

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT OF THE DMI NEWSLETTE



Squelettes of Mary Immaculate

The 3rd SMI Mindanao Area Conference 2023

July 8-9, 2023



Big group photo of all delegates of the SMI Mindanao Area Conference in the “Your Vibe Attracts Your Tribe : SMI Bohemian Night”

“Mary seeks for those who approach her devoutly and with reverence, for such she loves, nourishes, and adopts as her children.” stated by St. Bonaventure.

The nature of sisterhood and devotion comes from the idea of compassion and love for one another. The act of compassion temporarily suspends judgment to appreciate others’ perspectives or situations as it varies from one person to another. The act of love holds the act of care and kindness, which is the most powerful sword one could have. This is the power of sisterhood: women watching women strive through

the good and difficult times, thus enabling one woman to gain empowerment and aim greater with passion.

On the eighth and ninth of July, 2023, 110 Squelettes and 58 Tita DMII’s of Mindanao gathered at Dottie’s Place Hotel and Restaurant, Butuan City for the 3rd SMI Mindanao Area Conference. The participants of the assembly came from the three regions in Mindanao namely Region XII composed of Bukidnon, Cagayan de Oro, and the host region, CARAGA, Region XIII- Davao and Region XIV - Zamboanga, with an estimated 22 participating circlettes.

The conference started at 10:00 AM with the enthronement of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The circlette presidents and officers lined up with roses and candles as our Tita DMII’s Region XII Regional Representative Sis. Sheila Peji, DMII Morality in Media Mindanao Area Coordinator Sis. Annie Ty, SMI Luzon Area Coordinator Sis. Chodee Amoranto, SMI Mindanao Area Coordinator Sis. Susan Honculada, SMI National Chancellor Sq. Elvanne Laynes, SMI National Vice President for Luzon Sq. Mary Joy Ancheta, and SMI National Vice President for Mindanao Sq. Elaisa Marie Honculada offered basket of flowers for the Blessed Virgin Mary which was held and brought to her altar by the DMII International Chairperson for Youth Welfare/SMI Sis. Cathy Pineda and SMI National President Sq. Elizabeth Urmeneta.



The Enthronement of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the SMI Mindanao Circlette Presidents and Officers as candle and flower offerors

The celebration of Holy Eucharist, to open and give blessing to the area conference was presided by Rev. Fr. Jone Kevin O. Bermudez, assistant parish priest of St. Joseph Cathedral Diocesan Shrine, Diocese of Butuan. A short opening program then followed with the entrance of colors, singing of the Philippine National Anthem, the Panunumpa sa Watawat and the singing of the SMI Hymn. The SMI Mindanao



SMI Circlette Presidents and Vice - Presidents with their circlette banners during the Parade of Banners



SMI National President Sq. Elizabeth Urmaneta giving her Inspirational Message



SMI in Action in the Teambuilding Activity



International Chairperson for SMI Sis Cathy Pineda giving her SMI Updates/Report

Area Coordinator Sis. Susan Honculada gave her welcoming remarks to all the delegates. Lastly, to end the morning session of day one of the conference, the Circlette Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the Circlettes of the three regions of Mindanao were asked to bring their respective circlette banners for the parade of banners.

The program resumed after lunch. The delegates in their conference SMI white shirts gathered in the hall for the afternoon session and were welcomed by the performance of the area conference signal song Ave Maria prepared by the host diocese, the Squirettes of Mary Immaculate of the Diocese of Butuan. The area conference's emcees, Sq. Patricia Imee Joven and Sq. Angel Mae Mandigma enthusiastically led the program with the message given by the SMI National President, Sq. Elizabeth Urmaneta and the updates and report on SMI given by DMII International Chairperson for Youth Welfare/SMI Sis. Cathy Pineda. (see picture above).

Also on this afternoon, we listened to the talk and teambuilding given by the Director for Social Communications Ministry and the DMII Spiritual Director of the Diocese of Butuan, Rev. Fr. Renatu Abbu JR. The talk was about **Mental Health with the guidance of Mama Mary**. The key points Fr. Abbu focused on are the need to talk about mental health crisis with the sense of healing and the spiritual fruit of caring for one's mental health, the need of helping the faithful find hope and healing with the aid of Mary, Mother of Hope and finding peace with Mary, Queen of Peace, through spiritual aspects like Prayer, Meditation and Daily Mass. After the inspirational talk of Fr. Abbu, and while the working committee of the host diocese prepared for the teambuilding, Fr. Abbu asked each delegate to compose own prayer as reflection on his talk.

Teambuilding activities were done with focus on reflection towards the talk of Fr. Abbu on the aspect of care for one another, and in helping one another in time of need. To end the teambuilding activities,

a representative from each team shared insights and learnings.

The gala night of the conference with title "*Your Vibe Attracts Your Tribe : The SMI Bohemian Night*" was then graced by the delegates each with her unique bohemian outfit. The night began with the message from the host diocese, represented by the SMI National Vice President for Mindanao Sq. Elaisa Marie Honculada, followed by the inspirational message to the SMIs from the DMII International Vice Regent for Mindanao and Region XIV Regional Representative Sis. Pinky Saavedra.

The most awaited event of the night was the presentation contest with the theme "*SMI Empowerment of Women in the Modern Society: Proud & Passionate*". Seven circlettes participated in the said contest and was won by the **Archdiocese of Zamboanga and Prelature of Isabela de Basilan**. The gala night as well had the awarding of the **Tribe of the Night** which was won by the Archdiocese of Zamboanga and Prelature of Isabela de Basilan. The **Star**

of the Night was won by Sq. Jeilyn Grace Polinar of the Diocese of Bukidnon while Tita DMI Sis. Marge Ampo of the Diocese of Butuan won as the DMI Star of the Night.

A memorable moment in the evening was the few minutes while the results for the dance competition were being tabulated. There was a little SMI Got Talent session where the Squirettes with beautiful voices showcased us with samples. The gala night ended with a very fun showcase of attires of all delegates including the Tita DMI's and with the closing dance session led by Sq. Angel Mae Mandigma and the Squirettes from the Diocese of Bukidnon.

The cloudy morning after restricted the Human Rosary by the Pool due to droplets of rain. Instead, we held the activity inside the conference hall. As early as six in the morning, the delegates woke up and gathered in the big circle for a human

rosary to start the new day.

Right after breakfast, all Squirettes already in their Sunday's best white dress gathered for the SMI National Elections. In the session, the next National Vice President for Mindanao was elected, while two top nominees each for national positions such as the SMI National President, National Secretary, National Treasurer and National Chancellor were chosen. These candidates from Mindanao, together with the candidates coming from Luzon and Visayas who were, likewise chosen during their respective SMI Area Conferences will be the candidates for said National Positions during the Online National Elections that will be held sometime September, 2023, when all the 3 SMI Conferences nationwide shall have been held.

The Eucharistic Celebration of the Sunday Mass followed, and was presided

by the DMII Spiritual Director of the Diocese of Butuan - Agusan del Norte, Rev. Fr. Renatu Abbu JR.

The Conference ended with the recession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The conference served as a reignition of the light of sisterhood and devotion for the Squirettes of Mary Immaculate of Mindanao. Despite the distance and diversity of each delegate, the bond through the Blessed Virgin Mary was evident throughout the one and a half day event. We have seen the boost of confidence and empowerment that was spread from women to women to be able to spread and embody the good messages learned. This can lead to a deeper connection with ones faith, a stronger commitment to helping others, and a greater capacity for empathy and compassion, through God and Mama Mary.



Rev. Fr. Renatu Abbu JR. receiving his Plaque of appreciation from Sis Cathy Pineda, Sq. Elizabeth Honculada, Sq. Elaisa Marie Honculada and other SMI National Officers.



SMI National Vice President for Mindanao, Sq. Elaisa Marie Honculada, SMI Diocese of Butuan Lady Counselor Sis. Anabelle Obeñita and Diocese of Butuan Vicarial Regent Sis. Pelagia Joven presenting the Plaque of Appreciation to SMI National President and to Chairperson Sis. Cathy Pineda.



SMI's in their Bohemian Outfits with the SMI National Officers



SMI in the big circle for the Morning Rosary

"SMI BOHEMIAN DANCE CONTEST CHAMPION"

by Sis. Marilyn de Asis
Mindanao Area Coordinator
for Assistance To Prisoners Families and their Victims

"Your Vibe Attracts Your Tribe : SMI Bohemian Night"

(Fellowship Night)

The Squirettes of Mary Immaculate (SMI) of the Archdiocese of Zamboanga and Prelature of Isabela de Basilan were declared as **Champion in the Bohemian Dance Contest** during the fellowship Night of the 3rd SMI Mindanao Area Conference at Dottie's Restaurant and Hotel in Butuan City last July 8-9, 2023. Another Award given to the SMIs is the **Tribe of the Night**.

It was really a rewarding long land trip - from Zamboanga City, via Cagayan de Oro to Butuan City.

The SMI delegates came from two Circlettes - The Our Lady of Purification Circlette of Sta. Maria Parish and the Our

Lady of Peace Circlette of St. Joseph Parish . The SMI were accompanied by 6 Tita DMIs for the travel because they are still minors. On our way back home to Zamboanga City, Sis. Susan Honculada, the SMI Mindanao Area Coordinator, hosted a sumptuous lunch for us together with the SMI National Officers, at her private Resort in Nasipit, Butuan. We then proceeded to Cagayan de Oro City where we needed to stay for the night. Early the following morning, we started our trip to Zamboanga City and passed by the Divine Mercy Shrine at El Salvador to pay Homage to the Divine Mercy by lighting candles as our thanksgiving for the two awards we

received, and by letting the SMI see the Shrine and experience the Holy Place. Most of the SMI said it was their first time to visit the Shrine, and such experience was enjoyable and memorable.

As a reward for the long trip the SMIs together with their Tita companions were given a free treat at Monsgrill Restaurant in Ipil on Monday as they arrived in Zamboanga. As part of their incentive for their valuable achievement of winning Champion in the Dance Contest and Tribe of the Night, a victory party, lunch get together with the Tita companions, took place at Samgyup Salamat restaurant as a treat for them. .To God be the glory.



The Dance Champion – SMI from the Archdiocese of Zamboanga and Prelature of Isabela de Basilan



The TRIBE OF THE NIGHT. SMIs and Titas with Sis Pinky Saavedra - IVR Mindanao and RR14 and Sis Cathy Pineda – SMI Chairperson.



The SMI National Officers pose with Tita Pinky, Tita Cathy, Tita Chodee and Titas from Zamboanga



At the private resort of Sis Susan Honculada – with host Tita Susan, Tita Pinky, Tita Chodee and SMI VP Mindanao Elaisa Honculada



The SMI and Titas at the Victory Party and lunch get together at Samgyup Salamat Restaurant