



**THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL** The Provincial Council is composed of the Prior Provincial and the four Provincial Councilors. Front (left to right): Fray Dionisio Selma, and Fray Ian Anthony Espartero. Back (left to right): Fray William Emilito Villaflor, Fray Edgar Tubio, and Fray Amado Emmanuel Bolilia.

# 7<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter finally Concluded, Councilors Elected

**C**EBU CITY—The historic 7<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter was concluded in the evening of February 23 with the election of the four Provincial Councilors and the delegate to the 56<sup>th</sup> General Chapter in 2022.

The new set of Provincial Councilors are as follows:

- Fray Ian Anthony Espartero  
*Vicar of the Province/First Councilor*
- Fray William Emilito Villaflor  
*Second Councilor*
- Fray Amado Emmanuel Bolilia  
*Third Councilor*
- Fray Edgar Tubio  
*Fourth Councilor*

Fray Leander Barrot was elected delegate of the Province to the 2022 General Chapter. Fray René Paglinawan was elected substitute to Fray Barrot.

Everybody was awaiting for that conclusion when the Provincial Councilors would have been elected. And it came to pass on February 23, a day earlier than scheduled. Actually, almost all in the Chapter hall expected that the proceedings would end up even much earlier.

However, due to the many corrections and integrations when the Directory of the Province was tackled, the closing was delayed. Nevertheless, it was unanimously approved.

Earlier in the day, during the morning session, Fray Leander Barrot read the Chapter message. Some delegates made their suggestions before they cast their votes

for the determination of the Chapter. Fray Barrot received a resounding applause. It was followed by the reading and approval

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## IN THE KNOW

The Life and Mission Project (LAMP) crafted by the 7<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter for the quadrennium has a total of 80 decisions. Listed below are the number of approved decisions per Chapter commission:

Vocation and Youth.....	7
Social Apostolate.....	8
Ministerial and Mission .....	11
Spirituality and Formation .....	22
Educational Apostolate .....	11
Governance, Finance, and Communication .....	21

# Beginning with the Renewal of Ourselves

**C**EBU CITY—The renewal of the Province will start with the renewal of each member” was the opening invitation of Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR to the capitulars on his first mass after his reelection as Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno during the closing of the Seventh Provincial Chapter.

This renewal, stressed Fray Dionisio, can only happen if the capitulars would go back to the real reason why they professed their vows and surrendered themselves during ordination. And the reason is Jesus Himself and the mission He entrusted to us. Hence, every religious must strive to become like Jesus and spread Jesus, and in that way they can truly be creators of communion, men of hope, and be prophets in everyday life.

Fray Dionisio continued on by saying that this Jesus, who we wish to follow, can be found in the Eucharist and in the Word of God because these are the sources of renewal. He then shared his reflection on the gospel of day reiterating that in order to be renewed

and revitalized there would be a need to accept man’s sinfulness and that Jesus alone can cleanse man. He added that as religious they must recognize their failure and unfaithfulness in some of the observances and ask pardon from the Lord.

He challenged the capitulars also to be more than the scribes and Pharisees mentioned in the gospel of the day who were very legalistic in the observance of the laws of Moses. But Christ’s invitation is to go deeper than the legalism of the Pharisees by seeking Christ’s face in one another. “Left to ourselves we only see the weaknesses and limitations of each other but we know that God’s grace is beyond all of this,” said Fray Dionisio.

The reelected Prior Provincial concluded his homily emphasizing that all the decisions and ordinations crafted and approved in the Provincial Chapter would all be useless if they would not bring the religious to holiness and eventually to salvation. It would also be a failure if the focus would only be on mere legislation and norms. Rather, these should lead every religious to become real witnesses of Jesus.

“Through this we would be able to attract others to join us because they would be able to see the love shared by each other and they would see Jesus in us,” was Fray Dionisio’s final challenge to the capitulars.



*Fray Dionisio Selma celebrating his first Mass as a re-elected Prior Provincial.*

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of the minutes of yesterday’s sessions. For the completion of the rest of the minutes, Fray Jose Ernil Almayo, the secretary of the Chapter, was given the vote of confidence to integrate all the suggestions mentioned in the proceedings.

Towards the conclusion of the Chapter activities, Fray Miguel Miró gave his message of gratitude and challenge to the newly elected officials and to all capitulars.

Then, he officially declared the 7<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter closed at 6:49 PM. The thanksgiving mass that followed was presided by Fray Dionisio Selma together with two re-elected councilors as altar concelebrants. Fray Selma, in his homily, exhorted the religious of the Province to share in the collective responsibility and become themselves bearers of communion and forgiveness.

During dinner, it was also known that

the Full Council, or the meeting of the Prior General together with the elected Prior Provincial and councilors, will meet the following day, February 24, for the appointment of the Provincial Secretary as well as priors and vice-priors of domus formatae such as the communities of the four big schools, the four seminaries, and the Provincial House.

# Message of the 7<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter

The twenty seven capitulars of the 7<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter of St. Ezekiel Moreno, headed by the Prior General Fray Miguel Miró, OAR as president, greet all members of the Augustinian Recollect family throughout the world from the mountainous site of Talavera House of Prayer. “My whole hope is in thy exceeding great mercy and that alone. Give what thou commandest and command what thou wilt.”<sup>1</sup> These words of our Father St. Augustine inspired the religious to work with love, discuss with passion, and deliberate with earnestness what is best for the Province today and in the next four years.

## Trust in God’s Mercy

The capitulars, grateful for the trust given to them by the confreres and awed by the huge responsibility of crafting a life and mission project for the next quadrennium, sought the loving mercy of God. With God’s compassion and mercy, all human efforts done in sincerity and candor reach fruition. Where is your heart? What makes you happy? Who really are you?—these probing questions of the good Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan, Socrates Villegas D.D. became no personal queries but a solemn command to love not self but God, to prioritize nothing less than the needs of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, and to serve the Mother Church more than anything else. These, the capitulars, took to heart as the 7<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter unfolded.

The Talavera House of Prayer, a convenient residence of all provincial chapters, was at its usual welcoming and friendly self. The little-black image of La Salud, like a mother hen that gathers her brood under her wings, (cf. Mat 23:37) loomed large in the conference hall guiding her beloved children toward a maturing life process. Likewise, St. Ezekiel Moreno, our patron saint, silently stood by the side looking at his cherished brothers and sons crafting a path of life for the youngest Province of the Order dedicated to him. The prayers and greetings from the Augustinian Recollect communities of the nuns, sisters, priests and brother religious, the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity (SARF) and friends of the Recollect family added to the convivial and openhearted discussions among the friars. The recollect movement is indeed a living testimony of a life lived in “one soul and one heart intent upon God.”<sup>2</sup>

## Creators of Communion

This 7<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter echoes the slogan of the 55<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, to be “Creators of Communion”<sup>3</sup> which had been the challenge posed by Pope Francis to the capitulars in the said General Chapter.<sup>4</sup> To become creators of communion is a living and continuing imperative to re-interpret our very own charism within the social, political, and religious context in this part of the world and in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is likewise an alternative and relevant articulation of what Recollect holds dear to his heart, memory and conscience—fraternal life in community.

This challenge to be creators of communion compels every religious community to become locus of prayer, houses for accompaniment and active-spaces for discernment. It commits the province to establish a center of spirituality becoming the font of spiritual enrichment of our charism, the source for the study of St. Augustine, and a learning space for an enhanced understanding of our history and legacy to the church and society. To become creators of communion also means to look into our processes and standards of formation from the initial to permanent stages developing a seamless and integrated flow of spiritual, intellectual, human, professional and pastoral growth with a view to have models of the Augustinian life and Recollect spirituality among the sons and daughters of St. Ezekiel Moreno in the immediate future. It also demands to take care of our sick and elderly brothers and learn from their wisdom earned through years of experience, penance, and life of contemplation.

## Consecrated Life: A Witness of the Gospel

On the third year of the quadrennium, the Philippine Church will celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the entrance of Christianity to the Philippine shores (March 16, 1521-March 16, 2021). This will “be a grace-filled blessing for the church”<sup>5</sup> as she rekindles the very roots of her faith. A faith that helps her

1 St. Augustine, Confession, 10.29.40.

2 St. Augustine, Rule, 1.1.

3 *Augustinian Recollects Life and Mission Project* (2016-2022), 1. p.7.

4 Francis, “Address of His holiness Pope Francis to Participants in the General Chapter of the Augustinian Recollects,” Thursday, 20 October 2016.

5 Jose Palma, “CBCP Pastoral Letter on the era of New Evangelization: Live Christ, Share Christ, Looking Forward to Our Five Hundredth,” January 9, 2012.

## LIST OF MESSAGES RECEIVED FOR THE 7<sup>TH</sup> PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

- Colegio de Sta. Rosa Community, Intramuros, Manila
- Sr. Eva María Oiz, OAR
- St. Rita Dormitory Community, Cebu
- Recoletos de Tagburos, Puerto Princesa, Palawan
- Ms. Erlie Macaya, OLCP-Quezon City
- San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite, Inc.
- Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity-Cavite Chapter
- Recoletos de Antilla, Holguin, Cuba
- Fray Albert Pellazar, OAR
- SSC-R de Cavite Alumni Federation
- University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos, Bacolod City
- Ret. Justice Aturo Brion
- Sisters Ministers of the Infirmary of St. Camillus-Philippine Delegation
- Fray Joseph Shonibare, OAR
- Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity-RFC/OLCP Chapter
- Consolatrix College of Toledo City Community
- Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary Community
- Br. Edwin and Sis. Miriam, SARF de SEMONORE
- Recoletos de Talisay Community
- Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity-Provincialate Chapter
- Siervas de Maria, Ministras de los Enfermos
- Franciscan Sisters pro Infante et Familia

sense the great joy of believing and renews her wonder at the vast horizons which faith opens up.<sup>6</sup>

The history of the Recollects is deeply entrenched in the succeeding years of evangelization of the Philippine society. The recollect religious labored to create settlements, organized parishes, and introduced devotions to Mary like Our Lady of Consolation, Ina Poon Bato, Our Lady of the Pillar, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and La Salud. Beyond these missionary and pastoral endeavors, they remained faithful to their consecration and lived the vows embracing the challenges and difficult circumstances of moment.

The different anniversary celebrations of the past triennium and within the next quadriennium are solemn testimonies of the Order's continuing presence and evangelical engagement with society and culture. Worth mentioning here, from among many, are the following: 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Augustinian Recollect presence in Cavite (1616-2016), 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel de San Sebastian (1618-2018), 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Augustinian Recollect presence in Cebu (1621-2021), 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the San Sebastian Convent (1621-2021), 600<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of San Vicente Ferrer of Talisay, Negros Occidental (1419-2019), 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Augustinian Recollect presence in Mindanao and Palawan (1848-2018), 385<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of La Salud (1634-2019), 178<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the evangelization of Negros (1848-2018), 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Augustinian Recollect evangelization of Mindanao and Palawan (1621-2021), 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University of San Jose-Recoletos (1947-2022), 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Colegio de San Nicolas de Tolentino, Talisay, Negros Occidental (1971-2021), and 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno (1998-2018).

### **Service to Humanity**

These anniversary celebrations are not only the Order's and the Province's crowning glory of evangelization, but are also barometers through which all efforts and commitments to new evangelization will be gauged. The desire to be creators of communion impels every religious to live fully his consecration i.e. to "commit ... to the total surrender of himself to God, to the imitation and to the most radical and free following of Christ, in a life lived more for Him and for his body, which is the Church."<sup>7</sup> This consecration translates itself to the outpouring of self in pastoral ministries and service to humanity and culture in mission station. Every religious assigned to the school apostolate is to oblige himself in upgrading our learning standards, making our institutions centers of excellence, and teaching our students to be learned in the tatak Rekoletos<sup>8</sup> values and spirituality. Our pastoral care for the youth and for our Former Seminarians of the Order of Augustinian Recollects (FORSOAR) is to become avenues of life encounters, opportunities for discernment, and moments of accompaniment for those who would desire to consecrate themselves in religious or priestly life, to single blessedness or holy married life. As communities, institutions, and as individuals, our social and ecological concerns and responsibilities are to spring from an attitude of committed metanoia (a change of lifestyle) leading to an engagement with the poor, the marginalized and those victims of natural and man-made calamities. We open our life and our homes not only to become healers of pains and sufferings but also to live poverty both spiritual and in the flesh. For after all the poverty and suffering of the cross that saved us from sin purify us from apathy and indifference and enthuse us to acts of charity, graciousness in points of view, and life of virtue.

After having fulfilled the solemn mission, the capitulars entrust to every religious, to those who belong and are connected to the Augustinian Recollect family, and most specially, to those who will shepherd the Province to new horizon in the succeeding quadrennium, a pledge, a solemn promise of undertaking, a primary goal:

**Placing all our trust in God's Mercy, we, the Augustinian Recollects of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, desire to be creators of communion and witnesses to Gospel values through our consecrated life and service to humanity.**

6 cf. Lumen Fidei, 5.

7 OAR Const. 31.

8 Accepted branding motif of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno.

