



Chapter Chronicle

May 23, 2025

Vol. 9, No. 5

Discerning God's Blessings on Day Five

CEBU CITY — “A blessing in disguise.” With this hopeful theme, the fifth day of the 9th Provincial Chapter began on the morning of May 23, as Fray Dionisio Selma, presided over the Mass, invoking God's guidance for the day. In his homily, Fray Selma reflected on how life's trials often reveal a deeper purpose and unexpected grace. Drawing from personal experiences, Church history, and Scripture—especially the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ—he reminded the community of God's unconditional love and invited them to discern the hidden blessings in seemingly unfortunate events.



As the Chapter resumed its Information-Discussion Phase, the capitulars continued their inquiries into the Secretariat of Education Apostolate, now known as EDUCAR Filipinas. Fray Rafael Pecson, superintendent of OAR Schools, responded to questions, offering insights and updates on the current realities facing the Province's educational apostolate. The entire morning session was dedicated to this dynamic exchange of ideas.

Later, Fray Hector Gonzales, Chairman of the Commission on History, Culture, and Heritage-Recoletos, presented updates on the ongoing restoration of the iconic San Sebastian Basilica in Manila—the first and only all-steel church in East Asia. He also highlighted creative fundraising initiatives such as shirt printing and liturgical couture in support of the restoration projects.

Following him, Fray Arnel Diaz, reported on the Province's Commission on the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults, outlining the Province's concrete steps to safeguard the young and vulnerable in Recoletos-administered communities.

In the afternoon, Fray Rouel Sia, Chairman of the Commission on Social and Ecological Concerns-Recoletos ARCORES Filipinas, delivered updates on social outreach efforts—including medical missions, community assistance, and disaster relief—aligned with the plans set during the previous Chapter.

To conclude the day, Fray Jose Ernil Almayo, presented the Primary Objective proposed by the Provincial Council for the next term for review. After a period of discussion and feedback, Chapter President Fray Miguel Ángel Hernández, and the day's Moderator, Fray Raul Buhay, officially adjourned the session.

• Homily

A BLESSING IN DISGUISE: DISCOVERING GRACE IN LIFE'S UNEXPECTED TURNS

On the fifth day of the Chapter, Fray Dionisio Selma, OAR, delivered a deeply reflective homily centered on a familiar yet profound theme: the hidden grace often found in life's setbacks—a blessing in disguise.

Fray Selma began by drawing attention to how situations that initially seem unfortunate can ultimately yield unexpected blessings. He cited the example of a man whose car broke down en route to work. While the incident caused initial distress, it led to healthier habits and financial savings as the man began walking to his destinations. "What seemed like a setback," Fray Selma noted, "turned out to be beneficial."

In another real-life account, a priest involved in a minor car accident was brought to the hospital for a precautionary check-up. The examination revealed a dormant illness that might have otherwise gone undetected. The accident, though seemingly unfortunate, became a moment of divine intervention—a literal blessing in disguise.

Fray Selma connected these personal stories to the broader narrative of Christian history. He reminded the assembly of how the early Church, though persecuted and scattered, grew in strength and reach. The martyrdom of Saint Stephen and the ensuing dispersion of the disciples led to the spread of the Gospel to new territories such as Antioch, Derbe, and Lystra. Quoting Tertullian, he affirmed, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity."

He also highlighted key turning points in Church history where doctrinal crises led to the strengthening of faith. The Arian controversy gave rise to the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, which affirmed Christ's divinity as "consubstantial with the Father." Similarly, the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD responded to Nestorius' denial of Mary's divine maternity by formally declaring her Theotokos—Mother of God.

Yet for Fray Selma, the greatest blessing in disguise remains the death of Jesus Christ. Though viewed as a defeat by many, Christ's crucifixion was the path to resurrection and redemption. In His farewell discourse, Jesus left His disciples with a new commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you." (John 13:34). This love, Fray Selma emphasized, is radical and unconditional—far different from the conditional, transactional love often seen in the world.

He then challenged the Chapter participants to reflect more personally and communally: Could the closure of the Taiwan mission be a blessing in disguise? Might the acquisition of property in Pililla hold a deeper purpose? Could a sudden transfer, a leave of absence, or an unexpected leadership change be veiled forms of grace?

"In a world where not everything is as it seems," he concluded, "we are reminded that nothing happens by accident before God. With faith, we may come to see that what we once feared or lamented was, in fact, God's providence at work—a true blessing in disguise."



LIST OF MESSAGES RECEIVED FOR THE 9TH PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

- Maria Paule
- OAR Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino
- SARF de St. Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate
Recoletos Chapter, Antipolo City