

# CHRONICLES FROM MANILA

ASSUMPTIONIST PHILIPPINE DELEGATION



Nº19 | NOVEMBER 2011



The 2 new priests with the ordaining Bishop and the concelebrants



The laying of the hands



*Dear Friends,*

*The Philippine Delegation is very happy to give you a report about the Ordination to the Priesthood of Frs. Ricky Montañez and Alex Castro.*

*You will see more pictures of the event on our Facebook and Website ([www.assumptionists.ph](http://www.assumptionists.ph)).*

*Thanks for being with us and for helping us in our formation.*

*With gratitude,*



*Bernard Holzer, A.A.*

## New Manila Archbishop Ordains First 2 Filipino Assumptionist Priests

With a summer-like weather in November, considered a cold month in the Philippines, the ordination to the priesthood of Deacons Ricky Cañet Montañez and Alex Apawan Castro last November 12 in the Our Lady of Pentecost Parish in Loyola Heights, Quezon City proceeded with the newly-appointed Archbishop of Manila, Luis Antonio Tagle, as the ordaining prelate. This is the first ordination to the priesthood that occurred in the said parish.

Currently the Bishop of the Diocese of Imus in Cavite Province, Bishop "Chito", as he is fondly called, ordained Fathers Ricky and Alex to the Diaconate last October 31, 2010 in the same Parish Church. The new Archbishop is a friend of the Assumptionists and a former mentor of Ricky in the Loyola School of Theology in Quezon City.

The ceremony, which began an hour later than scheduled due to the heavy traffic on a major highway in Metro Manila on that day, gathered an estimated number of 500 faithful. The families of the new priests, members of the Assumption and Augustinian families, former students, classmates and co-workers of Ricky and Alex, members of various religious congregations and people from the Assumptionist apostolate area/center (like Marytown, Assumption Language Center and Bayard) witnessed this historic occasion



The prayer of ordination



New Manila Archbishop "Chito" Tagle

In his homily, Archbishop "Chito" emphasized on the symbol of the boat as representing the priestly ministry and their lives. The boat is very crucial to Peter as a fisherman. The boat is also where Jesus preached from on some occasions. The boat too accommodated Jesus's friends in crisscrossing the Lake of Galilee. He told Alex and Ricky that in their lives, in their boats, there will be unexpected guests. They must learn to be accommodating. To fish, like Peter, one must go out into the deep. One must be open to venture to uncharted areas in the priestly ministry. One must be sensitive always to God's call, to go where He wills one to go.

All these, according to the new Manila Archbishop, require courage. The grace of God will always embolden them to do this. The grace of God must be communicated in their ministries. His love must be felt by the people. Their boats, their lives, must be able to manifest His love, His graces.

The Provincial of the Assumptionists of the North American Province and the Philippines, Father José Miguel Diaz Ayllón (a Mexican), and the Assumptionist Delegation Superior in the Philippines, Father Bernard Holzer (French), assisted Archbishop Tagle in the two-hour long ceremony. 45 priests, religious and diocesan, concelebrated. 3 Filipino diocesan deacons also assisted in the celebration. Father Frans Desmet (Belgian), Superior of the Assumptionists community in South Korea, Father Paul Nguyen Van Hung and Brother Francois Xavier of the Assumptionist community in Vietnam also participated in this solemn and meaningful celebration.

Thereafter, people rushed towards the newly-ordained priests for the usual picture-taking, to congratulate them and to have themselves blessed by the new priests. A simple merienda followed in the Assumptionist Delegation House (Adveniat House) in Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Archbishop "Chito" stayed for the refreshment.

Father Alex hails from Apalit in Pampanga, a province north of Manila. Before joining the Assumptionists in the USA, he taught history and religion in Assumpta Technical High School (supervised by the Religious of the Assumption Sisters) in San Simon, Pampanga. He made his First Vows in 2004 in Massachusetts and his Final Vows in August 2009 in Pampanga. Alex graduated in May 2006 from the Masteral Program in Religious Education in Ateneo de Manila University and finished his Bachelor in Sacred Theology at the Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas in Manila in 2009. At present, Alex is the formator of the Postulancy Program. His interests are in the fields of liturgy, history and archives.



Fr. Alex with Fr. Bruno Lepeu ,MEP - Hongkong



Fr. Ricky with Fr. Karel San Juan, SJ

Father Ricky joined the Assumptionists in July 2000 in the USA. After finishing his Pre-Theology Program in Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts, he went to Chile for his Novitiate in 2003. He made his First Vows on January 4, 2004 and his Final Vows on August 23, 2009. At present, Ricky is the Director of the Assumption Language Center in Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Before joining the Assumptionists, he was an English teacher, class advisor and student activity coordinator in Assumption-Iloilo in central Philippines.

He earned his Bachelor of Secondary Education, Major in English (with honors), at the West Visayas State University where he also pursued a graduate course in English language Teaching. He went to Taizé in France as a Youth Volunteer from July to October 1996. After this, he became a Youth Volunteer to the Higaonon tribe in Impasug-ong, Bukidnon in Southern Philippines. He earned his Bachelor in Sacred Theology from the Loyola School of Theology in Quezon City in 2010. Ricky is the eldest in his family with four sisters. He hails from Bago City in Negros Occidental in central Philippines.



### Fr. José Miguel Diaz Ayllón, Provincial of the Assumptionists in North America and the Philippines

*“I feel so much joy for Ricky and Alex. I know them personally especially from their initial journey with the Assumptionists in the USA and Latin America. They both have this great wish to serve God and His people. Their ordination is a great sign, a big step in the mission in the Philippines! They have shown the way for all those religious as well as the novices, postulants and candidates who are still in formation in the Philippines. The priestly ministry is a gift of God. It is the presence of God’s love for the Church and for the Assumption. Ricky and Alex must therefore continuously open themselves to God’s invitation, to serve His people, and not to lord it over them or be distinct from them. The priestly ordination is not the end of their vocation. They must remind themselves of the counsel of St. Augustine: With you, I am your brother; with the people, I am your pastor. Moreover, I am deeply touched by the happy faces of the people during the ordination. There is a sense of communion. Truly, the whole thing is a grace of God!”*



### Fr. Paul Nguyen Van Hung, Assumptionist priest from Vietnam

*“This is my first time in the Philippines. I am very happy to be here. The brothers as well as the other members of the Assumption family are so accommodating. I experienced the internationality of the family here. The celebration was 2 hours long, but the liturgy is full of life, joyous yet solemn... filled with emotions. The people who attended are very pious. I had difficulty though understanding the English language. The whole celebration is a reception of grace for me.”*





**Lornalie Montañez Martir, youngest sister of Fr. Ricky:**

*“Ricky will always be my inspiration and strength, considering that I am preparing to go to Saudi Arabia to work...far from my family in a land where Christians are not allowed to practice the faith. Ricky is a silent person possessing an intense desire to become a holy priest. I wish him to be strong in all trials he will undergo. I assure him of my love and that of the rest of our family.”*

**Tomasz Wilgosz, Fr. Ricky’s friend from Poland:**

*“The celebration is very moving. I am very proud of my friend Ricky, and of Alex too! I first met Ricky in Taizé in France. He became my first teacher in English. He is very helpful. We became very good friends from that time on. I flew in from Poland because I cannot afford to miss this historic moment. Congratulations to the new priests!”*

**Sr. Aremar, San Lorenzo – Cana Community (Religious of the Assumption):**

*“The ordination to the priesthood was a dream come true for my dear friend Ricky! Now, he can fully share in the life and ministry of Christ, His Lord and Master. I am so happy for Ricky... as I have witnessed to all the marvels God has done to him. Ricky is a great blessing to the Church, the Assumption family and his family. And I feel blessed too through him. Congratulations kapatid! You can count on my prayers!”*

**Fr. Jean-Marie Chuvi, Superior of Fr. Alex in the Postulancy House:**

*“I wish Alex the best of everything as he is now in a new chapter in his religious life. I am confident that he will become a good priest since he has shown full dedication to every ministry he is assigned to. May he continue to do the good works he has done and bear much fruit in the ministry.”*



**Riezel C. Palses, cousin of Fr. Alex:**

*“My entire family flew from Bacolod for the ordination of our long lost cousin Alex. We are so proud of him. He is such a blessing to our family. He is a generous, jolly and a well-organized person. We wish him good health as he continues to serve God and His people.”*







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