

# QC WORD NEWS

The Newsletter of the Verbum Dei Missionary Family of Quezon City



Fr. Jojo with Bishop Ongtioco and the Verbum Dei Missionaries

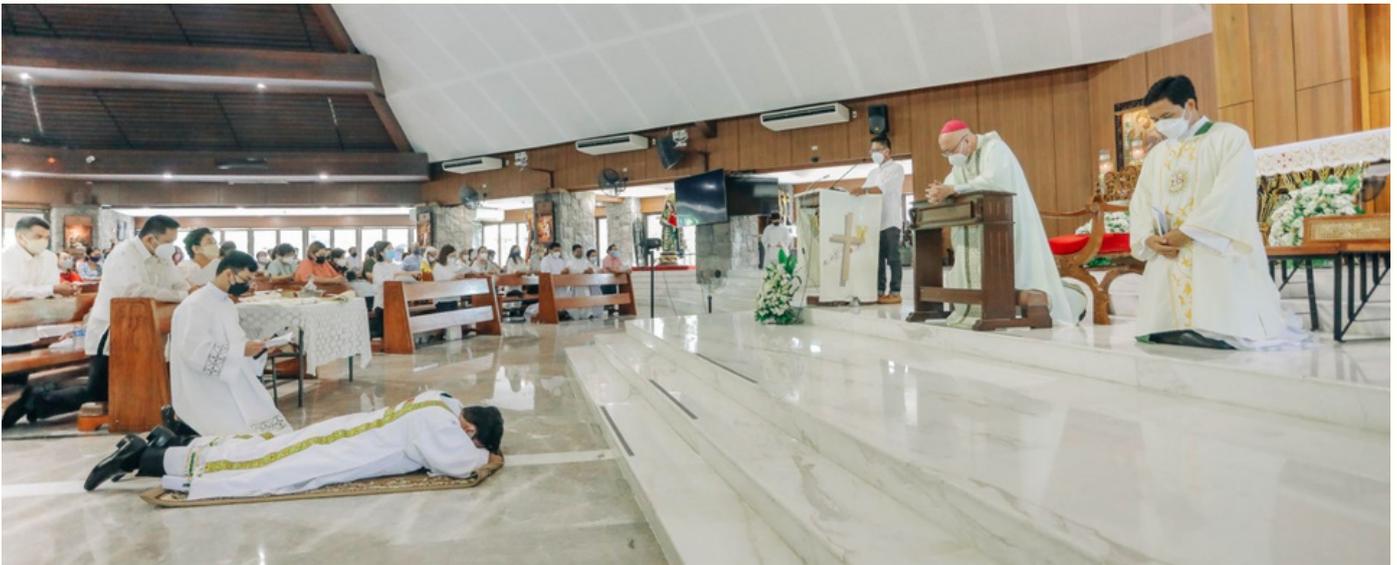
## Joseph's Yes

By Emy M. Abaya

Exactly a year after taking his perpetual vows, our very own Joseph V. David, fondly called Jojo, was finally ordained into the priesthood last March 19, 2022. It was the Solemnity of St. Joseph and Jojo's 57th birthday as well.

Unlike his diaconate ordination last September 2021, where attendance was greatly limited by the pandemic, the church of Sta. Maria della Strada Parish in Quezon City was filled to the brim with guests from all over the Philippines and the globe. It was an answered prayer. Jojo's fervent wish that his parents and family could come was granted. The Verbum Dei missionary family was there in full force, led by Sr. Amy Hernandez, Ecclesial Zone Responsible of Verbum Dei Philippines, Fr. Filipe Vaz Pardal, head of the Verbum Dei male branch in the Philippines, Sr. Grace Gonzales, head





*The Church implores the intercession of the Saints and God's help for Fr. Jojo*

of the Verbum Dei female branch in the Philippines. Fr. James McTavish, former head of the Verbum Dei male branch in the Philippines, and Verbum Dei missionary couple Marisol Diaz and Antonio Miralles came all the way from Europe. Fr. Arthur Opiniano, Parish Priest of Sta. Maria della Strada Parish, and the staff and volunteers of the parish lent their full support to the rite. Present as well were Fr. Robert Leus, CJM – local superior of Eudist Philippines, Fr. Bob Buenconsejo, SJ (Jojo's spiritual director), Fr. Sanny de Claro – Parish Priest of Sto. Niño Parish in Pandacan, Fr. Seelan Maria Michael, Fr. Dante Martinez, Fr. Jacek Kokosa, Fr. Cirio "Serg" Kabamalan, CJM, Fr. Dennis Jones "DJ" Garcia, CJM and Fr. Archie Villegas-Perez, SS.CC. Many more attended online via FB livestream.

Most Rev. Honesto F. Ongtioco, Bishop of the Diocese of Cubao, was the ordaining prelate. In his homily, he mentioned the struggles of Jojo's journey—struggles which began at birth! As a newborn baby, Jojo had great difficulty breathing. The bishop told Jojo that his vocation was a gift from God but that his commitment was his gift to God.



*Laying of hands by Fr James, his formator*

The Bishop advised him to imitate St. Joseph who was simple, just and spoke through his actions. Just as St. Joseph lived by faith and gave himself fully to a life of selfless service to God, so must his destiny be as a priest. The bishop expressed his thanks for the courage of Rev. Joseph in saying "yes" to the Lord's invitation to share his life and his mission.

"Do you love me? Feed my sheep" (John 21:17) was the Bible verse Jojo chose for his ordination invitation. It is a reminder that Jojo's life now belongs completely to the Lord, and to his mission.



The bishop confers the spirit of priestly ministry



Fr. Jojo gives his thanksgiving message





Fr. Jojo David with his immediate and extended family



Fr. Jojo, Bishop Ongtioco and the Pansol feeding program volunteers (L)  
Fr. Jojo with the Christ the King Parish School of the Word (R)



Fr. Jojo and the Pansol School of the Word

# My Vocation Story

*Joseph V. David, FMVD*



I have had this calling for some time. Looking back, I remember those moments but I did not mind it nor took it seriously. As the eldest, my parents ingrained in me the responsibility to help provide and support my siblings financially for their studies. Thus, I would brush this calling aside even if this desire to know the Lord more was always there in me.

In one of the retreats I attended, I met a seminarian who inspired me to become a priest. He gave me several books on the life of the saints - St. Therese of the Child Jesus, St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross to name a few. These saints inspired me to focus on prayer with the Word of God and to become more sensitive to my interior life.

So after obtaining my college degree and working for five years in a bank, this sensitivity led me to decide and join a religious congregation despite my parents' disapproval. I was accepted as a postulant together with ten other professionals and I was convinced it was the life for me. I was very happy but in less than a year, the five of us were informed that we did not have our vocation there. We were not given any explanation on the basis of why we could not pursue this vocation and so, I was very disappointed. I did not understand why. It was for me a major drawback since the desire to be a priest was still in my heart. I gave up my career and was all ready to follow Jesus but it led me nowhere. I was confused and deeply hurt.

After that experience, I tried to forget and dismiss the idea of vocation. I busied myself with work and no longer bothered to continue discerning. In fact, there were times that I did not pray at all except for the Sunday mass which I did not want to miss. I tried to go on with life and enjoy but still, there was this inspiration, this desire in my heart which I could not escape from.

And so, I prayed, "Lord, if it is not your will, please take it away. Take this inspiration away. Can I just live like a normal man taking care of my own family?"

I appreciated family life because my parents have been good to me. I have experienced romantic love - to love and be loved yet it was not enough for me. There was this longing for a deeper kind of love that I felt nobody else could give at that time. I thought I would find happiness in this adventure of working abroad, traveling to different countries and experiencing various cultures. I was happy for a time but still, there was this emptiness that lingered in my heart.



When I returned home, I was employed as an internal auditor but was quickly promoted to senior level manager. As such, I had my own office, ran my own department and received a hefty salary plus a yearly bonus.

I thought then that I was just one step away from my ambition of becoming the vice president of the company. After which, I could retire from a successful career and enjoy all my earnings. Everything was going well and I thought to myself that my life was all set. All except for the restlessness in my heart which I could not resolve.

*“Why doesn’t this inspiration to be a priest ever leave me? At the end of my life, how could I face Jesus when he asks me if I did what he wants me to do? How will I proceed in my life now?”*

Then in the midst of it all, I met Verbum Dei. My former boss invited me to attend a School of the Word and then a retreat. I was drawn to the simplicity and sincerity of the Verbum Dei misioneras. I enjoyed the silent prayers and my desire to experience more led me to join regularly and participate in the activities. At first I just wanted to be a good disciple of Verbum Dei. I never intended to become a missionary. As I joined one activity to another, however, the inspiration and desire grew intense. I was already in my 40’s then and I thought that it was impossible for me to become a priest. It was too late! More so, leaving a career which I built was not an option. I enjoyed work and the position I held and quitting would put everything to waste.



An answered prayer: Jojo's parents attend his ordination



Fr. Jojo's First Mass

On one hand, yes, I had my career, but I couldn’t resolve that restlessness in my heart. I was not really happy.

I was blessed to have met Fr. Gerson Ortiz, FMVD, my spiritual director who guided me in my discernment. He believed in my vocation when I thought nobody else believed me. A year later, he invited me to undergo the formation course in Verbum Dei. It was not an easy decision; I struggled a lot to leave “everything” behind, as they say. But through prayers and graces from God, what seems to be impossible for me became possible. What angel Gabriel said to Mother Mary was true, “Nothing is impossible with God.”

On March 19, 2022, on the occasion of the Feast of St. Joseph and my birthday, God granted me the desire I have been longing in my heart - the ordination to the Sacred Order of Priesthood. It is the greatest birthday gift I have ever received in my life. The restlessness I felt before was transformed into peace of heart - the peace and happiness that the world will not give. And so now, I surrender my life to God and I want to thank Him by borrowing Mother Mary’s words: *“Let it be done to me according to your word.”* (Luke 1:38)

# Thanksgiving Mass



**Fr. Jojo David's  
Thanksgiving Mass**

March 26, 2022  
Sta. Monica Parish Church  
Minalin, Pampanga



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