

# ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT NEWSLETTER

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### FROM BISHOP DOLAN

My dear Friends,

In November two "Home Alone" women died, and I offered Mass for them both. One of them had returned to the Mass and sacraments already a number of years ago, the other never did. This odd movement, understandable in a way given the great confusion of an eclipsed Church for sixty years, takes its toll particularly on the children and grandchildren. Having known nothing of Catholic life, of Mass and Sacraments, it is easy for them to abandon the readings and lectures which are all that are left to them. Father Cekada wrote one of his first articles on Home Aloners, *Canon Law and Common Sense*, followed by two others on the same subject. This is an excellent way to do missionary work today. Using these principles, our priests have worked with individuals and families, and brought them back to the Sacraments.

I thought of this subject recently, when Bergoglio's visit to Japan occasioned a spate of interesting articles on the Hidden Christians, the Kakure Krishitan, who went underground when the persecutions began in 1630. Some of them never came up, others joyfully welcomed the returning French Missionaries in the 19th century. Some Catholics during the changes tried to justify their Home Alone position by citing the case of the Japanese Christians, surviving for centuries, they claimed, with out priest or sacraments. But still today the old underground movement, thoroughly syncretic, a blend of Buddhism, Shintoism, and ancestor worship, carries on its curious priest-less rites and beliefs. Obviously Bergoglio's cup of tea. I wonder what fate awaits the descendants of the original Home Aloners? Already they have dispersed to the Novus Ordo or nothing but a vague memory of the Faith. Some have found their way back to Catholic priests and sacraments, as did those Christians in 1830.

They say that Bergoglio, as a young Jesuit, once wanted to be a missionary to Japan. That's hard to picture, because he doesn't believe in converting people to the Faith. Well, the Faith was very much on my mind this fall as I made my first visit to the Philippines in October. A few days at Father Soliman's chapel in Manila would not necessarily yield any converts, but the lasting fruit of a bishop's work may never be known. My more modest but critically important goal was to give the Holy Ghost in the sacrament of Confirmation to about twenty Catholics, almost half the regular Sunday attendance. Secondly, I prayed to confirm all the brethren in the



*His Excellency, Bishop Dolan administers the sacrament of confirmation during the course of his early October visit to Father Soliman's chapel located in Manilla, Philippines.*

Faith by my visit, and encourage them in this distant outpost of Catholicism. It also provided the people with an opportunity to confess to an outside priest.

It was a 14 hour trip from Los Angeles, but well worth it. The plane's landing was unforgettable as we slowly passed through nearby clouds of the most fantastic shapes. High security measures are in effect at the airport. Father Soliman and the faithful were obliged to wait for me across the street, behind a fence. Some kind soul saw my momentary confusion and helped me find my way. The Philippines is still in many ways a profoundly Catholic country, as Ireland was only forty

PLEASE COMPLETE THE ENCLOSED FORM AND SEND US THE NAMES OF LOVED ONES, AND YOUR OWN INTENTIONS TOO, TO REST ON THE ALTAR DURING OUR **Christmas Novena of Masses.**

*Remember the power of the Mass, God's best gift to us!  
Are you having a long wait or worse for your Masses?  
Send us your intentions and one of our poor missionary priests will offer your Mass within the month!*

years ago. It took us forever to get to the hotel. Traffic in Manila, I soon learned, is impossible. But we used the time well, Father Soliman and I did, to get acquainted. Former members of the Pius X Society of a certain era always have a lot in common. It was a pleasure getting to know him, and his work in Manila, with its heartaches as well as its solid foundation.

Sacred Heart Chapel is located on a narrow street and goes up rather than out, for lack of space. The chapel is small but unusually beautiful, a rich jewel in its tiny setting. Confessions on Friday afternoon were the first order of the day. An hour later I was preparing for Mass and sermon, with the help of two very competent young servers. Afterwards there was a meal at a nearby home. There's always a meal, I learned, as the people are very sociable, generous and gregarious, providing us with an impressive spread of tasty local dishes to sample.

The twelve hour jet lag was in the background, but I managed fairly well, grateful to be speaking English. The locals also speak their own dialect, or Tagalog. Saturday we had a recollection for Confirmation in addition to confessions, Mass and a meal in the little church hall and kitchen, through which one enters.

Sunday's beautifully sung Gregorian high Mass and Confirmations went well, and were followed by a more formal meal. Then the children delighted me with an informal, but charming, entertainment. Soon it was time for the scheduled conference, and an extended Q&A session. By now I had a chance to greet and visit with most of the devoted faithful.

Monday we had a final Mass and, I was not surprised to see that breakfast for everybody had miraculously appeared. The Manila traffic, however, did not yield to any miracles. We were forced to abandon our plans to see the historical city center, and to head for the heavily secured airport. There was time, however, for... one more meal! I will not soon forget the warm hearted generosity of the Manila faithful, and do hope to visit them again.

Soon it will be time for the Infant King to visit us for His birthday. May your Christmas be blessed!

– **Most Rev. Daniel L. Dolan**



*(Top) Three of Father Soliman's young flock who received their First Holy Communion from Bishop Dolan pose for a picture. (Above) Bishop Dolan flanked by Father Soliman and servers reminds both confirmands and sponsors of their duties. (Below) Following the confirmation ceremony, Bishop Dolan posed with the newly confirmed soldiers of Christ for the traditional group picture.*

