



Chapter Chronicle

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Delving Deep into Spirituality and Formation

CEBU CITY — As the 9th Provincial Chapter entered its second day since its official opening yesterday, the capitulars continued their reflective journey with renewed anticipation for the matters set to be presented and discussed. The Chapter remains in the Information-Discussion Phase, a crucial phase dedicated to the presentation, examination, and clarification of the reports made by the authorities of the Province.

The day commenced with the Holy Mass, presided over by Fray René Paglinawan, OAR, who also delivered the homily. Drawing from the Gospel image of the vine and the branches, he reminded the capitulars that just as the branches bear fruit only when they remain united with the vine, so too must they remain attached to Christ. Only then, he emphasized, can the Province discern what will truly lead to growth and fruitfulness.



Formal sessions resumed at 8:30 a.m., beginning with the presentation by Fray Leander Barrot, OAR whose comprehensive report addressed his Secretariat's key areas including spirituality, liturgy, charism, the OAR Family, and permanent formation. Following each segment, the Chapter Moderator for the day, Fray Raul Buhay, OAR, opened the floor for inquiries, allowing the capitulars to probe deeper and raise pertinent concerns. Fray Barrot's report spanned three sessions, underscoring the centrality of spiritual life in the Province's life and mission.



In the fourth session, Fray Kenneth Joseph L. Onda, OAR, President of the Secretariat of Vocation Ministry and Initial Formation, presented updates on the programs and initiatives implemented in the past triennium. His presentation prompted further discussion, with capitulars engaging in thoughtful questioning and dialogue regarding the on-going development of formation within the Province.

As the first phase progresses, the Chapter continues to provide a space for honest reflection, active engagement, and communal discernment, laying a firm foundation for the decisions that will shape the Province in the years ahead.



LIST OF MESSAGES RECEIVED FOR THE 9TH PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

- Diocese of Dumaguete
- Fray Manny Bolilia
- Rafael Mediavilla
- University of San Jose-Recoletos Cebu City

Homily • CLING TO THE VINE!

Fray René Paglinawan, OAR, began his homily by addressing the current conversations surrounding the newly elected Pope Leo XIV. He observed how swiftly public opinion has moved to categorize the new pontiff as either conservative or progressive—particularly in light of his revival of certain papal customs that had been set aside during the pontificate of Pope Francis, such as residing once again in the Apostolic Palace.

This observation provided a natural segue into the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, which recounts a pivotal debate in the early Church. Some believers from Judea insisted that Gentile converts must be circumcised and observe the Law of Moses. Paul and Barnabas firmly opposed this view, leading the Church to bring the issue before the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. Fray René noted that such internal tensions are not foreign to the Church. From the beginning, the community of believers has had to discern how to remain faithful to the Gospel while responding to diverse cultural contexts.

At the heart of this discernment, Fray René highlighted the importance of distinguishing between “Tradition” with a capital “T” and “tradition” with a lowercase “t.” The former refers to the essential teachings and practices handed down from the apostles—those rooted in divine revelation and integral to the faith. The latter, by contrast, encompasses cultural expressions and liturgical customs that, while valuable, are not immutable and may evolve over time. Debates surrounding these practices, he stressed, must always be directed toward one purpose: the faithful and effective proclamation of the Gospel.

The Gospel reading, in which Jesus identifies Himself as the true vine, served as the anchor of Fray René’s message. He reminded his fellow religious that what ultimately matters is a living, vital connection with Christ. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit apart from the vine, so too the Church and her members can do nothing apart from remaining rooted in the Lord. Whether preserved or adapted, external forms must always be evaluated by a single criterion: do they foster a deeper union with Christ and lead to more fruitful discipleship?

Fray René concluded with an exhortation to remain intimately united with Christ through prayer, faith, and the sacraments. Traditions and customs certainly have their place, but they must never eclipse the fundamental call to abide in the Lord. In every matter—whether ecclesial debate or personal devotion—the aim remains constant: to glorify the Father by bearing much fruit and becoming true disciples of Christ.



LIST OF MESSAGES RECEIVED FOR THE FOR THE 9TH PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

- Cofradía del Tránsito de Nuestra Señora de la Salud, Inc.
- University of San Jose-Recoletos Balamban Campus
- Bishop Bob John H. Koroma (Makeni, Sierra Leone)