” This is very much applicable to our provincial chapter. We walk together, although separately but definitely towards the same direction.

In the second conference, I would reflect with you on the theme where is God calling us? Walking together is not

the entire story but walking towards which direction is the more crucial question. Where are we heading?

We pray to the Lord to enlighten us all the more these days so that He will lead us and bring us to where he wants us to go.

We offer this Mass for this particular intention.

LIST OF MESSAGES RECEIVED FOR THE 8th PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

- Archbishop Socrates Villegas, DD - Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan
- Diocese of Baguio
- Fray Raul Buhay
- OAR Nuns
- SARF de Cebu
- Bro. Edwin T. Ruiz, SAR - SARF National President



INSPIRING YET CHALLENGING. Fr. Elias Ayuban (right) shares with the participants the constancy of the Church's mission of evangelization.

Departures, stops, audacity, and hope of a missionary church

Fr. Elias Ayuban, in the second part of his recollection-talk to the capitulars, dwells on themes of departures, stops, audacity and mission hopes. These themes, he connects with the image of a church constantly in mission or a church that goes forth.

He likens the church to an airport. As it is not ideal for an airport to have many parked planes, so, likewise, a true church is one that is constantly going forth to various and new destinations. Pope Francis, echoing the many synodal documents, has identified these new destinations—the church in the peripheries both geographical and existential. For the church to be relevant it has to be a missionary one and its pastoral orientations has to be inclusive and open. This mission mindset has to always be inspired by the gospel—the very life of Jesus Christ, who became flesh to live and have missions with humanity.

Fr. Elias expounds important concepts related to a church constantly in mission. He speaks of stops, audacity, and hope.

The stops refer to instances where a church cuts itself off from being a missionary one. This happens when first, the institution or its members no longer desire to leave the comfort zones and when poverty and other vows and promises are lax; second, when its members focus on immediate results, developments, and improvements (acedia); third, when worldliness creeps in and the motives

become human glory, personal well-being, and own or self-interest. In such cases, the church loses its being a light to the world.

For the church to veer away from these stops and remain faithful to her Lord and Master, she has to be audacious, daring, courageous and non-conformist. She is to believe that in serving the divine master, nothing is impossible; she needs to be in constant state of mysterious expectation. In all her endeavors, she has to share the same audacity with the common people.

In a time when commitment to priestly and religious life is no longer an alternative and when even among the professed—solemn, perpetual, and simple—there are more exits than entrances, the church is called to live a mission of hope. This mission of hope takes various forms. One of which is articulated as partnership with the laity. The emergence of lay partners in the church is a challenge to change paradigm and to share the church's gift or charisms with the lay.



SHARING OF THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS. The capitulars were divided into groups for the small group sharing answering the guide questions given by the speaker.