

## **SAFEGUARDING THE CICM MEMORY: A MISSIONARY MUSEUM**

Earl Antoine Alan Cura, cicm

### **VISION**

In 2015, the CICM-Philippines Provincial Superior, Father Ramon Caluza, cicm and his council decided to dedicate a part of the Provincial House structure to establish a museum. It aims to organise and preserve the various artifacts and materials [cultural, religious, liturgical, etc.] that reflect the missionary activities from earlier times and the rich cultures of communities and territories CICM missionaries encounter until today. Since then various consultations and meetings were conducted; experts from different disciplines were invited to take part in the formulation of concepts and images that can best capture what CICM desires to accomplish; weeks after, a preparatory team carefully examined several designs to create an appropriate museum environment.

The Quezon City local government has proclaimed the CICM Provincial House in New Manila a cultural heritage site in recent years. The pre-war edifice, designed by Manila's leading architects in the 1920s, is featured in several important public documents of the city – citing its religious, historical and cultural significance in the district. Yet more to the site and structure are the historical, cultural and religious treasures, missionaries past and present, highlight - promoting the people's tradition, community initiatives, shared spirituality and unique lifestyles.

The missionary museum aims to provide a deep sense of faith in God and animate the public: Christian communities, students, visitors, and researchers among many others - by promoting space and opportunities for education and reflection. It is not simply a depository of materials displayed with bibliographic explanation – rather it is a living witness that interacts and dialogues with each visitor; it manifests the story of every CICM missionary past, current [and future] called and sent to proclaim the Good News in a particular way. It seeks to enliven and stimulate creativity and innovation through direct and personal encounters with

historical, cultural, religious materials and events that are exhibited. The CICM missionary museum hopes to provide an environment of reflection, dialogue and research that can lead to deeper knowledge and contribute to [individual, church and societal] growth and transformation. This may be realised by engaging the public [visitors, researchers and scholars] in deep and reflexive programs made available during the museum tour.

Visiting individuals or groups are most likely to feel the heartbeat of every CICM missionary and touch the inner soul of the congregation's great founder, Theophile Verbist.

### **TASKS AHEAD**

This phenomenal enterprise certainly demands the close collaboration of each CICM missionary and all our CICM mission-partners. At the initial stage of pre-planning – identifying key institutions, resource persons, and working groups is critical in order to proceed with the succeeding stages. Tasks such as document gathering, collection of articles, inventory and cataloguing, practical organisation and management may be some of the project's immediate concerns. A working team is expected to design the museum's project plan and also oversee its proper implementation - ensuring execution and monitoring progress. A detailed work breakdown structure shall be prepared to serve as reference and guide particularly concerning the project cost and budgeting.

A target inauguration of the museum is planned in November 2017; the year coincides with the Congregation's 110 years of missionary presence in the islands. Like earlier missionaries who remained steadfast in their response to the challenges of their times, may we also be pioneering in our efforts to carry out the CICM legacy and the inspiration of the founder, by safeguarding our collective memory and idealism – and passing them innovatively to the new generations of CICM missionaries in the future.

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