

Interviewer ***- Would you share a bit about your background: family, childhood, early education, etc.?***

- **Br. Blair NUYDA A.A**. - I grew up in a small family. I'm the only child of an engineer and a nurse. My grandaunt lived with us. She was a very religious person and she would bring me to Mass often. To keep up with the needs of the family, my mother had to work in the United States when I was in high school. As a student, I was very much involved in campus journalism and in parish liturgical ministry. Being a delegate of the historic 10th World Youth Day (1995) in Manila proved to be a life-changing experience, the initial attraction to heed the call to dedicate myself to follow and serve God as a religious.

My parents were initially very uncomfortable with the idea of letting their only son pursue a vocation to the religious life. It will take some years for them to be truly at ease with this. Some years after entering the college seminary of the Society of Saint Paul, my father followed my mother to the United States. By the time my parents have settled well into their jobs, my petition for a visa will have to wait longer because I was already of another age category. Meanwhile, I was completing my double major in Philosophy and Mass Communication.

I have left the Society of Saint Paul after having gone through a work exposure program, citing the need to "see the world" and was already hoping to be with my family in the United States. But no travels took place, and I continued working as Café Manager in a leading coffee chain. Five years in the industry have given me certain technical and people skills, administrative experience and good friends.

I have always been a person inclined to read, write and draw. While working in a café, I started my MFA in Creative Writing. Then a classmate suggested that I teach Literature at Assumption College in San Lorenzo where she was also working. Thus began my exodus from the café to the academe and eventually to a religious family.



- ***Where/how did your Assumptionist roots begin? Did anyone in particular have a significant impact on your life?***

- As we were forming students, the College and the Sisters were also doing their best to form the faculty and staff. The profound mission of education that is reinforced by a certain quality prayer and sharing in the Assumption has made me rethink my life over. I have gone through detours, necessary ones I think, but now I realize that the Lord has been leading me all along to a life dedicated to following Christ through transformative education.

Upon the encouragement of the Sisters, I made contact with the first Assumptionists who had just founded a community in Manila that year: Bernard, Gilles, Chuvi, Alex, Ricky and Clem. I would spend time with them constantly on weekends and I have been a witness to the joys and difficulties of a new foundation that was also very international. I did not see a “perfect” community, but I knew that this community was sincere in its desire to follow Christ and I have always felt I belonged. I had the chance to visit other Assumptionist communities in France and Italy during the canonization of Marie-Eugenie in 2007.

- ***Would you share some of your later education and formation memories? Do you have any favorite scripture passages?***

- As a postulant, I continued teaching at the College while living with the Assumptionist community. I entered the then recently established novitiate in 2008 with the late Father Richard Brunelle as our novice master. Oh, If only I could share with you a lot of interesting moments during my time there! There were funny antics but mostly encounters with a novice master who may be strict, but was profoundly simple and spiritual. What made him so effective to us was that what he was already doing what he wants us to practice. If he insisted on becoming simple, he was an exemplar of simplicity.

Upon taking the vows, I started my Theological Studies in Biblical Theology at the Loyola School of Theology – Ateneo de Manila University. I would be very interested in pursuing further studies on this field seeing it as very relevant and essential to ecclesial ministries. Under the guidance of Father Bernard Holzer, the student brothers had been given certain responsibilities crucial to their apostolic growth in a foundation that had also started to expand in terms of its ministries. I had also the opportunity to be with some of our communities in France while having my “internship” at Bayard Presse.

With these in mind, this passage from Mark (4:8) somehow makes sense: “Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

- ***Where and what did subsequent community assignments take you?***

- Along with others, I had the opportunity to be among the founding teachers of the Assumption Language Center. Afterwards, I had a brief stint as Communications Officer at our NGO, Kaloob Development Foundation and as a member of the Youth Ministry working at Marytown, a poor section of the parish where the Assumptionists in Manila live. Here in the United States, I am serving as editor of Living with Christ-Philippines, collaborating with the editorial team of Bayard US and will help in the Campus Ministry of Assumption College.

Back in Manila, I had subsequent “internal” community responsibilities as sacristan, librarian, house manager and local councilor. Here in the United States, I have the opportunity to deepen my apostolic training by being involved in two of the mobilizing works of the congregation.

- ***How have you experienced growth in living out your Assumptionist charism?***

- Definitely, there is growth. While I miss being in the classroom, I am also actually engaged in what Father d’Alzon describes as “education in all its forms.” At first, I thought this was just something superiors say to convince the brothers to take assignments other than teaching. But I am now more convinced that most, if not all, of what the Assumption does starts with a certain kind of education.

Also, when one speaks of growth, one can describe it in ways that go beyond the individual. It is definitely done in the midst of a community and is really grace from God.

- ***Would you share any happy memories/stories?***

- Join the Assumptionist table for dinner and there will be lots of interesting memories and stories we will be glad to share with you. At the moment, I can recall the time when the student brothers went up to the mountains for some days of rest and bonding. We were just happy to be with each other, in such a very beautiful place, relieved that the semester was over. It was also a time to encounter a very interesting indigenous culture.

- ***What hobbies or other interests do you have?***

- Painting, sketching, reading, leisure walks, watching films, coffee-making.

- ***What is your vision and /or hope for the future of the congregation and/or the Church?***

- I would like to see a Church that is vibrant and dynamic, forward-looking and up to the challenges of the future. In other words, a Church that is so convinced on her Truth that she is willing to collaborate, dialogue and share this same Truth within her and around her.

I would like to see the Congregation working its way to become more international and in greater alliance with our lay brothers and sisters. I would like to see our mobilizing works grow with greater relevance to church and society.