

OUR VISIT OF KOREA



Sr. Pauline and Sr. Mary Paul in Gyeongbongsu Park

Sister Mary Paul and I had the Joy of visiting Korea for FREE. How did this come about? In their last Priory Chapter, Daegu decided to send their Junior Sisters to the Manila Priory to be exposed to another culture and to be given a chance to practice their English. Twice a year a group of Juniors were sent to Manila. They were sent to our different houses for the needed exposure to our life and mission. It seems the Daegu Priory is satisfied with the outcome of this Juniorate Program. So the practice is still going on till the present.

During the September 2009 International Formators' Meeting in Norfolk, Sister Marie Johann Heo, the then Junior Directress of the Daegu Priory told the group of formators how happy they are for the Korean Juniors' exposure for some months in Manila. They find the experience very enriching for the Junior Sisters. She invited me to visit Korea to get to know their people and their culture. This was the Priory's way of expressing its thanks to us for welcoming their Juniors to our Manila Priory. I was then the Directress of Juniors as well as the Directress of the Novices. I was happy for the invitation but I did not give it a second thought, so I never discussed the matter with our Prioress. When Mother Lumen Choi and Sister Marie Johann came to Manila to visit the Korean Juniors, they sincerely repeated their invitation. Sister Mary Paul was now the Directress of Juniors. Though we both realized the value of such a visit, we still did not act on it.

It was during our BEAO Meeting (Benedictines of East Asia and Oceania) last August 2014 here in Silang, Cavite when Sister Mary Daniel Park from the Daegu Priory informed Sister Mary Paul and me that Mother Lumen Choi is still extending her invitation to us and she would like us to schedule our trip to Korea this year. And so we scheduled it for September 22-28, 2014.

Sister Mary Daniel efficiently took charge of our travel schedules and all the needed documents. While in Korea, sisters from the two Priors: Daegu and Seoul, scheduled our days so we had time to tour the Priory House, to meet the sisters who had been to our Priory, to visit their nearby Stations and see cultural places in both Daegu and Seoul.

During our whole stay in Korea, we experienced the very warm welcome from the Prioress down to the formandeas. Even those who could not speak English welcomed us warmly with their smile and a slight bow of the head.

In Daegu, since they prayed in Korean we simply listened to their beautiful singing at Mass and during the Liturgy of the Hours. They had certain antiphons which used the Latin Tonus so I could resonate with the melody of some antiphons and psalms. Seoul's Liturgy had a mixture of Latin, English and Korean. So I sung to my heart's content when songs were in English and Latin.

Food was not a problem for Sister Mary Paul and for me. Their very vegetarian diet suited our taste. Of course, we avoided the very "hot" dishes. Twice we were brought to a Korean Restaurant: once in Daegu and another time in Seoul. In Daegu, we had those very low tables and we had to squat on the floor. Sister Maoro helped us by requesting for several throw pillows for us. After the meal, I thought I would not be able to stand up. But Thank God, I managed..

We took time to meet the formandeas of both Priors though we could not really talk with them

because of language. But they all had the very warm smile for us. The Junior Sisters of the Daegu Priory even entertained us with songs during one recreation time. While we were in Daegu, Sister Virginia, the Directress of Novices and Sister Zeno, Directress of the Juniors were our constant companions in our tour of various places. In Seoul, it was Sister Timothea who brought us around.

We are thankful to Mother Adelaida and the PG for allowing us to make this trip. And we are especially grateful to Mother Lumen Choi, the Prioress of Daegu for inviting us to visit Korea and who did not stop repeating her invitation till finally we sat foot on Korean soil.

By: Sister Pauline Triviño, OSB



Daegu Priory with Prioress Lumen Choi



Seoul Priory with M. Prioress Rose Marie & Subprioress Dominika



Daegu Priory, Junior sisters with Juniorate Directress, Sr. Zeno (4th from left)



Seoul Priory, Novices and Postulants with Novice Directress, Sr. Francisco (standing 2nd from left)



Daegu Priory, Novices & Postulants with Novice Directress, Sr. Virginia (standing behind Sr. Mary Paul)



Seoul Priory, Postulants with Postulant Directress, Sr. Veritas (4th from right)