

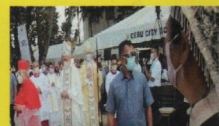
STA. TERESA DE AVILA Joins Ortega Twins 500 YOC Journey



14 April 2021



Reenactment of the First Baptism



**85 days
around the
Philippines**

March 15 - June 7, 2021



"The tender love of the Sto. Niño is the symbol of the arrival of Christianity in your archipelago." Papal Nuncio Archbishop Charles Brown



Argel , Maria Nila
STA. TERESA DE AVILA Joins Ortega Twins
500 YOC Journey

June 13, 2021
2nd Apparition Anniversary of Our Lady
Fatima (June 13, 1917)

Nihil Obstat

[Signature]

Abbot Santos Rabang
CHRIST OF THE DESERT MONASTERY
Alangan, Sto. Domingo, Ilocos Sur
Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia

Imprimatur

[Signature]

His Excellency
Most Rev. Ernesto A. Salgado, D.D.
Archbishop - Emeritus of Nueva Segovia
Gatchalian Subdivision 2
Las Piñas City, Metro Manila

FRONT COVER:

By the authority of President Rodrigo Duterte, Proclamation No. 1130 was issued declaring a special non-working holiday for the city of Cebu on April 14, 2021 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the first baptism.

The celebration was in a very limited capacity of only 700 individuals in a venue that has the capacity to accommodate 3,000 people. Security was tight at the Magellan's Cross at Plaza Sugbo but with Luz showing our reports to the police, we successfully passed through and she is seen at the Welcome Arch jubilant.

Arriving early we had the opportunity to watch the Sandiego Dance company doing their rehearsals on the reenactment of the First Baptism in front of the Magellan's cross, the holding of the First Baptism Mass in the Philippines and the gifting of the Santo Niño to Juana of Cebu. The first baptism in the archipelago took place in Cebu on April 14, 1521 when Spanish missionaries led by Fr. Pedro Valderama, chaplain of the expedition administered baptism to Rajah Humabon, his wife Hara Humamay and at least 800 of their subjects. Humabon and Humamay, who were given the Christian names Carlos and Juana were the first to embrace Christianity in the Philippines. Chaplain. Juana asked Magellan to give her the image of the Sto. Niño to keep in place of her idols. The actual show started at 2:30 p.m.

There was a one-hour rests before the Pontifical mass in commemoration of the 500 Years of Christianity at 4 p.m. We had a souvenir photo of the 500 YOC logo. We were lucky to get seats reserved for visitors as the processional with Apostolic Nuncio Charles Brown, main celebrant with Cardinal Emeritus, Orlando Quevedo, OMI, Cebu Archbishop Jose Palma, and Auxiliary Bishop Midyphil Billioness, passed by at our place.

The nuncio led the welcoming of the seven children, namely: David Villagracia, John Michael Dragon, Milby Illocendo, April Suan, Billy Connie Pal, French Cedrin Sison and Jolito Abaquita Jr. to the Catholic Christian Community. They also received their first Holy Communion. The newly-baptized children were carrying images of Sr. Sto Niño. The commemoration highlights the call for Filipinos to recommit to their baptismal calling and continuously share the "Light of Christ" to the world.

Apostolic nuncio waves to the Cebuanos as the crowd sings "Bato Balani sa Gugma" at the concluding rites. Luz was carried away with the song and waving of hands that she went in front. Then the nuncio gave his blessings, "May the Almighty and merciful Lord, grant you indulgence, absolution, and remission of all your sins."

Viva Pit Senor, Viva Señor Sto. Niño. Viva Pit Senor

The Covers of this book has a Philippine Flag butterfly as its border.

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

TO: Roman Catholic Church, Family and Friends
 FROM: Ma LuzNila Ortega BolongArgel
 RE: STA. TERESA DE AVILA Joins Ortega Twins 500 YOC Journey
 DATE: June 13, 2021 (Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of the BVM)

Our book gives us great happiness that we are pleased to share a shorter version in 50 pages. We have the Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur by the Church.

Text messages of Archbishop Salgado and Ortega twins:

Gud afternoon archbishop. We are the Ortega Twins and are at Vigan. Has the news that Abbot rabang died this morning reached you? We will attend his funeral mass tomorrow 10 a.m. at alangan. We requested his nihil obstat and foreword. He made a foreword to our book "STA. TERESA DE AVILA Joins Ortega Twins 500 YOC Journey."

Can we send our book to you at Las Pinas for imprimatur? Please archbishop. Journey from March 15- April 15. Attended all activities_ mass at Homonhon, Limasawa with Bishops. Cebu Easter mass by archbishop Palma and first baptism by Nuncio. Our trip very successful.

17 May, 5:36 pm •

Wednesday, 19 May • 7:55 am

Ok, send the book

Sunday, 23 May • 4:05 pm

We twins celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit through our book "STA. TERESA DE AVILA Joins Ortega Twins 500 YOC Journey. Archbishop, we sent our book through LBC yesterday. Hopefully you receive it tomorrow. Happy Solemnity of Pentecost. P. S. Your Excellency, your imprimatur to our book would multiply our plans. " Your daughters... Will dream dreams,... will see vision."

Thank you. My pleasure to look over your book. God bless and stay safe

Thursday, 27 May • 10:22 am

Dear Luz and Nila, I got your book. Congratulations. After Abbot Santos has given his Nihil Obstat, I now say "Imprimatur". God bless and stay safe.

Do I send te book back? Or are you giving it to me.?

Gud morning Apo. No need to send it back. The Vigan printing press will print the book because we are at Vigan. We are improving what we sent you. In fact I Luz was afraid you won't give the imprimatur. You really made us very very happy. Thanks a lot archbishop.

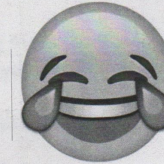
27 May, 10:40 am • SMS

The Visitation Living in the Divine Will



Due to over-excitement, LuzNila cry/ tears of joy are captured in our selfie.

Tears of joy
whiteswanfoundation....

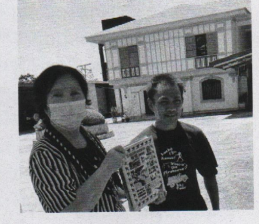
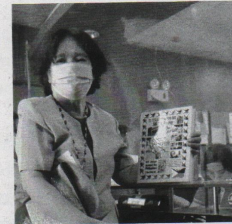


Feast of the Visitation of the BVM on May 31, 2021

Spouses Pacifico and Ma. Nila Argel residence at Vigan City, Ilocos Sur. My twin sister Luz staying with us at Vigan has a spiritual purpose. We are living in the Divine Will; focused in finishing the book, "STA. TERESA DE AVILA Joins Ortega Twins 500 YOC Journey. We follow the same schedule _ morning mass then work on our book.

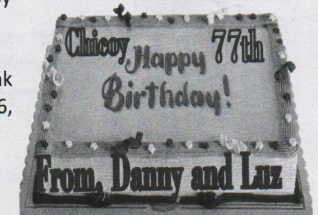
Yesterday, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, we got from the printing press seven copies of our book. Today, we sent our 500-page offering for the 500 YOC to the following:

1. Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines Charles Brown
2. Archbishop Jose Palma, DD _ Cebu
3. Carmelite Provincial Superior Dan Lim, OCD _ Manila
4. Archbishop Marlo M. Peralta, D.D. _ Ilocos Sur
5. Dr. Virginia Capiral, ocds



6. Bishop Daniel O. Presto, DD _ La Union will get his copy when Luz arrives at San Fernando.

An advanced 77th birthday to Chicoy (June 30). Thank you for Luz 2 months stay at Vigan City. April 16—June 16, 2021



FOREWORD

The 500th Year of the Christianization of the Philippines is the 500th year of the arrival of the Catholic Faith in the Philippines.

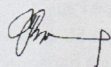
The Catholic Faith has four essentials: the *profession* of the Faith in the Apostles' Creed, the *celebration* of the Faith through the Sacraments centered on the Eucharist, the *living* of the Faith through the Ten Commandments and the Five Precepts of the Church, leading to the New Law of Love of the Gospel, and the *praying* of the Faith in personal prayer-life, outside liturgical and community prayer. This is *objective* Catholic Faith.

The 500 years, we ask this question: How deep is the understanding and practice of Filipinos of their Catholic Faith in their daily lives – personal and social? This is *subjective* Catholic Faith.

This book takes St. Teresa of Jesus to join the Ortega Twins in this Quintennial Celebration. St. Teresa of Jesus is the Catholic Church's doctor on prayer. Very well in *The Life* and in *The Interior Castle* did she map out the way of praying personally, by the metaphor of watering a garden and of entering the interior of a castle. If she joins the Ortega Twins in this celebration of the 500th year of the Catholic Faith in the Philippines, I take it that her suggested thrust would be *prayer*, the fourth of the essentials of the Catholic Faith.

Therefore, I suggest, if I may, that the Ortega Twins, being tertiaries of the Order of Carmelites, of which St. Teresa of Jesus is the towering central figure, come up with modules on sharing the Teresian way of prayer, by way of watering a garden and of entering the interior of the castle paradigm. This would be a beautiful JOURNEY which does not impetrate going to places of pilgrimage in the Philippines, a thing not often possible during this time of COVID 19 pandemic.

There is still ample time for the initiation into the practice of personal prayer according to the Teresian paradigm, now and even after the 5th Centenary of Grace.



Abbot Santos Rabang
CHRIST OF THE DESERT MONASTERY
Alangan, Sto. Domingo, Ilocos Sur



Luz Report

The late Sr. Lucia of Fatima now Servant of God has a story aside of course from the famous "Miracle of the Sun."

On February 15, 1926, I found a child I had previously met, so I questioned him:

"Did you ask our heavenly Mother for the Child Jesus?"

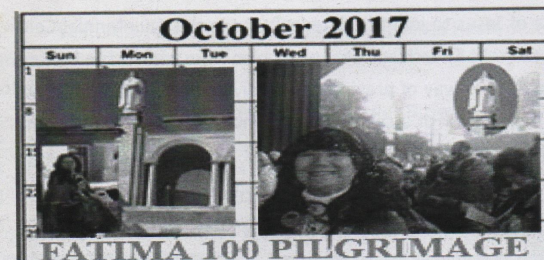
The child turned to me and said:

"And have you spread through the world what our heavenly Mother requested of You?"

With that He was transformed into a resplendent Child. Sr. Lucia knew that it was Jesus. The Child Jesus appeared to Sr. Lucia and asked what was being done to spread the First Saturday Devotion.

I too, have a story to tell. On October 13, 2017, marking the 100th anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun, I, Luz namesake of Sr. Lucia recalls, upon setting foot at the Fatima Colonnade to attend the culmination mass, I received a revelation from God.

"People were moving towards me. Somebody pointing and with a joyous greeting said, I knew that lady is special...I took a portrait of her."



Coincidentally, at the Greece airport, a co-passenger, Maltese Roman Catholic priest, Fr. Paul Fenech, working for the Parish Cell Groups around Europe sketched my face and gave my portrait before we embarked for Turkey.

On May 13, 1946, Pope Pius XII granted a canonical coronation to the venerated image enshrined at the chapel of the apparition of Fatima.

There are five papal pilgrimages in all on the 13th of May

1. Pope Paul VI in 1967.
2. Pope St. John Paul II in 1982 (in thanksgiving for surviving an assassination attempt which happened in 1981).
3. Pope St. John Paul II in 1991 (in thanksgiving for the fruits of the 1984 Collegiate Consecration and renewed the Consecration of the World to her Immaculate Heart)
4. Pope St. John Paul II in 2000 beatified Francisco and Jacinta declaring them Blessed.
5. Pope Francis in 2017 canonized Francisco and Jacinta declaring them Saints, the 100th anniversary of Fatima

I am amazed at how similar I and Sr. Lucia, the visionary looked alike in our childhood. Lucia's picture was taken when she was 9 years old and I, Luz was 12 years old.

On the feast of Our Lady of Fatima, I resolve to continue to spread the Fatima Message. As the faithful in the Catholic Church continue to cope with the implication of the coronavirus pandemic, it brings to mind the situation of the world 104 years ago when the Blessed Mother first appeared to three children _ Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta near Fatima, Portugal on May 13, 1917.

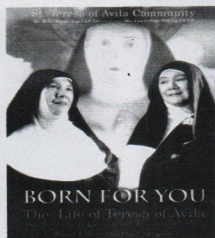
Francisco and Jacinta Marto died in the international flu pandemic that began in 1918 and swept the world for two years. Francisco died in 1919 and Jacinta in 1920.

It is worth recalling that on August 4, 2002, Sunday night I could not sleep. It was 12 midnight. That early Monday morning, I was inspired to go to Fatima. Francisco and Jacinta, now Saints are buried at the Sanctuary of Fatima. We twins were fortunate to have visited their tombs on our 2002 Marian Pilgrimage. We also saw the prepared tomb of Sr. Lucia as it was beside that of St. Jacinta.

We gave to Mother Celina, prioress of the Carmelite Monastery of Coimbra, Portugal, two statues of God the Father. The bigger one is made of fiberglass and the small one made of Mt. Pinatubo ash. One for Sr. Lucia and the other for the Community.

Sr. Lucia died on February 13, 2005. On October 12, 2017, we were at the Fatima Colonnade. However viewing of the tomb of Sr. Lucia was cancelled for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun.

It is for the Church that we present our report. It could be recalled that St. Teresa of Avila died saying, "I am a daughter of the Church." I am sure of it because that was my line in our stage play, "Born for You—the Life of St. Teresa of Avila."



St. Teresa of Avila is the reformer of the Discalced Carmelite Order; Servant of God Sr. Lucia was a Carmelite nun; and we twins are professed Secular Carmelites.

Our Lady of Fatima: The visionaries



L-R: Lucia de Jesus Rosa dos Santos, OCD also known as Lucia of Fatima Francisco and Jacinta Marto now Saints.

ON THE FATHER'S LAP

In 1954, the late Judge Evaristo Ortega and Rosa Ubaldo of San Fernando, La Union, our parents, contributed twins to the Philippine population. My twin, Ma. Luz got her name after Luz Magsaysay, the first lady at the time. Younger by 15 minutes, I was named after Leonila Garcia, the wife of then Vice-President Carlos Garcia.

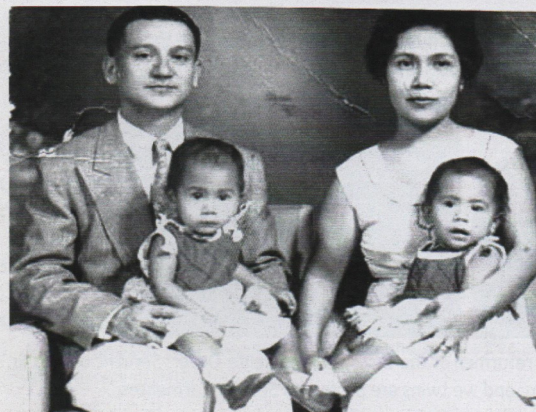
When we were kids, Mama and Papa made sure people won't mistake us as ordinary sisters so they dressed us as twins should look. Our joys with our parents were limitless. We were practically inseparable and identical in all aspects - we shared the same room and slept in the same bed, have the same friends and interests.



Luz and Nila sit on the lap of Papa God at Pannzian Beach and Mountain Resort, Ilocos Norte.

GOD OUR FATHER

PAPA BISTING ORTEGA



ST. JOSEPH _ FOSTER FATHER
OF JESUS CHRIST

February 7, 2021
Hermanas Mayores
St. William the Hermit Feast



Offertory Procession



Awarding of Certificates



Blessing of Ortega Twins' Haven Signage

February 25, 2021



February 27, 2021
OCDS House of Prayer



February 27, 2021
Sea and Sky Hotel

500 YOC Song _ Gifted to Give



March 5, 2021
Sea and Sky College



March 11, 2021
St. William's Cathedral
Bishop Presto's Pastoral Visit



March 11, 2021
St. William's Cathedral
Ortega twins attend Pastoral Visit



March 12, 2021
Twins Haven
God the Father



March 13, 2021, Carlatan Residence, San Fernando City, L U



Macie & Mika Bolong

March 14, 2021
Poro, San Fernando City, L U

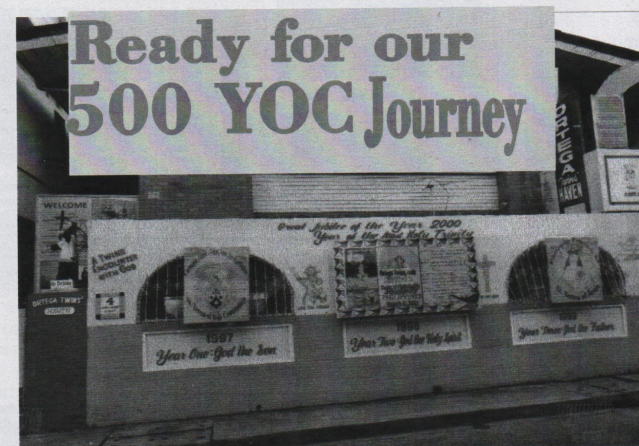


Bree Ortega-de Leon

March 14, 2021
Sea and Sky College



Danny gives P20k, mask & shield

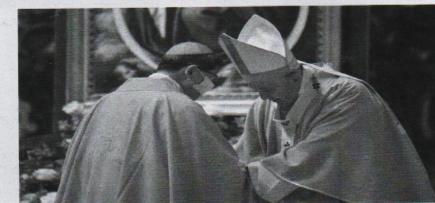


Pope Francis Mass and Homily on 500 YOC

"Dear brothers and sisters, five hundred years have passed since the Christian message first arrived in the Philippines. You received the joy of the Gospel: the good news that God so loved us that he gave his Son for us. And this joy is evident in your people. We see it in your eyes, on your faces, in your songs and in your prayers. In the joy with which you bring your faith to other lands.

I have often said that here in Rome Filipino women are "smugglers" of faith! Because wherever they go to work, they sow the faith. It is part of your genes, a blessed "infectiousness" that I urge you to preserve. Keeping bringing the faith, the good news you received five hundred years ago, to others. I want to thank you, then, for the joy you bring to the whole world and to our Christian communities.

I think, as I mentioned, of the many beautiful experiences in families here in Rome – but also throughout the world – where your discreet and hardworking presence became a testimony of faith. In the footsteps of Mary and Joseph, for God loves to bring the joy of faith through humble, hidden, courageous and persevering service.



Pope Francis thanks Philippine Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle during a mass to mark 500 YOC in the Philippines, in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, March 14, 2021.

On this very important anniversary for God's holy people in the Philippines, I also want to urge you to persevere in the work of evangelization – not proselytism, which is something else. The Christian proclamation that you have received needs constantly to be brought to others. everyone. Never be discouraged as you walk this path. Never be afraid to proclaim the Gospel, to serve and to love. With your joy, you will help people to say of the Church too: "she so loved the world!" How beautiful and

attractive is a Church that loves the world without judging, a Church that gives herself to the world. May it be so, dear brothers and sisters, in the Philippines and in every part of the earth.

March 15, 2021



NAIA departure for Tacloban

Strategy

Prior to our journey, Nila coordinated our trip to the Visayas, sending an email to the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) regional director of Region 8 Erlinda Olivia Tiu and the Information Managers Nimfa Illuminada Guirante of Borongan City Eastern Samar and Erna Gorme of Southern Leyte. Our trip from Tacloban to Guiuan were facilitated by the information managers.

We twins were anxious because nobody from the PIA was at the airport to fetch us. Nila called the regional director Erlinda Tiu who said that they were busy. But, she sent a driver just the same. We waited at the terminal and how happy we were when the driver arrived with Nila's name at the vehicle.

The PIA driver (ID) at driver's seat arrived at the airport terminal around 2 pm. and brought us to the Terminal for Borongan.



Nimfa Illuminada Guirante, PIA Manager

Guiuan is a 2nd class municipality and played a significant part in Philippine history.

Magellan discovered the Philippines in Homonhon. Nimfa Illuminada Guirante, PIA Manager informed us that they are billeted at SEABREEZE PENSIONE and we rode in a tricycle. It was a delight to see her the night of March 15.

We thanked Nimfa for giving us the Schedule of Activities. We asked her that we go to the Unveiling of the Historical Marker of Suluan. But, the person whom she asked to include us said that the participants were already submitted.

Nimfa told us to take a tricycle and talk to the parish priest of Guiuan Church. Arriving at Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish Church we met Fr. Edwin Lanuevo, the parish priest. He said that Msgr. Alfonso Lacsamana, our second cousin was his classmate in the seminary.

We showed him a copy of our book, "In the Footsteps of La Madre: STA. TERESA DE AVILA," informing him that we have sent a copy for Bishop Varquez. Fr. Lanuevo showed us the very informative Museum at the parish office, showing artifacts taken from the ruins brought about by Typhoon Haiyan.

We expressed our desire to go to Homonhon Island and got a positive response. Our not going with PIA to witness the blessing of the Historical Marker of Suluan was a blessing in disguise. Through Fr. Edwin Lanuevo, parish priest of Guiuan, he showed us the Museum, in the parish office.

We went to the Guiuan Transport Terminal to welcome the Spanish fleet ELCANO. The ship named after Juan Sebastian Elcano, the first person to circumnavigate the world, arrives in Cebu City on March 20, 2021. The Spanish ambassador to Manila Jorge Moragas said the ship's stop in the Philippines is a key part of the global voyage around the world to commemorate the Quincennial of the momentous circumnavigation. The 93-year old training ship arrives in Guiuan, Eastern Samar and stay in the waters off Suluan and Homonhon Islands until March 18.

Manicani Island

At the tent. A man asked, "why won't you ride on the boat?" Of course, we know there are designated passengers for each of the boats. Luz asked how much does it costs for the ride? The man replied, it is free. Approaching the coordinator, we were accommodated. While inside the boat, the barangay captain who is a co-passenger said, "You're lucky to have been allowed to join."

Due to coronavirus disease 2019 restrictions, the crew of the Elcano stayed aboard the ship.



It reminded us of the scenes on the movie "Titanic", an epic, action-packed romance set against the ill-fated maiden voyage of the R.M.S. She was the most luxurious liner of her era—the "ship of dreams".

Our exciting boat ride shows us waving to the passengers of the Elcano was captured by our co-passengers at 5:30 p.m.

Upon arrival at the shore at 6:30 in the evening, the same man who told us to have the boat ride approaches us and asked if we needed a ride in going home. He was a tricycle driver who significantly contributed in our memorable experience in Welcoming the Elcano Ship.



Homonhon Island

On March 16, 1521, Ferdinand Magellan arrived at the Island of Homonhon. Under the Spanish crown, he was the first European to discover the Philippines and trade with the Island-King, Rajah Humabon. Humabon embraced Magellan's attempt to convert the Philippines to Christianity.

Magellan and his crew dropped anchor off the uninhabited Homonhon Island, then known as Humumu, on March 16, 1521, where they stayed for eight days before proceeding with their journey to what is now known as Philippines.

Strategy

Excited, we went to the Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish Church very early in the morning. Bishop Crispin Varquez, D.D. was friendly, inviting us to go up to the refectory for breakfast. Then we rode on a van that brought us to the boat going to Homonhon Island. Homonhon Island is a 20-kilometer long island, and about 3 hours away from Guiuan port which is located in Barangay Lupok.

We arrived at the port at 6 a.m. Putting on our scapular the ferry to Homonhon Island, departed and we arrived at the St. John the Baptist Parish Church at 8:30 a.m.

We immediately changed into our Filipino attire, an Abel golden tenno.

Mass of Thanksgiving for the Quincentennial of the Arrival of Christianity in the Philippines on March 17, 2021 was officiated by Most Reverend Crispin Barrete Varquez, D.D.

After the 9 a.m. mass, at St. John the Baptist Parish Church, Barangay Casuguran, we had photos at the stained glass window depicting the baptism of Jesus. As Secular Carmelites, we had a photo with Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in a carro. At 67 years old, we the Ortega twins are indeed happy to say, we step foot at Homonhon Island.



Seated at the back of Poland Ambassador Jarostaw Szczepankiewicz, he took notice of our attire and showed appreciation by taking a photo of Nila's sleeves with the 500 YOC logo.

At the reception area, we were interviewed to give our impression of the affair.



St. John the Baptist stained glass window



Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

Unveiling of the Marker at Guluan Church

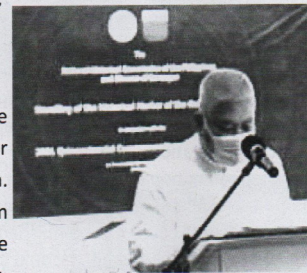
March 18, 2021 Thursday

We attended mass at 5:30 a.m. at the Church in Guluan on March 18. The RVM Sisters who run the St. Mary's Academy of Guluan invited us for breakfast at their place just at the back of the church. While having breakfast, we told of our desire to visit the Convent of the Poor Clares and after lunch with them we left for the Convent of Poor Clares at 1 pm.

Unveiling of the Historical Marker in the Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish Church at Guluan, Eastern Samar

Strategy

We went to SEABREEZE PENSIONE to change. Attire for the unveiling of the marker is Filipiniana. We wore our brown Abel Terno with flower patch. Arriving past 9 a.m. we were ushered to the ceremonial site. The program started at 9:30 a.m. Fr Edwin Lanuevo, parish priest gave the welcome remarks. The officials who unveiled the marker were Director General Jeremy Barns of the National Museum of the Philippines and Poland Ambassador Jarostaw Szczepankiewicz. There was a group picture and other guests were called to join the distinguished officials.



Limasawa Island

PIA Information Center Manager Erna S. Gorne gave us a copy of the program for 22 March 2021 Opening Salvo: Diocesan Youth Day and Travel Advisory. The names of two priests were written below the program. Luz contacted Fr. John Rey B. Sibi, Diocese of Maasin, Chairman 500 YOC 0915 450 1449 and Fr. Mark Vincent D. Salang, Diocese of Maasin, Chancellor 0917 845 4589.

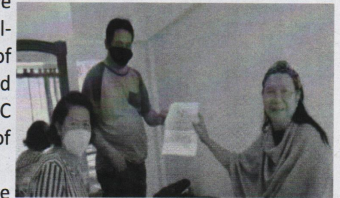
The Chancellor answered and Luz said that we were interested to visit Limasawa Island.

He told us to take a jeepney to Padre Burgos Port, and then a boat for Limasawa. We rode on the commercial pumpboat missing the first trip but very excited when we arrived reading the sign-board, "Welcome to Limasawa _ the site of the First Easter Mass in the Philippines."

Knowing that there would be no more boat going back past 1 pm. we decided not to hurry in catching the boat going home. Instead, to enjoy the new found place. We went to look for an accommodation.

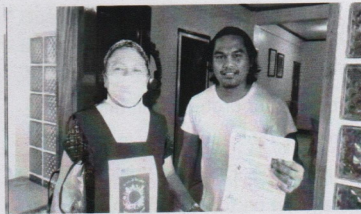
Finding none, we proceeded to the church being remodeled. Upon entering we get the impression that it could not be finished for the celebration but they insisted it could be done. We met the parish priest, Fr. Arthur Duarte.

The workers at the parish have found a place for us to stay. Actually, it was the place we saw earlier, but the caretaker said, a group is staying there; they just went out. The group had backed out preferring to stay near the beach area. For us twins, it is more accessible because it is walking distance going to the Church. We checked-in at Trimulco Traveller's Lodge.



PIA Information Center Manager Gorne hands over travel advisory

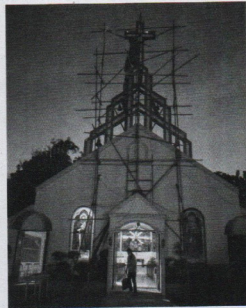




Parish priest, Fr. Arthur Duarte



Saw twins in front of Trimulco Traveller's Lodge

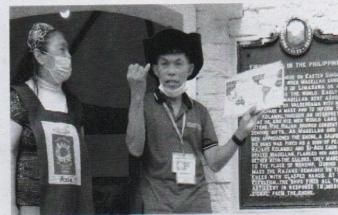


Then we took a habal-habal (tricycle) going to the site of the First Mass. The main path leading to the site of the First Mass building is flanked by gardens.

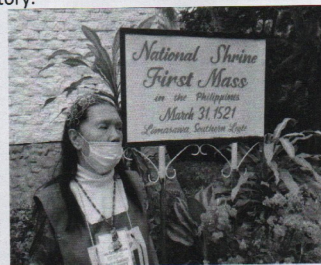
Sam Espinosa Galvez, a popular tour guide animatedly was explaining to a group. We stayed behind when the group left, as he dramatically explained the place Limasawa. Limasawa, an island municipality in the province of Southern Leyte is called "Lima'y Asawa", meaning that their Rajah has five wives. The place came to be called as "Limasawa". He also talked on the significance of Limasawa in history as the site of the First Mass held on the 31st of March 1521 officiated by Fr. Pedro de Valderama, chaplain of the Magellan-Elcano expedition. That day in the Roman Catholic Calendar was Easter Sunday.

Ferdinand Magellan made peace with two Filipino rulers Rajah Kolambu and Rajah Siagu who subsequently were converted to Christianity. A marker notes the spot on Limasawa where their blood compact of friendship and alliance was sealed.

Nila gave the tour guide P200 as tip and then went to the habal-habal (tricycle) driver whom we requested to wait for us to extend his time as we wanted to see the Magellan's cross.



Tour guide Sam Espinosa Galvez supports his narration with a series of paintings and a tableau of the places history.



Shrine of the Holy Cross and First Mass at Magallanes, Limasawa Island

Afterwards, a cross was planted at the highest peak in Limasawa.

Magellan planted a cross at Barangay Triana. It is not just a symbol of the birth of Christianity in the country but also place where they go to pray for protection in times of calamities and the pandemic. However, the cross was burned in 1565 apparently in protest of the arrival of the Spaniards led by Miguel Lopez de Legaspi. Former First Lady Imelda Marcos build a replica of the two-story-high cross planted by Magellan on top of a hill in Barangay Magallanes, Limasawa. This is part of her campaign to promote tourist spots in the country in the early 1980's. A step of 450 steps leads up to the commemorative 20 feet Magellan's Cross.



Magellan planting a large wooden cross



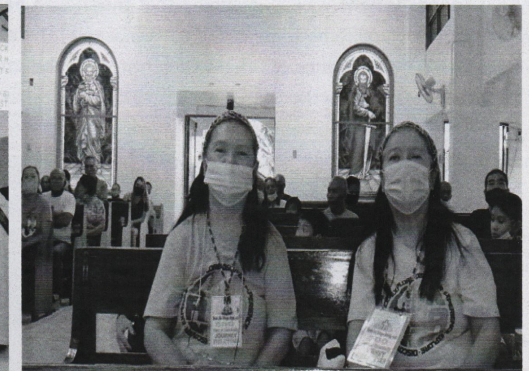
Climbing the 450 steps is a great challenge!



Replica of the Cross

March 21

We walked to the Shrine of the Holy Cross and First Mass at Magallanes, Limasawa Island. Lo and behold, it was a glorious Sunday Mass presided by the parish priest, Fr. Arthur Duarte.



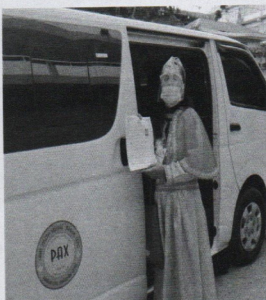
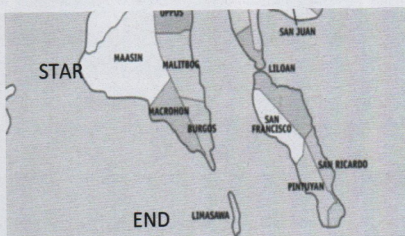
Opening Salvo: Diocesan Youth Day

6 a.m. Motorcade of the Senor Santo Niño de Limasawa from Maasin to Padre Burgos Port

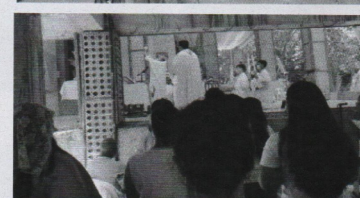
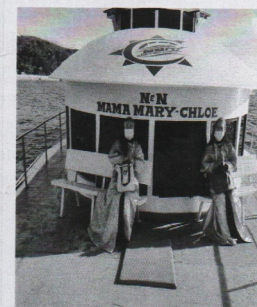
7 a.m. Departure of pilgrims from Padre Burgos Port to Magallanes Port

Motorcade _ A procession of motor vehicles, moves slowly along the road carrying someone important accompanied by law enforcement support and additional protection to ensure the safety of the people in the motorcade.

Nila approached the chancellor, asking him that we join the motorcade. He said it can be arranged so Luz who was still in the church listening to the homily had to leave and joined me in a van. There were around five vehicles at our back.



At the Padre Burgos Port, it was Luz who approached the bishop. She said, "bishop, it will be the apex of our journey to attend the mass officiated by you at Limasawa. He talked with the chancellor who later told us to go to the boat and pay the entrance fee of P300. We even had a picture with Our Lady of Fatima before going inside the boat.



Unveiling of Limasawa painting

Joined a group for lunch after the mass.

Rody Duterte: 2016

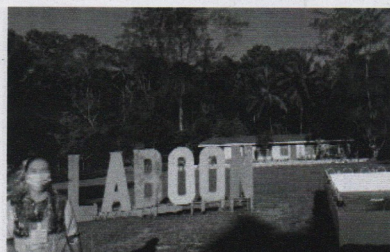
After more than 6 decades elementary classmate eager to meet Duterte.

MAASIN CITY _ They did not see this coming _ the possibility that their elementary school classmate might yet become the next president.

Mayor Duterte was slated to arrive in Maasin City for he is the guest of honor of the 4th Roa Clan reunion in Barangay Laboon, Maasin.

The mayor's mother, Soledad, a school teacher, belongs to the Roa Clan which forms the majority of the residents today in Barangay Laboon.

Ortega went on to become class valedictorian of the second batch of graduates that Laboon Elementary School would produce.



This photo of the husband of Constanica Magadan-Ortega hangs at the sala of their house.



Classmates of Mayor Rody Duterte during his early elementary school days in Laboon, Maasin, Leyte

L to R: Constanica Magadan-Ortega, Paterno Jacobe, Leonila Faelman and Magdalena Andoc-Francisco.

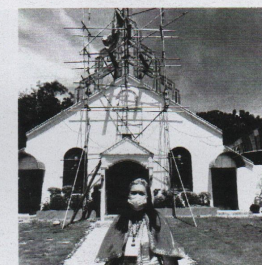
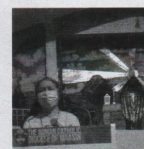


8 Jubilee Churches in 8 Days at Maasin

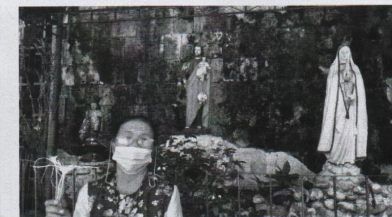
1 THE MAASIN CATHEDRAL _ DIOCESAN SHRINE OF THE OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION MAASIN CITY, SOUTHERN LEYTE
MARCH 20—27



2 SHRINE OF THE HOLY CROSS AND THE FIRST MASS _
MAGALLANES, LIMASAWA, LEYTE
MARCH 21 AND 22



3 ST. JOSEPH CHURCH _ MATALOM, LEYTE
MARCH 23



4 OUR LADY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH _ HILONGOS, LEYTE
MARCH 23



Prayer to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception

O most Holy Virgin, immaculate in body and spirit, look kindly on me as I implore your powerful intercession.

O most Holy Mother, receive my prayers as I present them to God. (state your intentions here)

O Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, you intercede for us with your Son.
O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

5 SAN ISIDRO CHAPEL _ PUNTA, BAYBAY CITY, LEYTE

MARCH 23



6 OUR LADY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH _ BAYBAY CITY, LEYTE

MARCH 23



7 STO. NIÑO CHURCH _ MALITBOG, SOUTHERN LEYTE

MARCH 24



8 ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH _ SAN JUAN, SOUTHERN LEYTE

MARCH 24



March 25

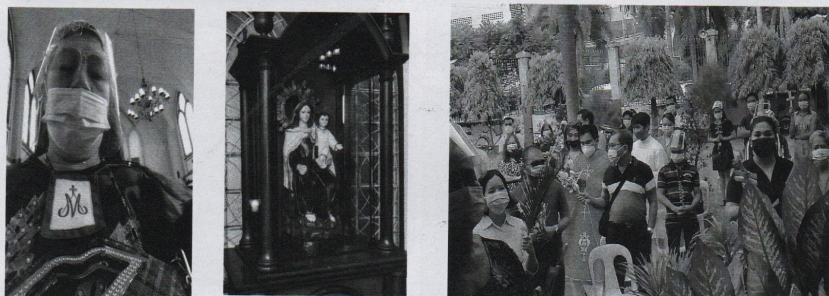
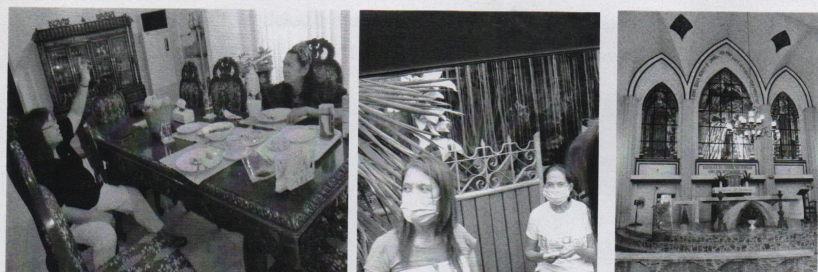
While at Mass at the Maasin Cathedral which is also known as the Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of the Assumption, Luz had already identified the left side of the altar as the location for our Annunciation shooting. Our previous shooting done at San Fernando, La Union can be viewed at You Tube. Nila was Mary and Luz as Angel Gabriel.

The shooting at Maasin shows us twins in different roles. This time Nila is the Angel and Luz as Mary. Luz is in brown long dress with blue sequin top while Nila is in white long dress and white sequin top.

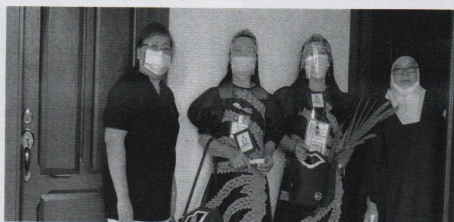
For the opening scene, a parishioner took our still photo. Then, we twins alternately shoot each for our scenes using our cellphone for our lines.



The video on the Solemnity of the Annunciation on March 25 reminds us to follow Mary's example to be a handmaid of the Lord.



Renewal of Baptismal promises by mass presider

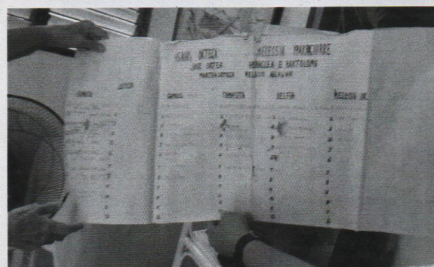


Marllou Ortega Carty, twins, Sr. Teresa Ortega, ocd



Luz gives book to Sr. Teresa Ortega, ocd

We brought our blue gown. It had decorations from a gown used by OCDS Caring Sobejana when she was a princess at Caba, La Union in 1954, the year we twins were born.

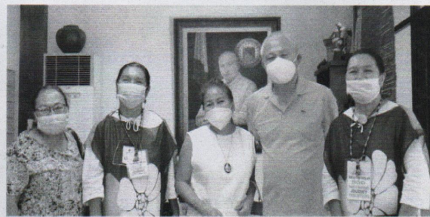


Tandag Bishop Raul Bautista Dael, D.D.

Diocese of Tandag, March 28

On March 28, we received a message from Sr. Teresa Ortega that the Chrism mass will be held on March 30 at the Cathedral of Tandag. On March 29, we had lunch with the Ortegas at a restaurant.

During the Chrism mass on March 30, we woke up 4 a.m. for the 7 a.m. mass. We had a souvenir photo with the bishop, Most Rev. Raul Bautista Dael, D.D. Mayor Roxanne Pimentel invited us for lunch but because she was not able to come she sent her staff to entertain us.



Lourdes Louella Escandor, Joy Cuizon

Congressman Johnny and Rosalinda Pimentel



Altar of Mrs. Pimentel

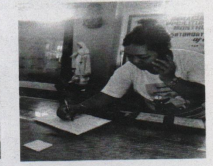
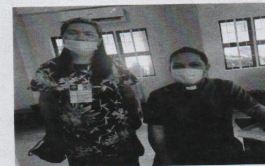


Old Cathedral of Tandag photo.
Twins with Sorayda Almeida Orozco



Poor Clares Convent

On March 31, we went to see Fr. Godofredo Quizon, Jr. of the Immaculate Conception Parish. He invited us to participate in the Holy Thursday, Last Supper Rites.



House of Dr. and Mrs.
Luciano Ortega

Ina Poonbato Statue rests on a 500 sq. meters lot donated by Dr. Luciano Ortega and family.



There's also an Association of Ina Poonbato Devotees at Metro Vigan, Ilocos Sur. The statue brought from house to house is owned by my sister-in-law Atty. Imelda Argel, who is now based in Australia.



Actually it is Marwin who went up to take a shot of Our Lady.

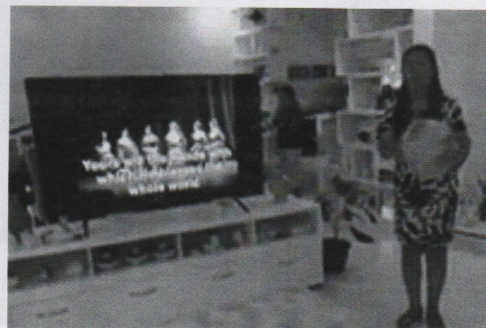
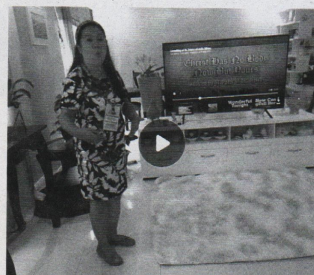
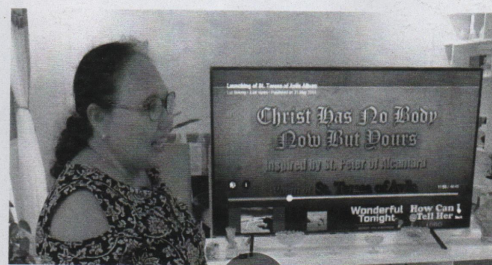
Marwin Ortega, brother of Sr. Teresa picks us up at the Hotel after breakfast at 8 AM for us to work at the Computer Shop. Then before 12 noon he picked us up for lunch at the house of Maria Cecilia Ortega Daniela.



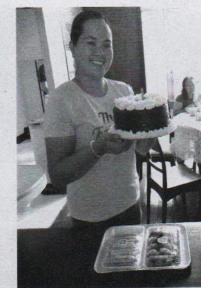
After a sumptuous meal, Luz had a performance, Christ Has No Body Now But Yours.



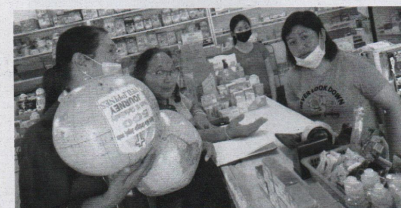
The beautiful house provided a very nice setting for the presentation_ a big television set is at the sala and they have an internet. We watched the video of the stage play, Born For You _ the life of St. Teresa of Avila. Luz was confident because she just lip-synched the song. Marwin Ortega had the globe balloon inflated for the performance.



We had two tarpaulins printed at the computer shop_ one we will give to Dr. Luciano and the other to bring home at San Fernando. Birthday celebrant is Joan, wife of Laurence Ortega.



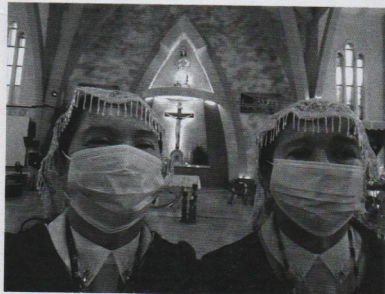
After the birthday cum despedida party, we went to Galaxy Pharmacy near the computer shop. We met Ruby Ann Arizoba Orozco, cousin of Sr. Teresa Ortega, ocd.



Back at the computer shop, we worked until 4 pm. We then went to the Immaculate Conception Parish. He invited us to participate in the Holy Thursday, Last Supper Rites.

Last Supper Rites

Jesus washing the feet of the disciples occurred in the Upper Room, during the Last Supper. It shows display of Jesus humility and His servanthood. We are called to imitate Jesus in our lives. We are to be servant of others, to live with humility, and love in every situation.

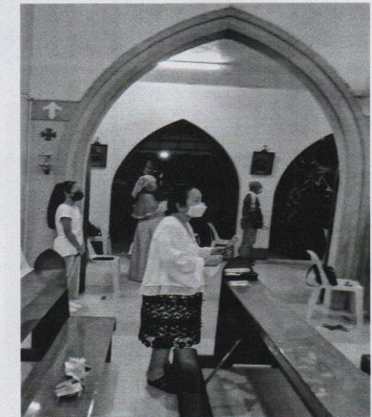
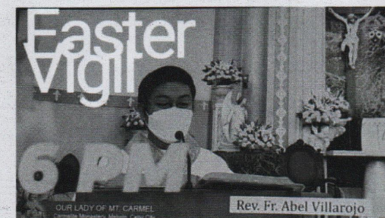


Easter Vigil and Meeting with Mother Proress Luz Tapales

An Easter Vigil, also called the Paschal Vigil is the culmination of a 40-day long observance of Lent. It is generally seen as the most important service of the year. This service celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and it is also a time when new members are baptized into the church or current members renew their baptismal vows.

Four parts:

- 1) The Service of Light
- 2) Liturgy of the Word of God
- 3) Liturgy of Baptism
- 4) Liturgy of the Eucharist



500 YOC at Cebu starts on April 4, 2021

At around 3 p.m. we were dressed up for the start of 500 YOC at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Cebu. We left our things at the middle pew of the Cathedral so we will have a seat during the mass. The activity started at the Cathedral's grotto.

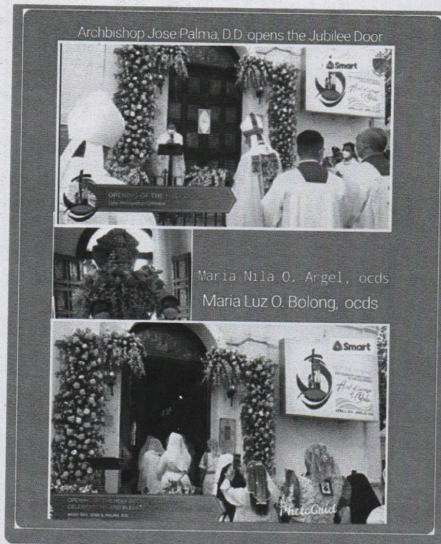
A procession leading to the Jubilee door with the statue of Sto. Niño followed. The usher told Nila to join who in turn told Luz to go into the line. After the prayers and blessing by Archbishop Palma on the Jubilee Door, the people entered. We twins were jubilant with the privilege and Luz touched the feet of St. Peter's statue, forgetting it is not allowed due to the pandemic.



Cathedral's grotto



Jubilee Cross Unveiling
Graces Unexpected!



Twins cherish entrance to the Jubilee Door.

On our fifth mass for the day, Archbishop Palma led the renewal of baptisms for those in attendance at the Cathedral. We just stayed until the offertory remembering the rules at the Carmelite Nun Monastery that the gate closes at 6 in the evening. Arriving at the monastery we had coffee and bread then slept very much fulfilled.

Sto Niño images SM Exhibit April 11, 2021

On April 9, we were at SM looking for an internet café at SM Mall so we could continue our documentation. The security guard said none.

Nila left to look somewhere else to have our covers done. She came back happy and said, it's the perfect place to have our covers done. While eating we saw men going out of their vehicles.

Something good happened as Luz got curious with the things being brought down by some men. She inquired and learned that they are putting up an Exhibit. Luz went to the North Wing Atrium of SM City Cebu to take a glimpse of the site. She was informed that the display of images will be done by noon. Although the exhibit will still open on April 11, we realized that we will no longer have time to go back. After our book covers were done, we joyfully watched the Exhibit with Luz doing a video on the 18 images of Sto. Nino.

The exhibit is made of four components:

- 1) Panaw sa Pagtuo,
- 2) Paintings of different Infant Jesus images, 3) Different Images of the Virgin Mary and
- 4) Old photos of Churches in Cebu.

Sto. Nino de Providencia _ Holy child of Providence

- Owner: 1986 Mrs. Corazon Gonzales of BF
- Resort Village, Las Pinas bought a two feet wooden image
- January 27, 1992—Mrs. Gonzales and daughter Lorna witnessed at their sala the image gliding and spurting oil and collected the oil with cotton balls.
- Testimony of Healing continues with oil provided free to anyone who asks.



Cebu Archbishop Jose Palma (third from left) leads the symbolic opening of the church door at the opening of the "500 Years of Christianity" exhibit at SM City Cebu.

Dr. Virgie Capiral gave us two issues of the Freeman. We saw articles on the 500 YOC.



1.

At the Back Yard

AUDIO

We are now going up to the grotto of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. So there's Nila, Layma and caretaker of this place. Going down we will use the staircase. They said that it is difficult going up here but I don't agree. It's just a few walk. And over there is the Seven Sorrows of Mary and we pass by awhile ago the Stations of the Cross.

See the flowers we bought along the way. Wow!

This is the statue of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, one of the photos sent to us by Dr. Virgie Capiral taken during the blessing of the place. Well documented.

Dr. Virgie Capiral text me. She said, "Sadly Cebu, the seat of Christianity but we don't have OCD Foundation of Friars." But, I read an article written entitled "Gems of Wisdom from the Men in Brown" at the Souvenir Magazine on the 60th Anniversary of the Sto Niño de Cebu Community. Fr. Alan Rieger, ocd said, "If God wants, God will provide." So, we are praying that soon the Friar's House in Sugbo Duruelo will come to reality. I am standing here at the Chapel of Duruelo, Sugbo and really it is small as in the Duruelo Monastery put up by friar St. John of the Cross. But it is not in the structure, the littleness of a place, but in the warm generosity of people that will make this a reality.

VIDEO



Nila

April 11 _1st day Triduum at Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe

ARCHDIOCESAN SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

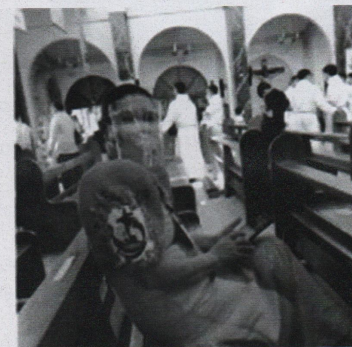
First day Triduum

**Before the event started
security was tight at the venue.**



**Usherette let us in
even without 500 YOC ID**

Smile! click!



National Shrine of St Joseph @ Mandaue



2nd Day Triduum



GOD IS DEFINITELY WITH US. ENTERED THE CHURCH. SEE PROOF_PICTURE AT MAIN ALTARI

April 13 _3rd day Triduum at Shrine of Our Lady of Rule

3rd day of Triduum

Shrine of Our Lady of Rule



Entered the Shrine

through the sacristy



ACTED AS PARENT DURING THE BAPTISM



His Eminence Cardinal Orlando Quevedo, OMI said that it is only now that he witnessed the reception of three sacraments one after the other within the day: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist.

1. Cebu Monastery Guest Room 5:30 a.m.

Feeling excitement as I looked at the yellow gown with scapular that Nila placed on the window of our room at the Cebu Carmelite Nun Monastery guest house in Mabolo the night before the Culmination of the 500 YOC thoughts flashed to my mind.

That day connects our two journeys _ 2017 Fatima 100th anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun and 2021 reenactment of the first baptism on April 14 at the Plaza Sugbo in downtown Cebu City.

2. Inside the event area 8:50 a.m.

We had videos at the Magellan's Cross reading the markers.

A signage Priests and Religious on a stand gave me an idea that we sit on the chairs area designated for the Priests and Religious. Memories on our 2014 study at the Gregorian University came back. While securing a Visa we went to the Italian Embassy. Outside the embassy, I called the their office and the receiver asked, "Are you religious?" I replied, "Yes" and was advised to go to the Apostolic Nunciature for recommendation. Coincidentally, that day was the birthday of His Excellency, Nuncio Antonio Franco. At the Nunciature office, the nuncio asked, "what do you want?" I replied, "Study at Rome" to which he answered, "Yes, you will go."

3. Prepared altar for the celebration of the Pontifical Mass 9 a.m.

Statues of the Crucified Christ in the middle and at the sides: L _ Our Lady of Lourdes and R _ St. Joseph with the Child Jesus.

4. Bee as souvenir 9:30 a.m.

A bee rests on my dress and wanted to keep it as a souvenir. Buboy Dioniso reacted on Nila's post on the video, saying, "a bee is a symbol of Sta. Rita. When Rita was an infant, the day after she was baptized, she was surrounded by a swarm of peaceful white bees. Instead of freaking out, her family knew she was marked to be full of virtue and devoted to the Lord.

5. Rehearsals for the Reenactment of the First Baptism 10:20 a.m.

6. Cluster 4 Guests and Visitors 11 a.m.

We decided to sit on Cluster 4 Guests and Visitors.

7. Reenactment of the First Baptism Dress Rehearsals 12 noon

Years of preparations, rehearsals and dress rehearsals finally come to fruition on April 14 as Cebu culminated the 500 YOC. At 2 p.m., an hour-long play depicted the first meeting between Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan and Rajah Humabon.

8. Napping 12:20

We twins joined the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites with some contemporaries of our late mother Rosa Ortega and aunt Consuelo Ubaldo still joining community meetings at our St. Teresa of Avila Community. Former provincial delegate, Fr. Cornelio "Kuni" Jaramillo, OCD came for visitations and saw the situation of the old members. He remedied this scenario by assigning us twins to take over. Now that we are seniors ourselves, we realized how the olds felt and doze during the meetings.

9. Music made Luz to swing 12:50 p.m.

As the performers danced with the music I stood up and wanted to dance but was too shy and so Nila commented, "You weren't dancing, you were just standing." Well, I managed to sway a little.

10. St. Lorenzo 1:40 pm

Specially-made altar with a reredos housing images of the Crucified Christ and the two canonized Filipinos _ Sts. Lorenzo Ruiz and Pedro Calungsod

11. Weather Forecast 2:20 p.m.

The weather forecast for the day was showers in the afternoon (light rainfall that has a shorter duration than rain) and the organizers of the affair were ready for the eventuality thus umbrellas were distributed to the participants. It really showered and I felt that it was our Heavenly Father pouring His blessings upon us. Because it was just shower and not rain, it provided coolness to the warm weather.

12. Luz at the Magellan's Cross in between two statues 3:15 p.m.

Statues of Mama Mary and St. Joseph with lily. The lilies symbolize integrity and indicate that Saint Joseph was the earthly spouse of The Blessed Virgin Mary, whose purity is represented by the chaste white lily.

13. Magellan's Cross Kiosk , 5:40 p.m.

From the elevated altar used for the mass officiated by Apostolic Nuncio, he moved to the Magellan's Cross Kiosk for the baptism rites of the 7 children. The statue of Sto. Niño during the processional is now placed at the side of the statue of St. Joseph.

14. Sinulog Dance 7:30 p.m.

We left Plaza Sugbo at 7:30 while the Sinulog Dance was on-going. Finally, after a tiring but fruitful day, we were back at the Cebu Carmelite Nun Monastery guest house and on bed twin sister Nila smiling.

April 14 _ 14 photos, 14 hours

April 14 _ 14 photos, 14 hours



Pontifical Mass with Papal Nuncio

Archbishop Charles Brown

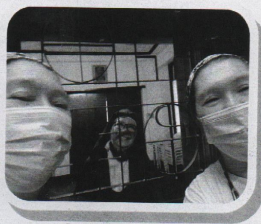
"By virtue of your baptism, all Catholics are called to be missionaries, sharing the Gospel message by their words and actions."



Archbishop Charles Brown, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines leads the commemoration of the first Christian baptism at Plaza Sugbo in Cebu City on April 14, 2021 and called on Filipinos to live their baptismal calling.



Luz went in front to get a closer look on the nuncio. The twins are very happy that they were among the 300 individuals who attended one of the most important occasions for the 500 YOC in Cebu.



*Ortega Twins
from the Philippines pose with the
40-meters high Iconic-Crosses
_twin tower as background.*



*An awesome moment captured
at the Cebu-Cordova Link
Expressway Bridges*

Bigueña Achiever

AUDIO

Luz:

I just got hold of this award for Nila as Bigueña Achiever Awardee. And, I am excited for her. I recall we were at Cantilan when Nila was interviewed by the Vigan City government.

This is my first time to hold this award because we just arrived here at her house. And let me read:

On the occasion of the
2021 WOMEN'S MONTH

The Vigan City Council of Women

presents the

Bigueña Achiever Award

to

MARIA NILA ORTEGA-ARGEL, Ph.D.

In grateful acknowledgment of

her contributions

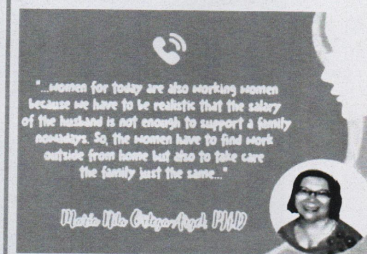
to Vigan City and the Bigueños,

particularly on

MASS MEDIA

She has made a significant difference as partner in community development through her unwavering commitment and notable accomplishments that are instruments in the fulfillment of the City's Mission and Vision.

VIDEO



AUDIO

And, what she is now again writing, "STA. TERESA DE AVILA Joins Ortega Twins 500 YOC Journey".

Thank you Nila, love you.

Welcome.

41st Wedding Anniversary

Today is a wonderful, beautiful day for Chicoy and Nila. To be part of their celebration, I would like to read what is written on their anniversary cake.

To: Chicoy Nila

Happy 41st Wedding Anniversary

Love,

Kambal Luz

So, blow the candles.

40 years ago, when I was already married, and Chicoy came to our mama's house for his visit, the first time I saw him, I told Nila, "siya na". Why? I was peeping at the room of my mama, there he was very talkative and it proved to be right. They are happily married and because of Chicoy, our religious endeavors has expanded. We are here at the Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia and who is better to recommend a husband for Nila, other than the late Bishop Victorino Ligot.

Bishop Ligot said, I will pray ... Chicoy and Nila wedded for 41 years.

It is a right decision.

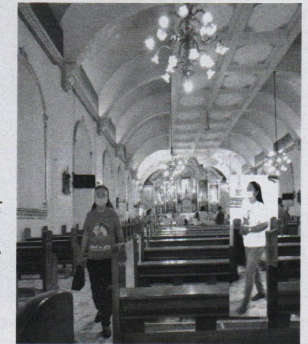
VIDEO



Jubilee Churches

Diocese of San Fernando, La Union

1. St. William the Hermit Cathedral _ San Fernando City, La Union
2. Sta. Monica Parish Church / Minor Basilica Of Our Lady of Charity _ Agoo, La Union
3. St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish Church _ Luna, La Union
4. Sts. Peter and Paul Parish Church _ Bauang, La Union



St. William the Hermit Cathedral

Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia

1. St. Augustine Parish Church _ Bantay, Ilocos Sur
2. St. Paul Cathedral, Vigan City
3. St. Nicholas de Tolentino Parish Church, Sinaít, Ilocos Sur
4. St. Augustine Parish Church, Tagudin, Ilocos Sur
5. Our Lady of Assumption Parish Church, Sta. Maria, Ilocos Sur
6. St. John of Sahagun Parish Church, Candon City



St. Paul Metropolitan Cathedral



St. Augustine Parish Church

Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia

Two Archdioceses reenact First Baptism

Archdiocese of Cebu

Reenactment of the First Baptism in the country was the main highlight of the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines at the Plaza Sugbo, Cebu City on April 14, 2021.

Got a full view of everything happening on stage, Seeing the show is an incredibly spiritual experience. Retablo for first baptism reenactment costs P2.5 million. The San Diego Dance Troop Performers wore traditional outfits and jewelry.

At least 25 people worked day and day out for at least three months to build the backdrop, according to Glenn Johnson Mendiola, general manager of Glenmend Stained Glass and Retablo Fabrication Services.

Visual arts, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts said, is a part of church history.

Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia

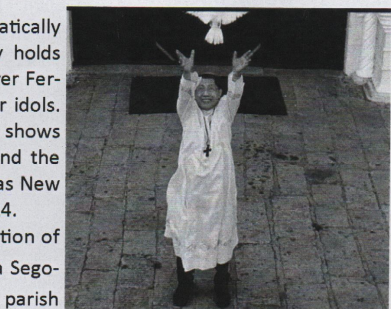
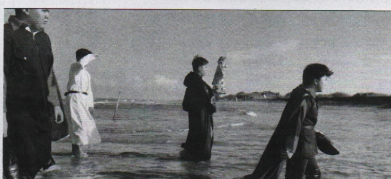
Music video of Kanta Ti Mision, the Ilocano version of We Give Our Yes as we celebrate the birth of Christianity in the Philippines and the birth of our Holy Mother Church on Holy Pentecost. For the first part the reenactment of the baptism done 500 years ago is depicted realistically for the it shows the embarking of the Spanish fleet to Philippine soils.

It also shows idol worship and how dramatically Hara Humamay, Rajah Humabon's wife tearfully holds the Sto. Nino, baptismal gift of Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan to take place the worship of her idols. The second part which is the musical presentation shows the talents of local artists; beautiful cathedral; and the old houses at Mena Crisologo street, declaring it as New 7 Wonders Cities of the World on December 8, 2014.

The viewers were happy with the participation of Most Rev. Marlo Peralta, the archbishop of Nueva Segovia and Rev. Msgr. Gary Noel S. Formoso, the parish priest of the Vigan Parish.



Actor from the San Diego Dance Company portrays Ferdinand Magellan.



Archbishop Marlo Peralta, D.D.

If You Only Knew... Saint Teresa and the Waters of Prayer



Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." (John 4:10; 13-14)

Jesus tired and thirsty sat down at a well and there encountered a Samaritan woman who had come to draw water. Asking her for a drink,

"He said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, Give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water...' Water is mentioned 722 times in the scriptures. In the Genesis account of creation in the very first chapter and in the second line we learn one thing about God's work – that He provided this gift that would be crucial to every living being that would later be created. Apart from that there was simply a formless mass.

When Jesus spoke of 'living

water' the woman would have understood this to be fresh water as a regularly available commodity that would save her from making so many trips to the well. Although more than 70% of the earth is covered with water about 96.5% of this is found in the oceans and only about 1% of all the water on earth is fresh water that we can actually use. Fresh water was precious and Jesus had definitely caught her interest and attention.

But Saint Teresa likewise catches our attention when she refers to the stages of prayer as 'waters of prayer' Why this term? Water has movement; it flows. In contemplative prayer we speak of the inflow of grace into the soul, a movement of the Holy Spirit. "This grace pours into us in the unity of our higher powers and of our spirit; wherefrom, through the power of the grace received, the higher powers flow out to become active in all virtues, and whereto, because of the bond of love, they ever return again." Blessed John of Ruysbroeck

How does grace work in our life of prayer? Anyone who loves a garden will appreciate Teresa's attempt to simplify her response by choosing the various ways, available in her day, of bringing water into a garden. The first two stages involve a great deal of effort on our part. After all, if we set out to create a garden we must care enough about the outcome to put in the labor required

Jesus had asked the Samaritan woman to draw water from the well to slake His thirst. Saint Teresa uses this very same example as the first means by which we are to slake our own thirst. Thus the First Water or the first stage of prayer requires considerable exertion on our part – we must draw the water from the well. As she will explain later in the "Interior Castle", prayer is the means of entry into the Castle. Just as providing enough water to meet our

needs will require numberless trips to and from the well, so too our perseverance in prayer will require a parallel in self-denial, cooperation with grace and growth in the practice of the virtues in order to be a true follower of Christ. This ascetical stage corresponds to the first Three Mansions and includes both vocal prayer and meditation. It is the preparatory ground for the Fourth Mansion when God intervenes more directly.

Saint Teresa indicates however that many do not go beyond the Third Mansion. What is accomplished in the first three mansions is what the person in maturing can achieve through human effort accompanied by grace. Having reached this limit there can be a comfort level in what has been achieved and a resistance to further surrender. This is brought out in Marks' account of the "Rich Young Man".



OCDS National Past President Celia Timbol gave us a pamphlet showing the four degrees of prayer. We had a tarpaulin made and is on display at the Twins Haven.

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Mark 10:17-31)

Jesus was very direct in what He proposed to the young man. Before He invited him into participation of the Gift of Living Water, He pointed him in the right direction, "go, sell all that you have...". Teresa refers to those who make it thus far as earnest

souls who have a well-regulated life, are zealous in keeping the commandments and avoiding sin and seeking to advance further in the spiritual life as shown by his question: *what must I do to inherit eternal life?* Jesus invited him to take the leap of faith by letting go, not only of his material riches but also of those spiritual riches he had zealously acquired through human effort aided by grace. The young man, although obedient to the commandments was not up to this further obedience. Jesus sadly watched him walk away enslaved by his attachments.

The Second Water, while still strenuous, is not as labor-intensive as the First: the use of a water wheel with dippers attached. As the wheel turns, the dippers pour the water into a trench which in turn carries the water to the garden. Here, in this Fourth Mansion, we touch upon the supernatural, the beginning of infused contemplation, in which the divine light penetrates the understanding, whereas in the "prayer of quiet", it penetrates the will. Teresa



Interior Castle made of Styrofoam made by Edgardo Regalado and Tony Belleza on display at the Sea and Sky Hotel and Restaurant, City of San Fernando, La Union Lobby during the Ortega Twins 60th Birthday.

describes this prayer as a bubbling fountain which brings with it a deep sense of peace arising from the deepest recesses of the soul. We cannot strive after this as it is a total gift of God. Our goal is love of God, not consolation nor self-interest. Although God gives this to whomever He wishes we can dispose ourselves through the practice of detachment, humility and obedience. With these dispositions we are becoming conformed to Christ.

In the Third Water the Lord Himself takes over the watering of the garden through irrigation. Whereas in the First Water the well could run dry and one would have to wait until it filled up again, in this Third Water the Lord provides an endless stream of water for irrigation. This is the Fifth Mansion in which the Lord enters the center of the soul. In the prayer of simple

union the interior faculties of memory and imagination are penetrated with the divine light of the Holy Spirit. As the soul becomes transformed it undergoes a radical detachment from worldly concerns. The garden is becoming lush different levels or intensifications of this mystical prayer of union. Once the soul has experienced this indwelling it retains a certainty of the experience.

The Fourth Water or the falling of rain on the garden: "...you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail" (Isaiah 58:11).

Here in this Sixth Mansion the Betrothal takes place. The soul may experience extraordinary mystical encounters. As the Holy Spirit takes over and penetrates more deeply into the soul the exterior senses will likewise be affected. The souls that have come thus far will

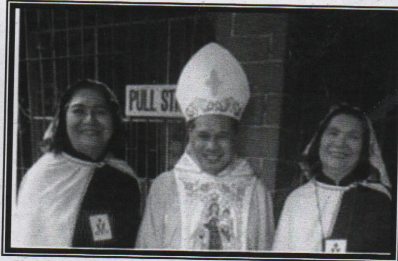
have many trials to undergo before entering the Seventh Mansion, the final stage of mystical contemplation. There is no need here for extraordinary mystical encounters for action and contemplation live in harmonious relationship with each other. Here the spiritual Marriage takes place. Teresa compares the gentle rain that falls into a river as the soul and God that once mingled cannot be separated.

Everyone loves a garden! It is a piece of paradise sometimes found within a drab environment. It reminds us of our first beginnings before the Fall when Adam and Eve walked with God in the cool of the evening in the Garden. George Bernard Shaw once wrote, "The best place to find God is in a garden. You can dig for him there." St. Teresa demonstrates how in the first three Mansions we must become the gardener, the laborer who digs, turns the soil, pulls out the weeds, sets the plants, and tugs the rope to draw water for the well.

When Jesus sees our intense effort, might He not be prompted to come sit on the edge of the well, ask us for a drink, and then encourage us with the words, 'If you knew the gift of God'?

Acknowledgment

Thanks for the Treasured Memories



La Union Bishop Daniel Presto



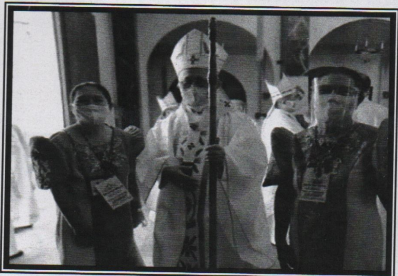
Borongan Crispin Varquez



Maasin Bishop Prescioso Cantillas



Tandag Bishop Raul Bautista Dacal

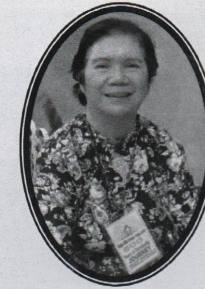


Cebu Archbishop Jose Palma



Nueva Segovia Archbishop Mario Peralta

AUTHOR



MARIA NILA O. ARGEL, OCDS

Maria Nila Ortega-Argel is a wife to Pacifico Lahoz Argel and a mother of three sons, Pacifico Jr., Evaristo and Neil. She is a grandmother to Kara Louise, Nikko and Marco.

She is a former manager of the Ilocos Sur Information Center of the Philippine Information Agency, the information arm of the government. Having rendered 37 years of service, she retired and now works as a part-time instructor at the Sea and Sky College at San Fernando City, La Union teaching in the Communication Arts course.

She recently received an award from the City Government of Vigan, Ilocos Sur as one of the Ten Most Outstanding Bigueña Achievers for the Year 2021 in the field of Mass Media.

The letter of commendation states, "Your accomplishments, efforts, and services to the City and the Biguenos are lauded and highlighted as we celebrate the 2021 National Women's Month Celebration with the theme, 'Juana Laban sa Pandemya: Kaya!'"

This award is highly appreciated for it comes at the right time. May it support our twins' book entitled STA. TERESA DE AVILA Joins Ortega Twins 500 YOC Journey.

May this award inspires us twins to continue doing God's Will for His greater glory! This gem of wisdom from Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD, moves us to persevere in our calling to be missionaries. "We want to give our spirituality to others, family, church and parish. We were given something to give out. As we were given freely, we want to give freely."

A twin sister to Maria Luz Ortega-Bolong, both are professed Secular Carmelites of the St. Teresa of Avila Community (La Union).

INSIDE BACK COVER:

We twins delivered the manuscript of our book, "STA. TERESA DE AVILA Joins Ortega twins 500 YOC Journey" on May 12, 2021 at DZNS, for the Nihil Obstat and Foreword of Abbot Santos Rabang. We dropped by Pantay Fatima to pray at the Grotto of Our Lady.

On May 13, the anniversary of the apparition of Our Lady of Fatima to three shepherd children at the Cova da Iria, at Fatima, Portugal we attended mass at Simbaan A Bassit. Luz held the statue of Our Lady with the three children _ Lucia dos Santos and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto, now Saints.

During the funeral mass of Abbot Rabang on May 18 we received the Foreword. As requested, the Foreword has the date May 13, 2021 below his signature. The oldest of the visionaries Lucia was also known as Lucia of Fatima and her religious name was Sister Maria Lucia of Jesus of the Immaculate Heart, OCD. She was a Portuguese Discalced Carmelite.

Our Lady of Fatima excites Luz. A Secular Carmelite she took a religious name Maria Lucia of God the Father, OCDS. On our 500 YOC Journey, we had encountered Our Lady's statues in various places:

1) March 22, 7:13 a.m. as we depart for Limasawa Island, site of the First Catholic Mass in the Philippines, we had picture with her statue before it was brought inside the boat.

2) March 27, 6:50 am. At Maasin, on our way to a computer shop, we saw a life-size statue of Our Lady in one of the sidewalk store.

3) April 4. Our Lady of Fatima, Spiritual Pastoral Formation Year House, Archbishop's Residence Compound, Cebu City. Luz through her video said:

Pray the Rosary everyday.

If possible, go to mass and receive holy communion daily.

Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us.

4) April 15, departure date. Ortega Twins with Louevelle Novalles at the Fatima Garden leading to the room where we stayed for 13 days at the Carmelite Nun Monastery.

Nila requested Oscar Ventulan, ocd to bring us to the Mabolo Church. Luz kisses the statue of Our Lady of Fatima as we leave the Church.

Pray the Rosary everyday
Servant of God Lucia of Fatima



