

Catholic Convento
Lala, Lanao
February 22, 1952

Dear Alice & Maurice,

I received the news of Tom's arrival when I returned from Manila early this month. May I offer my congratulations upon the new addition. I was glad to hear that everything went o.k. and I am sure that you are delighted to be doing the extra work involved. I will send him a little medal I have on hand but I guess I can't do it in this form letter so I will send it regular mail in another envelope. How about putting in an order for a little sister for Tom to play with later on???

FIRST FOLD



IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED, THIS LETTER
WILL BE SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL

Mr. & Mrs. Maurice Murphy
2550 31st Ave.
San Francisco, California
U. S. A.

AIR LETTER

Rev. William J. Smith
Catholic Convento
Lala, Lanao, Mindanao, P. I.

VIA AIR MAIL
PAR AVION



SECOND FOLD

Catholic Convento
Lala, Lanao
February 22, 1952

Dear Alice & Maurice,

If you want to be as consistent as I am you will start to read this letter on the back flap! Honestly, I'm punch drunk from running around and trying to cope with new problems. A week or so from now - March 1st, to be exact, I am to open a new parish and while becoming a pastor may be an honor or a time to start taking it easy in the States, it is nothing more than a headache and much more work out here. They have decided to split the parish of Lala in half and I have been presented with the new half. It was much too big to be handling from one centro and now that I am able to swing things a bit myself (though I'm still swinging a good bit like a rusty gate!) the break has come and I leave for Kapatagan, the other municipio of the original parish, on next Saturday. Well, I don't really leave - there is no place to go - but the parish begins to operate as a new unit. All I have is a piece of land - at least I almost have it - upon which stands a chapel where we used to say Mass every Sunday and that is all. I say the chapel stands; that is not quite correct. It tilts very much to one side. It has a beautiful entrance, there being no doors, and is well air-conditioned, there being no sides. The floor is the ground and a few home-made benches make up the pews. The convento, as yet, does not exist and that is the reason I will not start to live there in March. I will stay on here in Lala and run the parish from this place until I have a place to stay. I could rent a house for the time being; they are not too bad but the difficulty is that while the people are trying to get a priest to come they will go to a lot more trouble to fix things up. Once he is there, they have what they want and the priest will have a lot of work trying to get a bit of cooperation. They are planning to take up a special collection for the convento but if they manage a thousand pesos (\$500.00) they will be doing good. It will take at least five thousand pesos to put up a half decent place with a G.I. roof. (Doggone it; it is now 12.30. I started this morning and had to leave for a sick call, the poor guy was too far gone to even talk but that is better than no call at all. I started in when I got back from that and had to stop for a funeral. I ate my dinner and started again when another funeral came in. Also had two yesterday. I just asked the boy if the Moros were killing them off in the hills!)

Where was I; - oh, yes - well, after I get the convento up I can get to work on the church; straightening it up, if it will stand the pull, and then some siding and flooring. The altar is just made of a few planks so I should be able to clean that up. I have a small iron safe which I can use if for a tabernacle and two nice candle sticks. I also got a present of some linens from the Columban Sisters when I first came out which I have not used as yet, saving them for just such an emergency. I will try to bum a few things from the main house in Ozamis the next time I go over but they are not usually over-stocked. If you run across any one trying to get rid of a million bucks before income tax is due, give him my address!

Well, that's what has had me up a tree for the past few weeks. If it isn't one thing it is about twenty others. I have a stack of mail here that would choke a horse but I can't seem to get at it. But at least you know I am alive and kicking (plenty!) and when you get that block Rosary together tell them to throw in an extra Ave for a guy you know out in the swamps of Lala - or I should say, Kapatagan, now. That swamp business is not just a joke, either. During the rainy season I need a boat to patrol my vast domain. Oh, well, it has one advantage; I can fish right off the back porch - if my convento has a porch.

I guess that's it for this time. I hope Thomas Patrick doesn't give too much trouble and let's the neighbors sleep at night. My best to all my friends in San Francisco and keep me in mind as you pace the floor nights.

As ever, *Father Bill*