

Celebrating the work of a great friar

Fr. Rocco Famiglietti

On October 6th, 2012, not only was the birthday of Valley of the Angel's beloved founder, Father Rocco Famiglietti, celebrated, but many friends and benefactors gathered together to commemorate the great faith and love of Papa Rocco. He would have been 93 years old this day.

The reason of this celebration:



Thanks to this remarkable friar, around 200 poor children receive food, a home, an education and most importantly love every year. That is why his birthday is a special date that will always be remembered and celebrated. The ever growing "Valley of the Angels" family, were cordially invited to attend this auspicious event and were graciously thanked for their continued support. Vicky de Diaz, who serves as administrator of Valley commented that "It is because of their tremendous generosity which they give with such love, that 'Valley of the Angels' stands firm".

Mass:

The celebration started with the celebration of the Eucharist at 10:30 a.m. in gratitude to God who first placed the idea of this wonderful work in Father Rocco's heart. The mass was dedicated to Father Rocco, his work and all the children who have come through Valley since it was established 20 years ago. After mass, there was a procession from the church to the main entrance of the orphanage. During the walk, the children showed their love to Papa Rocco by singing him songs.



Inauguration of "Camino del Padre Rocco" (Father Rocco's Road):



At the main entrance, Father Michael Della Penna ofm, Father Rocco's successor, gave a short speech to welcome those who came and then introduced Antonio Coro, Santa Catarina Pinula's Mayor. Mr. Coro talked about Father Rocco, about his strengths; among them he mentioned his leadership and his unconditional love to the children and personnel of "Valley of the Angels".

At the end of his speech, Mr. Coro uncovered the sign that reads “Camino del Padre Rocco” (Father Rocco’s Road). He then cut the opening ribbon to inaugurate the main street as the way which leads into the orphanage. Father Michael said “This lasting tribute serves as a metaphor for Fr. Rocco’s life’s work, which aimed at paving a way for poor children to have a better life. What other symbol could better speak of his great legacy which opened a way, a means for leading thousands of children to God? The road is truly emblematic of Fr. Rocco’s dream to pave hope for poor children”. To conclude the opening of the street, Fr. Michael gave Mr. Coro a diploma, thanking him for his continued support to this Franciscan project.



Lunch Time:

After the inauguration of Father Rocco’s Road, the guests were invited to a barbecue, specially prepared by cooks from our “Board of the Association of Benefactors”. The meal was comprised of a steak lunch which featured delicious corn grown by our own children. While guests enjoyed a delicious meal, they were entertained with a video put together by Gaby Diaz which highlighted each of the many workers who compromise Valley of the Angels family. The girls from the 9th grade also presented a short history of Valley of the Angels.



Antonio Coro, Mayor of Santa Catarina Pinula, and Fr. Michael Della Penna, General Director of Valley of the Angels.

The Awards:



Towards the end of the lunch, the first “Padre Rocco Memorial Award” was presented. Because there were several outstanding candidates this year, it was unanimously deemed appropriate to present five distinguished members of our Association: Rita Cohen de Castillo, Lucía Richard, Luisa María Mata Castillo de Arias and Ana María Juárez de Sánchez. Each was warmly thanked for their individual effort of continuing



the Franciscan vision of Father Rocco, who dedicated his life to give the best to the poorest. Each recipient embodied the vision of the award: These ladies have excelled by helping others to have a better life, affirming the children’s dignity, and thus perpetuating the mission of educating our children in Guatemala. They were chosen not only because they made the transition possible after Father Rocco died (December 18th, 2010), but they made it successfully and fruitfully. These select women have been fundamental in solidifying Father Rocco’s legacy; not only have they all been part of the project since it’s inception and so serve as a thread of continuity, but they have been instrumental in enabling Valley to forge ahead.



A **Permanent Exhibit in Honor to Father Rocco Famiglietti** was unveiled, which includes trophies, personal articles, recognitions, pictures, memories, news articles and much more, insuring that we will always remember our founder, who will always be a vibrant and important part of this wonderful Franciscan project of love.