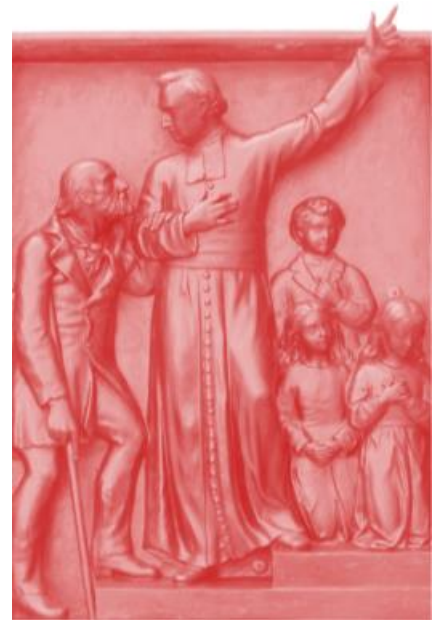


Feast of Fr. Victor Braun (May 18, 2016)

FR. VICTOR BRAUN'S CHARISM AFTER 150 YEARS CONTINUES

The Spirituality, Charism and Mission of Fr. Victor Braun arrived in Cebu, Philippines in May 2000, 16 years ago. We give thanks to God for the pioneering Sisters whose great love of Jesus and the Poor brought them here.

As a Filipino spiritual daughter of Fr. Victor Braun it is important for me to articulate the SSHJM Charism in relation to its mission here in the Philippines in particular as expressed in our Cebuano culture. The mission is rooted in the spirituality, personality and inspirations of our dear father founder who founded our Congregation in October 1866. Fr. Braun, when he witnessed many great needs in society, was called to serve and expand the Kingdom of God by serving poor migrant women who needed a place of safety, homeless children and the poor sick in their homes.



SSHJM and Cebu Mission: Service to the Poor

Even after 150 years of the foundation of the Congregation in France we see that the problems Fr. Braun responded to are still present today (although with a different face). The people we serve here in Cebu do not only have material necessity but physical, spiritual, mental, intellectual, psychosocial and cultural aspects also have to be included. The Charism of Fr. Victor Braun has been expressed in Cebu mission through integral development of the human person carried out by the Sisters, staff and Sacred Heart Companions. We are able to provide Day Care centers for poor children, training centers for children with special needs and intellectual disabilities (which are named after Fr. Victor Braun). Other activities include; physiotherapy, youth ministry and visiting families living in the cemetery and slum areas.

MY MINISTRY AS A NOVICE FORMATOR:

I am humbled and at the same time privileged to have this great responsibility to accompany our two novices; sisters Marrisa and Shiela. This ministry gives me an opportunity to journey with them to provide a special space for formation, discernment and study in a manner that is so interior and spiritual to me. This ministry also helps me with my own vocation to really live seriously and be a witness to fully live a life of dedication to Jesus Christ and the Poor. Above all, through undivided love and faithful prayer, I endeavor to become their encouragement and guide.

The role that I have as their sister and companion in their on-going discernment also challenged and taught me to recognise that we are all called to leave old ways behind and to be formed into an ever new creation in Christ. It is an experience of being on pilgrimage with them as they seek the will of God in their lives, to encourage them to keep going when they become tired, bored, or dismayed most especially during the desert or dark times of their journey. My role is to help them learn from the Master, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Obedient to the Father, Chaste and Poor, so that by God's grace they will be prepared to profess the evangelical counsels and be ready to give themselves totally to the Holy Triune God through our Congregational Leader.

Fr. Victor Braun emphasised that there are only two things in life: **Jesus Christ and the Poor**. This is central to our spirituality and Charism as it is essential that our novices develop an understanding of this pivotal way of life and that together we continue to deepen daily in our personal and missionary work.

CEBU NOVITIATE: Integration of our Spiritual Life and SSHJM Mission:

As a formator of Novices it is very important for me to balance daily schedule and to maintain a spirit of unity in the house. The spiritual life and the mission here in Cebu are equally important in the formation of our novices. To fully live and practice the Charism handed down to us through Fr. Victor Braun, the novices participated in different workshops, spiritual exercises and studies as part of the formation program. Participating in our own projects and with other religious groups both in studies and apostolic works helped to expose them to the mission of SSHJM. One novice was given experience in the area of Human Trafficking and the other volunteered to work with children who were abandoned and who lived on the streets. By God's grace and in the true charism of Fr. Braun both sisters dedicated themselves to the poor and to their life of prayer and sacrifice.

NOVITIATE CEBU: Strengthen Community Living in Religious Life

Living in community--a community of souls coming together being one in mind, heart and spirit like the early Christians for the love of Christ Jesus, Our Lord is not easy and a challenge for many. By our example of true community living we will be able to share the SSHJM spirituality, mission and Charism as expressed and lived by Fr. Victor Braun 150 years ago. It is concretizing our life and Charism through our mission and religious practices that we may be able to fully lived the life in which we are called.

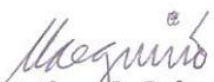
AFTER 150 YEAR OF FOUNDATION

I am very grateful to God for calling me to be a member of this wonderful community of inspired, spirit-filled women who serve Jesus and the poor wholeheartedly. After its foundation 150 years ago the spirit of Fr. Victor Braun and his legacy are still alive and will live on as long as God wills. Here in Cebu Mission we are continually praying for new vocations so that the Charism and Mission of Fr. Victor Braun will continue to spread and answer the needs of our people.

PHILIPPINES as a third class country--

Thanks be to God the newly elected Government Officials from National to Local has given us hope that the lives of our suffering people: the homeless, street children, victims of drug addiction, prostitution, and trafficked people will be given priority. We are praying that the new administration will be the answer to our long CRY for justice and peace and for the POOR in our country to live a decent life. Our new elected President's dream to let the POOR Filipino people live in paradise during his presidency is also the desire of our Lord JESUS and our father founder Fr. Victor for us all. And this is what we are hoping and dreaming of as a Congregation: to help shape communities of gentleness, justice and peace that witness to the healing, liberating and empowering love of God.

Respectfully submitted by:


Sr. Esther G. Suico, SSHJM