

SCJ NEWS

a newsletter of the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart

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In this issue...

Brazilians called to be missionaries, p. 3

As year ends, SCJs in Canada and US say good-bye to three priests, p. 5

International conferences bring 2011 to a close, p. 6



Several current and former members of the General Curia are alumni of the ESL program in the U.S. Province

Over 500 SCJs from at least 50 countries have taken part in Sacred Heart School of Theology's ESL program. This represents almost a quarter of the worldwide congregation.

Some, such as Fr. Donatus Kusmartono, SCJ, featured in this issue, as well as Fr. Yulius Sunardi, SCJ, who is the midst of his doctoral research in psychology, continue from ESL onto graduate studies. "Hosting SCJs for advanced studies is a way that the U.S. Province can support not only the missions, but the Priests of the Sacred Heart as a whole since many of these men will go on to be the leaders of our congregation in the future," said Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, provincial superior.

Several members of the General Curia, as well as SCJs who have gone on to become bishops and provincial superiors, are alumni of the ESL program including Bishop Virginio Bressanelli (former superior general and now bishop of Neuquen, Argentina), Fr. Léopold Mfouakouet, SCJ, provincial superior of Cameroon, and Fr. Andreas Madya Sriyanto, SCJ, provincial superior of Indonesia.

In this issue we share the stories of three of our ESL alumni

Delay in sabbatical leads to master's degree in education

After almost four years of study, and three since he visited his home country, Fr. Donatus Kusmartono, SCJ, is graduating with a master's degree in Educational Leadership and returning to Indonesia.

Fr. Donatus was originally scheduled to begin a study sabbatical in Sacred Heart School of Theology's ESL program in 2005. However, a personnel need at home forced him to postpone the sabbatical for three years. And then once he was free to come to the United States, another personnel need changed the sabbatical into a full-blown graduate study program.

"I was originally coming to learn a little English on my sabbatical," said Fr. Donatus. Instead, he spent two years learning English, and two more at Cardinal Stritch University, where he did his master's program.

In recent years the Indonesian Province has taken responsibility for a number of schools, including several K-12s and one university. "But we have very few people with the background needed to manage these schools," said Fr. Donatus. "When my provincial superior asked me if I would do studies in educational administration I said 'Ecce Venio' [Be-

hold, I come] and agreed."

That meant that a casual six-month sabbatical to learn a little English would become a four-year educational commitment. Fr. Donatus needed to become fluent enough to pass the TOEFL exam so that he could begin advanced studies in the United States.



Fr. Donatus Kusmartono

"That was the hard part for me," said Fr. Donatus. "Especially in the second year. At first, it was fun to be in a new place and begin to learn a new language. But by the second year I was very frustrated. It took me three tries to pass TOEFL."

Without a passing score, Fr. Donatus wouldn't be able to start the studies in education. But on the third try, he got the required score and applied to Cardinal Stritch, a university based in suburban Milwaukee.

Although Cardinal Stritch is based in Milwaukee, the program which Fr. Donatus needed was only offered in Madison, over an hour's drive from Sacred Heart Monastery where Fr. Donatus lived. But soon Fr. Donatus had both a travel and study partner. Fr. Ignatius, a diocesan priest from Indonesia, was also completing his English studies and looking for a graduate program in education.

The coursework was challenging for both students. Designed primarily

"We grew up with the SCJs... I would have never thought of being a priest as anything but an SCJ."

-Fr. Donatus Kusmartono, SCJ

for people who already had experience in education, Fr. Donatus said that he and Fr. Ignatius sometimes felt like they were playing "catch-up" to their classmates. "But we also learned a lot from their experiences," said Fr. Donatus. "They added the 'real life' situations to what we were learning in the classroom."

Language also continued to be a challenge. Although both passed their TOEFL requirements, English was still very much a new tool. "So we always did the class a second time during the car ride home," said Fr. Donatus.

Fr. Donatus would record each class and then play it back as the two students drove from Madison to Hales Corners. "We would then quiz each other to make sure that we understood what happened in class," said Fr. Donatus. "This helped both of us. But we were also lucky that our teachers were very supportive. Remembering that there were international students in the class they would explain terms that may have been



Fr. Donatus with fellow Indonesian and classmate Fr. Ignatius

common to the others.

"Also, I write much better than I speak English. My teachers saw this and I was able to earn good marks on my papers. This gave me confidence in my studies."

Fr. Donatus said that he is grateful to volunteers with SHST's ESL program who often proofread his text, helping him to fine-tune his papers.

Strong religious roots

Fr. Donatus is one of the congregation's three "Kus Brothers." Fr. Francis Kusmaryadi and Fr. Carolus Kusmaryanto are also SCJs. A fourth brother studied with the community but discerned his vocation elsewhere. Fr. Kusmaryadi has served as district superior of India and Fr. Kusmaryanto is a university professor and researcher in bioethics.

Fr. Donatus has seven brothers and sisters.

The family's roots are in Java. When Fr. Donatus was just a year old his father, a teacher, was recruited to come to the island of Sumatra to teach. His family and four others immigrated to Lampung on the southern tip of the island. There, they quickly got to know the SCJs.

"Our house was next to the church," said Fr. Donatus. "When the priest [an SCJ] came he would stay at our house."

The area where Fr. Donatus' family lived was served by a mission outpost. An SCJ priest spent two to three days a week in the area before traveling back to the main parish.

"We grew up with the SCJs because they lived in our house," said Fr. Donatus. "I would have never thought of being a priest as anything but an SCJ."

The SCJs were a part of Fr. Donatus' family. Eventually, he and his brothers became a part of the SCJ family.

"My father was very proud of our vocations and gave a speech at each of our ordinations," said Fr. Donatus. "Both of our parents were very happy that we became SCJs."

A year after Fr. Donatus began his English studies at Sacred Heart, his father died. Returning to Indonesia for the funeral in 2009 was his last visit home.

The day after his December 17 graduation from Cardinal Stritch Fr. Donatus flew back to Indonesia. It's a trip he had been looking forward to for a long time.

"I enjoyed my time in the United States and am very grateful for it; being here was a wonderful opportunity, especially being able to live in a very international community and getting to know people from around the world," said Fr. Donatus. "But there were many things I missed, especially pastoral ministry."

Before coming to the United States Fr. Donatus had been a parish pastor, a director of a retreat house, worked with youth and served as a chaplain to the Indonesian army and the local police. But it was always being with people in a parish that Fr. Donatus missed the most while in the United States.

"My first Easter here was very hard," he said. "I concelebrated Mass at St. Martin of Tours but kept thinking all week of my confreres who were so busy during Holy Week. It was very different for me."

But by the end of 2011 he was back in Indonesia and "for the first time I will celebrate Christmas Mass in my home village," he said.

And in the new year he puts that new degree to work in his first academic assignment at St. Antonius School in Jakarta.



After English studies in the U.S. Province, Fraters Sergio Matumoto and Jonathan Schneiders are now in the Philippines learning yet another language for ministry, and preparing for seminary studies.

U.S. Province is first stop in Brazilians' missionary journey

Just as Jesus sent people two by two, we are sent to share the Gospel in the Philippines," said Frater Sergio Matumoto, SCJ.

Sergio, along with fellow classmate, Frater Jonathan Schneiders, SCJ, have been sent together by the Central Brazilian Province to join the SCJ mission in the Philippines.

Their first stop on the way to Asia was Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners, Wis., where they spent several months in the ESL (English as a Second Language) program. They are now in Davao, a city in the southern part of the Philippines, where they are studying Tagalog, one of the indigenous languages of the country. In June they will begin their theology studies.

"We are preparing to be ordained for the mission that we will serve," said Jonathan.

English will be the primary language for study, but Tagalog will allow the seminarians to do pastoral ministry.

"Pastoral ministry is the best part of formation!" said Jonathan with enthusiasm. "When we were in formation in Brazil we always did weekend ministry, even in novitiate. It is how we learn to be a priest and a religious in a concrete way, in a practical way."

"I enjoyed pastoral ministry in Brazil," said Sergio, "but I am excited to do it in another country and to learn about another culture."

For both, a call to the missions has gone hand in hand with their call to religious life and the priesthood. "I always wanted to serve the missions," said Jonathan. "I want to know other cultures."

"Since the beginning, I asked my superiors about going to the missions," said Sergio. "I was persistent," he added, laughing a bit and admitting that perhaps "I bothered them a bit about it."

Whenever a missionary would come home to Brazil to visit he would spend time with the students and talk about his work and the people with

whom he ministered.

"Each time I heard one of these missionaries speak, my desire for the missions grew," said Jonathan. "Always I thought, 'I want to be like him!' They were so happy, so full of life. I wanted to know their secret. It seemed like the happiest religious were those serving in the missions. They filled me with enthusiasm."

It has taken a bit of time for Jonathan's and Sergio's families to understand their sons' enthusiasm for not only the missions, but religious life itself.

"My father had my whole life planned for me," said Jonathan. And those plans did not include a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. Jonathan's brothers all had careers in the military. His father planned on him following in their footsteps, or perhaps studying law in preparation for elected office.

"From the time that I was 12 I felt that I had a vocation but I respected my father so I did not speak about it at first," said Jonathan. But eventually, he decided that even though he respected his father, he had to follow his heart. After high school he looked at several religious communities.

"But none of them seemed to fit my vocation; I started to think that I would have to found my own religious community," he said. "Maybe

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Priests of the Sacred Heart

"I am a much better person because of my time here and I have a better idea of what it means to be an SCJ, not just an SCJ from Brazil."

-Frater Jonathan Schneiders, SCJ

I didn't even have a vocation."

But then he learned about the Priests of the Sacred Heart "and everything clicked!" he said. Even Fr. Dehon's history was similar to Jonathan's. The founder's father was also against his vocation and wanted him to study law.

Sergio was a young adult when he decided to follow his vocation. He came to know the Priests of the Sacred while he was in college, studying math. "I prayed with them on Saturdays and started to learn about Fr. Dehon," he said. "When I heard about the community's missions in Africa I became excited and wanted to deepen my relationship with the community. I believe, as Fr. Dehon said, that missionary activity is a privileged form of apostolic service."

Just as with Jonathan, and Fr. Dehon, Sergio's father was not initially in favor of his vocation. "But my mother supported it," he said.

Now that his vocation is taking him halfway around the world, both parents, as well as his siblings, wonder what Sergio is getting himself into.

"They ask me, 'Couldn't you live your vocation close to home?'" said Sergio. "They don't understand it, but I tell them that this is my vocation. To be a missionary is my vocation."

Friends and family tease Jonathan and Sergio about their upcoming assignment. "Every day I open my email and someone has sent me a photo or news story of a natural disaster in the Philippines," said Jonathan. "They tease me about giant crocodiles and other crazy things. I just laugh. You can encounter difficulties anywhere, and not just crocodiles!"

Both SCJs said that they were very grateful for their experience in the ESL program at Sacred Heart School of The-

ology. "We improved our English," said Jonathan, "but more importantly we experienced some of the many cultures of the congregation. Being here in the ESL program was the best preparation we could have had. ESL is the perfect place to learn about the congregation and about living in another culture. Here, it is like a 'little picture' of the congregation. In the morning I would have breakfast with someone from Indonesia and at lunch I would sit at a table with SCJs from Poland.

"I am a much better person because of my time here and I have a better idea of what it means to be an SCJ, not just an SCJ from Brazil."

On to the Philippines

In late September Fr. Jose Benedito de Morases Machado ("Bene"), SCJ, district superior of the Philippines, and Fr. Francis Pupkowski, SCJ, the district secretary and development director, came to the United States for a visit. One of the reasons for the trip was to update the Provincial Council on the ministries and goals of the district. The U.S. Province has supported it with personnel for English studies (Fr. Bernie Rosinski, SCJ, spent several weeks there as an ESL instructor this year), retreats, and administrative is-



Fr. Bene Machado, superior of the Philippines, talks to the provincial council during his fall visit.

sues, as well as with continued financial support. The province also assisted the Philippines in setting up its development program, including a seed-money grant of \$250,000.

Frs. Bene and Francis timed their visit so that they could meet with and accompany Jonathan and Sergio to their new home in the Philippines. Normally, said Fr. Bene, the district only accepts ordained SCJs to join the district (with the exception of members of the district's own formation program which includes candidates, novices and professed students from other Asian countries). However, Fr. Bene was impressed by the students' enthusiasm.

Fr. Bene met Sergio when he was visiting the Central Brazilian novitiate last year. Sergio told him that he wanted to be a missionary and asked if it would be possible for him to go to the Philippines. Initially, there was reluctance to send a young SCJ who hadn't even begun theology studies to a mission country. But eventually, hesitation turned into enthusiasm. Soon, Jonathan entered into the equation as well and it was decided that the two would go together to the Philippines.

Jonathan and Sergio will join a rapidly growing district; they will have plenty of company in the formation program. Currently there are nine Filipinos in theology and 35 in philosophy, along with several postulants and novices.

And they will study in a country that highly values education. "I have never seen education placed in such high regard as I have in the Philippines," said Fr. Bene. "Even in the poorest of areas, places where the people practically live in boxes next to trash dumps, the students come to school well-scrubbed and ready to learn. Always the most beautiful place in a community is chosen for the school. And graduation is a big event. I think that even kindergarten graduation in the Philippines is a bigger event than college graduation in Brazil!"

"We look forward to studying in such an environment," said Jonathan.

We remember...

As the year came to a close, SCJs in the United States and Canada said good-bye to three of their members



Fr. Jerry Clifford sharing a point during a 2010 province gathering.

Former professor, spiritual director dies

After battling lung cancer for several months, Fr. Jerry Clifford, SCJ, died December 19 in St. Louis. He was 78 and had just gone into hospice care days before he died.

Originally from Hartford, Conn., Fr. Jerry professed first vows with the community in 1955 and was ordained in 1961. Among the degrees he earned was a doctorate in moral theology. He studied at Catholic University of America, Sacred Heart School of Theology and Marquette University. Much of his priesthood was in academics, teaching both undergraduate and graduate level courses. "He was a brilliant teacher, one of the best I ever had," said one SCJ.

Outside of academics, Fr. Jerry was very active in social justice issues and served on the province Justice and Peace Commission. He was also involved in Sacred Heart Communities in Collaboration, an organization of religious communities of men and women dedicated to the Sacred Heart who share a common spirituality of the Heart.

Fr. Jerry retired in 2005. Based in the St. Louis area he was involved in spiritual direction (after earning a

graduate certificate in spiritual direction from the Aquinas Institute of Theology) and retreat work. He also served as a chaplain at two state institutions for the mentally ill and at a nursing home, and did weekend ministry in and around St. Louis.

Long-time minister to divorced and separated will be missed

Just weeks after celebrating his 85th birthday, Fr. Bill More, SCJ, a member of the Canadian Region, died on December 8.

Originally from the Netherlands, Fr. Bill came to Canada in the mid-1950s to teach at the SCJs' minor seminary in Delaware, Ont. He prepared for the task by first earning a degree at the University of Ottawa.

He taught at the seminary until it closed its doors in 1969. Soon after, he began ministry with the Family Life Office in the Archdiocese of Ottawa. Much of his work was with those preparing for marriage, but after some time with the office he realized a need for ministry to the separated and divorced. He did coursework at Notre Dame University and became increasingly involved in the apostolate as it developed in North America.

In Ottawa, he and a co-worker, Marjorie Moore, held monthly sessions for those coming to terms with their separation or divorce. Fr. Bill also produced a monthly newsletter and several brochures to help people deal with the challenges of a broken marriage and understand the Church's position regarding divorce.

"For those dealing with divorce

Fr. Bill was a voice of a loving and merciful God," said a member of his Ottawa community.

Fr. Bill was also very involved with the local Kiwanis Club. In recent years Fr. Bill's declining health forced him to move to nursing care but he continued to receive many visitors from his days with the Kiwanis and the archdiocese.

Fr. Bill made his first profession with the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 1949 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1955.

Retired Toronto pastor well remembered

Fr. Peter Botman, 81, a member of the Canadian Region, died November 3 in Toronto. In late July, Fr. Peter was diagnosed with lung cancer. In September, he had extensive surgery during which his entire left lung was removed. He had been recovering in a rehabilitation unit after the surgery, but after two weeks deteriorating health forced him to return to the hospital; he was placed in intensive care.



Fr. Peter Botman

Originally from the Netherlands, Fr. Peter professed his first vows in 1952 and was ordained in 1959. He had been a member of the Toronto community for many years. His ministries included the Neil McNeil Home in Toronto; Sacred Heart Minor Seminary in Delaware, Ontario; the Catholic Children's Aid Society in Toronto; and as pastor at the parishes of Immaculate Conception in Port Perry; St. Joan of Arc in Toronto; St. Anthony in Dartmouth, N.S.; and at St. Patrick in Caledonia.

His funeral Mass was at St. Joan of Arc parish in Toronto, where he had been pastor prior to retirement.

International conferences bring SCJs together

Understanding and adapting to European secularity

"Secularity" was the stated topic of the SCJs' European Conference, but the focus of the gathering was much more than secularity itself. Instead, it was a starting point for the congregation to answer the question: "How does the love of Christ impel us — Dehonians — to be present in Europe in its current reality?"

The conference brought together representatives from each of the European entities, along with invited guests from North America. Meeting in Clairefontaine, Belgium, from October 18-20, SCJs heard presentations from professors and social analysts on the changing culture of Europe, and how the Church, faith and spirituality fit into this new reality.

The theme of secularity took root at the 2009 General Chapter where SCJs in Europe noted the effect of secularity on the Church and expressed a desire to better understand its impact, especially as it affects vocations, ministry, and the members of the Priests of the Sacred Heart themselves.

Not antagonistic

Secularity isn't a concept that is antagonistic toward religion, said Dr. Matthias Sellmann of Ruhr University in Germany, one of the conference presenters. While secularity can allow for a freedom FROM religion, it also allows a freedom FOR religion, for a multitude of religious expression. Too

often, he said, the Church has reacted to the modern world as did the frightened disciples to Jesus on the stormy sea, whom they thought to be a terrifying ghost. The world may be more filled by the Holy Spirit than many think possible. Secularity may in fact be a new opportunity.

Sociologist Peter Martin Thomas spoke of the various social milieux or social contexts in which Europeans live. He identified 12 such contexts such as traditionalists, intellectuals, consumer-hedonists, and experimentalists. Each milieu or context has different expectations of the Church and of the priest. No one priest or religious, no one community can assume each role, or fulfill each expectation of the different milieux. There are many paths. However, this also means that there are a multitude of possibilities for the different talents of individuals and the many charisms of religious communities.

To better know the needs of the people, Mr. Thomas said that the Church must listen. "Don't just be a Church that offers," he said, "be a Church that listens and hears people's needs."

Fr. Gilles Routhier, a professor on the faculty of Laval University in Quebec, Canada, noted that the transformation from a world of yesterday to what is now considered the "modern world" is complicated. But throughout history the world has changed and there is always a sense of loss for what was. However instead of viewing a changing world as something that is in opposition to the

Church, the Church must dialogue to be a part of and a response to a new world. The world is not the enemy. As incarnation of the Word, it bears "traces" and "seeds" of the Word.

Relating to a changing world

The Church, and SCJs in particular, were urged not to view themselves as a "victim" of secularization. If the Church's impact on society is less than at other times in history, what is the Church's responsibility for this? How does the Church relate to this changing world? How do the Priests of the Sacred Heart build a relationship to the modern world? The Gospel, reminded Professor Routhier, is present in all realities; it is in all segments of society.

The face of the congregation, as with the rest of the Church, is radically changing. Numbers will continue to diminish in Europe, while the population of the congregation grows in the southern hemisphere and in Asia. The congregation is challenged to become less Euro-centric

Fr. General asked, "Do we have the prophetic courage to respond to change? Does the weight of commitments and structures hinder the congregation from being open to creative solutions?"

It is important that the Priests of the Sacred Heart not fall into a "survivalist mode," said Professor Routhier. The community should not become obsessed with its number of vocations but instead focus on how it can express its

charism at this time in history in Europe.

To do this, it is vital that individual SCJs and entities find ways to better collaborate with each other, and



Fr. Levi dos Anjos Ferreira
of the German Province



Sociologist Peter Martin
Thomas spoke of the
various social contexts of
Europe

with other congregations and the laity. Dehonians must look at new ways of being present in Europe but also examine what the congregation does well, such as ESIC in Spain, and work to further develop such ministries.

Fr. Leo John Dehon was a man who insisted that the Church listen to the modern world and the new realities that it presents. Conference participants were urged to continue this call of the founder — not only in Europe, but as a congregation that is present throughout the world. The concerns of one part of the body are the concerns of the whole.

Daily reports and photos from the conference are available on the province website (www.sacredheartusa.org). Look under “News and Events,” starting with “Goal in Europe Still the Same” through “The European Conference on Secularity.”

Madrid Conference was “Excellent, just excellent!”

“It was one of the highlights of my life with the community,” said Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ. “Excellent, just excellent! Well organized. And to meet with so many of our SCJs from around the world – it was really a shot of energy for me in my vocation as an SCJ. Incredible.”

The strong words of praise from Fr. Ed were about the November 18-22 SCJ Justice and Peace gathering in Madrid, Spain. Held at ESIC, the world-renowned business school operated by the Spanish Province, the conference was split into two parts. From November 18-19 approximately 200 people gathered – including approximately 25 invited SCJs from around the world as well as ESIC students – to learn about and discuss *Caritas in Veritate*, the first social encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI. Fr. Ed represented the U.S. Province and Fr. Peter McKenna, SCJ, represented the

Canadian Region.

Released in 2009, *Caritas in Veritate* addressed the Christian response to global development. The document finds even more relevance today as the world grapples with economic concerns that affect all.

During the second part of the gathering, November 21-22, Fr. Ed joined other SCJs and collaborators to “basically discuss reconciliation,” he said. “How do we do reconciliation on the local level in our communities; how do we do it on a worldwide basis?”

SCJs focused on the need for collaboration – both internally among SCJs within their entities and on an international level – as well as collaboration with others. “There is strength in cooperation or collaboration,” said Fr. Ed. “We often returned to this theme.”

Working in linguistic as well as regional groupings SCJ participants discussed reconciliation and collaboration, as well the 2000 General Conference in Recife Brazil. The theme of that conference was “The Economy and the Reign of God.” SCJs in Madrid reviewed proposals that developed at the conference. “Some proposals have not been implemented so it was important to revisit what had come from the conference,” said Fr. Ed.

“From the very first moment of the meeting, many of the participants affirmed the significance of previous SCJ documents but indicated that we are at such a critical, crucial moment in our history that it is time for us to adopt and implement a common collaborative SCJ justice, peace and rec-



Participants at the Justice and Peace Conference in Madrid came from Europe, North and South America, Asia and Africa.

conciliation plan of action for each member and for the congregation as a whole,” said Fr. Peter.

“We are approximately 2,200 Dehonians in 42 countries,” he continued. “Think of the difference we can make when and if we collectively are ministers of reconciliation in whatever context we find ourselves.”

From their discussions, the small groups developed a number of proposals of their own which appear in the final document of the conference.

“We had some very good discussions, especially in regards to reconciliation,” said Fr. Ed. “But for me overall, the most important part of the gathering was the fraternity that I experienced among my SCJ brothers from around the world.

The camaraderie and the hospitality were incredible. It was also eye-opening for me to learn from SCJs in other parts of the world that many of us struggle with common issues — good and bad. It was really an experience of ‘We the Congregation.’ I left feeling energized about being an SCJ. I met so many interesting members of the congregation from all over the world – bright young religious from Africa and Asia, from all over.”

The final message from the conference is available at:

<http://tinyurl.com/8xyntte>

“We are approximately 2,200 Dehonians in 42 countries. Think of the difference we can make when and if we collectively are ministers of reconciliation in whatever context we find ourselves.”

-Fr. Peter McKenna

SCJ NEWS

Happy anniversary!

In November the South African Province celebrated the jubilees of three SCJs, two of whom are Americans: Bishop Joseph Potocnak (50 years of vows) and Fr. John Strittmatter (50th anniversary of priesthood). Fr. Anthony Austin, SCJ, a South African, also celebrated his golden jubilee of vows.

Bishop Joe was the principal celebrant; he was joined at the altar by Bishop Michael Wustenberg of Aliwal North and Bishop Adam Musialek, SCJ, of De Aar, along with approximately 20 other priests.

Following the liturgy, children from a nearby school did traditional Xhosa and Sotho dances and songs and students from the SCJs' pan-African formation community in Pietermaritzburg performed skits to honor and thank the jubilarians.

Massive flood in the Philippines

"At least 650 people died and more than 800 are missing after the tropical storm 'Washi' or 'Sendong' (the local name) swept across the southern Philippines," wrote Fr. Francis Pupkowski, SCJ, of the Philippine District. "A heavy rain that lasted over 10 hours, beginning on December 16, caused a massive flood that affected many places on the island of Mindanao."

Thousands of houses were literally swept away by the water or were very heavily damaged. Several villages in Cagayan de Oro were completely under water. Many of the dead were swept out to sea. Others were buried alive as mud cascaded down mountain slopes. Water levels rose three feet in less than an hour, forcing thousands to climb on to the roofs of their homes where they huddled against wind speeds reaching 55 miles per hour.

The highest death toll is among the children, disabled, and elderly people. Up to 100,000 people might be displaced. Many of the victims lost everything they had.

The SCJ Formation House in Aluba, located in the upper part of Cagayan de Oro City, was not affected directly by the flood, except for lack of electricity and internet connection. However, the compound of the Kasanag Daughters Foundation, the SCJs' shelter for abused women and

girls, was once again under water. Most of the items in the buildings were destroyed. Fortunately, all the girls and the staff were safely transferred to the SCJ formation house and given shelter.

"This has been one of the strongest tropical storms that ever passed through Mindanao," added Fr. Francis.

New appointment

Bishop Virginio Bressanelli, SCJ, has been named as Bishop of Neuquen, Argentina. Bishop Virginio is the fourth bishop of the diocese, which was established in 1961. He replaces Monsignor Marcelo Melani Angiolo, who retired.

Former general superior of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, Bishop Virginio was born in southern Argentina in 1942. Ordained a priest in 1966, he was elected as superior general in 1991. Fr. Tom Cassidy, U.S. provincial, served as a general counselor during both of Bishop Virginio's six-year terms.

In 2005 he was named bishop of Comodoro Rivadavia, and in 2010, coadjutor bishop of Neuquén.

In the Episcopal Conference of Argentina Bishop Virginio chairs the Episcopal Commission on Consecrated Life, and recently was named the conference's vice president.

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