



Chapter Chronicle

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Bishop Ayuban Presides Opening Mass, Gives Recollection

CEBU CITY — With a renewed sense of purpose and a heart open to the Lord, the 28 capitulars gathered today at the St. Ezekiel Moreno Chapel for the Opening Mass in honor of the Holy Spirit.

Most Rev. Elias Ayuban, CMF, DD, Bishop of Cubao, presided over the holy mass, calling the assembly to seek divine guidance. In his homily, he delivered a striking message: "Your Order was not founded on mere structures, but on the fire of the Spirit. You need that fire again..."

Bishop Ayuban invited the friars to "return to the upper room," "receive the breath of the Holy Spirit," and "rediscover the mission"—a compelling reminder in relation to their Augustinian Recollect identity and call.

Following the Eucharistic celebration which started at 10:30 a.m., the capitulars returned to the Chapter Hall for a Recollection, also facilitated by Bishop Ayuban. His conference, rich in spiritual insight and pastoral urgency, reiterated, "We can lead like Jesus." He expounded on four dimensions of Christ's leadership:

- Jesus lives – engaging fully in the life of the people through listening, working, praying, and suffering alongside them.

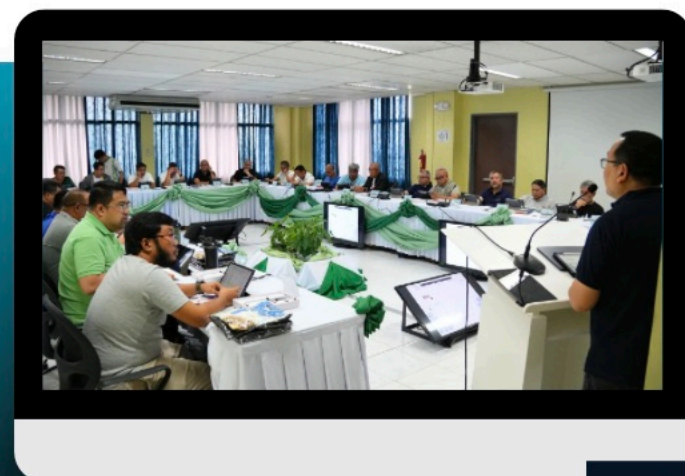
- Jesus serves – embodying humility, as "He came not to be served, but to serve."
- Jesus involves – building community and mission not with the exceptional, but with the willing.
- Jesus accompanies – walking with others in both strength and weakness, encouraging them to lead in turn.

The recollection was held in two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, allowing time for personal reflection and a deeper spiritual engagement.

The day concluded with group sharing, where the capitulars broke into five groups to exchange insights and reactions to the bishop's inputs. This communal dialogue fostered a space of openness and fraternity, capturing the spirit of the Chapter's journey ahead.

With this meaningful beginning, the 9th Provincial Chapter stands poised for a grace-filled discernment and renewal in mission.

At 8:00 a.m., the capitulars entered the Chapter Hall and occupied their proper seats for the first time for the orientation session. Facilitated by the Technical Working Group, composed of Fray Jose Ernil Almayo, Reynaldo Jaranilla, and Robin Ross Plata, the orientation included registration, distribution of Chapter kits, and essential guidelines on the use, flow and procedures for the digital platform.





Back to the Upper Room with the Holy Spirit

In a deeply pastoral and contemplative homily delivered during the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit at the start of the Provincial Chapter, Bishop Elias Ayuban, CMF, DD, draws inspiration from the Gospel scene of the Risen Christ appearing to the disciples in the upper room. With the doors locked and hearts filled with fear, Jesus stands in their midst and offers peace—shalom—a peace that signifies not merely the end of conflict, but the restoration of wholeness. Bishop Ayuban connects this moment to the lives of the capitulars, especially during moments of darkness, fear, or desolation, asserting that it is often in such times that God makes Himself known; not to condemn, but to heal.

Reflecting on his own missionary journey, the bishop affirms that the wounds borne in ministry are not disqualifications, but sacred signs of Divine Mercy. Like the wounds of Christ, these become channels of grace and witness to the resilience of faith. From this foundation, Bishop Ayuban offers three invitations that arise from this Gospel and are crucial for the Chapter's discernment:

1. Return to the Upper Room

Bishop Ayuban invites the friars not to approach these days merely as administrators or planners, but as missionary disciples—open to encounter the Risen Christ anew. He reminds them that their Order's foundation was not built on bureaucracy but on the fire of the Spirit. Without that Spirit, structures become lifeless, leadership becomes mere hierarchy, assignments turn into jobs, and collaborators are seen as employees. With the Spirit, these are transformed: structures become communities, superiors become brothers, and work becomes mission.

2. Receive the Breath of the Spirit

Quoting Jesus' words—"Receive the Holy Spirit"—the bishop links this moment to the breath of creation in Genesis. But here, the breath signifies not only new life, but new mission. The Chapter is a time of personal and communal renewal, a call to on-going conversion and deeper interior silence, where God's voice may be heard. The Church does not need more religious "doing things," but men on fire, renewed from within. The Holy Spirit can dispel spiritual fatigue, complacency, and the desire for comfort, reigniting the joy of their original call.

3. Rediscover the Mission

Finally, Bishop Ayuban challenges the friars to rediscover their apostolic identity. "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" is not a historic statement—it is a present call. All decisions, plans, and discernment within the Chapter must be oriented toward mission: reconciliation, healing, and communion in a world and Church marked by division. The bishop calls them to be wounded healers, not functionaries—brothers who embody mercy and fraternity in a time of fragmentation.

In conclusion, Bishop Ayuban invites the capitulars to allow the Holy Spirit to guide every dimension of the Chapter. He entrusts the process to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to Our Lady of Consolation and to St. Augustine. He reminds the brothers that unity and interiority are not optional; they are paths to holiness. His final exhortation—"Receive the Holy Spirit"—is not only the Gospel message, but a profound prayer for the Chapter and for the future of the Province.

GLIMPSES OF THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES

OPENING MASS:

Invoking the aid of the Holy Spirit



GROUP DYNAMICS:

Sharing of life experiences



FRAY LAURO LARLAR:

In the service of translating to Spanish the Chapter proceedings for the Prior General



USING THE TABLET:

The Technical Working Group orients the capitulars on the use of tablets

