

Favorite meal: "Polenta e stufato," a typical dish of Milano made of cornmeal porridge served with beef stew.

What he misses most: "Arakan Valley, my first mission in the Philippines. I miss the people and Jango, my horse, my faithful companion in many visits to the villages in the mountains of Mindanao."

On hearing the call: "There two distinct moments that marked my vocation story. The first was at a Sunday Mass in my home parish when one of the priest announced that he would leave the parish to go to Zambia, as a missionary. For years my home Diocese of Milan [Italy] had been sending diocesan priests to the missions in the Diocese of Kariba; Fr. Joseph wanted to be one of them. The announcement came as a shock, and from that moment of I started reading about Africa and missions and I could see myself as a missionary in Africa. The second episode that marked my story was at the Thanksgiving Mass of a newly ordained PIME Missionary. During the homily a wild thought crossed my mind: 'Now there is a vacancy in the PIME Seminary, you must fill it.' The first episode marked the beginning of my vocation discernment, the second was the confirmation that God was calling me to join PIME."

Challenges in missionary life: "Language was certainly a challenge, but not as difficult as adapting to a new culture. I loved Filipino generosity and hospitality, but I had a hard time in reconciling with their sense of resignation; 'bahala na' — come what may."

Advice to the discerning: "Many times I have experienced God's presence in my life and I can say that God is faithful, He keeps his promises. Do not be afraid to say 'Yes!'"