



BAGUYOS CATHOLIC SCHOOL—FIRST ENROLLMENT

BAGUYOS SCHOOL

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY REV. O. DE SMET

Father, will you open our school again?"

So asked the old men of Baguyos (Mankayan, Mt. Prov.) when I went to visit them for the first time in 1948.

It was six years ago that Father Miguel Veys had started there a little school. An unoccupied house was used as temporary classroom. A new school was just finished, when on December 8th the Philippines were attacked and involved in World-War II; the building was never used for its purpose.

When the Japs operated the Lepanto copper mine, they constructed a road Mankayan-Cervantes, passing through Baguyos. That time it was quite a busy place with transportation and plenty of work to keep the road in good condition. The Guerillas drove away the enemy by burning the whole town, and opened the road for the American troops, who digged in their cannons at Baguyos

to fire at the Japanese army still nestling in the hills of Lepanto. The people had evacuated in the most remote tops of the mountains, and waited for the end of the fight. In no time, with bamboo sticks and cogon grass, they had put up their new houses; the rice fields were irrigated and ready for planting. There was peace again, but alas! some of their townmates did not come back; they had died for the liberation of their country. Now they had to work for their daily food, and they worked hard; but even the two crops a year are not enough to feed them for the whole year.

They were also quite worried about the future of their children, and they wanted them to progress.

"—Father, will you open our school again?"

"—I would, if I had the means. . . ."

And the next month again:

"—Please, Father, will you open our school again?"

Our children run away when a

stranger is passing by in our barrio and they do no more know how to pray, because there is nobody to teach them. And furthermore, we want a Catholic school."

Could I send them away unsatisfied? Wouldn't Our Lord send the means for His work?

"—Yes, I answered, I will, but you have to prepare a building."

The old men accepted. The work was divided; the people of one barrio had to bring the bamboo for the framing work; another barrio had to take care of the cogon grass for the roofing; I sent them some old galvanized sheets for the walling; and the most expert men started the construction, while I had the desks made, bought books and blackboards, and sent a teacher.

On July 6, 1949 Baguyos Catholic school was opened again!

After one week I asked:

"—How is the enrollment?"

—"Father," the teacher answered, "there are around 60 pupils; the room is too small, and there are desks only for 40!"

—"Where do they come from?"

—"Well, from Baguyos proper, from Ampontok, Maduto, Saleng, Cavite, Colalo, even from Pasnadan."

—"Let's wait. Many might no more come after a few weeks."

We waited. Some left, but new ones came, so that each time I visited the place I could count more than fifty children present.

The people of Baguyos and surrounding barrios are proud of their school, and not without reason!

—"Only four months they go to school," they say, "and our children can write their name and count until hundred. No other school can beat ours! We have to enlarge the classroom. And will you give us 6 more desks, Father?"

BAGUYOS CATHOLIC SCHOOL—SAME CHILDREN AS ON PAGE 24, IN UNIFORM



I was so pleased with the cooperation and the good will of this people that I said: "You will get 6 more desks, and I promise to give to each child, for his Christmas, a new dress, a uniform".

The Christmas program was anxiously expected, and it will always remain a never-to-be forgotten day in Baguyos. I wish that the mission friends who have helped me could have been present on that occasion.

More than fifty smiling, happy faces! More than fifty pairs of sparkling eyes admiring themselves and one another in their new blue-and-white uniform!

Let us also congratulate the teacher. She is not only teaching the children, but also treating their



BAGUYOS MOTHERS WITH THEIR BABIES

wounds and helping the sick, giving advice, baptizing the dying babies, and bringing them all to a practical christian life. That is why the people like her. That is why there is progress at Baguyos and surroundings.

—Father, they are already suggesting, if there are eighty children, will you send a second teacher?

And it flashes through my mind: that means another teacher's salary, and books, and desks, and blackboards....and then a new and better building will be needed.

And I answer by myself: "I hope so."

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Mother: **Tomorrow's your birthday. Would you like to have a cake with ten candles?**

Junior: **Couldn't I have ten cakes with one candle?**

• •

Millie: **If you don't stop playing that saxophone, I'll go crazy,**

Willie: **I guess it's too late. I stopped an hour ago.**

—*Mountain Echo*

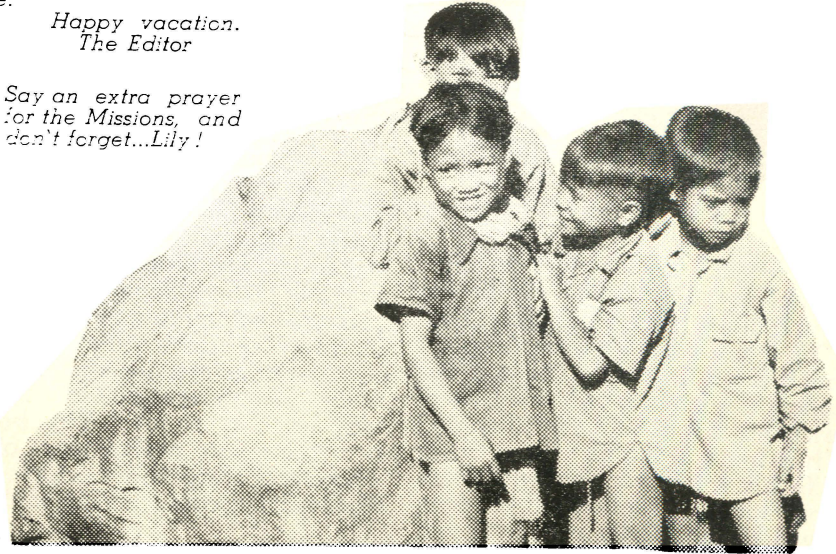
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Dear Friends of LILY and CARMENCITA:

Carmencita must have been awfully busy! Although in vacation, she didn't pen a word to Lily. I'm sure you feel sorry. I too, for I really enjoy with you that busy correspondence.

Happy vacation.
The Editor

P.S. Say an extra prayer
for the Missions, and
don't forget...Lily!



First Communion day was fast approaching, and the religion teacher was hard at work teaching her pupils their act of contrition. Each day a group was called to recite their prayers from memory before the class. One little boy, though, seemed almost a hopeless case. He simply could not get through reciting the act of contrition from beginning to end. Somewhere near the middle he always stopped and could not get ahead.

Today the teacher looked at her seemingly hard-headed little pupil. Poor boy, she thought, I will have to call him again, and I fear he will be humiliated. Nevertheless, she called him.

With an assured step the boy came forward and in a clear voice recited his prayer from: "O my God" to "amend my life. Amen," without as much as a stammer. It was perfect!

Amazed the teacher listened, wondering who could have coached him.

"That was very well," she smiled approvingly. "Who taught you to say it correctly today?"

In a flash, a wide bright smile spread over the little boy's countenance. Without a word he turned around and pointed at the statue of the Blessed Virgin, "She was the one."