

CABRINI COMPANIONS

The Official Newsletter of Circles of Discernment
Baguio City, Philippines

Volume 1. Series 2

November 11, 2006 Feast of Mother Cabrini

The Journey of COD

Sr. Patricia Spillane, MSC

In our third year of Circles of Discernment here in Casa Cabrini, Baguio, our theme is "Continuing our journey in love, truth and freedom." Each month we are asking ourselves "What are the habits and virtues we need for this journey in order to develop a discerning heart?"

There is a close relationship between good habits and virtues, between bad habits and vices. Since grace always builds on nature, good human habits are the precursors to virtue. The New Catechism of the Catholic Church defines virtue "as a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself or herself." Therefore, it is helpful to us, both humanly and spiritually, to reflect on and become more conscious and deliberate about our habits, whether those of speaking or acting, choosing or relating. Each of us probably has more than a thousand habits, large and small, but since we so often take them for granted, we don't think about them and often are not even aware of them.

By becoming conscious of our habits, we can evaluate them, decide if they are to our advantage or disadvantage, take control of them (instead of them taking control of us) and eventually decide if we need/want to change a particular habit or not. For example, I may not even be aware of my habit of speaking to certain kinds of people in a harsh, rude or demeaning way. Is this the way I want to be? Is this "giving the best of myself?" Or I may have the habit of deciding impulsively,

not taking time to weigh the consequences of my actions. Of course I may not even be aware of this habit unless I develop the corresponding good habit of reflecting on my life, my behavior, where I am going and what kind of person God wants me to be. So habits -- good and bad, mature and immature--are essential building blocks of my life and well worth the effort to reflect on them.

If I discover that I have a less than desirable habit and I want to make a serious effort to change it, what can I do? The following suggestions might prove helpful:

a. First of all, I should thank God that He has brought me to this new awareness in my life which is already a positive step forward (even if I don't like what I see in myself).

b. Secondly, I should remember that God knew about this less-than-desirable habit of mine way before I did--and He still loves me and gives me the grace to change.

c. To change my unfortunate habit, I need to practice two virtues--the first is hope and the second is courage.

➤ **Hope** that with the aid of His grace and help, I can change and not remain stuck in my old pattern of behavior. He is the one who has begun this change in me and He will see it to the end.

➤ **Courage** because change is always difficult and I can easily become discouraged. I may hear "negative voices" in my head (another mental habit) that discourage me from moving ahead in this journey of love, truth and freedom. "No, you can't change, so don't even try." Or when I try and fail, the voice that says "See, I told you it wouldn't work!!!"

d. I need to remember that according to Ignatian discernment of spirits, the good spirit can be recognized by an inner voice that gives me "courage and energy" not to give up and to keep on trying. The evil spirit is the source of the voice that says "What did I tell you! I knew it wouldn't work!"

e. Finally, in our efforts to change habits and grow in virtue, it is often helpful to:

- talk to a trusted advisor who can help us gain another perspective to see more than we could by ourselves. This same person may also help us become more hopeful and courageous in our journey;
- record our struggles and successes in a journal which will help us strengthen the good habit of reflection;
- beg the Lord's grace daily in prayer and scripture reading, and through the frequent reception of the Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation.

Growing in good habits and in virtue will not rob us of enjoyment and pleasure. Rather, in the long run, it will help us live happier and more satisfied lives in the light of the gospel. As the great theologian Bernard Haring reminds us:

Virtue is a form of competence that enables us to grasp the melody of life as a whole and to arrive at that basic option for good that brings all our thoughts, desires and actions to maturity. (Virtues of an Authentic Life).

May our growth in good habits and virtues enable us to sing that melody of life with gratitude in our discerning hearts.

COD NEWS UPDATE

CABRINI COMPANIONS MEET

Present and incoming Cabrini Companions in Discernment and Mission met on Sunday Oct 22 to reflect on "Mother Cabrini: her spirituality and charism" in preparation for recommitment or first commitment on the Feast of Mother Cabrini, Saturday Nov 11, St. Joseph's Parish, Pacdal



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SEEKER'S Journey with Discernment

LIVING THE CABRINI CHARISM

Jovie Ann Decoyna

Be involved as a

When I was first asked to write an article about the Cabrini Charism from my own point of view as someone who has lived in Casa Cabrini for more than a year, I was hesitant. I was afraid I might fall short in describing the charism, but I derived courage from God and from the fact that I am a witness to these works and it is my desire to share it with you.

Firstly, throughout my live-in experience in Casa Cabrini, I finally understood what individual evangelization really means or how evangelization can be carried out not only in groups but more importantly by the individual. The two MSC sisters with whom I've lived with have entirely different ways of evangelizing, but both are geared towards one purpose: to glorify God. I saw how Sr. Patricia does her mission by helping in the spiritual formation of both the young and old members of the Circles of Discernment through spiritual direction, counseling, group meetings and retreats. And as part of the community and the COD, I know how these activities helped me grow spiritually. Likewise, I saw how Sr. Patricia strived hard to raise funds for the SOSCFI (Save Our Street Children Foundation, Inc.) just like Mother Cabrini who was a great fund raiser and the Cabrini sisters who went around begging to feed the orphans under their care when they first arrived in America.

Although spiritual growth is what we should give importance to, we should not forget that practical matters should also be taken care of. And this I saw in the works of Sr. Romy who always prepares cornbread and cakes for community occasions and COD meetings, and tasty food for community meals. We might see housekeeping as unimportant in spiritual growth but I see Sr. Romy putting things in order in the house and going around the city to buy the things needed for the community, I realized the importance of what she's doing in keeping and maintaining the community's physical or physiological needs which, if not met, will also affect our capacity for human or spiritual growth. Moreover, I also witnessed how Sr. Romy religiously walks to church everyday and never faltering in visiting and giving Holy Communion to the sick. These two different ways of evangelizing maintains the uniqueness of the individual while allowing the person to use these unique characteristics in fulfilling their mission of bringing the love of Christ to other people.

Secondly, collaboration with lay people. Even Mother Cabrini knew the importance of involving lay people in fulfilling her missionary plan. The presence of faithful and committed lay people who volunteer their time and effort in helping the Cabrini mission throughout the world is very essential. And I saw how the staff and volunteers of SOSCFI work together with the MSC sisters to provide for the street children of Baguio City.

Thirdly, care of the poor and marginalized people of the society. Mother Cabrini was sent to America to care for the Italian immigrants and she established orphanages, schools and hospitals. I believe that Mother Cabrini valued education and before she founded the MSCs, she first became a school teacher in her own country. And now we see how the MSC sisters here in Baguio are continuing these missions by working with the SOSCFI to provide street education especially for the Muslim children, providing livelihood programs for the parents of these children, and by working with Interplast in Australia to provide free surgery for the indigenous people of Cordillera and the Aetas of Bataan. To provide all these, they work hard to raise funds to support these activities and to provide a center for the SOSCFI who for many years have been "homeless." The sisters, in short, continue what became the motif of Mother Cabrini's life: *"Let us work, Cabrini. Let us work. We have an eternity to rest."*

Fourthly, something I observed the first time I joined the Cabrini community, is its being open. Casa Cabrini is an "open house" where people come and go. Some stayed and others went on but nobody who came into the community would say he/she did not feel at home. The openness and hospitality of the sisters shows that nobody who knocks at the door will be rejected. When I first walked in into this house, I knew I found a family. A unique family composed of people with different backgrounds and who came from various cultures coming together to be a witness to God's marvelous works.

And finally, these missionary works are always coupled with a habit of fervent prayer—both personal and communal. Just like anybody, after a long and tiring day, one has to rest to have strength for the following day. The MSC sisters as I have witnessed, pray every day and encourage us to do the same. They also have their days of recollection especially after a series of activities in the SOSCFI or in the community, as well as their annual retreat. As Mother Cabrini says on retreat: *"It is in retreat that the soul learns to gaze interiorly at the beauty and goodness of God. In retreat one acquires the spirit of interior prayer, the interior spirit that raises us up to God at every moment and in every work."*

Sojourner's Journey with Discernment

WORTHY UNDER GOD'S EYES
Deborah Muena

I am worthless...

I harbored this way of thinking every minute, everyday dragging myself into the pool of misery.

I grew up in a dysfunctional family, a materialistic family. In every abusive word that splintered against my being and every spanking that landed to my vulnerable body, I rebelliously reminded myself that I will never be like my mother.

Like all of my siblings, I became headstrong. At a young age, I learned to decide and act based on my instinct, how to survive every terrible day. As the eldest, I always considered what is best for my younger siblings. As I grew disgruntled, I became anxious about everything that makes my mother angry. Nothing pleases her because she believes that she is always right.

My grades suffered because I had a low self-esteem. Likewise I never had a serious relationship with the opposite sex. But instead of tending to my wounds, I joined organizations varying from theater plays, writing, student councils, civic organizations and religious groups. This way, I diverted my frustrations in life. From these activities, I built my self-esteem and enhanced my knowledge, skills and talents. However, every time I went home, I left all my school concerns at our front gate and picked up my burdens. I felt empty...worthless. At the end of the day, I went to my room and read books, letting the words take me to different dimensions.



Finally, I courageously ran away from home for a couple of times but still I knew that my heart's concerns, my sisters and brothers, still remained in our house. Life has taught me to be patient. God has taught me to be merciful and forgiving, so I returned back to take care of my family responsibilities. I finished my college degree and subsequently took up law course. I also worked to defray some of my expenses. I wake up early: read, work, go to school and go home. Everyday I did the same routine. Then one day, I got tired and not from physical exhaustion. I felt that my mind, body, heart and spirit started to deteriorate. I felt helpless, useless. Suddenly I realized that life became boring...without a purpose. Until August 20, 2006, I attended the Path of Life Retreat sponsored by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart (MSCs) led by Sr. Patricia Spillane.

The first statement from the pamphlet handed to me was, "What the Lord has promised me". After a laborious routine week, I said to myself indifferently, "Oh, there is more to life!" However, my tired mind started to be attentive when Sr. Patricia reads the Biblical passage from Jeremiah 29: 11 which states, "I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. Plans for peace and not disaster, reserving for you a future full of hope." Then, a warm feeling enveloped me. It started from my heart then spread out to my whole being to my head, to my fingertips and tips of my toes. Subsequently, I asked God. "Lord is this answer to my gnawing query, 'Why do we have to live in this world when life brings all kinds of pain?'" Suddenly I felt at peace with myself and with God.

Through this experience I learned that God has given us suffering for a purpose. In this way, everyone will call upon him to show His ultimate plan. Sufferings are reminders that God dwells with the poor, the sick, the ignorant and the hopeless. Then, we should ask ourselves, "How do I respond to you, Lord?"

I realized that our very life is a gift from God. Our life is unique and worthy in the eyes of God because He created us from his own image. I posted this question to myself, "How can I be a blessing to others?" Likewise, I am joyful for the second gift He bestowed upon me, our relationship with God, a life long journey with Him.

These treasures are hidden in the field...worth everything, worth selling all to possess. We must celebrate and flourish because of these gems. In Matthew 13: 44-46 we read, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in the field which someone has found. He hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field."

Yes, indeed, my life has a purpose!

After the Retreat and this day onwards, I challenge myself with these following questions: At the prime of my life and looking back on the path I traveled, what do I want to see?

Did I walk the holy life?

Did I live my life to the fullest?

Did I fulfill God's plan?

How about you?

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

THIS IS MY STORY

By Sr. Romualda Molon, MSC

I was born in Brazil on April 19, 1938 in a rural area of Otavio Rocha, province of Caxias do Sul, the first of the ten children of Gervasio Molon and Candida Sartor. My brothers and sisters were born after me in this order: Ivo, Aldo, Irma, Maria, Terezinha, Pierina, Angelo, Jose and Darci. I was baptized with the name Diva.

I don't remember my baptism but I certainly do remember my confirmation in 1944 at the age of six and even more, my first communion when I asked the Lord if He would like me to become a sister.

I always loved the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mother Mary and I always prayed to the both of them. When I was 18, during a novena, I felt in my heart a true sense of calling to serve the Lord.

But at that time, my family was experiencing terrible difficulties. My brother Aldo had died on Feb. 23, 1956. My father was sick in the hospital in Porto Alegre. In May of that same year, my sister Irma developed polio and was paralyzed in both legs. While my mother was in the hospital with her, I was at home on the farm taking care of the rest of my brothers and sisters. My mother started to pray in the hospital to Our Lady of Caravaggio; during the novena to Our Lady, Irma started to move her legs and the doctor said "It's a miracle!"



Sr. Romy with some of the ladies living at Cabrini House.

On July 29 of that same year, on the feast of St. Martha, I started to feel a special premonition. My sister Terezinha went to Mass at 10:30 in the local chapel while I was still on the farm. Fr. Antonia Alessi arrived at the Mass with two sisters and asked Terezinha "Does Diva want to become a sister?" My sister said, "Yes, she does but not in the local sisters of St. Joseph because they are very expensive and the family doesn't have the money for the dowry." Then Father Alessi and the two sisters drove to my house to find me. The two sisters were Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart; one, Madre Lucia Rodrigues, invited me like this: "Diva, do you want to serve God with us?" I wanted to very much but I told the sister I couldn't leave my mother and my little brothers and sisters. The sister asked "Where is your mother?" and I told her she was out working on the farm. My sister Terezinha went to call her and when she arrived, Madre Lucia "May Diva come with us to be a sister and serve God?" My mother said that if that was what I really wanted to do, I could go because the Sacred Heart of Jesus would help the family. And so, I left my family and went with the sisters that same day—just like that!

CIRCLES OF DISCERNMENT CALENDAR

November 3-11:

Novena to Mother Cabrini, 6 pm daily in Casa Cabrini

November 5, Sunday:

COD in Casa Cabrini with Fr. Dict Legarde, MJ.

"Spirituality from the margins of society: Mission from the Heart of God." 1 pm to 5; Mass included

Nov 11, Saturday

Feast of Mother Cabrini. St. Joseph's Church, Pacdal. 10 am Liturgy. Golden Jubilee of Religious Life of Sr. Romualda Molon, MSC. Presentation of Cabrini Awards. Cultural presentation and lunch

Nov 15—24:

Interplast Mission, sponsored by SOSCFI, MSCs, Camp John Hay Manor at Benguet State Hospital for cranial deformities and burn victims

Dec 2-3: Advent retreats

- Saturday, Dec 2—Twilight Advent retreat, Casa Cabrini 6:30—9:30 pm, Sr. Patricia Spillane, MSC
- Sunday, Dec 3—Advent retreat for men and women in 20's-30's, cosponsored by diocesan vocation team, Maryknoll Sanctuary, 9—5; Sr. Teresa Dagdag, MM

Sunday, Jan 8:

COD Epiphany Party, 11 am Casa Cabrini; pm COD presentation on "Good Habits and Virtues for 2007."

COME JOIN US

Circles of Discernment YEAR III meets every first Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday at 1:00 pm @ Cabrini House #43 M. Roxas Street, Baguio City.

Call 074-442-6764 or 0918-342-3035 or email at ps3816@skynet.net

Interested in learning more about the Cabrinian Family throughout the world? Check us out on www.mothercabrini.org or www.cabrinifoundation.org or here in the Philippines for Save Our Street Children Foundation, Inc at <http://soscfi.tripod.com>

COD NEWS UPDATE CONTINUED....

The SOSCFI children with staff and guests outside the new center **Sr**

New SOSCFI Center inaugurated in Camdas Romy's 50 years of God's Faithfulness... Continued

Through the generosity of so many patrons who answered the call of the marginalized street children, the inauguration of the newly-acquired SOSCFI building was one of the highlights of the year on June 24, 2006



In the picture are Baguio City Mayor Brulio Yaranon with Sr. Patricia Spillane and Sr. Joan McGlinchey during the opening of the new Center.



Bishop Carlito Cenzone blesses the new SOSCFI Center

Two days later, I became a postulant in the Colegio of Madre Cabrini, Sao Paolo where I remained for nine months. Next year, 1957, I flew to Italy to make my novitiate in Ospedaletti, on the Italian Riviera Coast. As a novice I received the name "Romualda." My father died while I was a novice on Dec. 3, 1957. After one year of novitiate, I made my first vows on March 20, 1958 with twenty five other sisters. One month later, I was missioned to the United States to serve in St. Cabrini Hospital, Seattle, Washington where I served for seventeen years. During that time, I had my first home visit to Brazil, returning there in 1968, eleven years after I left my country and home. After a year's mission in New Orleans, I was transferred to Chicago where I worked in St. Cabrini Hospital for the next 20 years. I also served in Cabrini Retreat House, Des Plaines Chicago for a year. Then in 1996, I flew to New York where I served in Mother Cabrini Shrine for six years, helping all the pilgrims who come to pray at the tomb of Mother Cabrini. My mother died during that time, on August 27, 1999.

In 2002, Sr. Diane Dalle Molle, the provincial, asked for volunteer sisters for the Philippines. At first, I didn't respond, but I felt so happy that day, singing in my heart, that I resolved to volunteer for the Philippines. I arrived here on June 16, 2002 and I've been here ever since! I coordinate Casa Cabrini, do ministry in St. Joseph's Parish and am on the Board of Save Our Street Children Foundation, Inc. I enjoy my mission here—but then I've always enjoyed everywhere I've been. I love the people of the Philippines and the ladies of Casa Cabrini. When I look back on these fifty years as a Missionary Sister, I can hardly believe it. When I made my Silver Jubilee 25 years ago, I said "I'll never make the 50th!" but here I am. The years have flown by and here I am in Asia. I'm so grateful to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mother Cabrini for all the blessings and graces He has given me throughout my life and that He gives me the health and energy to continue to serve His people. Amen, Alleluia!

Lastly....

You can email us your articles, sharings, poems and reflections at

Binklette1970@yahoo.com



HAPPY FACES

DISCERNING GOD'S CALL

Drawn by the Heart of Jesus

Read more about being drawn by the Heart of Jesus at

www.motherscabrini.org/sisters/vocations/disc.asp