

**FORMATORS MEETING OF THE ORIENS REGION**  
**GUIMARAS, PHILIPPINES**  
**23-29 SEPTEMBER 2018**

1. **Formation Secretaries**

- Japanese-speaking Sub-Region – Fr David
- English-speaking Sub-Region – Fr Samuel (*elected at the beginning of the meeting to represent Sr Rosanna who could not attend the meeting*)

2. **Participants**

- Ajimu (Japan) – Sr Martha
- Gedono (Indonesia) – Sr Magda and Sr Cornelia
- Guimaras (Philippines) – Br Inaki and Fr Bruno
- Lantao (Hong Kong) – Fr Andrew
- Lamanabi (Indonesia) – Fr Gabriel
- Macau – Sr Anna Marie
- Matutum (Philippines) – Sr Vera and Sr Josie
- Nasu (Japan) – Mother Scholastica
- Nishinomiya (Japan) – Sr Rosa Maria
- Oita (Japan) – Fr Vianney
- Phare (Japan) – Br Thomas
- Rawaseneng (Indonesia) – Fr Daniel and Fr Julius
- Rosary (China) – Sr Elizabeth, Sr Stephen and Sr Yasunda
- Sujong (South Korea) – Sr Catharina
- Tarrawarra (Australia) – Fr Joseph and Fr Samuel
- Tenshien (Japan) – Sr Johanna

3. **Communities Not Represented**

- Imari (Japan)
- Kopua (New Zealand)
- Kunnambetta (India)
- Kurisumala (India)
- Shuili (Taiwan)

4. **Translators**

- Japanese-English – Fr David (Nasu)
- Japanese-English – Sr Bernarda (Nasu)
- Korean-English – Sr Josepha (Sujong)

5. **Speaker**

- Dom Giullaume, former abbot of Mont-de-Cats (France) and current chaplain at Valsarena (Italy)

6. **Statistics**

Speaker	1
Monks	11
Nuns	13
Translators	2 (not including Fr David)
Total	<b>27</b>

7. **Summary of the Meeting on 23 September 2018**

- The Formators Meeting started at 2.00pm.
- Since Sr Rosanna, the English-speaking Sub-Region Formator Secretary, could not attend the meeting, Fr Samuel was unanimously elected as one of the moderators.
- Dom Gerard, the abbot of Guimaras, welcomed all to the meeting.
- During the Orientation, all present took turns to introduce themselves.
- At the beginning of Session 1, Dom Giullaume introduced himself and was delighted to be a presenter.
- Session 1 looked at the essential spiritual elements of monastic experience of Cistercian *conversatio*. By using Patristic synthesis, Dom Giullaume linked in the quest for inner and spiritual experience (what is beautiful or *theoria*) with the rational, more elaborate expression of the faith (the truth or *orthodoxy*); an art of living that tried to express in the concrete of daily life the consequences of the logic of the Incarnation (the good or the moral).
- After supper, Rawasenang, Gedono, Lamanabi and Macau met the community of Guimaras.

8. **Summary of the Meeting on 24 September 2018**

- In Session 2, Dom Guillaume reflected on the importance of monastic life as a place of searching for something significant. He introduced 2 theological images: community as an image of the Trinity and as an image of the Transfiguration. These images will not only support us but they express our love for God. Dom Guillaume challenged us with the question: how do we use formation to help our young monks and nuns to know the love of the Trinity and be transfigured?
- At the end of the lecture, Dom Guillaume presented some questions for group discussions in Session 3. Various groups presented their reflections in Session 4.
- In Session 5, Dom Guillaume spoke in length about “beauty” or *theoria*. Beauty in the patristic tradition referred to the inner eye. It is an experience. To see or experience God, we need purity of heart. Monastic life allows us to desire this beauty. This desire to experience beauty implies a renunciation of the obstacles in our life and enables us to discover our true identity.
- After Compline, Tarrawarra and Sujong met the community of Guimaras.

9. **Summary of the Meeting on 25 September 2018**

- In Session 6, Dom Guillaume spoke about the Rule of Benedict as a way to heal our humanity. We discover who we are through the presence of God. Thus, monastic life is where we meet God and it can free us from our false self.
- At the end of the lecture, Dom Guillaume presented some questions for group discussions in Session 7. Various groups presented their reflections in Session 8.
- In Session 9, Dom Guillaume enlightened us with the question: “What does it mean to want life and desire happiness?” Sometimes in determining our choices, we experience a refusal to live an authentic life and so we desire to die. We even stubbornly repeat the same scenario of our unending suffering as if reliving and repeating it would eliminate all the opportunities offered by life. Dom Guillaume further commented on Deut 11:26-28 and Deut 30:15-20. Life leads

us to happiness and blessing while choosing death is suffering and a curse.

10. **Summary of the Meeting on 26 September 2018**

- We spent our outing at a private beach resort called “Playa de Paraiso.” Some monks and staff from the Guimaras community joined us.
- After Compline, we had supper at the coffee shop with the monks of Guimaras.

11. **Summary of the Meeting on 27 September 2018**

- Today, the format changed. We heard 4 lectures from Dom Guillaume and had the opportunity at the end of each lecture to raise questions or to make observations.
- In Sessions 10 and 11, Dom Guillaume reflected on the topic of desire. As Christians, we search for happiness. The challenge is to realize that we can be in a state of happiness without experiencing joy or pleasure. Happiness cannot be confused with joy. Newcomers continue to demonstrate this desire for happiness. We have the task to discern this with them.
- In Sessions 12 and 13, Dom Guillaume spoke about the religious life as a living interpretation of the Scriptures. The spiritual life shows us the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. Thus, monastic life is a way to hear the Holy Spirit’s promptings in us.
- After Compline, the Japanese group met the community of Guimaras.

12. **Summary of the Meeting on 28 September 2018**

- Today we returned to the original format of lecture and group discussions.
- In Session 14, Dom Guillaume shared the experience of *conversatio* as a daily struggle. The spiritual warfare is a common heritage of humankind. This is attested to both by shared experience and by the Scriptures. Dom Guillaume drew examples from the *Conferences of John Cassian*, especially the allegory of the farmer, the merchant and the soldier. He also reminded us that it is important to know the end and aim of spiritual warfare in our monastic journey.

- At the end of the lecture, Dom Guillaume presented some questions for group discussions in Session 15. Various groups presented their reflections in Session 16.
- In Session 17, Dom Guillaume highlighted the aspect of monastic life as a promise and the tendency in us to transfer this promise into a project. Then, he gave a few interesting interpretations of the sacrifice of Isaac in the book of Genesis and the stubbornness of Pharaoh in the book of Exodus. Finally, the Scriptures can be a book of experience for those in formation to discover themselves in the Scriptures and help them to progress in the monastic life.
- After Compline, a farewell party was held in the beautiful garden of the guesthouse. We had a great time interacting with the monks and staff of the Guimaras community. It rained heavily suddenly but that did not dampen the spirits of all those present. The staff graciously performed some Filipino dances including some modern upbeat dances. After that, some communities performed some songs and even a magic show.

### 13. **Summary of the Meeting on 29 September 2018**

- In the Final Session, a vote of thanks was made to Dom Guillaume.
- After a group photo, we broke into various language groups to discuss the following questions: (a) Propose 3 possible venues for the next Formators Meeting in 2021, (b) Propose some names for the speaker at the next Formators Meeting in 2021 and (c) Evaluation of the Formators Meeting in Guimaras.
- The language groups returned 20 minutes later and presented their suggestions and reflections.
- The Formators Meeting officially ended at 9.00am.

### 14. **Gratitude**

- We are thankful for the Guimaras community for organizing the Formators Meeting.

Prepared by Fr David and Fr Samuel

7 October 2018