

P.S. As to my needs - I'm fairly well taken care of but a little surprise package along the line you suggested is always pleasant. The Ozamis City address is the best for that sort of thing. No telling where I will be at a given time. Our main house is there. That address is: Ozamis City, Mindanao, P.I. Those air mail sheets Maurice mentioned don't exist out here any more and to send this by air would cost P1.20. You will excuse the regular mail. No?

Catholic Convento
Lala, Lanao
August 30, 1951

Dear Alice & Maurice,

What a week! It shouldn't happen to a dog. I have been waiting for a notice from the P.O. to come, telling me that your money order had arrived. I got it Monday but have been so busy that I have not had time to sit down and write you about it. I was on retreat all last week and I have been out to a Fiesta every day this week. Today was a very easy one, close to home with no baptisms, weddings or anything; just a Mass so I find myself at home at 10.30. This is an official notice that I received it safely. However, the boy is across the street trying to cash it and change the piece of paper into pesos. It was made out to the Kolambagan P.O. and of course I am now in Lala which might be a difficulty. Sometimes the municipio does not have enough money to pay the employees so twenty pesos might be too steep for them. However, I should know before I finish this. (He just came in and I have to go to Kolambagan to cash it - hope I get there before it wears out!) You can tell your friend Mrs. Carroll that you have fulfilled that Spiritual Bouquet and I will also say a Mass for your deceased relatives that you had in mind. Sorry to have delayed so long in acknowledging your letter but I thought the money order would be here before this.

The news about your "expectency" is wonderfull. There can't be too many Murphys around, especially like you people. I am sure everything will go well and I will keep you in my prayers. It must seem like a gift from heaven after all these years. You had better take it easy Maurice as you will need all your strength for this ordeal. Joking aside, I am glad to hear that you are feeling better and that it was nothing more serious than a nervous stomach - though that is bad enough.

I received your letter with the pictures, for which many thanks. I had seen the set you sent Father Lavin but it is nice to have a set of my own. I was glad to hear that all in the picture were well and happy and expecting little surprises of their own.

These Fiestas I mentioned are great things. Some you can make in the jeep (very few!), some you go to strictly on foot and to one of them I had to ride a bangka or native boat down a river as mysterious and beautiful as anything you would see in a travelogue. The crocodile is no stranger to this river and I had hopes of an interesting journey but as we twisted and turned with the water there was nothing more exciting than a stray log to avoid. In fact the only thing we saw was a stray monkey, all by his lonesome, eating his breakfast in a tree top. Oh, yes, I did see a baby crocodile, that is, I saw his skin, hanging on one of the houses to dry. A uke and a pretty girl would have made it seem like a ride on a city lake! Off course that's out. Have you noticed the price of uke strings these days!

The following day I went on a fiesta that was strictly a foot job. It had rained for a day or so before I started and the rice fields were full, leaving no path to follow. I tried jumping here and there for a while but finally gave that up as a bad job. It was much easier to sit down and take off my shoes - which I did. From there on it was just a matter of taking the most direct route. I will admit I looked rather well tanned up the knees when I arrived near the chapel but a nice, little stream took care of that and I said Mass clean but sockless. Things do turn out a bit differently than in the States. My most harrowing experience turned up in what was suppose to be a very quiet barrio. I returned from my breakfast to find the chapel " a mass of human flesh". My boy and a couple of others were trying to register the baptisms. I got a table and put them outside to continue their work while I started to baptize. When I finished the work I had baptised 58! The first batch was 38 and the second was 20. Any baby that wasn't crying was having the life pinched out of it to start it up. These people don't believe it takes unless the baby cries during the ceremony and pity the poor baby that sleeps. As you pass from one to the other, the baby is often handed back to the mother to be fed and there is a snatching back and forth as you walk along the line. Speaking of lines, I am now on the last one. Love to all my friends in S.F. and to yourselves. *Father Bill*