

Author: Frederick Nangca, VP Filipino Community – Saint Boniface Church
Pictures provided & ID'd by Paz Jardeleza

**April 18, 2010 mass celebraton at Saint Boniface Church, presided by
His Eminence Gaudencio B. Cardinal Rosales,
Archdiocese of Manila, Philippines.**

Who said that "you cannot teach an old dog, new tricks"? Yes, you can. However, it does require a lot of patience, perseverance, courage, discipline and most of all, determination to do it. These qualities sum up my whole experience as the liturgy and music committee coordinator from the just concluded Eucharistic Celebration and dedication ceremony presided by His Eminence, Gaudencio B. Cardinal Rosales, DD, April 18, 2010.

The preparation of the missal and the process of researching for appropriate prayers, songs and readings for the mass is as easy as reciting the alphabet or counting numbers. For as long as you have a copy of the current missal and/or a sacramentary, you are done with your tasks. Better yet as most people do this day and age, Google it; type them up, copy and paste, print a master copy and hire a printing company to do it for you. And as I always tell a friend, "sit in front of your computer and you are done within a day." However, being a musical director is a different story. Rehearsing the songs both new and old with a group of very mature individuals (and when I say mature, their ages vary from the early 60's to mid 80's) who do not have a formal training in music and notes (musical) reading, that is what you call a **VERY CHALLENGING AND STRESSFUL TASK**. And then being asked by your pastor a week before the event if you have more people to sing, that is what you call pressure. To top it off, this was no ordinary Sunday mass. You have a high ranking official of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the Philippines, a Cardinal, visiting your Church as the guest of honor and main presider at the mass with an expected 400 guests/attendees. No wonder I had butterflies in my tummy the whole week.



The choir groups of the Filipino Community of Saint Boniface and Saint Patrick. In the piano is the Music Director, Wadleigh Rifermo, standing far end liturgy incharge & conductor, Frederick Nangca.

Author: Frederick Nangca, VP Filipino Community – Saint Boniface Church
Pictures provided & ID'd by Paz Jardeleza



The Choir groups of the Filipino Community of Saint Boniface and Saint Patrick.

The pressure was on, coordinating everyone's schedules just don't seem to work out. With our tight work load and hectic family demands, we have to squeeze in an extra day or 2 to learn new songs and rehearse some old ones. As some of our choir members always says, "Perdona me. Senior moment here." They have forgotten some of the songs we have been singing all these years. "Ay! Dios mio!" was all I can say. The challenges we faced were re-learning the songs; bringing in their books and worst of all low in attendance at the rehearsals. Then you have 2 violinists, a saxophonist and a clarinet who knows how to read sheet music while a pianist who plays by chords. How was I to coordinate them? The least I could do was pull my hair. No worries, I still have hair left on my head.

And as the saying and song goes, "God works in mysterious ways; in ways we cannot see. He will make a way for me. He will be my guide..." Friday before the mass, my phone rang and there was this young lady (Hershey Rosales) from St. Patrick's Youth Choir Organization who left me a voice message saying that they will help us sing. Was that a relief or not? A little bit, for we still have this problem of singing by musical notes versus by ear; our choral group were the young once while theirs were the young ones; and of course, the blending of voices. How was I to accomplish this task and deliver the results "with grace and poise"? That call was proceeded later on by a confirmation of 12 attendees from Miss Rosales and her group and 4 more rehearsals within a 2 day period of the event, to learn and re-learn the songs.

Then of course, my upper manager denied my request for a Sunday off on the day of the Cardinal's mass at St. Boniface Church. What a disaster about to happen! Again, God has His way of doing things. That Saturday before the mass, the same person who denied my day off request had asked me instead to come in really early that Sunday to help out prepare my department for business. It all worked out. I

Author: Frederick Nangca, VP Filipino Community – Saint Boniface Church
Pictures provided & ID'd by Paz Jardeleza

could just leave early. So I did. But when it was time for me to leave work at 2 in the afternoon that Sunday as I planned, my reliever-manager did not arrive until 2:30, an hour and a half before the celebration. Praise the Lord! San Francisco MUNI was running smoothly that day with no delays at all. I got home safe and sound.

But the most awaited event in our Church's history was about to unfold in an hour. Miss Rosales brought in, as she confirmed, 12 choir members combined with ours of the same membership and the musicians. Finally, we were one in voices and praises. Through constant prayers, rehearsals (even to the hour before the celebration) and full determination, WE DID IT again. The church resounded with our unified voices and musical accompaniments from our 7 member orchestra as we sing songs from 3 of our great Jesuit Filipino composers/priests like Manuel Francisco, Arnel Aquino and +Eddie Hontiveros. Our voices brought justice and new life to these songs.



Look at Rowena, Frederick & Cip, they were all relaxed & smiling after months & months of planning and meetings prior to the celebration. L to R : Arnel Carandang, Fr. Jun Pilande, Frederick Nangca, Mons. Fred Bitanga, Fr. Kirk Ullerly, partly hidden: Cardinal Rosales. Standing at the back: Rowena Lawson, Cip Warbington and Betty Duran.

I have only heard nothing but praises and hoorahs from the people I spoke at the reception for the Cardinal. Msgr. Fred Al Bitanga even said this to His Eminence as he refers to us, "This group of Filipino-Americans in this Church is very little in number but they have what it takes to accomplish a task only a multitude of people and pool of resources could do. And they did it successfully with very limited time

Author: Frederick Nangca, VP Filipino Community – Saint Boniface Church
Pictures provided & ID'd by Paz Jardeleza

and resources and that's what makes me proud of them." Fr. Kirk Ullery, our administrative Pastor, said this, "Thank you. The music and the voices were great. You (referring to all of us), the Church, did it very well." And to end this, let me quote Miss Rosales' text messages the night after the event, "I was so tired. Woke up at 4 am to pick other choir members to be at St. Patrick's at 6:45 and sing for the 7:30 am and 12:15 pm masses then to be at St. Boniface later at 5. Thought I was going to faint. But after singing and taking people home safely, I realized God planned this day for us to meet all of you. Thank you for making us feel at home in your church. You are right (Fred), we are now one in ministry. By the way, Fr. Ed Dura (of St. Patrick's) was also glad for what he saw (referring to being one united Filipino-American Choir). Thanks again, Fred. We are not "others" (in Tagalog iba) anymore, rather new brothers and sisters in faith."

It is now accomplished.



**During the mass celebration with eight (8) concelebrant priests.
Fr/ Kirk Ullery, Saint Boniface Church; Mons. Fred Bitanga of St. Monica; Fr. Jun Pilande of St. John Evangelist; Fr. Ed Dura, St. Patrick Church, Fr. Felipe Marvin of St. Anne; Fr. Frank Bagadiong of St. Anne; Fr. Raymund Reyes of St. Anne and Fr. Virgilio Bartolome, SVD.**

Author: Frederick Nangca, VP Filipino Community – Saint Boniface Church
Pictures provided & ID'd by Paz Jardeleza



L to R: Fr. Kirk Ullery, Cardinal Rosales, Fr. Frank Bagadiong and Fr. Bart. Ladies at the back are the members of the working committee Noemi Digma, Gloria Correa, Zeny Bunagan, Rose Nangca, Tess Galindez and Lulu Hitones.