

TRINITY NEWS

Lent II The Lasting Underlying Configurations of our Journey

This week I and Melvin Bautista, Rebecca Oxley and Lance Masters attended the Diocesan Convention at the National Cathedral in Quezon City. It was a first for Lance and Rebecca in the Philippines. We assembled on Tuesday afternoon and it continued until Thursday evening. Sitting on the rock-like pews of the Cathedral soon required a cushion for me. The people who always speak at such gatherings of the diocese did so again, but there were some fresh voices, including our own representatives. The reflections at the midday prayers turned into full-blown sermons as usual.

Some of the lay people seemed intent on making sure that theological students passed canonical exams and that clergy who did not attend the convention without due reason should be disciplined. They had one or two in their sights, but names were not mentioned aloud. They seemed to want to do it themselves rather than leaving it to the Bishop who really should attend to such matters. Considerable pressure has been placed on Bishop Dixie Taclobao and his diocesan staff to relocate elsewhere rather than their present location in the grounds of the National Cathedral and other church facilities. Plans for relocation were put before the convention, but negotiations are still underway. The diocese gets a good deal of its finances from rentals from shops that surround the present offices. The compensation for this and the relocation plans evoked a great deal of interest and feeling in the convention. We are large in size in terms of area, but we are perhaps the smallest diocese in numbers of parishioners. Despite some dedicated work and the spending of resources some of our missionary work has shown little or no progress and in some cases it has gone backwards. This provoked some real frustration from the lay representatives. Some of the clergy were defensive about it because they have poured so much of their own selves into it and also because their positions hang on it. But we were glad to welcome another fully supported parish that had come from a missionary status. This brought great delight to that convention. Nevertheless, some of the larger constituents of the National Church are exerting pressure in some measure on their "lesser brethren". The Bishop led us with his usual grace and patience. It requires concentrated focus for the duration of the business of convention. The Episcopal Church is I suspect far more vibrant and true to Christ than many of its adherents comprehend. This positive comment would be affirmed by Fr Gabriel Dimanche who loved the Filipino people. He was remembered at the convention as someone who had made a considerable contribution to

the diocese and to the Church in this country. Filipino spirituality was all around us this week. It combines trust in God and a deep love of Jesus the Christ. It also has an openness to the touch and luminous presence of the Holy Spirit that resonates in the way in which they go about worship and in their devotion to Christ. It was a memorable few days that opened doors to other vistas in understanding the ways of the people of this great nation.

The gospel for today speaks of the Word, that is the Christ, coming to his own and not being received by them. Christ comes to us, whether we are Jews or Gentiles or Others. We are evangelists, and we bring Christ to all from our own experience of the Gospel. Then it is between them and a Loving Father who yearns for the love of his children.

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Wednesday, March 19.

- Bible Study, 10:00 a.m.
- Lenten Study, 7:30 p.m., Parish Office.

Thursday, March 20.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00 a.m., Chapel

Readings for next Sunday:

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-26,39-42