

Commission on Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry

Underlying Principles

Parish ministry (pastoral care) is one of the fundamental apostolic works of the Augustinian Order. From an Augustinian point of view, (and) among the several apostolic activities of the Order, this communal and collaborative work also provides an enormous venue whereby the life of the Order is experienced and lived by an Augustinian. It is in this context that Augustinians also share the mission of Christ as participants and witnesses to the building up of God's kingdom. Thus, the basis and the spirit of this endeavor start and end with Christ. Consequently, this particular apostolic activity can be viewed as evangelization in actuality, and should also be considered an important "means of sanctification" (Const. 145).

Situational Analysis

Since its canonical erection in December 1983, the Augustinian Province of Santo Nino de Cebu, has been actively collaborating with the local churches in the Philippines and other international circumscriptions of the Order. In the Philippines, the Province is involved in parish ministry to eight local parishes from different archdioceses/dioceses, of the eight parishes, only three are to be perpetually administered by the Province, namely: Santo Niño Mohon Parish, Mohon, Talisay City, Cebu; Santo Niño de Cebu Parish, Biñan City, Laguna; San Jose Parish, Iloilo City; and, the rest are all under contract with the local Ordinaries. Given this fact, the Province commits itself to serve the parishes without discrimination. All parishes which the Province manages are given favourable reception. This is proven through the Province's acceptance of new parishes and about to request renewal of contract from the Archdiocese of Manila on behalf of the Nuestra Señora de Gracia Parish in Makati City.

The Philippines is a multi-lingual and multi-cultured archipelago. Friars take time to learn local language/dialects and even local culture. Thus, it is important for friars to be more open to learn new language/dialects and cultural norms and practices within the area they are concurrently assigned.

On economic concerns, some parishes (which are considered local mission areas) are financially poor that communities can barely receive contribution from the parish they minister. These communities are currently subsidized by the province.

It is evident that the Augustinian presence in all the parishes which the friars manage is clearly noticeable to the parishioners. Community life is more manifested through the assignment of two or more friars in the parish communities; the Augustinian way of worship; and, the way the decision making is communally made. Furthermore, community life is an illustration of team ministry or collaborative service. Accordingly, the Augustinian way of life is an effective pastoral approach for worship, for evangelization, and service.

Action Plans

1. Stabilization of the canonical status of our parishes
2. Organization of cross-cultural experience among friars and parishioners
3. Augmentation of the financial capacity of the parishes, especially the subsidized ones
4. Involvement of the people in the liturgical celebrations of the Community
5. Reintroduction or revitalization of the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC) in all Augustinian parishes
6. Intensification of Pastoral Formation Program in the parish
7. On-going formation for parish priests

In most parishes, the involvement of the laity is remarkable. This calls for creativity and initiative on the part of the friars in order to sustain the laity's enthusiasm. On the other hand, it is notable that majority of the laity, especially the youth, need more catechesis regarding their interests and faith commitment to their particular parish. Thus parish pastoral council should be strongly established and supported on their pastoral programs.