

Mission WORLD

Priest renews call for villagers to continue fight against mining

Philippines (UCAN) - A southern Philippines priest has urged villagers living amid coal reserves to renew their anti-mining campaign.

Speaking with UCA News in April, Fr Romeo Catedral, director of Marbel Diocese's Social Action Centre, said residents of Barangay, "must continue their stand against coal mining."

The priest whose diocese is based in Koronadal City, 980kms southeast of Manila, said he cautioned local people to be vigilant.

Crew Gold Corporation signed a contract in June 2006 with Daguma Agro-Minerals Incorporated (DAMI) to mine the coalfields of Ned. It has coal reserves estimated at 104 million metric tonnes. They pulled out their equipment due to mounting opposition from local residents, supported by the Church.

Fr Catedral said that if mining operations revive, the environment in and around Ned would suffer great damage. He warned, "They will tear up thousands of newly planted fruit trees and a reforestation programme. Most of the land is planted with corn and vegetable crops. "We also will lose a valuable watershed." He added that the governor supports the anti-mining stance.

Pope to receive first commemorative replica

Manila (UCAN) - Pope Benedict XVI will receive the first of 400 miniature Black Nazarene replicas that are being created to commemorate the revered 17th-century statue's fourth centenary in the country.

The first replica of the sculpted wooden brown-faced Christ carrying the cross will be presented to the Pope this month.

Woodcarvers were commissioned to craft the 400 miniature images of the life-sized statue of the Christ that Spanish Augustinian priests reportedly brought to Manila from Mexico in 1606.

The other replicas are being sold for 20,000 pesos (AUD\$512) each to raise funds for Church education and feeding programmes and other projects benefiting street children.

David Guevara said the 17-inch replicas have carved wooden bodies and resin heads. Each is set on a base and clad in fabric cut from garb worn by the original statue from Mexico, with a cross made of wood from the original accompanying cross.

He added the mould for the images' would be destroyed to avoid unauthorised replication. The feast of the Black Nazarene is celebrated January 9.

Programme helps missionaries returning home adapt to new situations

Seoul (UCAN) - Korean missionaries who return from service abroad say they often face misunderstanding as they re-adjust to realities at home.

"Returning to Korea after 10 years, people remember me as I was before, so they don't know or understand my present reality," Sr Cypriana Lyu Seon-ja said during a new "re-entry" programme for missionaries.

Moreover, missionaries' experiences in situations far from everyday reality in South Korea have left them with changed outlooks on life that members at home sometimes cannot appreciate, Sr Lyu added.

To address those issues, the Korean Catholic Foreign Missionary Education Association organised the re-entry programme in Seoul. Seven nuns from several congregations and five Columban lay missionaries attended.

The programme, the first of its kind for nuns, was run in conjunction with the Columban society, which has a similar programme for its lay missionaries.

It focussed on group sharing with an emphasis on feelings, plans and ways to adapt to a South Korea different from the one they had left.

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS>>> *The prayers of our readers are requested for the repose of the souls of friends and benefactors of St Columban's who died recently: also for the spiritual and the temporal welfare of all our readers, their families and friends.*



from the Director

Pope speaks up for the environment

Vatican City (ZENIT) - Benedict XVI joined his voice to those encouraging the protection of creation and respect for the environment.

The Pope's appeal came in a telegram signed by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, and sent to participants in a seminar sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. The conference examined "Climate Change and Development."

The Holy Father invited everyone to adopt "a way of living, models of production and consumption marked by respect for creation and the need for sustainable development of peoples, keeping in mind the universal distribution of goods, as is so often mentioned in the Church's social doctrine."

Mission Intention for June

That the Church in North Africa may bear witness, with its presence and its action, to God's love for every individual and all people.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem after the conversion of the gentile Cornelius he was given a blasting by the Jewish Christians. 'How could you eat and pray with a Gentile? It was against everything we believe.' Peter's reaction is revealing. He didn't resort to authority; he didn't dismiss them as out of date reactionaries. He was not defensive and equally he did not retreat from what the Holy Spirit had taught him in Cornelius' house.

Sharing our religious experiences

Peter's answer was personal, humble testimony about his religious experience in Caesarea. He recalls in detail the spiritual pilgrimage the Holy Spirit had taken him on and concludes that if Cornelius and his family had received the same Holy

Spirit and the same gifts as Peter had then who was he to stand in God's way? We know that Peter had a struggle coming to that realisation but once he did he was able to share his religious experience in the most humble and convincing way.

Personally I learnt two things from the way Peter reacted. The first was admiration for the way he didn't attack or dismiss his critics. Perhaps he could understand that only days previously he would have made exactly the same criticisms. He recognised that it was his experience that changed him. The second point is the need for us to share our experiences of God.

It was Peter's humble but positive account that convinced his fellow Jewish Christians because they could recognise the truth of what he was saying. It echoed with the God they had experienced and longed for in their hearts.

Many years ago I did a retreat in Dublin and one night I was chatting with a lay man who was also doing the retreat. He said to me, "Noel, my parish priest is very friendly and always talks to me about football and my family but sometimes I wish he would share with me his hopes. What keeps him going?" I think that is what we want to hear from our preachers and from each other - what keeps us going? What religious experience inspires us to keep loving, believing and hoping? Nothing convinces like genuine religious experiences.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Noel Connolly". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Fr Noel Connolly
director@columban.org.au