



ERDA Foundation Updates

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Sir Camille and the French Volunteers *by Edlyn Ortega-Burgonio*

I was in my second year of working (in 1997) when I stumbled upon a magazine article (in Sunday Inquirer) about Fr Pierre Tritz, SJ and his work especially in Tondo, Manila.

Growing up in Tondo and studying in the University of the Philippines did something to my conscience. I felt the urge to “help my country.” (But I could not go far and make more heroic sacrifices because I could not live far away from my mother, a single parent.)

I wrote Fr Tritz about my interest to volunteer in Tondo. There was no internet yet during that time. When Father received my letter by snail mail, he called my Office at the Assumption College where I worked as Psychometrician.

He was asking for a meeting. I told him that I worked from Monday to Friday so we set the meeting on a Saturday.

When I was in Linaw Street, I was led to the old Office of ERDA which was a residential place – a house. Then, I was directed to the new ERDA Office.

Father was in his Office at the second floor. There were only a few employees in the ERDA building. Then, I realized that Fr Tritz went to the ERDA Office just to meet this unknown aspiring volunteer – me.

What if I decided not to show up? How could he have such faith that a very young (struggling) professional (of 23 years old) with whom he spoke only over the phone would take this meeting seriously?

And now, I could imagine Sir Camille and the other friends of Fr.

Tritz having this faith for all the French and other European students he has been encouraging to visit ERDA Philippines, see our work for the children, interact with them, play with them, do arts with them and even try math with them.

If I am not mistaken, Sir Camille has presentation about ERDA or communication with

Sir Camille and Father Tritz

French Scouts' volunteer work

different universities and with the Scouts et Guides de France.

When I was still a volunteer in ERDA, I also brought my boyfriend with me. And Fr Tritz learned that he was writing for a newspaper. Father said, “Please tell others about my work. They need to know about our work.”

Certainly, this is also the prayer and wish of Sir Camille: That every French volunteer would share the good news that the children getting help from kindred people. But there are still many children who need our help. So we appeal to the parents of the French volunteers to support as well.

