



TAKE THIS ALL OF YOU... The capitulars join the Mass presider and homilist of the day, Fray Leopoldo Estioko (not in photo), in celebrating the Eucharistic celebration for the sixth day of the 8th Provincial Chapter.

Chapter's information phase concludes



LAST TWO REPORTERS. Fray Bernabe Dosdos (above) reports the financial status of the province. Fray Robin Plata (below) presents the template of the Last Will, Medical Power of Attorney, and Medical Record.

On the sixth day of the Chapter, reports from the Province's secretariats, commissions, and foundations concluded.

At 8:30, after the opening prayer, the morning session commenced with the reading of new messages and the review of the minutes of previous sessions. Two other decisions were done by the capitulars, endorsement of the first interview of the 8th Prior Provincial of St. Ezekiel Moreno and the itinerary of the following Sunday activity.

The last two presentations of the morning sessions were by Fray Robin Ross Plata who presented the proposed templates regarding the Last Will, Medical Power of Attorney, and Medical Records of the religious—a directive from the previous Prior General of the Order; and by Fray Bernabe Dosdos who showed the overall economic status of the Province.

These reports closed the Information Phase of the 8th Provincial Chapter.

LIST OF MESSAGES RECEIVED FOR THE 8TH PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

- Recoletos de Casian
- Recoletos de Kamalo
- SARF de UNO-R Bacolod
- Siervas de Maria

Prayer, Sacraments and Imitation of Christ

Jesus said, "If they persecute me, they will also persecute you. If they keep my word, they will also keep yours. And they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me."

Allow me to use a prayer as my jumping board in my short homily. Please pray with me: "Lord Jesus, you always know that we will face sufferings and persecutions as we proclaim Your Good News to all the nations. We pray that you offer us a yoke that is good to bear and a burden that is light. May we feel as if the worst suffering we encounter is a light burden. May we have the courage and strength to proclaim your Holy Word to all. Amen.

In today's gospel Jesus gives us a reminder when He said: "If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first, "If they had persecuted me, they would also persecute you." When Jesus talks of persecutions, He was also referring to the sufferings and persecutions His disciples would undergo at the hands of the Jews and the Romans in proclaiming His teachings.

The "world" that rejected Jesus and His disciples then is the same "world" that will reject and persecute his disciples today. Jesus leaves no middle ground for his followers. We are either for Him or against Him, for His kingdom of light or for the kingdom of darkness. Suffering is part of human existence especially for Christians. It is because, a life with Jesus is not a bed of roses but a thorny one. Thus, we should not pray for an easy life. Instead, we pray to become stronger persons to be able to face life's challenges.

As an Augustinian Recollect, let us in time of rejections and persecutions, give to Jesus the assurance that we will be faithful witnesses no matter what may happen. Pope Francis, in one of the Chrism masses he officiated, reminded priests that the proclamation of the Gospel will always be intrinsically linked to persecution. He added further that

the weight of the cross had been present throughout Our Lord's life from beginning to end; and Jesus embraced his sufferings at every moment of his earthly life. So, priests needed to do the same, "... for on the cross there can be no ambiguity! The cross is non-negotiable." This message of Pope Francis was not only meant for



THE MASS PRESIDER AND HOMILIST. Fray Leopoldo Estioko delivers his homily.

priests, it was also addressed to religious men and women.

We cannot bear witness to Jesus if we do not know Him personally. We cannot be his witnesses unless we experience him in prayer and the sacraments. Pope Francis said, "Knowing Jesus is our life's most important work", because in coming to know him we come to know the Father also. The Pope pointed out three doors we need to open and pass through, if we want to know Jesus. The three doors are prayer, sacraments, and imitation of Jesus.

The Pope said, "study alone without **prayer** is useless. Great theologians do theology on their knees." He continued saying that in research we will advance a little but with prayer we will know and experience Jesus. Yes, Prayer opens our eyes of faith. It enables us to see what God is doing and makes us see things we are blinded to when we are without prayer. Let us not, then, miss our Liturgy of the Hours and be religiously in love with prayers.

The Bishop of Rome also said, that prayer alone "is also not enough." "Celebrating Jesus joyfully in the **Sacraments** is needed as well, for it is there that He gives us life, nourishes us, comforts us, makes a covenant with us, and gives us a mission. Indeed, In prayer, we give to God that which we owe to Him. In the sacraments, He gives to us the graces necessary to live truly our religious life.

Finally, the Pope advised that we take up the scriptures in order to discover in the Gospel what Jesus did, what kind of life he lived, and what he told and taught his disciples. Let us, then, "seek and imitate him" in the bible: The gospel will tell us to be merciful; to be prayerful; to feed others; to Die for others, to teach others and to be joyful as we carry our crosses.

My brother capitulars, as we journey together during the next quadrennium, let us **pray, celebrate the Sacraments, and imitate Jesus** in order to know him more, love him more and serve him more in our neighbors. May His words, "I am the way, the truth and the life," lead us to a synodal Church where there is accompaniment and communion among OAR religious in the whole province of St. Ezekiel Moreno.