

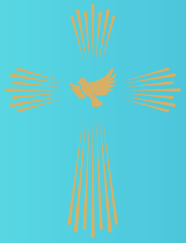


PILGRIMS OF HOPE

**REV. MANUEL HEWE
SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR**

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August 10-26



Dear CCST Pilgrims of Hope,

Mahalo to all of you!

We give glory and praise to God for the fifteen-day pilgrimage we have shared and are grateful for our safe travels and arrivals. Such blessings far outweigh the pains and challenges of early wakeups, short sleeps, hotel discomforts, and long travels.

We also thank our Blessed Mother Mary and our patron, St. Therese of the Child Jesus, whose presence and intercession have guided us along the way.

We are grateful for all the dedicated individuals of A & A Travel and Tours, especially Arlene and Krista, Jenny, and Manang Nita, as well as partner agencies, whose efforts and assistance made this pilgrimage successful. Their labor of love in organizing, planning, and guiding was indispensable in facilitating our travels.

I am sharing insights from the Word of God in all the Holy Masses we celebrated together. I hope this will help you reflect further on the many encounters that you have had. As you return to your daily lives, the spiritual fruits of your pilgrimage continue to resonate within you.

Let us strive to embody the light and inspiration we have received to become beacons of hope for those around us.

God bless you!

Fr. Manny Hewe



Day 1, August 12, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Baclaran, Manila

Readings: Deuteronomy 31:1-8, Psalm Deut. 32:3-4,7,8,9; Matthew 18:1-5,10,12-14

Grace to ask: Virtue of humility

“Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven” (Mat 18:3).

As Pilgrims, our Lord Jesus gently remind us that the key to enter the Kingdom of heaven is to humble ourselves, to choose to be small like children.

The decision and choice to be like children is to learn simplicity and humility. Simplicity and humility are the soil which the grace of God grows.



Day 2, August 13, St. Joseph, the Worker Church, Pascal, Baguio

Readings: Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Psalm 66:1-3, 5 & 8, 16-17; Matthew 18:15-20

Grace to ask: to be on fire with God's love

"Blessed be God who filled my soul with fire!"

The fire that God will bless us with is the fire of his love. This fire of love perpetually purifies our soul. It is our prayer to the Holy Spirit:

"Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth."

With this prayer and our every act of charity, every time we forgive and every time we ask for forgiveness, our soul is purified. When our soul is purified, peace reigns in our hearts.

In the Holy Mass, we ritualize this before singing the Lamb of God and receiving the Body of Jesus. We say: "Peace be with you. And with your spirit. Let us share to one another the sign of peace."

As Pilgrims, our pilgrimage is also the pilgrimage of peace. We bring peace wherever we go.

The Gospel speaks of the practice of peace. Peace is not the absence of conflict. It is the presence of Jesus in our lives. It provides us with "the order of things" or "the hierarchy of things" to address conflict. It is one of the ways our Lord teaches us to practice.

Here are the order of things: If we have a problem with our neighbor, we talk to him individually about the differences or conflicts. If that doesn't work, we'll take another person with us. Only after this has been done we seek a remedy by authority. If this doesn't work, we turn to Jesus and pray for that person. And so, If someone hurts us but never asks for forgiveness, pray to Jesus for the person who offended us.

When we use this "gospel order of things" in dealing with conflict, we can prevent further harm to one another. Consequently, when it becomes our habit, we become a person of peace.

"Blessed be God who filled my soul with fire!"



Day 3, August 14, Santa Maria Church, Ilocos Sur

Readings: Joshua 3:7-10, 11,13-17; Psalm 114:1-2,3-4,5-6; Matthew 18:21-19:1

Grace to ask: to have a forgiving heart

Why forgive?

Because we are not meant to hate, we are created to love. Because Jesus commanded us to forgive. To forgive is to release ourselves from the burden.

God only forgives us when we forgive others from the heart, and we cannot enter heaven when we don't forgive.

One of the worst and ungodly things we do to others is when we use the name of God to punish them, such as, "I pray that God will punish you." A slight expression of this ungodly prayer is "makarma ka sana."

Let us remember that Jesus never taught us to pray like this. He taught us to pray for our persecutors and wish for their conversion (cf. Mat. 5:44).

However, when these thoughts enter our minds, we should immediately say, "Lord, Jesus, forgive me."

The Gospel deals with the issue of forgiveness. Even though we pray in The Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us," we always find it difficult to forgive. What do we do when we can't forgive someone? How do we eliminate the emotional block that kills our best effort to forgive?

I want to offer three suggestions:

First, we have to ask Jesus for the grace to forgive. "Lord Jesus, have mercy; make my heart like yours." Humans, as we are, naturally tend to take revenge, get even, and hit back either by being aggressive or passive and indifferent to the person.

Only by the grace of Jesus crucified on the cross can we find the strength to forgive.

The second way to handle the problem is to sit down in God's presence and recall how often God has forgiven us. Before God, we humbly acknowledge: "I am a forgiven sinner. Why can't I forgive?" God has forgiven us infinitely more than he asks us to forgive others. The very least we can do in return is to reach out to our brothers and sisters and offer forgiveness.

There is a third way to handle the problem. It is to see those who have hurt us in a different light. It is changing perspective or taking a long standing look.

Like Jesus, who prayed on the cross for his executioners: "Father, forgive them! They don't know what they are doing" (Lk. 23:34). Our Lord Jesus saw them in a different light. He saw beyond their external appearance. He saw them as broken and wounded people needing healing and integration. He saw them as children of His Father who had lost their way.

With this perspective, we decide not to go down to their level. But to elevate them in prayer.

Let us seek God's grace that murmuring, complaining and cursing will not take over our hearts, but the forgiveness inspired from the sacred heart of Jesus.

Jesus make our hearts like yours. Amen.



Day 4, August 15, St. Andrew Church Feast of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary

Readings: Revelation 11:19, 12:1-6,10; Psalm 45:10,11,12,16; 1 Corinthians 15:20-27; Luke 1:39-56

Grace to ask: to be faithful in imitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Blessed Virgin Mary's Assumption is a culmination of a life of fidelity. It is the realization of God's promise of eternity and the confirmation of the words of Jesús that there are many rooms in his Father's house, and we shall be with him someday.

Where Mary has gone, we hope to follow.

It is a given reality that we will always encounter adversities and trials as we strive live faithful lives. Indeed, this is expressed in one of our ancient prayers, Salve Regina: "Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, hear our life, our sweetness and our hope, to you, do we send up our sighs mourning and weeping in this valley of tears."

So, it is profoundly comforting that while we carry our struggles, we reflect the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which teaches us that the same reward of a glorious life awaits all who are faithful to Christ.

Let us hold on to this truth that every moment of faithful discipleship, which was unseen by others, is seen by God. Every interior struggle against temptation, which the world will never know, is known by God. Every good intention that the world misunderstands is thoroughly understood by God. Every act of goodness invisible to the world is visible to God. The Assumption means that our full and final reward is with God. And while in this valley of tears, Mary's Assumption assures us of hope that she is with us in the battles of our earthly life.

Today's first reading from the Book of Revelation describes a woman of the sun and stars who escapes the destruction of the dragon (cf.Rev. 12:1-6).This woman is Mary.

Every generation and every life has its struggle with the dragon. Symbolically, we have our fight with the dragon in our lives—temptation, addiction, unhealthy relationships, brokenness, etc. The Blessed Virgin Mary helps us in our battles with this dragon. We petition her as our advocate to intercede for us now and at the hour of our death.

The Assumption shows us that the body follows the soul. Ultimately, our bodies will be raised to be reunited with our souls.

In the Assumption of Mary, we see that our hope, limitations, inner division, and isolation will all be healed and fulfilled in God. The deepest hunger of the human heart here on earth cannot be satisfied by the things of earth but by God alone.

We thank God for all the graces he conferred upon the Blessed Virgin Mary and for giving her to us as our Mother.

May we honor her by doing our best to live as she lived - a life of love and holiness in the service of God and others.



Day 5, August 16, St. Andrews Church, Baccarra

Readings: Joshua 24:14-29; Psalm 16:1-2 & 5,7-8,11; Matthew 19:13-15

Grace to ask: to embrace the disposition of a child-like

We have two gentle reminders today from the first reading and the Gospel.

Joshua asked the pilgrim Israel, “Decide today whom you will serve” (Josh 24:14). The people responded: “We will serve the Lord, our God, and obey his voice” (Jos. 24:24). It is also our response.

In the Gospel, our Lord Jesus reprimanded his disciples who prevented the children coming close to him, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt 19:14).

His words remind us of a necessary disposition of being a child.

One big stumbling block in serving God and achieving the Kingdom of Heaven is pride. God cannot reveal Himself if we are proud and saturated with worldly wisdom. He reveals himself to the children or childlike. To be like a child is not about age. It is a spiritual reality. Whether you are 20, 40, 50, 60, 70, or 80, you are a child.

Being a child-like is to live with HOPE — Humble, Open, Prayerful, and Eager to learn.

“Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Our Lord Jesus is actually describing himself. He is describing his own experience.

When we look at Christ's life, we see how he emptied himself. Though he is the Son of God, he emptied himself of this legitimate dignity. He opted to be small and insignificant as he inaugurated the kingdom of God. In his life, he prayed a lot. He prayed as a child dependent on the Father. And even before he died, he was totally a child entrusting his life into the hands of the Father.

Whether Jesus was an infant in the manger, a twelve-year-old in the temple, or a thirty-three-year-old hanging on the cross after fulfilling his mission, Jesus remained a child.

So Jesus, the one who brought salvation, the one who brought the kingdom of God, was a child. And he expects those who want to be part of this kingdom to be like him, a child like him.

Our Lord's perpetual invitation to all is “learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart” (Matt 11:29).

Our pilgrimage should lead us to the heart of who we are, as children of God, we are created, children we ought to behave as children, and children we shall return to him.

To be childlike is to live with HOPE—to be humble, Open, Prayerful, and Eager to learn.



Day 6, August 17, St. Joseph Church, Dingras

Readings: Jeremiah 38:4-6,8-10; Psalm 40:2,3,4,18; Hebrews 12:1-4; Luke 12:49-53

Grace to ask: to have heart to care like Jesus

The Collect Prayer this Sunday repeats the truth that we already knew.

"O God, who have prepared for those who love you good things which no eye can see, fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love, so that, loving you in all things and above all things, we may attain your promises, which surpass every human desire."

We claim that God prepares for us good things which no eye can see. And we ask for his divine love to warm us that we may love him above all things and attain his glory in heaven.

One of the youth groups in Hawaii chose a catchy caption printed on their t-shirts. It was printed in pidgin English: "Yo no care? Jesu cares! I care!"

The caption calls for doing what is right and holy. It is shout out of the youth to all not to be complacent.

As Jesus' disciples, we all care, just as Jesus did. We care about the truth and the love of God and our neighbors. But the devil doesn't want us to care for the truth and the love of God and neighbor. The devil's schemes are to discourage us and sow doubt in us when troubles come and adversaries surround us.

It is good to be disturbed by discouragement and doubt; otherwise, the devil will successfully make us complacent. When discouragement and doubt enter our minds, we need to pray immediately; say one Our Father and Hail Mary, and then take a long, standing look.

If our Lord Jesus cares for the truth, and the Love of God and neighbor, then I care.

Jeremiah cared for the truth and the love of God and neighbor. He spoke out against corruption and the mistreatment of the poor and condemned deceitful prophets.

Because some didn't care for the truth, love of God and neighbor, he was imprisoned and thrown into a cistern and left to die. Eventually, the king changed his mind and sent someone to rescue Jeremiah, possibly influenced by his proclaimed truth.

Similarly, the Letter to the Hebrews cares so much that we live like Jesus, to carry and endure our cross; and persevere in our journey. It assured us that we are surrounded by a "cloud of witnesses"—the saints and faithful departed who will intercede for us.

At times, we may be tempted to complain about the hardships we face as followers of Christ. The Book of Hebrews presents a thought-provoking statement: "In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood" (Heb. 12:4). In simpler terms, this means that if we haven't shed blood yet, what are we complaining about? Instead of dwelling on complaints, the Book of Hebrews encourages us to fix our eyes on Jesus, who endured the cross and is the leader who will perfect our faith.

In the Gospel, our Lord Jesus cares so much for the world to be on fire to witness the truth, the love of God, and the love of neighbor. But Jesus was clear about adversaries and conflicts when witness the truth, the love of God, and the love of neighbor.

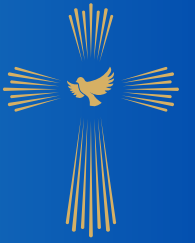
In a world characterized by deception, the truth will always be divisive; in a society marked by a culture of death, the truth will always be disruptive; and in families struggling with sin, the truth will always disturb. While the truth can hurt, it ultimately sets us free.

Let us remember, that the Good News of Jesus is meant to change us and transform our lives—not just to make us nice or good people but to make us saints; to prepare us for heaven.

Let me pray again for you the Collect prayer:

O God, who have prepared for those who love you good things which no eye can see, fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love, so that, loving you in all things and above all things, we may attain your promises, which surpass every human desire.

"Yo no care? Jesus care! We care!"



Day 7, August 18, 2025, Shrine of our Lady of Manaoag

Readings: Judges 2:11-19; Psalm 106:34-36,36-37,39-40, 43; Matthew 19:16-22

Grace to ask: to have a heart-free from all inordinate attachments

The man in our Gospel appeared to be excited to approach Jesus. He asked the right question: "What must I do to possess everlasting life?"

But he later went away sad when he heard our Lord Jesus' response: "Go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven."

He was sad because his excitement was suddenly spoiled by the demand of Jesus. He could not understand why his wealth which is a blessing of life has to be sold and give all the proceeds to the poor.

For our Lord, letting go of what we possess and helping the poor are essential means to have everlasting life.

Like the man in the Gospel, we all have difficulty on fulfilling the demand of Jesus.

Letting go does not come naturally to many people. It is easier to accumulate than to let go, just as it is easier to gain than to lose weight.

St. John of the Cross once said that what is more crucial is not what we possess but what possesses us.

It is not easy to let go, but it can be done. The spiritual disciplines of the Church during Lent, such as fasting, abstinence, penance, and works of mercy, are means of letting go and letting God.

Here's a thing: The words of our Lord invite us to adopt a specific pattern of life. This consists of our choices of having and owning what is necessary to live with dignity.

This is the wisdom of "as far as or as long as."

You can have and own a thing as long as it helps you live with dignity. You can have and own a thing as long as it helps you to be generous. You can have and own a thing as long as it enables you to attain eternal life.

God, in his mysterious way, will provide us with an opportunity to let go. Always expect that there will be moments when God awakens you to realize what is necessary and holy to do. Always expect that this will happen in your life.

We have been visiting Churches, and many of us may have been asking for something from God. How about we pray to let go or give up something instead of praying to receive something?

What is it you want to let go of or give up?

Letting go of what we possess is setting our hearts free.



Day 8, August 19, Basilica of Sto. Nino, Cebu

Readings: Judges 6:11-24a; Psalm 85:9, 11-12, 13-14; Matthew 19:23-30

Grace to ask: A heart-free from inordinate attachments

Someone said that we all have a clinging heart. We cling to something, person, pet, or thing. The attachment varies in different levels or degrees. It is a natural human tendency. It is beautiful to be attached to something or someone.

While it may be beautiful experience, it can be harmful when it leads us away from our journey to heaven or when it replaces our worship of God.

Yesterday, we heard the story of a rich young man who followed the law all his life. But went away sad because he has a lot of possessions. He was inordinately attached to his wealth. The door became too tight for him to enter the Kingdom of God.

Detachment is one of the ideal Christian dispositions towards material things. Being detached is to be free. It is an attitude of being a child-like.

Remember, Jesus said unless we become children we cannot enter the kingdom of God. Those who practice the spirit of detachment welcome God's reign in their lives.

We grow with what we embrace or live out. It is an ecology of grace.



Day 9, August 20

Immaculate Concepcion Church, Baclayon Bohol

Readings: Judges 9:6-15; Psalm 21:2-3, 4-5, 6-7; Matthew 20:1-16

Grace to ask: the joy of appreciating the gift of others

Our Lord Jesús reminds us, or better yet, teaches us, of God's too unbounded love for all.

The parable of the vineyard workers tells us of the immeasurable generosity of the landowner who invites all kinds of people to work in his vineyard.

However, he is not only hiring people to work in his vineyard; he also wishes those who worked with him would join him to rejoice and celebrate that others came to work and received his goodness despite arriving late.

His loving treatment of all causes bickering and jealousy among the workers. Some workers were unhappy that others received the same wage despite being late.

Jesús concluded the parable with a question: Are you envious because I am generous? These words could also be said as, "Do you have an evil eye?"

Now the story became the story of the listener, our story. It is a question also for us to personally answer. Are you envious?

Envy is a dangerous vice. Envy consumes itself, like rust that consumes iron. St. James warns that where jealousy and ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice." (James 3:16)

It is one of the seven capital sins along with pride, avarice, lust, greed, covetousness, and sloth.

How do you handle when you are envious?

1. To realize that envy is a terrible source of dismal tribulation

- the first victim of envious is the envious one.
- It is a kind of boomerang; when thrown at another, it circles back to the one who hurled it.

2. Sense of Humor. Laugh at yourself.

- To offer just one sample in the area of personal ambition:

"If I am the best athlete this town has, poor town."

"If I am the best musician God has, poor God."

3. A single-minded love for God and for the common good.

- appreciation for "the gifts and the quality of our brothers and sisters in our community."
- When I am jealous, I must say to the Lord: 'Thank you, Lord, for you have given this to that person.'

When this becomes our habit, we enter into the heart of the vineyard owner who provides opportunity for others, truly cares for the person's well-being, and blesses others with his generosity.

We may sometimes be envious, but we can prevent it from stealing our joy of living by practicing the three spiritual discipline above.



Day 10, August 21

St. Jude Thaddeus Church, Malavar Davao

Readings: Judges 11:39; Psalm 40:5, 7-8a, 8b-9, 10; Matthew 22:1-14

Grace to ask: wearing and living out the white cloth garment of baptism

During the Mass before communion, we hear the words: “Happy are those who are called to his supper.”

These words are taken from the Book of Revelation (19:9), which describes the wedding supper of the Lamb. It symbolizes the intimate union of our Lord Christ with his people.

We are perpetually invited to this union. But God’s invitation forces no one. He does not impose, he proposes, and he is relentless.

The gospel tells us about this. The king sent out his servants to deliver the invitation, but the invited guests refused to come.

Imagine it is a royal wedding! It would be foolish to refuse. How could they miss such a celebration?

But they were no more ridiculous than those who refused to live with God.

God continues to offer his invitation to everyone. This is spoken well in Eucharistic Prayer IV: “Even when he disobeyed you and lost your friendship, you did not abandon him to the power of death. . . . Again and again you offered a covenant to man.”

Did you know we were given a wedding garment for the first time when we were baptized? It marked our official invitation into God’s Kingdom. With the giving of the white cloth, we were entrusted with dignity as children of God, temples of the Holy Spirit, and members of the mystical Body of Christ.

What a tremendous honor! But with this honor comes a great responsibility. We are saints in the making!

Today’s parable reminds us that God longs for our homecoming to his kingdom. He is persistent and relentless in his invitation. In the meantime, our priority is to respond to His love.

Each time we reach out to help others, we make visible the “white garment” that represents our faith. The Holy Eucharist nourishes, strengthens, and renews this gift within us. It enables us to rise when called upon by God to be his love.

It is a grace bestowed by the Lord to anyone who humbly lives in his house all the days of their lives!

Let us pray that we carry ourselves with dignity while wearing the white garment of Christ’s love.

Let us strive each day to become the most beautiful versions of ourselves in God’s eyes.



Day 11, August 22

Abbey of Transfiguration, Malaybalay Bukidnon

Our Lady, Mother and Queen

Readings: Ruth 1:1, 3-6, 14b-16, 22; Psalm 146:5-6ab, 6c-7, 8-9a, 9bc-10; Matthew 22:34-40

Grace to ask: learning to give our all for the love of God

We are to love God with all our heart, mind, body, and soul, and our neighbor as ourselves.

The story of Ruth and Naomi exemplified this giving all for love.

Ruth is a daughter in-law of Naomi. After the famine Naomi's husband, Elimelech, died, then later her two sons. She advice Ruth to go back of her people because of financial difficulty. But Ruth decided to remain, she said the profound covenanted love, "For wherever you go, I will go, wherever you lodge I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God my God."

Ruth is a model of all daughters-in-law. She embodies the unquestionable faithfulness and everlasting love. If one has this kind of daughter-in-law, one is super blessed.

The gospel echoes Ruth's all-out love for God — to love God with everything in us, not with some or part of our heart, mind, and soul, but with everything in us, entirely, completely, and our neighbor as ourselves.

We often struggle to fulfill this giving all of us for the love of God. We sometimes hear the advice of some people not to give everything. Leave something for yourself.

However, these are not the values of Jesus. There is a close connection between what we do to our neighbor whom we see and what we do to God whom we cannot see.

The love of God cannot co-exist with indifference toward the exploitation of the weak and defenseless. It cannot coexist with passive and cold treatment with others.

I think we knew this giving all for love. This requires daily self-examination and conversion because there are small or big denials we commit in genuinely loving God.

We grow in this love only through our constant acts of love, through repeated acts of kindness. If these become a habit, they become more frequent, intense, generous, tender, and cheerful; then and only then are we growing towards giving our all.



Day 12, August 23

St. Augustine Metropolitan Cathedral, Cagayan De Oro

Reading :Ruth 2:1-3, 8-11; 4:13-17; Psalm 128:1b-2, 3, 4, 5; Matthew 23:1-12

Grace to ask: Humility of heart

The great doctor St. Augustine said, “Exelsia et patria, humilis et via.” In English, “Great is the fatherland, humble is the way.”

We journey to our eternal destiny through humility.

Remember, not all saints shed their blood, not all have the opportunity to donate a significant amount to the poor, not all are virgins, not all are teachers and doctors, but all are humble.

It is our Lord’s personal invitation to all. He said, “learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.”

We are all saints in the making, but the devil hates to make it happen. He takes advantage of human weakness by deceiving and attracting us to his known devices, one of which is pride.

Lucifer fell from heaven because of pride.

God will take away the blessing from the proud and give it to the humble.

God blessed Ruth’s humble care for her mother-in-law, Naomi. She married Boaz, a rich man. They had a child, Obed, the great-grandfather of King David.

“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” We have heard this reminder many times. And, including me, we have failed many times.

In the eyes of the Gospel, self-exaltation is a useless effort. It merely values external appearance, not interior quality.

Our Lord Jesus wants us to avoid it because it is not the way of heaven and will lead to our downfall.

Humility is his way!

The story of our faith begins with humility and proceeds with humility. God humbles and lowers Himself: He comes among us, lowers Himself, and remains humble even to the Cross.

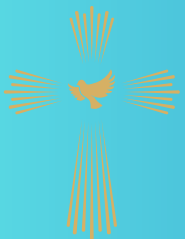
He continues to humble himself through a small white appearance of the Holy Eucharist. Indeed, the Holy Eucharist is filled with the ritual of humility: the confiteor (striking our breast three times), the offertory (may the Lord accept the sacrifice we offer for the good...), the Our Father, which is the prayer of the humble. before receiving Communion, (Lord, I am not worthy...)

Humility is not about casting eyes down. Unlike pride, which often makes a person boast of what he is not and denies what he is, humility is integrity, sincerity, and honesty. Without humility to publicly acknowledge our sins, we cannot attain salvation. We cannot effectively proclaim Christ or pretend to be his witness without humility.

Humility makes us real (totoong tao). It not only makes us real, but it creates in us a capacity for the closest possible intimacy with God. Remember Jesus’ direct invitation, “learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart.”

It is significantly important to know ourselves, for to know ourselves is to know the Lord. Let us make the prayer of St. Augustine our prayer: "Lord, let me know myself; let me know You".

“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”



Day 13, August 24

Shrine of the Divine Mercy, El Salvador, Cagayan de Oro City

Readings: Isaiah 66:18–21; Psalm 117:1, 2; Hebrews 12:5–7, 11–13; Luke 13:22–30

Grace to ask: to strive to enter the narrow door

One of the old priests used to reply when ask, “where are you going Father, he will say, “I am going out today to fight the devil.”

I find this funny at first hearing, but it means something. It means an active awareness of my Christian life. Awareness of my weaknesses is where the devil can use to ruin my walk of faith.

One of the powerful images of a Church is from the old teachings of our Christian tradition: three states of Church: suffering, triumphant, militant.

Lord, will only a few people be saved?” Jesus did not answer the question directly, but his answer goes deeper: not how many are saved, but how one attains salvation... not the quantity but the quality of life. Jesus' answer to this question is direct and straightforward: “Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough.”

A specific condition is given to us: STRIVE. Strive to enter through the narrow door... to go all out, make every effort; to make something happen, give our very best, fight vigorously, and pursue with zeal.

We cannot sit back and take our salvation for granted. Meaning that only those who are willing and prepared to make a serious effort will enter it. We can't expect to triumph for the Lord if we are out of shape. The best way to achieve unity with God is through the frequent reception of the Eucharist.

Strive to enter through the narrow gate/door. Enduring life's trials makes us strong. But it is more worth enduring to live our Christian life faithfully and meaningfully because it promises eternal life.

Let us consider the old priest's awareness: "I am going out today to fight the devil." How about you?

Let us make the Act of Contrition our prayer today: “Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, bring all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of your divine mercy.”



Day 14, August 25

Black Nazarene Church, Quiapo, Manila

Readings: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5, 8b-10; Psalm 149:1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b; Matthew 23:13-22

Grace to ask: Purity of heart

I did an experiment in front of the mirror, I uttered the words love, honesty, kindness, faithfulness.

Then I said the word hypocrisy, and repeated it many times. Consequently, my mouth became stiff and rigid.

We surely will have difficulty with the word, and how much more with the person.

The word hypocrisy comes from the Greek word Hupokrisis, which means acting in a theatrical part.

There is no question that the Lord is more understanding of sins committed in moments of human weakness than those resulting from deliberate efforts to deceive God, one's neighbor, and oneself.

Our Lord Jesus never condemned sins of the flesh as harshly and intensely as he condemned the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes.

His words: woe to you! It is a denunciation of sin and a severe warning.

Our Lord likened the person to whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead bones and every kind of filth.

I think this is the most dangerous sin of the religious person at any time.

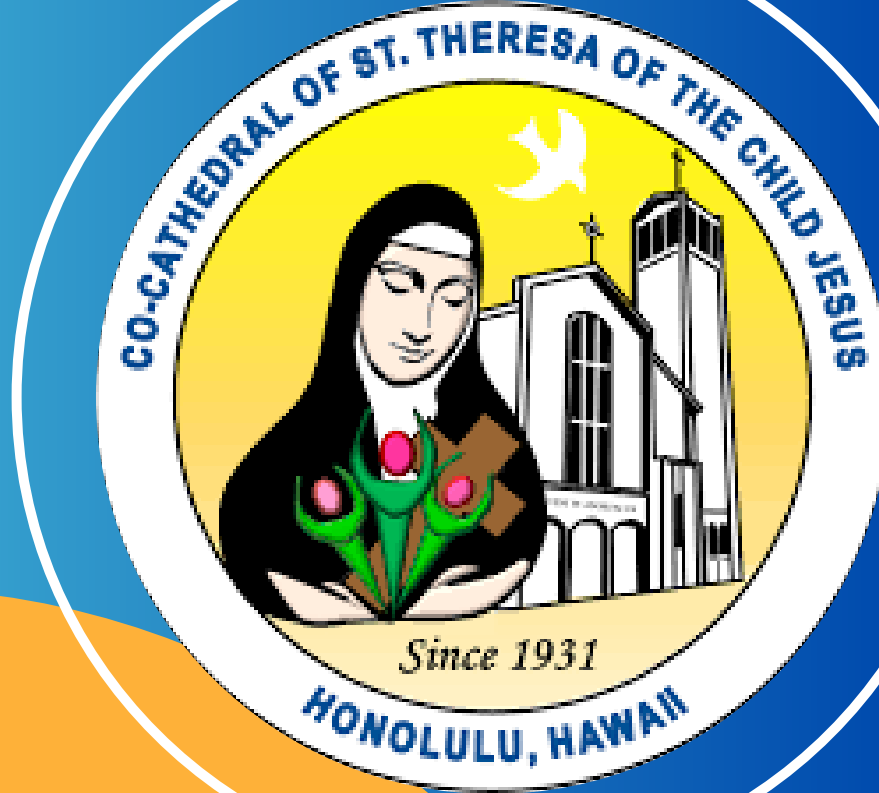
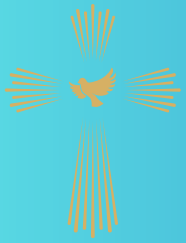
It can happen to any of us when we become too concerned for the exterior and too little for the interior, when we become too concerned for appearances and too little for what matters of the heart.

Let us humbly recognize that the more committed we are to our Christian faith, the greater the danger of falling into the same trap and seeing ourselves on a higher level than others whose behavior we deplore and perhaps even attack.

Let us be aware of this danger at any time we become what we are not. We are not actors and actresses of good words and deeds. We are children of good words and deeds.

Let us pray, Lord, You have searched me and know me. Help me to be honest and sincere in my actions. Amen.





Pilgrims of Hope

In our world beset with uncertainty and pervasive doubt, hope is essential. Hope helps us navigate the complexities of life, choosing to walk by faith rather than sight. It is our steadfast anchor through trials and tribulations, strengthening us through tumultuous waters and illuminating our way.

Our hope has a name, Jesus. He is our guiding light—a beacon that dispels the shadows of despair. This hope empowers us to embrace challenges, recognize growth opportunities, and foster resilience in adversity.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of Hope. We entrust ourselves to her maternal help toward a purposeful and meaningful existence.

As we march forward as Pilgrims of Hope, we ask the intercession of our patron saint. St. Therese of the Child Jesus, pray for us!



2025 PILGRIMS PARTICIPANTS



*Mr. Earl Morita and
Ms. Cecilia Morita*



*Mr. Richard Chor Jr. and
Ms. Mary Anne Chow*



*Mr. Allan Kuanna and
Ms. May Kuanna*



*Mr. Orie Butac and
Ms. Gloria Butac*



*Mr. Manuel Sumibcay and
Ms. Delia Sumibcay*

2025 PILGRIMS PARTICIPANTS

*Mr. Eliseo Aguada and
Ms. Andrea Aguada*



*Mr. Fidel Palpallatoc and
Ms. Elizabeth Palpallatoc*



*Mr. Leonides Ablan and
Ms. Gloria Ablan*



*Ms. Juana Silveria and
Ms. Marina Arata (sisters)*



*Ms. Reynata Ulep and
Ms. Yolanda Ulep (sisters)*



2025 PILGRIMS PARTICIPANTS



*Ms. Jovita Ungos and Ms.
Mary-Cris Alviar (Mother
and Daughter)*



*Ms. Minda Robinol and
Ms. Arcenia Pasion (sisters)*



*Ms. Christine Messer and
Ms. Bethany Messer
(Mother and Daughter)*



*Ms. Gloria Bernal and
Ms. Veronica Aurellano
(sisters)*



Ms. Corazon Abad

2025 PILGRIMS PARTICIPANTS

Ms. Ceferina Pasion



Ms. Lydia Olario



Ms. Carmen Mae Vierra



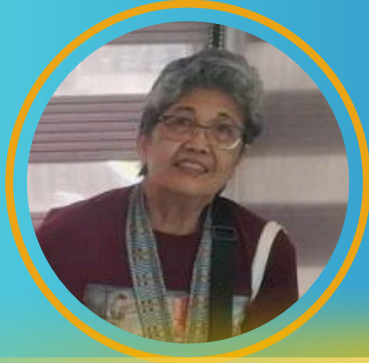
Ms. Emma De Leon



Ms. Priscilla Lucas



2025 PILGRIMS PARTICIPANTS



Ms. Minerva Rabacal



Mr. Felipe Tan



Ms. Jennifer Asuncion



Ms. Juanita Ayag



Fr. Manuel Heve

MESSAGE OF LOVE

Pilgrims of Hope – August 11-26, 2025

Joining the CCST Pilgrims of Hope was a truly blessed and unforgettable journey. Together with fellow pilgrims, we traveled across Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao—visiting sacred churches, deepening our faith, and walking in unity as saints in the making. With the spiritual guidance of Fr. Manny Hewe and the loving presence of Tita Nita Ayag, this pilgrimage became more than just a tour—it was a journey of the heart and soul. Along the way, we grew not only spiritually, but also in friendship, forming lasting bonds that reflect the love of Christ. Despite sleepless nights and physical exhaustion, every step was filled with grace and joy—because we journeyed not for ourselves, but for the Lord. As our beloved patron, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, reminds us: “I will spend my heaven doing good on earth.” This pilgrimage inspired us to live with childlike faith, humility, and great love. I thank God for the gift of this sacred journey. Everything we experienced was by His grace. Walking alongside my fellow pilgrims was a true blessing—each one a unique soul, full of joy, humor, and generosity. We encouraged, supported, and lifted each other in love, always ready to walk together in God’s grace. A heartfelt thank you to A&A Travel and Tours, especially Krista, Arlene, and their partner agencies, for making this meaningful pilgrimage possible. A very special thanks to Tita Nita, the heart behind this journey—at 88 years old, she remains a remarkable inspiration to us all. Her wisdom, kindness, and unwavering spirit brought us together. She lovingly led this group with Fr. Manny, and it was an honor to stand with them, guiding and journeying with amazing participants—many in their 60s, 70s, and even 80s—yet full of fire, faith, and strength to sustain this 15-day pilgrimage. To all my co-pilgrims, thank you is not enough. This was more than a pilgrimage—it was a shared offering of faith, hope, and love. May we continue to walk together—joyfully, faithfully, and always as saints in the making. All for Jesus, through Mary, with the childlike spirit of St. Thérèse.

Jenny Asuncion



To my fellow CCST Pilgrims of Hope,

Just like what I mentioned when I introduced myself, “I am the self appointed trouble maker of the group”. I enjoyed every moments we spent together. Father Manny always uplift us spiritually everyday. Much mahalo to Krista and Arlene for a job well done. Hope we can get together again soon.

Love you guys Gloria Butac



MESSAGE OF LOVE

My first trip to the Philippines was so amazing beautiful churches, great tour guides and Jenny, Nita and Gloria Butac making sure I was okay. Fr Manny best priest ever.

Love, Carmen Uierra



Pilgrimage 2025 was a journey of 39 pilgrims full of hope and trust in the love and mercy of God.

Like little children we were awed at the beauty and elegance of Ancient churches where our forefathers prayed, adored God and transmitted their faith. Only with the grace of God could have safely brought us to to see the breathtaking beauty and riches of Mindanao.

Our pilgrimage is full of God's blessings. The perfect weather, the joys , safety and health of every pilgrim, and most of all the presence of God and our Blessed Mother throughout the trip. Many thanks to all the pastor's(fr. Ernie who served us merienda after the mass) all the Bishops who welcomed and even provided us sumptuous meals and very Special delicacies . (Courtesy of Fr. Manny). Thank you Fr. Manny for all you do. May God bless you always with joy and love . Maraming Salamat sa A&A Travel n Tours ;

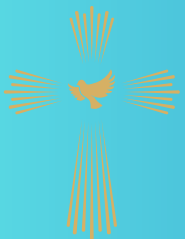
To Arlene and Krista for a beautiful itinerary and reliable help and support. Above all we give Glory , praise and thanks to God for a grace_filled pilgrimage.

Our hearts full of love and Thanksgiving to Mama Mary for her Love and constant protection. Till our next pilgrimage " may God's blessings be upon us" . Shalom!









Thank You, Pilgrims of Hope From the bottom of our hearts

We at A&A EXPRESS TRAVEL AND TOURS extend our profound gratitude to the Pilgrims of Hope, Co-Cathedral of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus – Honolulu, Hawaii, for entrusting us with your blessed pilgrimage.

We sincerely value the sacrifices, support, and faith you have shared throughout this sacred journey.

Our special thanks and appreciation to:

Fr. Manuel Hewe for his spiritual guidance,

Ma'am Nita for her tireless coordination,

Ma'am Jenny for her steadfast physical and mental support.

To all the pilgrims and participants, we are deeply grateful for your cooperation, kindness, and unity during the entire event. It has truly been our greatest honor and pleasure to serve and assist each and every one of you.

Above all, we lift our deepest thanks and glory to our Father God, who granted us strength, protection, and togetherness as we journeyed in faith.

May this pilgrimage continue to inspire us all to remain steadfast in faith and to live as true witnesses of God's boundless love.

Yours' Truly

A&A EXPRESS TRAVEL AND TOURS TEAM



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KRISTA



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