Greenland, the world’s largest island, lying in the North Atlantic Ocean. Greenland is noted for its vast tundra and immense glaciers. Although Greenland remains a part of the Kingdom of Denmark, the island’s home-rule government is responsible for most domestic affairs. The Greenlandic people are primarily Inuit (Eskimo). The capital of Greenland is Nuuk and the population is about 57,000. There are only 50 registered Catholics. There is only one Catholic parish, Christ the King Church.

Letter from a Missionary Priest in Greenland…..

We have already taken the first steps – although small – in the language, which we are studying. For Easter Sunday, I celebrated and preached my first Mass in English. I shared the news with ‘our neighbors’ the Icelandic missionaries, and told them that the parishioners did not understand some parts of the sermon … maybe neither did I completely in the moment of preaching, because the nervousness makes one forget even the meaning of the few words that one had memorized. But it’s worth to ‘to go out on the field’, ‘to be under the spotlight’, and then to receive some precise corrections and continue to study enthusiastically. I speak in plural because the following Sunday of Divine Mercy, Fr. Gerardus celebrated his first Mass in Danish which – though not a competitor in ‘difficult languages’ – is still new to us, and that is enough to make our days entertaining.

I share this because I know that for most of the missionaries, it will be a memory of their early experiences and because they know better than us, these first stepping-stones are a collection of sensations, that of joy, shame, discouraging attempts, an overcoming, another downturn, and then resuming again with fervor … and so for a while.

One of the great truths that comforts in the midst of these ‘ups and downs’ of the spirit, is to think that throughout this vast and white island, which we could label ‘the empire of ice’, we are the only priests, and therefore chosen to be the intimate and close friends of Jesus. For who among all the inhabitants of Greenland is in front of Jesus every day for an hour in adoration? Who, whether Greenlandic, Danish or foreign, eats his Body and drinks his Blood every day? Who has Jesus dwelling in his own house? Of course, this supernatural reality also shows us that it is our duty to be close to the tabernacle in order to support the great work of redemption being carried forward by the Church, and the salvation of souls loved by Jesus, who inhabit these lands. To be sincere, I must say that this really goes beyond any difficulty of language or difficulty of any other genus … as long as we practice.

Just as in some Catholic countries, in Greenland as well there are no classes for students during Holy Week. Friday & Saturday are complete holidays in all public and private sectors, as is the Monday of the Easter Octave. While many people use the time for sports and recreational activities, they are aware that those are times of religious significance; on the other hand, generally no one leaves this quaint little town since there are no highways; hence also, we live in a kind of cloister, which certainly makes it difficult to travel, except by plane or boat. This means that there are several favorable circumstances for people to think about God. Only He knows the heart.

For my part, I lived the first Easter of my life in the northern hemisphere. I remembered that sermon of Fr. Castellani, which I once quoted as Master of Novices in Chile: “The Church wants us to rejoice and does everything possible in order that we may rejoice: it is the Easter of the Flowers (la Pascua Florida). In Europe, Easter falls in the season of flowers, here in the southern hemisphere it occurs during the fall, which is also rightly so, because autumn is the season of the fruits: it is not Easter of the Flowers, but it is Easter of the Fruits (Pascua Frutal)”. Here then we have the Easter of the Flowers, although the flowers need to be imported from abroad … but the weather is different, it is spring, it is the climate of flowers.

The ceremonies were in Danish and English, while in private some of us read the readings in our mother tongue. The parishioners have the custom of celebrating with a solemn dinner on Holy Thursday, and with something simpler on Saturday after the Vigil, mainly for those who did not participate on Thursday. The Filipinos have their festivities on Sunday afternoon, after the Mass of the Resurrection. The sisters and we did not omit any of the meals … it is part of the mission.
On Thursday, a good number of persons attended the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. On Friday, there were not as many for the Adoration of the Cross. Nor is there the custom of praying the Stations. And on Saturday, which St. Augustine called the “mother of all vigils”, there was a large number of faithful, including many Filipinos. The ceremony began at 22hs; it is really quite late for here, which shows the sacrifice that was involved for the people. We began with a small fire in the reception hall, because it is impossible to have it outside, due to the cold. Then the procession followed with the chanting of the Lumen Christi in Danish; the Easter Proclamation was sung in Latin and the readings were interspersed, some being in Danish and others in English. Among the peculiarities of the night, one could highlight the presence of a young couple, the lady being a doctor and the gentleman an economist, both from Australia who came for the first time to our parish, since they arrived recently to Nuuk.

Another distinctive touch of this Triduum was the result of a radio announcement. In the afternoon, in one of the local radio stations, the schedule of the religious services was broadcast. An elderly couple, Protestants and parents of 11 children – which is not common here – wanted to join in the ceremony and festivities, given that they knew Father Walter and the sisters. They attended the whole Vigil, without knowing English, and the lady knowing only Greenlandic. Later they stayed for the festivities. To top it all, during the week of Pascueta they had the gracefulness to invite us and the sisters, to tea at their house. Two wonderful persons.

And as if that were not enough, the big surprise of these days was the visit of an Argentine couple, from the province of Santa Fe. They had hosted for one year in their home a young woman from Nuuk, of a Danish father and Greenlandic mother, who travelled to Argentina as part of a cultural exchange program. Some time ago, she returned to Denmark and invited the family to visit Greenland. And that’s how they came here. They came for the Easter Sunday Mass and then later participated in the Filipino dinner. They were shocked to find three priests from Argentina in these remote places of the planet, and for us as well it was a great joy to have fellow citizens among the lands of ice.

Finally, a week later, we celebrated the great Solemnity of the Incarnation of the Word, as do all the members of our religious family. We sang without any unease, repeating to ourselves the familiar Spanish adage that *en el país de los ciegos el tuerto es Rey* (in the land of the blind the one eyed man is King). Here we are counts, dukes, princes and kings. And so we sing. I confess that during the more difficult moments, I comforted myself remembering the current missionary in Spain, who with his beloved samba ‘Jujuy’ has managed to encourage and embolden many newcomers to the world of singing. Anyway, with this wealth of encouraging thoughts … we also sang in Nuuk! Besides the Matins on Sunday, we had the Holy Mass on Monday evening, presided and preached by Fr. Agustín Bollini, in which the sisters also participated along with a layman who is married and is a student of theology. He is one of the few Catholic Greenlanders who has perfect attendance at Sunday mass. His wife, also Greenlander although not Catholic lived for several years in Bolivia and this enabled him to learn some Spanish. What we might call a real gala: a Greenlander communicating in Spanish. Finally, I note that a few days ago, this young man has begun to teach Danish to Fr. Gerardus, with dedication, patience, responsibility and without expecting anything in return.

Finally, in these paragraphs I have tried to share with you some of the important activities we have lived through during these recent days in our mission. As always, we continue to entrust ourselves to your prayers.

P. Fabio Schilereff, IVE
The saints are ordinary people like you and me but they walked in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and won the victory of love and now live with God in Heaven. You too can become a saint. We don’t have to do great things to become saints but we must do all things for the love of Christ.

*Are you walking in the footsteps of Christ?*

*What I have done for Christ?*

*What am I doing for Christ?*

*What should I ought to do for Christ?*
**David and Goliath**

Saul and the Israelites are facing the Philistines in the Valley of Elah. Twice a day for 40 days, morning and evening, Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, comes out between the lines and challenges the Israelites to send out a champion of their own to decide the outcome in single combat, but Saul is afraid. David, bringing food for his elder brothers on the battlefield, hears that Goliath has defied the armies of God and of the reward from Saul to the one that defeats him, and accepts the challenge. Saul reluctantly agrees and offers his armor, which David declines, taking only his staff, sling and five stones from a brook.

David and Goliath confront each other, Goliath with his armor and javelin, David with his staff and sling. "The Philistine cursed David by his gods", but David replies: "This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that God saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is God's, and he will give you into our hand."

David hurls a stone from his sling and hits Goliath in the center of his forehead, Goliath falls on his face to the ground, and David cuts off his head. The Philistines flee and are pursued by the Israelites "as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron". David puts the armor of Goliath in his own tent and takes the head to Jerusalem, and Saul sends Abner to bring the boy to him. The king asks whose son he is, and David answers, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." [1 Samuel 17]

**The Catechism of the Catholic Church**

1808 **Fortitude** is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions. It disposes one even to renounce and sacrifice his life in defense of a just cause. "The Lord is my strength and my song." "In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."