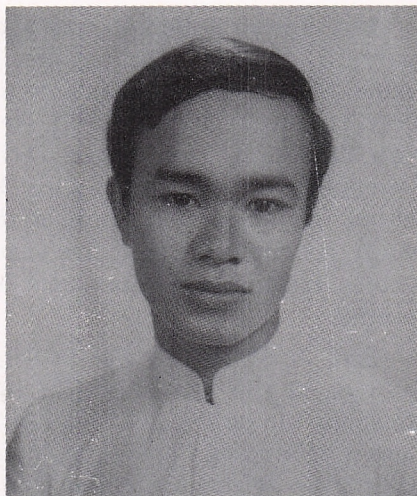


DON BOSCO - PARAÑAQUE
PROVINCE OF MANILA
PHILIPPINES



April 24, 1982

Dear confreres,

It is with mixed feelings that I am announcing the passing away of

CLERIC JOVITO SOBERANO

His sudden death is truly saddening. But it is also a joy to realize that in him we have a confrere who has persevered to the very end and who has gone ahead of us to the home of the Father.

How did it all happen?

The Superiors and the students of theology of the Don Bosco Center of Studies, Parañaque, had decided to go for their annual outing to Pangasinan and to Baguio City, where certain benefactors had generously offered them their resthouses. It was April 13, 1982, Tuesday. They were going along the new Marcos Highway on their way to Baguio City when one of the buses fell on its side inexplicably after negotiating a sharp curve. Bro. Jovito and the others who were slightly injured were rushed to the Baguio General Hospital. Bro. Jovito was then thinking of making his vacation to Negros after this camping, not realizing that God had other plans. In the hospital, while the doctors were doing all within the reach of science and medicine, our Lord called Bro. Jovito to his eternal vacation.



His Curriculum Vitae

Bro. Jovito Soberano was born at Manapla, Negros Occidental, on February 15, 1957, of working-class parents, Mr. Jesus Soberano and Mrs. Mercedes Alonzo. He was baptized at the Parish of Our Lady of Victory, Bacolod City, on January 5, 1958. He was confirmed in the same Parish on January 26, 1962. Don Bosco Technical Institute - Victorias saw him as an Elementary School student. He began his High School studies at the same school but completed them at the minor seminary in San Fernando, Pangasinana. He spent the next five years at the Don Bosco Seminary College, Canlubang, Laguna, where he came out as a full-pledged Salesian and a certified teacher.

Bro. Jovit (as he was usually called) made his two years of Practical Training at the Don Bosco Technical College, Mandaluyong, Metro Manila. He spent the last year of his life as a pre-theology student at the Don Bosco Center of Studies, Parañaque, Metro Manila. Prior to his death he had already passed the entrance examination to the Central Seminary of the University of Santo Tomas for his theological studies. But it seems that the Lord had other plans for him.

The Salesian Portrait of Bro. Jovit

His two years of practical training evidenced his growth in spirituality and the Salesian spirit. The following comments were made of him:

"He is a hard worker and is responsible in the commitments assigned to him. He is serious in his duties of study, piety, etc. He eagerly desires to go to the missions."

"He succeeds in his studies. He is a hard worker, serious and pious. He is determined. He is very obedient to his superiors."

"He is good-willed and serious. He is pious and industrious at work. But sometimes he is distracted and not very orderly in his activities. He shows a lack of sensibility to the feelings of others. He is very attached to his vocation."

At the end of his first year of practical training, he applied for the renewal of his vows. His letter of application shows visible growth in his Salesian vocation.

"My first year of practical training is coming to a close. Indeed my stay here is very fruitful. It initiated me to the real Salesian apostolate. At last, I have seen and experienced what it means to be a Salesian contemplative in action. The example of my confreres and my own experiences here urge me to stay in the Salesian Congregation. My vows will terminate within two months. In accordance with the ruling of Mother Church, I would like to renew my vows for three years, although it is my intention to dedicate myself to God in the Salesian Society completely for the rest of my life. I have arrived to this decision after due consideration and prayer, and aware of my human weaknesses."



The House Council accepted his application with the following remarks: "He is very dedicated to the demands of his vocation as a teacher, brother and assistant. He is hardworking and zealous in the apostolate. But he should correct certain manifestations of perfectionism and be ready to accept his limitations and those of others."

These remarks and the personal observations sent in by his Rector bear witness to his good religious spirit, zeal in the apostolate and great spirit of generosity.

Bro. Jovit spent his practical training as assistant to the college students of Don Bosco - Mandaluyong. It was the first try of sending a young cleric to work with boys in their late teens. Bro. Jovit endeared himself to all with his cheerfulness, generosity and genuine interest in their spiritual welfare. He worked too with the upperclassmen of the High School Department and he obtained similar results.

But the boys of the Youth Center occupied the biggest portion in his heart. He spared neither time nor energy for these poor boys. He willingly sacrificed his meals, amusement and even hours of sleep. Bro. Jovit was responsible for the setting up of the Don Bosco Referees' Club. He trained the boys himself to officiate in the games. But his true goal was to make of these boys honest citizens and good Christians.

We can conclude this Salesian Portrait with this episode as narrated by his Rector during his Practical Training, Fr. Francesco Panfilo. "When I came back from Italy, some confreres told me to look after Bro. Jovit, he was eating very little and sleeping even less. When I spoke with him, he replied with tears in his eyes, 'How can I eat when some of the boys of the Youth Center can hardly eat two meals a day?' "

The Moral Profile of Bro. Jovit

Fr. Jose Reinoso, the Rector of the Don Bosco Center of Studies, made the following report concerning our dear brother:

"I have known Jovito Soberano since he was nine years old. I have always admired his quiet attitude combined with efficiency in work. It was at a very early age that he started helping at the Oratory of Don Bosco - Victorias. He enjoyed playing basketball. But this fact did not draw him away from his task of managing the ballroom. He must have felt keenly the sacrifice of seeing his friends at play while he had to see to the distribution and the returning of the balls. And he did all this for no material compensation whatsoever. He was truly a good-hearted boy. When he entered the Seminary, he never failed to show his gratitude towards the Rector of Don Bosco - Victorias for the financial help he was receiving."

"We met again at the Don Bosco Center of Studies as members of the same community. He was a grown-up Salesian by this time, yet he had lost nothing of the quiet but efficient worker. His superiors did not fail to note this. In the Book of Remarks we read: 'He is diligent and serious in work.'



We find other noteworthy observations: 'He is neat and punctual! He is idealistic and strives to reach the ideal.' His ideal was no other than to be a Salesian after the heart of Don Bosco. This became clear in his last 'manifestation' where he showed a particular determination to overcome some deficiencies he had noticed in himself. This impressed me so much that after his death I could not help telling myself that he must have sensed that his time was running out. During his year of stay at Parañaque, his Superiors found him truly zealous and creative in the apostolate. Moreover he was noticeably respectful towards Superiors. The Book of Remarks contains nothing that is in any way negative."

"I can add that Bro. Jovit was truly sincere and open in his 'manifestations.' He was very regular too in approaching the Sacraments. He used to spend some time each day in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. He was of average intelligence, but his walking around with his notes was proverbial. Most probably he felt he needed to walk around in order to get rid of sleepiness since the Seminary sleeping time was far too short for a student. Thus his grades were rather excellent. His constancy and perseverance in his tasks were at the root of his many achievements."

"His short but fully lived life will always be a beacon of light pointing the way to those who wish to live the Salesian ideal to the full."

Conclusion:

Bro. Jovit is the first Filipino Salesian to enter the home of the Father. He is the first fruit of the Salesian charism as incarnated in the Filipino culture. We all have an intercessor in heaven. In Bro. Jovit we all have a model to look up to and a source of encouragement in the difficult moments of life.

As we continue to pray for the eternal repose of Bro. Jovit, let us thank God for the wonderful incarnation of the Salesian charism in this good Brother.

Always your brother in Don Bosco,

FR. LAZARO REVILLA, S.D.B.
Provincial

For the Necrology:

Cleric JOVITO SOBERANO

Born at Manapla, Negros Occidental (Philippines) on February 15, 1957.

Died at Baguio City (Philippines) on April 13, 1982.

6 years of profession.

