

DAUGHTERS OF MARY IMMACULATE INT'L.

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Talk on the Mission:

*Assistance To Prisoners Families
And Their Victims (APFV)*

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(Intro)

We know for a fact---- that the Daughters of Mary Immaculate International has been given a special mandate by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) to assist the families of the Prisoners & their Victims. It is only the DMI that is specifically tasked to pursue this apostolate, church ministries and organizations and NGO's being already involved in serving the needs of the prisoners themselves.

The DMI Mission of Assistance to Prisoners Families and their Victims is a component of a macro program called Restorative Justice. The Program is based on the ff. concepts and principles:

1. Crime is primarily an offense against human relationships and secondarily a violation of law.

2. Justice requires that we work to restore those who have been injured and victimized.

3. Those most directly involved and affected by crime should have the opportunity to participate in the response if they wish.

4. Government's role is to preserve a just public order, and that of the community is to build and maintain a just peace.

5. Restorative justice recognizes and encourages the role of community institutions.

Restorative Justice Program utilizes several methods.

They are as follows:

a. **Victims –Offenders Reconciliation /Mediation** – programs use trained mediators to bring victims and their offenders together in order to discuss the crime, its aftermath and the steps needed to make things right.

b. **Group Conferencing** – programs are similar to victim-offender reconciliation but differ in that they involve not only the offender and victim, but also their family members and community representatives.

c. **Victims –Offender Panels** – bring together groups of unrelated victims and offenders, linked by a

common kind of crime but not by the particular crimes that have involved the others.

- d. **Victims Assistance** – programs provide services to crime victims as they recover from the crime and proceed through the criminal justice process.
- e. **Prisoner and Prisoners Families Assistance** – programs provide services to offenders and their families while they are in prison and on their release.
- f. **Community Crime Prevention** – programs reduce crime by addressing its underlying causes.

As you can see, Dear sisters, this mission of the DMI forms part of the Restorative Justice process. These are in the areas of Victim Assistance and Prisoners Families Assistance. In pursuing our Mission, the DMI Handbook of Information (Yellow Book) defines the whole scope of the missions program. Because of the wide scope of the program, we need to break it down into smaller, Doable and manageable activities that we can readily implement and continue to maintain. Let's keep our projects simple, doable and sustainable.

As your Mission Chairperson, I launched a 10 year program for the families and victims of prisoners covering the years 2011-2021.

The Program Campaign slogan is: **“EDUC A CHILD, EDUC FOR LIFE, EDUC PROGRAM OF THE DMI , DREAM COME TO LIFE”**.

Briefly , let me walk-thru the Program Again:

The 10-year program is premised on: The education of children of those who are in prison is an answer to the challenge of truly providing and empowering the child to think, choose and decide for the rest of his/her life, build a stable future and live a dignified life as a responsible family member and as a contributing citizen of our country.

The Objective of the Program are:

1. Provide full formal education to children of prisoners and victims as DMI scholars from elementary to high school (Grade 1 to 12) and college (2 to 4 years college course).
2. Accompany each scholar in his /her journey, monitoring his/her performance and rendering periodic reports on his/her progress/status of school work to the Vicarial /Diocesan Regent and the Regional Representative.

3. Provide the following scholarship components:

- Tuition and miscellaneous fees
- Books and other learning materials and school supplies (bag, notebooks ,pencils, and others)
- Daily food/snacks
- School uniform (full or partial subsidy)
- Provide guidance and counseling to ensure good academic grades, proper attitude and conduct, correct work and study habits in collaboration with the parents and the school.

The plan also includes a process for the selection of scholars and the schools they will attend, **DMI-parents-school** partnership to ensure effective program implementation, fund sourcing and allocation, responsibilities of the project team on the circle, vicarial and diocesan levels and an annual program evaluation.

Copies of the proposed 10-year program have been sent through your RRs for distribution to all the circles nationwide. I am confident you have received your copies of the program by then. (And for those who have not, I have copies available here later on)

Today, I pose this question: What more are we challenged? How far have you gone in implementing the program? In our Biennial Convention last year in TAGAYTAY. I reported that at least 35 % of our circles

have already implemented our scholarship program. I am happy too that a circle in TANAUAN , BATANGAS-REG.--- Seven has even opened a school for this purpose .
(PINAPALAKPAKAN YAN MGA KAPATID)

I call on all circles represented here today to start the Program. If you haven't -----and for those who have started it-----to continue its implementation, if possible ,see through its completion.

Again, as your servant-leader in this mission, the more that I am compelled to face that impact on our responsibilities as, what our new Supreme Pontiff Pope Francis said;

“keep it simple . . .

“aid the less fortunate ..aid the prisoners and their families ,their victims and their families.

“welcome women – they cannot remain fence-sitters or nannies . .

“pray for me...and your church leaders....

“aspire positive development – be open to others’ views, respect different people, the house of God is the house of all, move on ... inspire in faith, bring joy to others’ lives, cannot stick to status quo, catholic church must b dynamic to maintain loyalty of its flock and win many souls to God.”

I am posing a great challenge to the DMI ----to do an immediate action- **NOW NA“ADOPT A POOR CHILD OF A PRISONER OR A CHILD OF THE PRISONERS VICTIM, AS A SCHOLAR”**.

This is where we are focusing on our concrete action in justice and charity. Our goal/password helps us/focus our attention on the use of our common energy, people, time, resources, etc., and make it our “DOMINANT ASPIRATION FOR OTHERS – THE EDUCATION OF THE POOR, BUT BRIGHT FILIPINO CHILDREN.”

Why did I say, it is our DOMINANT ASPIRATION?

By definition alone, DOMINANT means OUTSTANDING, IMPORTANT, PREVAILING, OF GREAT VALUE OVER THE OTHERS.

So, as DMII Project, our dominant aspiration is to provide help / assistance to the poor, but deserving children to gain formal education in school. Our other dominant aspirations along with education are: Spiritual formation, financial assistance, catechism, and upliftment of the families of these prisoners & victims.

My dear sisters-----we had a DREAM and we already saw the ripple effect of that DREAM TO HAVE A CIRCLE IN EVERY PARISH – A SQUIRETTE IN EVERY CIRCLE.

And this time-A DREAM TO HAVE A SCHOLAR IN EVERY CIRCLE! Imagine we are more than 500 circles and still counting and with at least 1 scholar in every circle-we can send 500 plus scholars through out the country! LET’S CONTINUE THE DREAM AND BY DOING SO-we will understand, as what Bishop Zach said “FIND THE TRUE/GOODNESS, & BEAUTY IN YOU. THEN WE.....AS DMI, WE WILL TRULY FIND GOD IN ALL THINGS! WE SHARE ----BECAUSE WE CARE!!

Thank you and God Bless you all!!

Sis. Milde R. Tong

Daughters of Mary Immaculate International
Assistance to Prisoners Families and their Victims

Chairperson

2013