

Fr. Agustinus Guntoro, SCJ, is in the United States for the summer ESL program. Originally from the Indonesian Province, he has ministered in India and the Philippines. He arrived in Hales Corners in early June, several weeks before his English classes were to begin so Fr. Tom Cassidy suggested that he take the opportunity to visit a couple of the province's ministries. The following is his journal from his visits to South Dakota and Mississippi. Keep in mind, he wrote this before beginning his English classes. Fr. Guntoro will be the first to tell you that what he knows of the language is primarily self-taught. "I write with broken English," he said. It may be a bit broken, but it easily expresses Fr. Guntoro's enthusiasm for his visits and his future mission.

MY PASSAGE TO SOUTH DAKOTA AND MISSISSIPPI: I HAVE A DREAM

Fr. Thomas Cassidy suggested that I visit the SCJ communities in South Dakota and Mississippi during my break (June 4-28) before beginning the ESL course. I was excited and happy to use this opportunity. It was not just because I got the opportunity to meet with two Indonesians who are in South Dakota as missionaries and to get to know the SCJs of U.S. Province, but because I believed it would be a valuable experience where I could see new places, people, and the SCJs' ministries with all potentialities, opportunities, and challenges. I considered the trip and visit as my mission exposure and as my preparation on my next mission which I call "I have a dream".

I borrowed the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "I have a dream" for my next mission, our congregation's mission to China. I have used the words, as I realize that it will be no easy task for me and others who will be with me in this mission. But I know for sure that "not easy" doesn't mean impossible. I do hope that this dream will be not just a dream. Every time I met confreres in the passage to South Dakota and Mississippi I got wonderful support and encouragement from them. It makes me not alone in this dream.



Fr. Agustinus Guntoro, SCJ

JUNE 4, 2012: SOUTH DAKOTA: I AM COMING

I departed from Milwaukee by plane at 10:23 a.m. and arrived in Chicago at about 11:30 a.m. After about an hour of transit, I left from Chicago at 12:50 and arrived in Sioux Falls at 2:45 p.m. The trip was smooth and I could enjoy the views from the window. I could see the plains, with grass but without hills and many trees.

Fr. Hendrik, one of the SCJ missionaries who is working in South Dakota, picked me up. It took about three hours to reach our destination. The road was simply excellent. The views along the road were just plain areas with green grass and corn fields. It was beautiful, just like a huge and pretty tapestry. But when we were close to our home, when we passed the big river, we discovered hilly areas. On the way, Fr. Hendrik shared many things about his ministry and experiences being as a missionary in the midst of Native Americans, also called Indians.

The name of our place is Lower Brule. The people here are among the poorest of the poorest in this country. It is a reservation Native Americans. The government provided many things for them, such as food, houses, education and health. At the same time, Fr. Hendrik said that there is dependence with the government. Moreover, many do not have a job. This situation is not healthy. However, it is our challenge to be with them. It was great and insightful to know the SCJs have a mission statement as follows: *As South Dakota SCJs, through the power of Jesus, and involved in the intense struggle for liberation, we are called to be ministers of evangelization instruments of empowerment, and builders of respect and unity between the Lakota and other American traditions.*

Coming in the house, Fr. Joe, the superior of the community, welcomed me and we talked lightly getting to know each other. After for a while, Fr. Hendrik introduced me the office and the parish church nearby the SCJ community.

JUNE 5, 2012: IT'S ALL ABOUT LOWER BRULE

I spent the whole day in Lower Brule. I opened the day with Adoration and Morning Prayer with the community. There was a special prayer for Fr. Vincent as it was his birthday. After prayer activities, I helped Fr. Hendrik cook for a special lunch, birthday lunch. Before lunch, Fr. Hendrik introduced me to parish employers and two sisters who are working for the parish. Lunch was simple and a nice atmosphere where we enjoyed the food and had friendly chit-chat. I was questioned by others about my time in India.

After lunch, Fr. Hendrik brought me around Lower Brule. We stopped in two places: in the higher empty area (on the top of a small hill) and in "harbor" (a place where many people stopped their fishing boat to fish). From the top of hill, I could see the whole area of Lower Brule. Yes, it was a small area (small village) in an open area. It seemed like it was in the midst of a grass desert, where we don't find any big and high trees. In the winter, that place would be an ice desert. However, the Missouri River creates a beautiful spot for Lower Brule. That's it. Otherwise, it is just a kind of huge "carpet", which will be very hot in the summer and will be extremely cold in the winter. Fr. Hendrik shared that in winter, there are many funerals as people die because of cold. It's precisely opposite with my India, my second home. In India, many people die because of heat in the summer season.

On the second stop, I tried to touch the river water. It was very cold. For sure, I am informed that people here do not take bathes in the river; they would be frozen in the river. Fish in this river are very different than fish in the tropical area. Therefore, the way to cook of fish is different. Some people even throw away some specific fish because they don't know how to cook them. Once Fr. Hendrik showed people about how to cook the fish that they prefer to throw out.

Fr. Hendrik gave some other information about the life of Indian. They often name their children with something that has quickly entered their mind. For example, when the father raised his baby, suddenly he saw a crazy dog, and then the name of his baby would be Mad Dog. Thus, it would be common among Indians to use many kinds of animals for names or pieces of nature.

Many Native Americans do not work, but often they fish. That's why Fr. Hendrik likes to go fishing, because it is the way to be close with them. Unfortunately, many Native Americans are affected by drinking and gambling. What can the Church and the SCJs do in this situation? I need deeper reflection for this kind of question.

The Native Americans don't have places in many careers in the country, except the leadership career in their tribes. There are rarely national politicians coming from the Native Americans. Some join the army. They are always in the front side of the American army. They are ready to die, as they believe that it is better dying for their country, rather than dying for nothing in their reservation area or in their family. In the St. Joseph Church, Lower Brule, I saw on the board the list of people from the area who were and are abroad, such as in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other places.

At 5 p.m., we had Mass in the church. Only two Native Americans and two sisters were attending the Mass. This is not unusual for daily Mass. Fr. Vincent presided at Mass. He invited us to bring people gradually to gradually be part of the church.

June 6, 2012: SOUTH DAKOTA: A SPIRITUAL GEOGRAPHY

South Dakota, as I mentioned before, is just a kind of beautiful carpet or tapestry, the Great Plains area. It can be a green desert in the summer and a white (snow) desert in the winter. This Great Plains is a place where things timeless and deep can be found, offering gifts of grace and revelation. It offers a timeless tribute to a place in the American landscape that is at once desolate and sublime, harsh and forgiving, steeped in history and myth. It is an act of devotion with nothing cloistered about it.

Kathleen Norris, a writer said, *"The so-called emptiness of the Plains is full of such miraculous 'little things'. The way native grasses spring back from a drought, greening before your eyes; the way a snowy owl sits on a fencepost, or a golden eagle hunts, wings outstretched over grassland that seems to go on forever. Pelicans rise noisily from a lake; an antelope stands stock-still, its tattooed neck like a message in unbreakable code; columbines, their long stems beaten down by hail, bloom in the mud, their whimsical and delicate flowers intact. One might see a herd of white-tailed deer jumping a fence; fox cubs wrestling at the door of their lair; cock pheasants stepping out of a medieval tapestry into pasture, anticipating a storm in the approaching thunder-heads. And above all, one notices the quiet, the near-absence of human noise."* St. Hilary, a fourth-century bishop (and patron saint against snake bites) once wrote,

“Everything that seems empty if full of the angels of God”.

My spiritual geography is an experience of contrasts, an experience of emptiness. I have studied and been formed by many contrasts, experiences in different places, such as in India, Singapore, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, The Philippines and now in America, especially in South Dakota. I was even experiencing the deepest affinity in my own country, such as in Palembang, Lampung, Jambi, Jakarta, Madura, Batam, West Papua, and surprisingly in my village.

For example, India. I had lived in India for seven-and-a-half years from 2003 – 2011. The geography of India describes the physical features of India, a country in South Asia, which lies entirely on the Indian Plate in the northern portion of the Indo-Australian Plate. It is the seventh largest country in the world. Mainland is the principal landmass of a continent or country as distinct from its islands. As a big country, India offered to me a ‘desert’ of mind to experience contrasts of climate, culture, art and a way of life. Even though there are some similarity between India and Indonesia as my home country, I found the different which is enriching my life. My life being in the international communities and being with all kinds of Indianess, grasped in the ideology that the different is beautiful; the contrast is grace. The contrasts create the emptiness. In the emptiness I discovered the ‘angels’ of God flying in my twister of life.

The Philippines. I visited the Philippines three times. The last time, I had lived there for almost a year. The Philippines is an archipelago comprising 7,107 islands with a total land area of 300,000 square kilometers. The 11 largest islands contain 94% of the total land area. The largest of these islands is Luzon at about 105,000 square kilometers. The next largest island is Mindanao at about 95,000 square kilometers. I went through many events and feelings. The nature and people brought me on the way to be humble, patient and faithful. The beautiful girls helped me to realize that the world is exciting; however God’s call is amazing.

West Papua. West Papua (also known as Western New Guinea) informally refers to the Indonesian western half of the island of New Guinea and other smaller islands to its west. The region is officially administered as two provinces: Papua and West Papua. The eastern half of New Guinea is Papua New Guinea. The population of approximately 3 million comprises ethnic Papuans, Melanesians, and Austronesians. The region is predominantly dense forest where numerous traditional tribes live such as the Dani of the Baliem Valley, although the majority of the population lives in or near coastal areas. I was so excited there. For three weeks I spent my time with Papua and Papuan. It was just a short time that I would not be able to see the real Papua. Everything was just nice. This feeling could be another “desert”. Feeling that I was not empty is itself emptiness. I should be so excited for everything.

Sleman. It is my hometown. My life started from this place. My childhood was formed by the geography and all other aspects. Sleman is a region located on the northern border of the Yogyakarta Special Region province, Indonesia. Its capital is the town of Sleman. Sleman was incorporated on 8 August 1950 with the passing of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 15 - 1950 about the Creation of Regencies within the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Sleman is located on the northwest border of Yogyakarta Special Region, between the city of Yogyakarta and the Magelang Regency. It is bordered by Central Java to the north and east, Kulon Progo, Bantul, and Yogyakarta to the south, as well as Gunung Kidul to the southeast. Mount Merapi is located on the northeastern border of the regency. Mountain areas were my school of life as a kid. It taught me to have a high dream as the mountain stand so high. At the same time, mountain eruption brought me to realize my emptiness and limitation. I am nothing. In it where God is dwelling, I will be not everything, but at least something.

All above was just my reflection in the full morning. However, I spent time that day helping Fr. Hendrik cook “opor” (Indonesian curry), fried rice and beef soup. At midday, I went with Fr. Hendrik to celebrate Mass in St. Joseph Church. I was happy that I received already the faculty letter from the bishops of Rapid City Diocese and Sioux Falls Diocese, thus I could join to concelebrant Mass.

After Mass and chit-chat with parishioners, we went to fish in the Missouri. Fr. Vincent and Mr. Ron already waited for us there. Well, fishing was not something new for me. But fishing in that place was a new challenge for me. I tried it. It was not easy. In the last minutes, I got only one, and it was too small.

JUNE 7, 2012: CROSSING THE DESERT

In the previous day, I wrote about the idea of “desert” and how it taught me about the way of my life. Thus, it’s time for me to cross the “desert”. It is an invitation to face all obstacles, loneliness, feelings

of being lost, stress, spiritual isolation and desolation with courage and bravery. Lower Brule seems like the most isolated place in the world, even though nature abundantly opens and faces the sky. The eyes of the Native American could see the rainbow, firmament and look around as far as possible; but for many, their life is just in the small area of Lower Brule.

What about me? Many times I am trapped in one of life's many "deserts". In this case, I need to discover a more authentic sense of self and to let go of what impedes my true happiness. I must be crossing this "desert", even though I need it. Only in it, I will be helped to free myself from the desolation of the "desert." Hopefully, it shows me the way to a life filled with meaning, peace, and joy by way of purity of heart.

After afternoon Mass, Fr. Hendrik and Fr. Vincent invited me again to go fishing. We went fishing nearby our house. Fishing is an art. It is not just for fun. In this activity, I could learn how to be patient, alert, and creative. Fishing is like walking on the desert. There is uncertainty. Waiting, watching and reflecting could be "the spice" of fishing. Others got many fish, I still wait. I got a chance to have it. I was so excited, but I was careless. I failed in the last moment. I was still on the desert. Oasis was still invisible. However I was faithful, until the storm invited us to be wise that the time to go home was up.

We spent a lot of time cleaning fish and dishes. We closed the day with the late dinner of fresh fish. Thank you, O God, for giving me an opportunity to stand up and go ahead in this desert journey.

June 8, 2012: KULWICASA OYATE

"Kulwicasa Oyate" is a kind of identity for people of Lower Brule. I discovered it at the watertower which is written very big and easy to read it from far away. "Kulwicasa Oyate" means common or ordinary people. From the explanation of Fr. Hendrik, they are even considered as people outcast and marginalized. That's "Kulwicasa Oyate".

Hmmmm.... Do you think who I am? I expect that nobody would think I am far from "Kulwicasa Oyate". I am not saying that I am a person's outcast. Never! I believe that many people consider, care, and love me. However, everybody should believe that I am just an ordinary person. Nothing is great in me. I just try in the whole of my life ever to be in my level best in everything. With these, I am going ahead in my life. And here is my Friday's life.

Thanks to God that I woke up in good health. I could join Mass & Adoration and expressed my gratitude always to His kindness. In this prayer, I remembered my district, the SCJ India District. I prayed for them, for the seminarians, confreres, their administration and their mission. I prayed for my last students who just took the first vows on May 14. Three of them will continue their studies in India and two of them will study Theology in Chat and prepare themselves to be missionaries in Cameroun. Grace of God is always with them. That's my hope.

Like two days before, I helped Fr. Hendrik cooking. I cut onion and prepared salad. We had a good time and conversation during lunch time. The topic what I could remember is talking about the new movie in Indonesia, titled "Soegija". Fr. Joe shared his knowledge about Indonesia and its history.

After afternoon break, I was invited by Fr. Hendrik to visit some of our other parishes. The first we went to see St. Michael Parish. The second visit was at St. Mary's Church. Both churches look simple from outside, but there are good and complete facilities inside the building.

I spent this evening time for myself. I read a book, titled *The Lakotas and The Black Hills: The Struggle for Sacred Ground*. It explores the deep relationship between a people and their land, and chronicles their struggle to preserve it in the face of overwhelming odds. The majestic Black Hills mountain range contains some of the most breathtaking features of the American landscape. It is the sacred place for the Native Americans. Unfortunately, they are struggling to defend this place as their place being with their ancestor and the divine. Reading this book, I have more concern about them as "Kulwicasa Oyate". It reminded me not to be busy with myself; not to be maudlin and sloppy.

June 9, 2012: THE BLACK HILLS

What can I say about the Black Hills? *The Lakotas and the Black Hills'* book, written by Jeffrey Ostler, give us information as follows. Each year over 3 million tourists visit the Black Hills. Few visitors to the site likely give much thought to the previous owners of the Black Hills, a tribe of Native Americans

called the Lakotas, who counted among their number some of the most well-known Indians in American history, including Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull.

The day was opened by writing about the conflict of the Black Hills. It was just one of my ways of concern for Native Americans. I began my activities with concern as I have concern always to all kinds of in justice in the world. Yes, I cannot do many things. Hopefully, this writing will help others and moreover me to see the light in the darkness, the oasis in the desert.

It was the weekend. In the morning, all activities were managed personally. Right after taking a shower, I went to the small chapel for Morning Prayer and rosary. In my prayer, I prayed for my nieces and nephews who came up in my dream the night before. I expect good news always from them.

In my breakfast, I reminded myself to take care of me. I need to drink a lot of water. However, my body is still in the process of adjustment with all the weather and situations. I need to deal with all wisely.

After cooking and lunch together with Fr. Hendrik, I went to the office of Fr. Vincent as I heard that he had been working even though in the weekend. I had already a lot time to share with Fr. Hendrik, thus just to make balance; in purpose I met Fr. Vincent for sharing. We talked about many things related with mission and our beloved Indonesian Province. We talked about our concern, hope, and at once our dreams. The tale was the same that our heart is in the mission.

At 6 pm, I was invited by Fr. Hendrik to join him for the celebration of the Eucharist in Reliance Parish, St. Mary's Church. Sister Mary and Sister Eileen were with us. Sister Eileen prepared the songs. The congregations were about 15 people and many were old people. In the beginning of Mass, Fr. Hendrik introduced me to the congregation. Well, glad to be with them all, the people of God. It made sense on my life as a priest, even though we expected more people should come to the important celebration of faith.

Fr. Hendrik gave a good homily. He started with a story of lady who lost her husband. She reported to it to the police but she could not explain in detail about the characteristics of her husband, while she was easily explaining about the characteristics of a dog which was with her husband. It was a story of a poor husband and a lucky dog. From that story, we were invited to realize our celebration of Corpus Christi (The Body and Blood of Christ). Often we heard but probably we don't have eagerness to know and experience deeply, as the wife was many years with her husband, but she could not know her husband properly. In the end, Fr. Hendrik invited all of us to make sacrifice for others; to break our bread (then change: our life) for the need of others.

JUNE 10, 2012: THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

Sunday, June 10 was the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. I was invited to celebrate, encounter, and participate in the most precious gift Christ left to the Church to reveal his love: the gift of his very self in the Eucharist. Whenever I receive Holy Communion or spend time in Eucharistic Adoration, I breathe into our being the very breath and the very life of Christ who is our hope, the Eucharist. I need to take this gift and use it during my everyday lives to share the light of Christ with those whom I meet. How do I share the light of Christ with the world? It is a question and at once challenge on my life always.

In the previous day (Saturday evening), I celebrated this occasion with Fr. Hendrik in St. Mary's Church, Reliance. In that exact day (Sunday), I was invited by Fr. Joe Dean to celebrate the Eucharist in St. Joseph's Church and in the cemetery of Immaculate Conception Parish. Before Mass in St. Joseph's Church, Fr. Joe introduced me to Fr. Gary, an SCJ who is retired. He welcomed me nicely. He talked about the bishop of the Palembang Archdiocese, who studied in Chicago. He informed me also about the population of Christians in the United States. The biggest is from the Baptist Church and the Catholic Church is the second biggest.

The congregation at the Mass at St. Joseph's Church was the biggest number so far in my days attending Mass in my South Dakota visit. Fr. Joe led the Mass with a loud voice, accompanied by Deacon Steven, Fr. Gary and myself. He opened his preaching by saying that when we heard about scary movies, what came first in our mind was about blood, killing, scary expressions and so on. Some of us are afraid to see blood. Blood brings us in the feeling of death. But the Gospel proclaimed something new for us. Blood is a symbol of love and life. Breaking His body and giving His blood to us gives meaning that Jesus Christ offers his love and life. It happened, not just by words but deeds as we experienced Jesus' crucifixion, death and resurrection. Through the Eucharist we recall the offering of Jesus Christ. At the

same time, we are invited to do as Jesus did in our context of life. By this, we believe that the Eucharist is the celebration of hope, love, lives, and sharing.

Fr. Joe and I continued to go to another place for second Mass. We went to the place, called Stephan. Our parishioners there are Indian and Anglo. On the way Fr. Joe shared the situation of that area. The Indian and Anglos are living side by side, but many are suspicious of each another. That's one of our challenges of our ministry. Stephan Parish was under Benedictines for a long time. They even building and taking care of the school apostolate. Now the SCJs are taking care from Lower Brule and the school is under the management of the tribe.

In this occasion, we had Mass in the cemetery. It is a tradition in this place. Fr. Joe didn't know in certain the history of this tradition. He presumed that probably it is influenced by the Spanish Christian tradition. When we came, many people were already in the cemetery. The weather was not good, with strong winds. It was difficult for Fr. Joe to handle the book. I helped him as far as possible. Fr. Joe led the Mass as far as possible because the weather was not friendly. After Mass, we blessed all the tombs. The family members decorated the tomb with flag and flowers and offered foods.

I just was amazed with Sr. Charles. She is a nun who has been working in this area for almost 28 years. She is in her upper 70s I believe. But she was the main person behind this celebration. She brought and prepared all the liturgy stuff, such as a table for altar, books for singing, the missalette book and lectionary, and sound system. She played keyboard and sang. After Mass, she prepared two long tables that she brought from her house by her own car. And she drove a car by herself. She provided also lunch for all parishioners. Incredibly, she did everything alone. I didn't know whether she was able to do all or not if I didn't help her. In many ways, I tried to help her.

JUNE 11, 2012: WHERE ARE YOUR LANDS NOW?

It was a cultures day for me as I was invited by Frs. Hendrik and Vincent to visit some important, historic, and tourism places in South Dakota. We visited Crazy Horse, Mount Rushmore, and Badlands.

We started our trip at 6.00 a.m. and needed to spend about 3 hours to get to the first destination, Crazy Horse. On the way to Crazy Horse, we went through Rapid City. It is a small city in South Dakota. My ears were already familiar with this city in these several days, because the SCJ community where I am living now is working in and for the diocese of Rapid City, in addition to the diocese of Sioux Falls.

When I heard that I would be going to see Crazy Horse, I thought I would see some of people who try to tame a wild horse. Well, I laughed at myself when I came to know that Crazy Horse is actually a name of a person. Crazy Horse was the leader, combatant, and hero for the Native American. He was born on Rapid Creek in the Black Hills of South Dakota in about 1842. While at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, under a flag of truce, he was stabbed in the back by an American soldier and died September 6, 1877. He defended his people and their way of life in the only manner he knew. He has never been known to have signed a treaty or touched the pen. He, as far as the scale model is concerned, is to be carved not so much as a lineal likeness but more as a memorial to the spirit of Crazy Horse to his people. At the stone sculptures, with his left hand thrown out pointing in answer to the derisive question asked by a white man, "Where are your lands now?" He replied, "My lands are where my dead are buried."

Korczak Ziolkowski is a sculptor who worked in that huge project. He started work on the mountain 1948. He didn't finish it. Since his death in 1982, his wife Ruth, with seven of their children, working in concert with the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation Board of Directors, has directed the work which continues to see exciting progress being made with each passing year.

That's all about Crazy Horse. Thus, in this place, I was treated to see a giant sculpture to memorial the spirit of Crazy Horse. In addition, I enjoyed, learned, and got closer with the history of Indians by visiting the museum. It is a museum which informs about all things related with Indian (Native American).

The second destination was Mount Rushmore National Memorial. This mountain carving features the 60-foot faces of four great American presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. Work on the sculpture began in 1927 when the sculptor Gutzon Borglum was 60. Work ended 14 years later at his death. The Lincoln Borglum Visitor Center and Museum has several interactive displays, along with more than 400 artifacts and 300 photographs. The Presidential Trail, which is about a half-mile walk and loops along the base of the mountain, offers spectacular close-up views of the faces.

I went to that place to admire the remarkable sculpture. Apart from that, I admire the way Ameri-

cans appreciate the work of others and to learn from their history. I was lucky to be there, as I could learn from their professionalism and their way to appreciate others. After about an hour, we came back to Rapid City for lunch. We had lunch in a Chinese restaurant and right after lunch went to an Oriental market for shopping. I was surprised that there were many Indonesian items there, such as ketchup, tea, ginger, noodle, soup, spicy, and sauce. I didn't even think that I could find 'Gula Jawa Asli' (Original Javanese Sugar).

At last, on the way home, we visited the third destination, that was Badlands. For a moment, we looked the Retreat House under the Benedictines. It was an old monastery, which is used for retreat nowadays.

Speaking about Badlands, it came up in mind, what great thing I would see there? Are there any good things in the Badlands? The Badlands are a place of extremes. When I arrived there, that was true. It was an extreme place which is a very different landscape for many miles. I didn't feel something great there, but I let myself to silence. I stayed a while and let the Badlands reveal themselves to me. The so-called emptiness of the Plains is full of traces of ancient life. I experienced quiet, the near absence of human noise. Wow.... It was really great. It was an experience of good things in bad things; beautifulness in ugliness. What else? I was speechless. Although I had much curiosity and questions.

We went home and surprisingly Frs. Hendrik and Vincent were still in good spirits for another activity: fishing. Well, why not for me? I joined them. I got three catfishes in short time. It was a good progress for me as before I got nothing. Hopefully, I will get more than three next time. And I hope, someday I can drag out not just fishes but people bringing into His love.

JUNE 12, 2012: THE LAST STAND

I have been in Lower Brule for a week. In the 8th day I was not having many activities in outside. I decided to spend that day for on reading. I was interested to read a book, titled The Last Stand, written by Nathaniel Philbrick. It is another remarkable story about the survival, struggle and battle of Indian (Native Americans) against immigrant (white men) who came in the land of Indian. The main leader and hero for the Indian in The Last Stand is Sitting Bull.

Sitting Bull (Lakota: *Tȟatȟánka Íyotake*, c. 1831 – December 15, 1890) was a Hunkpapa Lakota Sioux holy man who led his people as a tribal chief during years of resistance to the United States government policies. Born near the Grand River in Dakota Territory, he was killed by Indian agency police on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation during an attempt to arrest him and prevent him from supporting the Ghost Dance movement.

He had a premonition of defeating the cavalry, which motivated his Native American people to a major victory at the Battle of the Little Bighorn against Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and the 7th Cavalry on June 25, 1876. Months after the battle, Sitting Bull and his group left the United States to Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan, where he remained until 1881, at which time he surrendered to U.S. forces. A small remnant of his band under Chief *Wanǰlí Ĝí* decided to stay at Wood Mountain. After his return to the United States, he briefly toured as a performer in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, earning \$50 a week.

After working as a performer, Sitting Bull returned to the Standing Rock Agency in South Dakota. Because of fears that he would use his influence to support the Ghost Dance movement, Indian Service agent James McLaughlin at Fort Yates ordered his arrest. During an ensuing struggle between Sitting Bull's followers and the agency police, Sitting Bull was shot in the side and head by Standing Rock policemen Lieutenant Bull Head and Red Tomahawk after the police were fired upon by Sitting Bull's supporters. His body was taken to nearby Fort Yates for burial, but in 1953, his remains were possibly exhumed and reburied near Mobridge, South Dakota, by his Lakota family, who wanted his body to be nearer to his birthplace.

The Last Stand was an expression of the Great Spirit, totality, honesty, and dignity of Sitting Bull and all Indian. He led his people without fear till the end of his life. In addition, he was a wise, smart, and fearless leader. He said, "If the Great Spirit had desired me to be a white man he would have made me so in the first place. He put in your heart certain wishes and plans; in my heart he put other and different desires. Each man is good in the sight of the Great Spirit. It is not necessary for eagles to be crows. Now we are poor but we are free. No white man controls our steps. If we must die, we die defending our right".

I must learn from him, Sitting Bull. Fortunately, my name, "Guntoro" in the Spanish words can be a Great Bull. On the way of "Vocation Desert", I have to fight with all kinds of evil spirits. I do expect to my-

self in order to be able to be in the last stand of my lives. Hearing that one of my companions took decision for "Extra Domus", I was sad. It seemed too easy. Somehow, I appreciate a way of life for each of us. I have to support him in my prayer and in my last stand.

At noon, after a full morning at home, I went out awhile with Fr. Hendrik to buy a gift. I bought something from traditional Indian cultures, even though I was surprised that it was made in China. Fr. Hendrik said, "God created everything, but in States everything is made in China!" I don't know for whom these gifts will be. For me, the best gift from me to all people who love me is just to be faithful in the last stand.

JUNE 13, 2012: HOPE – JOY – LOVE

"God is not calling those who are worthy, but those that He wants." That sentence caught my attention when I entered St. Joseph's Hall at Fort Thomson. It was written on a board for a the vocation apostolate in the parish. I do agree with that statement as I believe I am not worthy at all. However I am still (and always still) sure that my way is His way; my way is what He wants me to go through. That was what I got before I celebrated Mass at St. Joseph's Church in the evening.

In the morning I spent the whole time working on the computer related to a project of a book, The History of the SCJs India District. I realized that I have to work hard in this project as I don't have many resources and documents at my hands. Basically, I have done just four chapters, while the whole chapters in this book would be about 14 chapters. However, I started to keep in touch some related parties to assist me to provide more resources. I have gotten also some fresh idea where I will bring ahead this project. By grace of God, everything will be okay before I will go to China.

Speaking about China, I remembered something. At noon, by accident I got a small paper in my pocket what I received from China's restaurant some days ago. There was written there, "Everybody feels lucky for having you as a friend". I laughed at myself and said in my heart, "Is it right?" The answer was that "I don't know exactly what people feel about me". Well, thanks to God if my present gives a good atmosphere to others, such as hope, joy, and love.

JUNE 14, 2012: PEOPLE OF THE PLAINS

At my room, on the top of cupboard, there is a flower picture and written beside a flower, "We can do no great things; we can do small things with great love". It is a statement of Mother Theresa that often I read and heard. Therefore, that statement didn't make a sound in my heart. But because I have been at that room for several days, somehow my eyes could not deny looking at it. Then I felt different in the day of June 14. I felt again that words are alive and make string sense in my daily and simple activities. I am not great; I don't have a great task; but hopefully I have a great heart to pass through all small things.

Probably I was wrong to say that I don't have a great thing in my life. All American confreres and friends here are appreciating me a lot when they heard that I am preparing to go to China for mission. It is miraculous for them. Although, I don't know for certain whether I will be in China in a short time or not and I don't have any idea how and what will be happen for the project of China. That feeling deeply came in my mind when Fr. Bernard (a senior and great SCJ of the US Province) was kneeling down at me for my readiness and willingness to go to China. I was ashamed but at the same time I felt a great support from many confreres in America.

It was happening when I visited another SCJ community in Chamberlain, South Dakota for lunch. I met also Frs. Anthony and Stephen. Accompanied by Fr. Vincent, I had lunch with that community. It was a good time with them for sharing and to get to know each of them. Before we arrived in that community, Fr. Vincent brought me to visit the Indian Museum, Chapel and Indian school which belongs to the SCJs. It is a great ministry and commitment of the SCJ US Province, especially their commitment to be with Indian, the unforgotten people in their own lands. In addition, they work in very professional way.

I was amazed with their way to manage the museum. From all presentation, I could get clearer picture about people of the plains. It is just a color on my personal life. I am from the mountain areas. They are very different from me. Knowing their life with all the struggle and challenges has given another perspective of life.

On the way home from visitation, I have taken many pictures of views. Mostly views of plain areas. In my eyes, plain areas are giving me along firmament; free up my eyes to relax and to realize how

great is God. Even though at the same time, it has given me an emptiness and silent spot on my heart. However, it would be a part of my life whenever and wherever. Thanks to all people of the plains who have taught me how to face the emptiness; how to defend our dignity; how to be proud as here I am.

I con-celebrated Mass at 5 pm. That day was special, because there was a sacrament of baptism for two Indian girls. From the whole liturgical celebration, I was touched to remind myself about my commitment of baptism. When we must to say no for all kind of empty promise from the power of evil, I realized that many times I followed wherever the empty promise go on. My inner-self is not in good shape. I fault much time on my life. Mea culpa... Mea culpa.....!!!! Thanks to these girls who reminded me. After Mass, the big family of the baptized persons invited me for a small banquet. I was surprised that they (Indian family) offered something which is similar with the food from real India. I don't know what the name for them is; for the real India, it was "a kind of purotta". Well, I enjoyed to eat and chit-chat with some people.

I closed the day with a raising heart, "It does not require many words to speak the truth" (Chief Joseph Nez Perce; one of people in the plains).

JUNE 15, 2012: MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS

My entire body embraces the nature
My eyes goes on and on without border
My ears have caught the winds blowing from the south
Sunrise woke me up on the spirit blowing from a Heart

What a Heart is it?
Warm me up in the cooling bright
Sing a melody scatter the darkness heart
I am sputtered on the desert

The plains are so great
My dark night is so deep dark
However, it is a Heart
This is great more than any great

I am in the midst of people of the plain
But always that I am in a Heart
Nothing to complain
As I know my heart is in a Heart

Deus Semper Maior
Ego Semper Minor
That's all
It's for all
Sunset waving from the west
It's far away, but closes in my heart
It's too high, but deep in my heart
His conqueror from east to west

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Have mercy on us
Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
It's my least heart for You

Make it, and it will be done
Use it, and May Your Kingdom come
Wash it, and let the sin be gone

O God, I offer my unworthy heart for your Son

JUNE 16, 2012: OH, THE COMFORT

“Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thought nor measure words, but pouring them all right out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away.” (Anonymous, Shoshone)

Speaking about the comfort, I am always reminded by all my experiences, especially my decision to go to India as a young priest and finally being expelled from India. For me, it was an uncomfortable experience. But that's what I want in my life. India gave me many things, including loneliness and unfriendly weather, and uncertain stay. That's enough for to say that it was my 'desert' of life. Even though I couldn't deny all the good and enjoyable things that I have gotten from India and all people there. All in all has formed me as I am now. The experience of being uncomfortable is very worth it for me, to challenge my limitation as a young religious and priest.

Now, where am I? I am speechless, but my heart could feel many senses of 'desert' lives. Thanks for the nature that teach me something different in my lives. Thanks for my confreres for their unique way to see and consider me as whatever, whoever, and however. It was and it is and it will great to accompany my journey of life. One thing is sure that I am in His way.

Weekend had come again for me. It was two weekends in South Dakota, Lower Brule to be exact. In the second weekend, it was really a day of me. I just was in my room and house. Most the time, I continued my project on SCJ India District History. Wow... I got many insights that day. Many changes have happened. I just hope that many related parties would help me to finish it. So that, I would be focus on other projects, in particular China's Mission.

Writing and writing might make people bored. Imagine, in the whole day just at the room. However, I didn't feel it. I found my world. I like adventure, but at the same time, I could be very contemplative and stable in one place for a long time. I have expected myself to be productive in whatever my life is at. I do hope. People can understand it. If not, let it be done as His wish.

JUNE 17, 2012: LET ME GO, GROW, AND GLOW SLOWLY BUT SURELY

At eleventh Sunday in ordinary time's Gospel, Jesus was presented to us as the master storyteller. *“He loved to use parables, a tool for comparing one thing to something else. Most of the parables of Jesus revealed God by comparing God's essence to something that was familiar to people. In the parable of the mustard seed, Jesus proclaims a marvelous and irrefutable truth. His small band of disciples, as insignificant as they may have felt, would one day go, grow and glow into a powerful kingdom whose growth would be initiated by God. It was God who planted the seeds of the kingdom and it would be God would harvest the fruit brought forth from those seeds. The kingdom of God cannot be forecasted or predicted. We must trust the work of the Master's hand as we, the mustard tree, grow and grow. Sometime, I feel that I am insignificant to the building of the kingdom of God on earth. I am nothing at all. I am so small for the world. But the mustard seed's parable has again taught me to believe that God greatly depends on me to do my best in making God's presence known in the world.”* Therefore by Grace of God, let me go, grow, and glow slowly but surely. That was the message I could bring 'home' in my lifetime, as Fr. Hendrik and I were in twice Mass in Fort Thomson and Big Bend Churches.

One day more, it would be my time to go back to my temporary community, SHST - Hales Corners Community. Let me review my experiences in these about two weeks being in South Dakota. I have been visiting the SCJ community in Lower Brule. It is a reservation for Indians (Native American). The SCJ mission commits in this kind of ministry. They have not only parish ministry, but also Indian school, museum and fund-raising for the needs of Indian. I visited also the school and museum. They are great and professional. In the parish where I have been living, the members of community are three, Fr. Joe Dean as pastor and Frs. Hendrik and Vincent as associates priests. The last two are Indonesian, but they have already become members of SCJ US Province. They are in charge of not only one parish. All together are six parishes and they are working for two dioceses, Rapid City Diocese and Sioux Falls Diocese. Well, although six parishes, but the members of parishioners are few. For me, the most important is that they stand by Indians faithfully. Indians are the lost generation. Being with them is the great wit-

nesses of the mission of Jesus.

What about the environment and natural surroundings? Many times I have mentioned that they are living in the plains and prairie area. There is no any big tress, except the surrounding houses. Population is still not solid. Livelihoods of most residents are farming and animal husbandry. The main agricultural income is corn and wheat. Most farmers are raising cattle and horses. In nowadays, the weather is good as it is about to go for summer season. That's the live of South Dakota, in particular Lower Brule surroundings.

I got some different experiences in my life. I have to use it for my growth. Thanks for all kinds of experiences: good, bad, bore, empty, silence, inspiring and so on. With all, let me go, grow, and glow slowly but surely.

JUNE 20 – 30, 2012: ROCK N ROLL EXPERIENCE

I was in Mississippi for a week, from 20 to 28 June. It was a good and inspiring time to be there. Moreover it was a good time to review my spirit of mission. Br. Ray, SCJ told and introduced to people that before I will go to China, I must go through Mississippi experiences. It was a kind of joke, but for me, it is important that I could learn other confreres how to deal with many things in mission areas. In the previous visit, I got many valuable experiences in South Dakota. With different color, I have gotten the experience how the mission is.

I travelled to Mississippi by train from Milwaukee to Chicago and Chicago to Memphis. It was a long trip, about 10 hours. I couldn't see many things as it was in the night. However, my trip was good and I enjoyed experiencing the American train, even though I was difficult to sleep in the train.

Fr. David picked me up at the train station at Memphis. Fr. Jack, the superior of Community welcomed me very well. In the first three days, I was asked to join Fr. Ray to see all the SCJs parishes and other ministry. It was good to see the way of SCJs American province to do in their ministry. More and more, I was interested to see their way of fund-raising.

The rest days, Fr. David and two students brought me in many places to get to know better about Memphis and Mississippi with all the history. It was inspiring also to see many museums, especially to know about the struggle of Martin Luther King and the king of Rock n Roll, Elvis Presley. The most interesting and valuable visit in my mind is when I was having chance to visit the Museum of Martin Luther King. I learned a lot with his dream to bring all back as "I am a man". The young man, Elvis Presley touched also somehow my heart. Rock n Roll experience shapes my dreams stronger and sharper. In my free time, my mind flew very high to see my dream coming closer. I hope I could make rock n roll for my harder and incredible life what I am facing in nowadays.

In the community, I felt that our confreres are living in the community with good spirit, even though I didn't have many opportunities sharing of life with them as the time being with them was very short. Somehow, I was happy to be relaxed, before I will go to my incredible mission.

I hope it will enrich and support my vocation, ministry and the next mission. When I was about to leave from Memphis, it was great to hear that I followed the rail steps of Fr. Dehon. In 1910, Fr. Dehon visited U.S., and he travelled by train from New Orleans to St. Luis. And I would be in his half of Fr. Dehon's way. Well, then I could feel the aroma of mission in my visit to Mississippi. It was not vacation, but a kind of mission spirit experience. That's making sense on the words of Br. Ray who said that before I go for mission to China, I must go through our mission in South Dakota and Mississippi.

I am very grateful with all experiences in South Dakota and Mississippi. As Martin Luther King says, "I have a dream", I have courage to say too that I have a dream. South Dakota and Mississippi make me my dream flew highly. I expect that it would be not an empty dream. With humbly I realize who I am, but I have right to dream and to fulfill it. It doesn't matter if I would be not able. That's part of my dynamic's life.
