

# **The first Filipino Associates of Opus Dei ordained priests**

Reverends Renie Cavales and Abraham Geraldez from Cebu (Philippines) were ordained priests of the Prelature of Opus Dei on Saturday, 25 May 2024.

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On 25 May 2024, Msgr. Paul Toshihiro Sakai, Auxiliary Bishop of Archdiocese of Osaka-Takamatsu, Japan ordained 29 members of Opus Dei as priests at the Basilica of St.

Eugene in Rome. Among them were two Filipinos: Rev. Renie Cavales and Abraham (Abe) Geraldez, the first 2 Filipino Associates (members of Opus Dei) to be ordained priests.

The two are graduates of CITE (Center for Industrial Technology and Enterprise), a technical-vocational school in Cebu. This social initiative was established in 1990, following the wishes of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, then-Prelate of Opus Dei, who was in Cebu in 1987. After graduation each was able to pursue university studies while working in CITE.

### **Abraham Briones Geraldez**

Born on 25 February 1983 in Cebu City, Abe earned his diploma in Mechanical Technology from CITE in 2003. After graduation, he worked shortly for a Japanese manufacturing plant. He returned to CITE later in 2003 to teach mathematics, technical

drafting, and to supervise machining workshops. At the same time, he pursued university studies in Mechanical Engineering. He is a licensed engineer. He subsequently headed the Mechanical Engineering Technology department in CITE and was Vice-Academic Director until 2017.

Rev. Geraldez shared that the persons who made a great impact on his spiritual life were: “my mother, the nuns of Divino Amore Academy where I spent my high school, and Saint Josemaria Escriva.”

Instructing and training young persons who have less in life, and helping them obtain gainful employment through CITE was very meaningful work for Abe. Talking now about his calling to a new profession, the priesthood, he reflected: “I realize that getting to know Christ and following Him is the

greatest honor one can possess. May I be faithful to the task that He has entrusted to me.”

## **Renie Toco Cavales**

Born on 7 August 1987 in Samboan (Cebu), Renie earned his diploma in Electromechanics Technology from CITE in 2007. After graduation, he worked as a maintenance technician, a university professor of technology and a design engineer. He returned to CITE in 2009 to work as an instructor in the Electrical Engineering Technology Department. He worked in the Personnel Department of the school and was adviser and mentor of students until 2017. While in CITE, he finished university studies in Industrial Engineering and in Secondary Education Pedagogy.

Rev. Cavales recalls St. Josemaría Escrivá’s 1973 homily: *A Priest Forever*. “Talking about the laymen of

Opus Dei who are called to the priesthood, St. Josemaria said: ‘Through their vocation to Opus Dei they have been devoted to the service of the Church and of all souls. This full, divine vocation led them to sanctify their work to sanctify themselves in their work and to seek the sanctification of others in the context of their professional relationships.’”

Rev. Cavales reflects that in his new profession as a priest he will be seeking the sanctification of others by being a “moral guide, sacramental minister, and spiritual leader.”

## **Associates in Opus Dei**

Associate members of Opus Dei are lay faithful who live apostolic celibacy in the middle of the world. They have professional jobs and usually live with their families (vis-a-vis numerary members who live in centers of Opus Dei). Associates and

numeraries who receive the vocation to the priesthood are incardinated to the Prelature of Opus Dei, with the Prelate as their ordinary.

Abe and Renie went to Spain in August 2018 to pursue their ecclesiastical studies at the University of Navarre in Pamplona. In 2023, Abe earned his licentiate in Moral Theology and Renie in Dogmatic Theology. They moved to Rome in August 2023 and are presently doing doctoral studies at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. They were ordained deacons at the Roman Basilica of St. Eugene in Rome on 18 November 2023.

“We will be very grateful for your prayers,” Rev. Abe Geraldez said. “We are just beginning this ‘new journey’ and have so much to learn.”

Raffy Lobrin

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