



fire & water

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fire & water

Fire and water are the outstanding biblical images for the prophetic mission. Both are paradoxical symbols of cleansing and healing, life and death.

Fire (= denunciation) that sears, that cuts, that purifies, but also heals, stands for the critical stand the prophet always takes in God's name to attack the moral ills of society.

Water (= proclamation of hope) like fire also cleanses and purifies, but it, too, symbolizes the hope, the fullness of life that God's word brings to the lives of all men and women of good will.

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the land, the lumads and the rest of us



In the earlier days of the Church, the followers of Jesus were called upon to exercise vigilance and keep themselves uncontaminated by the world during the in-between-times, the period between the first and second coming of the Christ. With the passing of the Church's early centuries, the well-intentioned practice of vigilance evolved into a *fuga mundi* spirituality (a flight from the world type of Christianity).

Generally Church history tells us that, in fact, two principal motives led to the founding of religious communities. On the one hand was the resolve to flee the “bad” world (*fuga mundi*); on the other, the resolve to live and work as God’s witnesses in the heart of the world (*professio in hoc mundo*). Nowadays, with the dominance of globalization, anyone who wants to follow Jesus finds himself/herself immersed in that chaotic territory between reality and the ideal. Following Jesus is further specified by Pope Francis’ resounding challenge for the Lord’s modern disciples to locate themselves in that problematic zone he frequently refers to as the peripheries, the margins of society. These places have been designated peripheries and margins precisely because they are where the marginalized and excluded of the world can be found. Notably they have come to constitute the refuge of the poor and displaced populations, the oppressed, the politically persecuted, the economically bereft. But peripheries do not merely refer to geographic areas measureable in square meters or acres bounded by perimeter fences of barbed wire. These are intensely spiritual spaces where the poor cry out their hearts to God for help because their better-off brothers and sisters have failed them miserably.

Were human history written from the perspective of territoriality, it would present a tragic narrative of displacement by the powerful of the less powerful, by the more able of those they have disabled. It will reveal how indigenous populations were driven away first from fertile valleys and water sources to the hills and mountains, or to the shorelines; and then, in denouement, when the mountains yielded gold and the shores deeply buried fossil fuel, they were forcibly ejected by paid goons of investors or government soldiers supposedly sent to clear the forests of rebels, to the slums of decaying cities from where the

exploitative rich have decided to move out because of pollution and shabby neighbours.

A positive development the *lakbayan*¹ events are occasioning is the awakening of many young Filipinos² to the reality that *Lumads*³ are Filipinos, Moros are Filipinos. Yes, they are Filipinos, and just like the rest of us, citizens of this country entitled to equal rights and dignity.

Father Quirico Pedregosa shares with us an article describing how the University of Santo Tomas for ten full days hosted a group of forty young *lumads* and ten of their older leaders as part of the *Lakbayan 2017* Program of Activities. It occasioned an encounter between the students, seminarians, faculty and administrators of UST and our *lumad* brothers and sisters that proved to be a powerful learning experience for both the hosts and their honored guests. It was an experience that went beyond books and treatises, one that they will remember for many years to come, if not for the rest for their lives.

¹ Formally called **LAKBAYAN NG PAMBANSANG MINORYA (Protest March of Philippine National Minorities)**. For the past two years representatives of our indigenous brothers and sisters from the Cordilleras to the mountain fastness of Mindanao have trekked to Manila to denounce the harassment and abuses committed against them by the goons of mining companies and the military in a move to awaken the national population and inform the government of their sad plight. This year they were joined in their protest march by many of our Muslim sisters and brothers, victims of the pacification of Marawi and Martial Law in Mindanao. They numbered some three thousand men, women and children.

² This is not to say that older Filipinos are better informed of the situation of our national minorities.

³ The term *lumad* is the currently accepted and politically correct term to refer to our indigenous brothers and sisters, particularly those from Southern Philippines.

Pedregosa's article is complemented by the first-person narrative of Sr. Lydia Lascano, who reminds us of the forcible evacuations of the Mamanwa and Manuvu indigenous communities of Carrascal, Surigao del Sur that have been taking place on and off since the nineteen nineties. Sister Lydia's poignant description of what our indigenous sisters and brothers have to suffer on account of the plunder of their ancestral lands and the violence inflicted on them by big business and government does not require much imagining. It simply breaks human hearts. The *Lumads* belong to the land so that when you take their land, you rob them of their soul.

The plight of our indigenous countrymen and women, now conjoined with that of our Muslim sisters and brothers, is posing a challenge as Christian as the Lord's summons for his first disciples to tend to lepers, the blind, the deaf, the hungry, the poor and the excluded others of their times. Is their plight not telling us where today's Christian disciples are to locate themselves – in the muddied peripheries drenched with the heady mix of human discharges (blood, tears, sweat, pee, excreta) - on which the wobbly feet of refugees, migrants, *lumads*, those displaced because of war and terrorism, are squarely planted? Victims all, they seem stuck and can't move, paralyzed. They seem to need some help. If only we could remember the lesson of the travelling Samaritan? If only.

w. t. dulay, mdj

A LAKBAYAN OUTCRY (EDUCATION FOR SELF-DETERMINATION)

By Fr. Quirico T. Pedregosa, Jr., OP

On September 1-21, 2017, around three thousand Moro and indigenous peoples from far-flung places of the country came together to Metro Manila to stage their second LAKBAYAN NG PAMBANSANG MINORYA. They gathered anew in Metro Manila to call the national government's attention to their painful and miserable plight and relentless struggle for their right to self - determination, the preservation of their ancestral lands and the establishment of just and lasting peace in their communities. For this purpose, they set up camp, "KAMPUHAN", at the University of the Philippines, Diliman Campus, and satellite camps in different parts of Metro Manila.

At the request of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, a satellite camp, or KAMPUHAN, was set up at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila (UST), from September 11 to 21. Thus, on September 11, UST officially received a contingent of 50 *Lumads*, indigenous peoples from Mindanao. The group was composed of 40 young *Lumads* accompanied by 10 leaders and teachers of theirs. Amid rain shower, they were ushered into the University Campus by students from the UST College of Tourism and Hospitality Management. Together they walked through the iconic Arch of the Centuries to the Plaza Mayor of the University, for the warm welcome rites that was presided by Fr. Pablo Tiong, OP, UST's Vice-Rector for Religious Affairs together with Assoc. Prof. Mark Abenir, Director of UST Simbahayan.



Salubong of UST community to delegates of Lakbayan of National Minorities on September 11, 2017 (Photo of Kilab)

An Encounter Up Close

UST has rendered services and projects to several indigenous communities in different areas of the country. But, this was the first time for the University to host right in its campus a group of indigenous people. And that has spelled a lot of difference.



Thomasians immerse with members of the Lumad community as part of the annual "Lakbayan ng Pambansang Minorya," a month-long caravan to assert the rights of the indigenous people at the UST Central Seminary Gym last Sept. 11. (Photo by Michael Angelo M. Reyes)

For ten full days, the *Lumads* found a home at the Gym of the UST Central Seminary. The resident-seminarians, who themselves come from different parts of the country, were happy to house and host their *Lumad* brothers and sisters. They did not only throw a welcome program and party for them on the first evening. They also served them daily the same food from their seminary kitchen. They took turns by groups to integrate with them, to sit down and eat with them in every meal from the same table. More importantly, they took time to interact personally with their young *Lumad* brothers and sisters. They listened to their experiences, stories, aspirations, dreams, problems and challenges in their *Lumad* schools and communities. Indeed, it was an opportune blessing that the *Lumads* came to stay at the Seminary Gym. It made possible for the seminarians to have a dialogical encounter up close with their *Lumad* brothers and sisters. It gave them a foretaste of their future ministry among the *Lumads*.

A Powerful Learning Experience

The arrival and stay of the *Lumads* at the campus proved to be a powerful learning experience for many UST students and teachers. True, they have heard or read a lot about them before. But, it was a different experience for UST students and teachers to see and hear the *Lumads* in person, to personally talk and listen to them. No wonder, in a span of ten days more than two thousand and five hundred UST students and teachers took time to interact or sit down with the *Lumads*, to integrate or join in varied activities organized with or for the *Lumads*.

Most of the *Lumad* youth who came to UST were junior and senior high school students. It was an eye-opener for many UST students to learn how the *Lumad* children and youth are greatly disadvantaged in life. In particular with regards to

education, the *Lumads* have extremely limited means, resources and opportunities for learning. They have to stay in boarding schools, far away from home, in order to study. It is part of their daily class hours to do farming so as to grow food for their meals. Sadly, they have experienced their schools occupied, or worse destroyed or bombed by military forces. At times, they have to pursue their schooling in the midst of great dangers and threats to their lives. On their part, UST students cannot but marvel at the tenacity and persistence of *Lumad* students in their struggle for their right to education. Yes, against all odds, the *Lumads* persist in their schooling. They have to pursue their studies and uphold their *Lumad* educational system and schools, come what may, at whatever cost. Why? For deep in their hearts and minds they are so convinced that unless they are educated they will never be empowered to fight for their legitimate rights, beginning with their right to self-determination.

Indeed, it was a sight to see the *Lumad* young people dance and sing, talk of the hopes and dreams of their communities, relate their experiences of violence, pain and suffering. With strong conviction and emotion, they would chant and rant their pleas! With courage, they spoke before varied audiences, presenting with confidence their situations and demands for the respect of protection of their human rights as indigenous Filipinos. Indeed, they came across as empowered young people. That was all a proof of the liberating power of education among the *Lumads*. Doubtless, their right to self-determination is propelled and goes along with their right to education.

A Cry for Justice

The *Lumads* came for a clear and crucial purpose to Metro Manila. They know that they could no longer be silent but speak aloud about their appalling plight; they have been long

victims of injustice, exploitation and oppression by the powerful and greedy intruders into their ancestral lands and communities. Their lot has been made worse by the lack or utter absence of government services, support and protection in their behalf. The aggressive intrusions into their ancestral areas and communities by the operations of mining companies, of vast plantations, inclusive of military, paramilitary and other armed groups, have further divested or deprived them of their traditional and vital means and sources of economic life and of communal and peaceful living.

Thus, they have come to Metro Manila to tell the central government and all people of good will about their unjust and hapless situation; that everyone may hear straight from their mouths their claims to their legitimate human rights as equal Filipino citizens of this country. In particular they have come to demand support and protection for the enjoyment of their right to self-determination, right to ancestral lands, and right to education, and to just and lasting peace in their areas.

In view of this, throughout the period of ten days, the UST Central Seminary Gym has been transformed into an open and common space of learning and advocacies, both for the UST students and teachers alike and the *Lumad* youth, teachers and leaders themselves. A series of meaningful and educative programs and events were held, day in and day out, to present the situations, issues and just demands of the *Lumad* communities and schools. To mention a few, the activities included a photo exhibit on the *Lumads'* quest for self-determination and education, cultural programs highlighting the *Lumad* culture, situations and issues, forum on *Lumad* schools and right to education, peace forum, unity walk, advocacy parade, solidarity meals, manifesto of unity signing, etc. In all these activities, the center stage was given to principal actors, resource persons and performers coming from the ranks of *Lumad* students, teachers and leaders. UST

administrators, students, teachers and staff lent support and active participation in said activities, under the animation of the office of the Vice Rector for Religious Affairs through UST Simbahayan.

An Event of Solidarity for the Right to Education

It can be said that the coming and the stay of the *Lumads* at UST were not in vain. It was worth the many efforts and sacrifices of all parties concerned to bring the *Kampuhan* at UST a reality. In the end, the *Kampuhan at UST* has given many gains to all its participants. In a span of ten days, countless meaningful encounters, rich conversations and dialogues, fraternal fellowships and ties of support and assistance were forged among the members of the *Lumad* contingent and UST students, seminarians and teachers and volunteer staff.

At the closing day of the *Kampuhan* at UST, the University has committed itself to three concrete acts of solidarity with the *Lumad* contingent, with their struggle for their right to education as focus. First, the University has pledged support and assistance to *Lumad* schools under the animation of RMP, via the latter's Project INSPIRE. Second, it has committed to establish in the University a local chapter of "Save Our Schools Network" (SOS, UST Chapter). Lastly, a group of UST administrators and teachers signed a Manifesto of Unity with the *Lumads*.

A Hopeful Sight

It was on a rainy day when the *Lumad* contingent first came to UST, with the looming darkness of clouds above their heads and perhaps of uncertainty too in their minds. After ten days of stay, now bolder and determined, the *Lumads* from the *LAKBAYAN NG PAMBANSANG MINORYA* took their

exit under the bright light of the noonday sun, escorted by student-leaders and seminarians through the Arch of the Centuries—the same spot where they first set foot inside the University. As Thomasians, we are left not only with 10-day memories of integrating with them, of sharing the same meal with them, of hearing them express their rants to the government’s apathy and indifference, witnessing them almost exploding in anger and resentment, and taking time to listen to their delicate stories –full of emotion and conviction.

Just before they joined the other delegates along España for the *Salubungan*, we heard the same cry, the same pleas blurted out by the young *Lakbayanis* – “*Stop Lumad Killings!*” “*Save our Schools!*” “*Libro Hindi Bala!*” We cannot help but share the same sentiments and display the same amount of empathy. Before stepping out of the university corners, the UST’s Simbahayan Director, Assoc. Prof. Mark Abenir, and the Vice-Rector for Religious Affairs, Rev. Fr. Pablo Tiong OP, assured them that UST will always be a family which they can lean on, a home where they can run to, a refuge where they can growl and raise their voices even louder for their rights to self-determination and education, and an abode where they can always seek assistance and security.

As the *Lumads* moved out of UST, there were among them eyes wrapped in tears. But, behind those eyes are daring convictions that will continue to propel them to fight for their rights, demand for justice and to end of the culture of impunity. We saw the *Lumad* youth joined their fellow *Lakbayanis* with warm exchange of embraces, their weary bodies invigorated, thinking not about the risks they may encounter on the way, but spurred by the firm confidence to carry on the struggle for their just demands, beginning with their right to education for self-determination!

DOCUMENTATION

Iumads: nature's keepers and our evangelizers

By Sr. Lydia Lascano, icm



When I volunteered to do mission work in Carrascal, Surigao del Sur, little did I know that the tapestry of my religious life was being enriched with a new weave of missionary experience related to minerals and mining. In God's providence, could this be the reason for my avid interest in mineralogy while taking up B.S. Chemistry at the University of Sto. Tomas, memorizing the names of mineral samples fascinated by their different shapes, colors and textures?

My "mining mission" started from day one of my arrival in Carrascal. In August 1996, accompanied by Sr. Reggie David, icm, after a 2-day boat trip from Manila, I was thrilled to arrive at the famous Carrascal crossroad where a big old acacia tree stood with its welcoming branches. The ICM Sisters who welcomed us were all with sore throats, barely able to utter their welcome except through "*beso-beso*"! The reason: for days they had been giving talks on mining to their Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) in the whole parish, including

shoreline communities accessible only through motor-run bancas and mountain BECs reachable only by motorbikes and “*habal-habal*”! There was an urgent need for “a crash course” in mining! The local government was recruiting mine workers but without the mention of mines. The government agents were deceptively asking “Would you like to be employed?” The prospective workers were made to sign blank sheets of paper indicating their agreement to what was still to be written on those blank sheets. Many poor fisher folks and farmers longing for employment after years of meager earnings were signing up, not realizing what they were getting into.

Before we could unpack our travelling bags we decided to meet with the Tandag Diocesan Youth organizers and some parish leaders to plan a 2-day seminar/training in view of forming a Parish Education Committee to develop a faster and more systematic mining education program. The sense of urgency was further intensified by the news that a foreign mining company was already applying for a permit to explore and mine nickel ore in Carrascal, in collusion with local partners who are sitting in local and provincial government positions. Since the Mining Act of 1995 or Republic Act 7942 was signed into law on March 6, 1995 by then President Fidel Ramos and pushed for implementation by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, our anti-mining activities were up against boulders of legal and political obstacles. Despite this fact, our anti-mining campaign spread in the whole diocese of Tandag through the BEC Program of the parishes with the assistance of the Diocesan Social Action Center (DSAC).

The Taganito nickel mining in Surigao de Norte, just across the boundary from Carrascal, served as a glaring example of environmental destruction with its practice of open-pit mining resulting in the systematic and progressive scalping of a mountain, chipping off its sides and scraping its core until the mountain disappeared! The displaced indigenous Mamanwa

families were pushed to the edge of the mining area and forbidden to hunt or farm in the remaining untouched patches on the mountainside which already belonged to the mining company. The “disappeared” mountain has effectively been transplanted somewhere in Japan where all the sacks filled with soil rich in nickel ore and other minerals were transported by boat. All buses from Carrascal and Tandag pass through this mining area on their way to Surigao City, which means easy and full viewing of the environmental destruction and the displaced Mamanwa families by the road side.

While all this was happening in Carrascal, the Manobos-Mamanwas in the Southern part were suffering from militarization that began in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s and continues to this day. The reason: the proliferation of applications to explore and mine in ancestral lands and the strong opposition by the indigenous tribes. Logging has been going on in some of these ancestral lands displacing *lumad* families and forcing them to beg in the municipal centers. Resistance from the IPs were met with militarization in the guise of an anti-insurgency campaign by the government. Soldiers would enter and occupy barangay halls and school buildings sometimes for days. For fear of being caught in the middle of possible encounters between the soldiers and the NPAs, the *lumads* would evacuate with their families to nearby barangays in the lowlands. One such big evacuation or “Bakwit” happened in 1990 during the time of Bishop Ireneo Amantillo, DD. For lack of evacuation centers in nearby municipalities, a big group of *lumads* from 15 communities in Diatagon begged to stay in the Diocesan Pastoral Center (DPC) in Tandag. The Bishop accepted them and they stayed on for three months.

The frequency of evacuations increased in the early 2000’s. In 2005 more than 2,000 *lumads* evacuated due to militarization.

In 2007 391 families consisting of 2,175 individuals experienced another “*bakwit*” to 6 evacuation centers located in 6 neighboring municipalities near Tandag. The Diocesan Social Action Center (DSAC) was then under my charge and we could visit the evacuees who were housed in 6 centers to determine what assistance the DSAC could extend to them. The situation in the evacuation centers was shocking, to say the least: lack of space, no privacy, no decent place for women and children, cardboard on cement floors on which to lie on, a few and broken down or clogged rest rooms for more than three hundred people or more, not enough food and water, not enough fuel and utensils for cooking. The unsanitary condition of the whole set-up was revolting and inhuman! And to think that these people enjoyed fresh air, space, needed amenities, simple food yet ample in the ancestral lands they left behind! After negotiations between the barangay leaders, the military, and the *lumad* leaders with the supporting Church groups and NGO’s, the “*bakwits*” agreed to return to their homes on condition that the military pull out from the vicinity of their residences and their farm lands. Upon their return – the *lumads* saw that their homes were looted, ransacked, destroyed and their farms devastated, fruits and other products harvested, farm animals taken! Who did all that? There were, of course, no witnesses! No one dared to speak and report the abuses. They just suffered in silence – happy to be back and start life again in their beloved mountains.

Then it happened again – “*BAKWIT!*” In 2009 heavily armed military from the 58th IB were deployed in the 15 *lumad* communities of the municipalities of Lianga, San Agustin and Tago mountain villages. Afraid of being caught in the crossfire, the *lumads* once again ran down to the municipal evacuation centers to endure the same dismal conditions experienced in the Lianga municipal gym. Ten days after, we heard that there was a caravan of 15 jeeps full of *lumad* families with their

belongings heading for Tandag. News was that they were transferring to the Tandag sports grandstand to be near to the provincial government to air their complaints and demand that the military leave their areas so that they could return to normal life. On the way, they were stopped by the military eleven times, to prevent them from reaching Tandag. It was very late afternoon and dark when they finally reached the sports grandstand in Tandag and was met by uniformed, armed soldiers! Great fear overcame them and the *lumads* refused to stay in the grandstand, suddenly turned the jeeps around and were frantically heading for the Diocesan Pastoral Center. Hungry, tired, in great fear they quickly parked their jeeps in front of the DPC and before we could say a word in no time they alighted from the 15 jeeps and poured in with their things, and settled on the bare grounds of the pastoral center. The DSAC staff, Sisters and the Vicar General of the Diocese, in the absence of the Bishop, talked to the *lumad* leaders that the Pastoral Center does not have enough facilities for more than a thousand people and that the Bishop who was not around at the time, had given orders not to allow them to stay in the center for lack of facilities! Almost in tears, the men and women *lumad* leaders answered, "Everyone rejected us, will the Church also reject us?" With that, the whole group stayed and continued to fix makeshift dwellings, occupying all the space in the DPC grounds, corridors of the buildings and empty rooms. Our greatest worry was food, water, and rest rooms!

Early the next day, we talked to Governor Johnny Pimentel, whose wife is a graduate of ICM's St. Theresa's College in Cebu, and challenged him: the military, which, is part of government, caused all this evacuation, hence, the government should take responsibility for the people's needs while they are settled in our DPC premises. We demanded a supply of water, food and toilet facilities. When the Bishop arrived a few days after, his heart must have sank to see the encampment in the whole

pastoral center area. We requested for a meeting with lawyers, Church lay leaders and government agencies to discuss the problematic situation and find a solution to the dilemma so that the *lumads* could return to their communities the soonest possible. The Governor ordered the local NFA to provide 18 sacks of rice a day for over a thousand individuals, donations from the parishes came in, the NASSA office in Manila sent food and other supplies, the different DSACs of Mindanao, the Sisters Association of Mindanao (SAMIN) and other NGO's donated relief goods & medicines. For the Catholics among the Lumads, a regular Sunday mass was held in the DPC grounds. On some evenings, to fight boredom and discouragement the *lumads* would entertain themselves with *lumad* dancing and songs or an occasional movie on screen provided by friends and supporters.



Massive evacuation of Lumads in Surigao Del Sur because of military operations.

The intermittent rains started to pour and soak the grounds

and cardboards the *lumads* were sleeping on. They were getting sick, especially the elderly and children. Doctors from the Local Department of Health volunteered to hold free consultations with medicines. The *lumad* leaders looked around for scrap wood to cover the ground on which they slept.

In an attempt to find a resolution to the problem several dialogues were facilitated by the governor: between the legitimate *lumad* leaders with ecumenical Church groups and NGO's, on one side, and, on the other, the military, para-military groups and "*lumad* leaders" the military have recruited and paid (therefore, bogus). With the help of Church groups, *lumad* and progressive party-list representatives in Congress the Department of Justice (DOJ) was informed about the militarization of *lumad* ancestral lands and their forced evacuation. Leila de Lima of the DOJ with her staff came and further facilitated the dialogues by talking separately to the leaders of the affected local governments, the military and the genuine *lumad* *datus*. After several meetings on their level the DOJ ordered the military pull-out from *lumad* territory. Future military operations will no more be allowed in areas where *lumads* have their houses and farms. The decision was based on the *lumads'* accounts of human rights violations due to civilians being caught in the crossfire of the armed conflict, the disruption of their normal daily life through incursions of military operations in their communities with concomitant destruction of their farms and disruption of livelihood, and various forms of harassments by the military. The destruction of *lumad* farms deprived the lowland communities of their regular supply of farm products, hence, the local governments of affected municipalities pressed the DOJ to demilitarize the *lumad* areas and allow them to return to their communities! And so it was done! Leila de Lima ordered the pull out of all military personnel and the immediate return of the *lumads* to

their 15 communities, after a stay of 40 long days at the Diocesan Pastoral Center! On August 30, 2009, 1,700 *lumad* “bakwits” in 21 trucks returned to their 15 communities in Diatagon, Lianga accompanied by DOJ head Leila de Lima and staff and, the DSAC members, priests, Governor Johnny Pimentel, and some progressive congressmen of the region.

That was 2009! But with the liberalization of the Mining Act of 1995 to back them up, foreign companies brazenly applying for mining permits have increased in number and ferocity. With the government interested in foreign investments to augment its budget, all possible leeway to accommodate the eager applicants is given, even with the support of the military in the guise of anti-insurgency operations. The sprawling ancestral domains of the *Lumads* of Surigao del Sur are sitting on metallic mineral deposits, especially gold, iron, nickel and copper, some non-metallic or industrial minerals and large quantities of fuel mineral such as coal. The ancestral lands of the *Lumads* of Lianga are sitting on large mineral deposits of coal and gold. Accordingly the Indigenous Peoples’ Right Acts (IPRA) also protects the rights of the IPs to live according to their indigenous culture, customs and laws.

During the 2009 “Bakwit” of *Lumads* to the Tandag Diocesan Pastoral Center, the DSAC discovered on research that the Phil. Government’s Department of Energy (DOE) wanted to explore the coal deposits of Andap Valley, which belongs to the Lumad Ancestral lands. On the road leading to Andap Valley lies the 15 communities of Lumads of Lianga who have been militarized several times since the 1980’s. To cite an example: July 5, 2005 the DOE granted the coal operating contract #140 to PNOC, an exploration corporation composed of 3 coal blocks for three thousand hectares of Tago municipality, an area for coal mine between the municipalities of Lanuza and Lianga Bay with a potential of 42 million metric tons of coal. The IPRA Law

requires an issuance from the *lumads* of the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) before a mining venture can proceed. Since the PNOC project was not given an FPIC, the coal project was stopped by October 12, 2006. Even with such legal provisions to protect the ancestral domain of *Lumads*, foreign mining companies remain undeterred. They keep applying for mining permits with the convenient support of the military who this time makes use of para-military groups as part of their so-called anti-insurgency strategy. The *Lumads* believe that these para-military groups are behind the killings of three of their leaders in Han-ayan. Part of the Andap Valley complex, Han-ayan is the road leading to Andap Valley, where the coal deposit is located.

On September 1, 2015, at five o'clock in the morning, in the guest house of the school, para-military personnel killed Emerito Samarca, executive director of the Lumad school ALCADDEV (Alternative Learning Center for Agriculture and Livelihood Development, affiliated with St. Scholastica's College in Manila). The military has long accused the ALCADDEV of being a training school training for the NPA! The same early morning, in Kilometer 16 in Han-ayan, the *lumads*, with their leaders were told to assemble in the basketball court. In full view of the people the para-military men killed Dionel Campos, chairman of the lumad organization MAPASU, and Datu Jovello Sinzo. The harassment by the military of *lumads* suspected of either supporting the insurgents or being members of the NPA, was the cause of the previous incidents of "bakwit" – from early year 2000. *Lumad* farmers had been illegally arrested, questioned, detained, intimidated. A young *lumad* boy recounted that while being questioned by the military he was forced to dig his own grave with his bare hands. A farmer was shot and not allowed to go to any hospital for treatment to prevent doctors from getting bullets as evidence against the military. One farmer died while being treated by the military

after he was shot. The stories of atrocities are numerous and revolting! And yet the *lumads* remain tenacious in their resolve to defend their ancestral lands. The land for them means LIFE!

What do we make of this tenacity? In the perspective of our avowed love for “Bayang Magiliw, Perlas ng Silangan” what are the *lumads* telling us by simply being themselves – yes, indigenous, firmly rooted in the land that gave birth to their customs, traditions, laws, practices and above all, gifted them with the respect, the reverence and the love for creation and for life!

To my “colonized” and westernized mind, the *lumads* put us to shame. We, in fact, are the perpetrators of neo-liberalism by ***the way we live*** (air-conditioned buildings, flashy cars, exclusive and gated subdivisions, McDo & Burger King, malls – lots of them, golf, etc, etc). We eagerly follow “the liberal, technocratic paradigm which tends to dominate economic and political life” in the country (cf *Laudato Si*). This, effectively, is the root cause of the sufferings of our *lumad* sisters and brothers. “The economy accepts every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impacts on human beings” like the *lumads*! (LS no. 109) Technology depends on metallic, industrial and fuel minerals found in the land, mountains and hills covered by ancestral lands and forests – the life-base of indigenous peoples! “Life gradually becomes a surrender to situations conditioned by technology, itself viewed as the principal key to the meaning of existence” (LS no. 110). There is a general recognition of the positive contribution of technology concerning the fields of communication, medicine, infrastructure & transportation to name a few. However, as far as the environment is concerned, “the technological mind sees nature as an insensate order, as a cold body of facts, as a mere ‘given’, as an object of utility, as raw material to be hammered

into useful shape; it views the cosmos similarly as a mere 'space' into which objects can be thrown with complete indifference. The intrinsic dignity of the world is thus compromised" (LS no. 115). And all forms of life is violated. This is the deepest pain of indigenous peoples, the posture of technology in regarding nature as an object separate from humans, to be exploited and destroyed, not realizing that they are causing destruction to themselves as well. This is the message of indigenous peoples to us in their continuing and relentless defense of their ancestral lands, and way of life. Veritably they are our evangelizers if we but give time and listen to their message. They even go to the extent of organizing march and caravans to announce their message and appeal for solidarity after some of them were killed in cold blood for continuing their efforts at building their own school, augmenting their way of life and customs showing an alternative way of living in harmony with nature and the land that they believe owns them and not the opposite. "For the, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values. When they remain on their land, they themselves care for it best. Nevertheless, in various parts of the world, pressure is being put on them to abandon their homelands to make room for agricultural or mining projects which are undertaken without regard for the degradation of nature and culture" (LS no. 146).

The *lumads* are evangelizers to us and for us who are peripheral to their way of life which clearly gives tribute, respect and reverence to the whole of creation. "There needs to be a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational program, a lifestyle and a spirituality which together generate resistance to the assault of the technocratic paradigm" (LS no. 111).

Foundational Assumptions of the CICM Missionary Project taken from the Missionary Project of CICM - Dominican Republic

Through Fr. Ramon R. Caluza, CICM



1. Commitment to the Poor

“Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel.”[1]

As missionaries, we are witnesses of the suffering of many people. We are called to respond to situations of misery and injustice, wherever we work and whatever our specific tasks. The poor should always be at the center of our concerns; they constantly question us and demand from us a continual conversion to Gospel values.

The poor are not only those who do not have the means to satisfy

their material needs, but also those who, on the level of human dignity, are excluded from full social and political participation. To achieve any solidarity with the poor, it is necessary to understand the mechanisms and the structures that cause this domination and that sustain it. We are required to analyze them.
[2]

We exert effort to be able to acquire a more profound sensitivity for the cause, struggles and aspirations of the people by means of a greater integration into their lives and culture. That moves us to be present in marginalized areas where our presence is most needed.

We are convinced that our simple life-style is in itself a witness to the Gospel imperatives.

We do not have the monopoly on the mission of building up the Reign of God. There are numerous Institutes, organisms, missionary groups, and movements. Collaborating with them enriches the Particular Churches and makes the services that we want to render more efficient. The Spirit is at work everywhere: in the Church and beyond.

Many organisms and groups of people are involved in the struggle against injustice and for peace, respect for human rights and the development of peoples. We are asked to collaborate with them. In so doing, the Church is enriched and together we bring about a more humane world and thus a world that is closer to the reign of God.[3]

2. Commitment to Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation

We acknowledge our passion for justice, a desire for peace and non-violence, a concern for the integrity of all creation. We believe that this is essential to the living out of the gospel. They are not an optional extra but a way of life. Action for justice and participation in the transformation of the world are a constitutive

dimension of preaching the gospel and essential to the Church's mission of liberating the human race from every oppressive situation.[4]

We are convinced that for a Christian to remain silent and unmoved in the face of injustices, violence and destruction is a denial of the Gospel. Our role as followers of Jesus is to bring the good news to the poor, work for justice so that all may have life in abundance.[5]

3. Commitment to the Organization and Animation of Base Ecclesial Communities

We affirm that through the Base Ecclesial Communities, we wish to welcome and contribute to the building of the reign of God, living and promoting its values, continuing the mission of Jesus and of the Universal Church. The Base Ecclesial Communities are the leaven and the transforming element in society, helping to create men and women (and structures) from the perspective of a preferential option for the poor.

We help in the organization of these communities in such a way as to become a safe place open for shared living, communion, participation, celebration, awareness and commitment. Planning and evaluation, indispensable instruments of progress, take place in these communities, thus avoiding improvisation and inappropriate actions.

These communities are open to all the living forces present in the people so as to work together toward changing the sinful reality in which we live. Through a formation process based on Faith and Life, the poor become aware of their dignity and realize that they are agents of change capable of organizing themselves.

4. Commitment to the Continuing Formation of Local Leadership

Our animation should result in the mission of the Church being

truly the mission of all its members. Many lay people take on different responsibilities in a living community. These different roles are the ministries that build up the Christian communities which are called to be a leaven in the society in which they live. This is why we work with great care in the formation and empowerment of lay leaders. It is up to them to transform their society and their culture in the light of the Gospel.[6]

5. Commitment to Pioneering and Missionary Work as our way of collaborating with the Local Church

The specificity of our charism leads us to be involved in pioneering work. Within the local Churches and in the entire world, we must always ask ourselves if the work that we are doing retains this pioneering character. The missionary is asked to PIONEER that means, to go where others do not go or do not wish to go. Pioneering means taking initiatives. Be at the forefront of the church, establish new pathways for the gospel, preparing the way for others (by the example of John the Baptist), be leaven in the dough, sowers of seeds. The missionary is asked to be CREATIVE—AUDACIOUS—IMAGINATIVE (CAI). We have to stress the quality of the content of our work (meaning and succession of our works). We are successful when our goals and missionary objectives have been reached and the local church is ready to take over. They are ready because they have been enabled.

We are convinced that, as missionaries, we are asked and tasked to be mid-wives in the birthing of “new inculturated churches”. We facilitate the inculturation of the Gospel in the local culture. [7] We recognize the presence of Jesus in the other cultures and religions.

We also stress the missionary character of our presence, always asking ourselves the question: Do we tend to sacrifice what is MISSIONARILY IMPORTANT AND OPPORTUNE for what is PASTORALLY URGENT?

When the services that we take on in the local Churches can be taken over by local personnel, it is time for us to say that *our task is accomplished*. Ongoing discernment will help us to continue to perceive where the Lord calls us to serve.[8]

We are committed to be in constant dialogue with all those who assume a responsibility in the communities and the particular Churches. It is they who are primarily responsible for the growth and the life of the Christian communities.

There are three self-principles that would indicate that the local church is ready to succeed (the missionary):

1. The local community is self-supporting (financial, material resources)
2. The local community is self-governing (own leaders and structures)
3. The local community is self-propagating (self-extending) so that they can take care of their own pastoral vitality.

6. Commitment to Missionary Animation

We are convinced that the Church is essentially missionary. We stimulate in the local Churches a concern for the universal mission, both within and beyond their boundaries.[9] Missionary animation inspires and helps the local Church to discover and embody its missionary dimension: addressing the situations of injustice present on the local level and announcing the Good News of the reign of God to all nations.

As missionaries, we do missionary animation by consciously making it an integral part of our pastoral work. By our missionary animation, we fulfill our charism and help the local Church to open up itself to the universal mission of the Church and in so doing, offer the wealth of its ecclesial and cultural heritage and receive, in turn, from the dynamism and experience of other local Churches.



Br. Willian deep into the Montalban mission



**We are CICM MISSIONARIES, towards
proclaiming God's word as a way of life.**

[1] Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, 1971.

[2] CICM Constitutions Commentary, Art. 7, p. 27.

[3] CICM Constitutions Commentary, Art. 8, p. 28.

[4] Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, 1971, No. 5

[5] Luke 4, 18-19; John 10:10

[6] CICM Constitutions Commentary, Art. 10.4, p. 34.

[7] The missionary cannot inculturate himself ever in a culture not his own. A missionary can only acculturate himself and facilitate the inculturation of the Gospel in the local culture. Only the local people can inculturate the Gospel in their own culture. On the side of the missionary, to be able to acculturate himself in the culture of the local people, this presupposes full inculturation in his own (home) culture.

[8] CICM Constitutions Commentary, Art. 10, p. 31.

[9] CICM Constitutions Art. 11

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**“PROPHETS are GOD’s HARBINGERS of HOPE
in the HEART of the WORLD”**

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