

God's Commissioning

Rico Gerardo Jazmin, SVD

I do believe that my calling started even before I was born. I cannot help but compare myself and my calling to that of the great chosen leaders in the Old Testament called by God to lead his people, like Samuel, Isaiah and Moses and many more. God has chosen them.

At the age of twelve slowly God started to concretize my vocation to the religious, missionary and priestly life. In June of 1978, finally I entered and joined the first year high school batch of 48 students in Christ the King Mission Seminary. After fourteen years in formation, only two of us from the original class got ordained to the priesthood in 1991 and 1993 respectively. We're not the best, but we know that in God's eyes we were the most precious.

Right after my formation and theological studies I was sent to Argentina, my first foreign mission assignment. It was another chapter in my life encountering myself in another context and reality. One very important lesson and experience I learned during my formation, and carrying it out throughout my life is: remain OPEN to the HOLY SPIRIT in order to be led by Him wherever and to whatever place and direction He wants me to go.

In November 1992, I arrived in Misiones, Argentina. I found and encountered many new things different to what were then familiar to me. But, what made me feel so secure in going to this place was that I knew that before I arrived, God was already there. And, I never felt alone in the mission because I had with me my brothers, fellow Divine Word Missionaries, sharing together and fulfilling God's mission: *the proclamation of God's Good News*. As a missionary let me share with you my personal realizations about mission.

MISSION is going out of *my personal boundaries*. I realized that I had to leave many things in my life before going beyond the physical boundaries (from one place to another). I had to empty my whole self in order to assume the new realities in life. I had to accept that I was different from them, and that my mission is to share my own *personal experience and testimony* of my own personal God, a God who was incarnated, lived among us, died and resurrected to tell that God has never forgotten his own people.

MISSION is to have the *habit of asking questions*. I was advised by one of my SVD Filipino confreres working at that time in Argentina that I must always *ask questions*. Children always ask questions of their parents; these are signs of humility, an interest to learn and to be filled with knowledge and wisdom. Being new in mission, I knew that there were so many things that I must learn. I was born as a Filipino, not as an Argentinian, with a different culture and history. Therefore, I humbly accepted that there were many things in their life as Argentinians that I must learn in order to be able to walk with them on their journey. In other words, mission is none other than *incarnating my faith* in a specific place and culture.

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