

A Celebration of God's Faithfulness for Fifty Golden Years



Sr. Mary Placid Sr. Consilio Sr. M. Bellarmine

“Has heaven come down right here or have we been lifted up to the heavens?” Such was the impassioned question S. Consilio N. Napi, OSB, one of the golden jubilarians, asked in her response toward the end of the Eucharistic celebration with Renewal of Vows on Wednesday, April 24, 2013, 9:30 a.m. at St. Scholastica’s Chapel, Manila. She referred mainly to the liturgy just experienced, but the golden day was preceded by meetings, practices and a flurry of preparations. The idea of having a quiet, monastic celebration was quite far-fetched considering the other two jubilarians: S. Mary Bellarmine G. Bernas, OSB. President of St. Scholastica’s College, Manila for a number of years among other positions held and S. Mary Placid C. Abejo, OSB, Dean of the School of Music and Alumnae Moderator for many years.

The number of guests had increased as the day drew near and as expected, included not only members of families but also school officials, past and present, alumnae, classmates, friends and other well-wishers. Add to that number the School of Music choir, the members of the Manila Symphony Orchestra and the Missionary Benedictine Sisters from the Luzon communities. It could not be but a grand celebration!

A day before, the chapel, the passages, the refectory, the cells of the brides in the Priory House, the Kuniberta and Barrion Halls of the school came alive with golden and white flowers. The day itself dawned with a serenade with no less than Mother

Prioress Adelaida Ygrubay, OSB as the guitarist. Than as early as 8:30 a.m., guests were ushered into the chapel. At the end of the line during the processional were His Eminence, Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, D.D., the presider, Abbot Emeritus Tarcisio Narciso, OSB, Fr. Joaquin Bernas, SJ, Fr. Fruto Ramirez, SJ, concelebrants. There were other priests who were there, but opted not to concelebrate.



Fr. Ramirez Fr. Bernas Fr. Narciso Cardinal Tagle

S. M. Angelica Leviste, OSB introduced each of the jubilarians to the delight of the congregation. Then the liturgy which was prepared by S. Pia Lansang, OSB and S. Imelda Halili, OSB began. The compositions of S. Mary Placid for the proper of the mass on the feast of St. Scholastica and Gregorian chant for Missa de Angelis were all sung. When Fr. Benildus Ma. Maramba, OSB was the one conducting during the Gregorian chant, S. Imelda was at the organ. For the rest of the songs, it was Mrs. Monette Balingcos, Assistant Dean of the School of Music, conducting while Mr. Arturo Molina conducted the Manila Symphony Orchestra.



Cardinal Tagle dwelt for a while on the description of love from the Song of Songs (the first reading), but the real gem was in his reflection on the Gospel passage about the five wise and five foolish virgins. He said that the real bride is the Church and so the jubilarians and we are the bridesmaids. The challenge is to remain awake, holding aloft our flaming torches and if we can not raise anymore our arms high, to let our whole beings become the burning torch through our compassion and love.

Inspired by those words, the choir almost literally soared during the singing of “On Eagle’s Wings” and in the final song, “Now Thank We all Our God”. There were three venues for the feast that followed the almost two-hour long liturgy: Kuniberta Hall for the guests, Barrion Hall for the members of the choir and orchestra and refectory for most of the sisters.



It is on occasions like this that we can say, “Religious life is indeed a beautiful life.” We hope that some young hearts among those present heard the whisper of that truth.

By: Sr. M. Isabel Orito, OSB