



Squirettes of Mary Immaculate

17th SMI BIENNIAL CONVENTION

MAY 17-19, 2019

Day 1

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As early as 8 a.m. on May 17, 2019, SMI and DMI delegates from all over the country started arriving at Anne Raquel's Hillside Resort in Olongapo City ready and eager to start the 3-day 17th SMI Biennial Convention. As one entered the Grand Pavilion Hall, words such as "long time, no see", "how have you been" and "it's nice to meet you" filled the room with such excitement and joy. What a perfect way to start this much-awaited reunion and celebration!

The theme of the convention was "SMI Being Beloved, Gifted and Empowered . . . in the Year of the Youth" with the sub-theme "Celebrating Our Different Ethnic Cultures through Dances".

The convention officially started with the enthronement and consecration of the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Carrying flowers and candles, the Past International Regents, Regional Representatives, Mission Chairpersons, and Diocesan and Vicarial Regents who attended the convention lined up at both sides of the center aisle as the image of the Blessed Mother was carried to the altar. Leading the procession were International Regent Sis. Ruby Macario, International chairperson for Youth Welfare Sis. Biannah Villanueva, SMI Coordinators Sisters Evelyn Alcantara for Luzon, Melissa Manulat for Visayas and Annie Ty for Mindanao. The SMI national officers, Squirettes Madison Pineda – president, Angelee Perada – vice-president for Luzon, Jara Alcantara – treasurer, and Jonalyn Lico – chancellor carried Mama Mary's image to the altar.

The Parade of Colors and presentation of the 89 participating circlettes from Regions I to XIV followed. The Squirettes from the Diocese of Cubao carried the Philippine flag and SMI banners guided by Committee for Ceremonials Chairperson Sis. Beth Bongon. Program emcees Sq. Jona and Sq. Jennica set the mood of the convention with their warm and energetic greeting of convention delegates. SMI National President Sq. Madison officially welcomed the convention participants. The doxology dance performed

Photo at left: Mama Mary's image carried by SMI National Officers; Middle: The Parade of Colors; Right: Parade of circlette banners



Candle and flower offering by selected DMIs and SMIs

by the Columban Circlette of the Diocese of Iba capped off the convention opening. Nothing better can express their message "Welcome to our hometown!" than by their beautiful and heartwarming performance.

Rev. Fr. John Remel Mara, diocesan director for Social Action and Basic Ecclesial Communities of the Diocese of Iba celebrated the Holy Mass with Squirettes from the Immaculate Conception of Karangalan Circlette as lectors and commentators and the Squirettes of Nuestra Senora de Nieva Circlette composing the choir.

Ater lunch, the Squirettes were asked to sit with their respective groups indicated by the color of their ID laces. This encouraged the formation of new friendships among Squirettes from different circlettes and strengthened the solidarity of their teams. The emcees announced the set of house rules the delegates must observe to ensure orderliness and their safety during the convention. Tita DMIs from the Diocese of Iba served as marshals to enforce the rules.



Doxology dance by the Columban Circlette SMIs



Fr. John Remel Mara with Sis. Ruby, Sis. Biennah and Sq. Madison

The main event of Day 1 was the Youth Camp. Undaunted was put into action. It consists of four modules with specific objectives contributing to one main goal: spiritual growth and realization of the Squirettes. An icebreaker game called “Ambulance” was facilitated by Bro. Jojie Juanerio to get the teams off to a good start. Squirette Jona then read the story of the Annunciation to inspire the Squirettes to not fear – be undaunted – saying “yes” to spiritual service just as Mama Mary did to be the Mother of Jesus.

Module 1 entitled “Today’s Catholic Youth Mission and the SMI Community” urged the Squirettes to dig deep and think about their vision for SMI five years from now and the attributes required to fulfill their vision. The Squirettes wrote their responses on pieces of yellow and blue paper.



The convention security marshals from the Diocese of Iba

Module 2 “Piece by Peace: SMIs are taken and broken, yet shared” tested their knowledge of their faith through a friendly game called “Bible Quiz-iz it!” Afterwards, the groups were given a task to draw a picture portraying a moment of their lives when they felt God’s Mercy. In the exercise, each member of the team was given just one crayon each with the challenge that they must work together to produce a holistic image. This module served as a reminder that to become daughter-servants of God requires knowing one’s faith and living it.

Module 3 focused on the present age of technology and the internet. Entitled “The Millennial You! Understanding Squirettes as Millennials and Digital Natives” provided guidance on how Squirettes can use social media as a platform for spreading only good things, being role models and inspiring their peers to do the same. Their last task for this module was to produce a short video showing what it’s like to be a Squirette in this day and age.

As the evening set in, it was time for Gala Night, a much-awaited event. The Squirettes, wearing their best dresses and gowns and their best smile, started to fill the hall where a dinner buffet awaited them. A photo wall at the hall entrance was an instant hit.

Module 4 of the Youth Camp was part of the evening program. Entitled “Konek-Tahan: How your “yes” can change your life and the world”, the Squirettes realized their aspirations for themselves and the SMI while singing “A



Squirettes during their Youth Camp activities



Gala Night

Million Dreams” and candle-sharing. The Youth Camp ended with this activity.

The party continued afterwards, led by emcees Sq. Chear and Sq. Jenica. A special dance presentation by the Squirettes of Nuestra Senora de Nieva Circlette kicked off the celebration. Then every Squirette was given the chance to strut down the aisle, showing their best with such grace and confidence. Not to be outdone were their Tita DMIs. The search was on for the evening’s Best-Dressed SMI and DMI. Six Squirettes and three DMIs were chosen as finalists. Winning the title were Sq. Claire Louise Aguilar of the St. John the Baptist Circlette, Diocese of San Pablo and Sis. Bernadette Paraiso of St. Joseph Circle, Diocese of Balanga. The search for the prestigious Star of the Night came next. To everyone’s surprise, a group of young gentlemen carrying trays of tiaras entered the hall. Every Squirette was declared Star of the Night! The Tita DMIs got chocolate bars with the note “Happy Mother’s Day” from the SMIs as Mother’s Day gift.

Day 2



Squirettes during their morning zumba prayer by the pool

Day 1 of the convention ended with such a happy note.

Start the day right and that’s what the Squirettes did on the morning of Day 2 with zumba dancing prayer by the pool. The SMIs from the Immaculate Conception of Karangalan Circlette set them off to a good start with this year’s alert song “Wake” followed by a solemn prayer led by Sq. Jona. Sq. Venus Soriano then led the fun-filled zumba

exercise. The stored-up energy having been awakened, the Squirettes, one by one, jumped into the pool until it was time for breakfast.



Day 2 speaker Fr. Eric Dela Cruz

The day’s speaker was Rev. Fr. Eric Dela Cruz, chaplain of St. Therese of the Child Jesus Chapel and director of Commission on Youth of the Diocese of Iba. He inspired and reminded us that despite the challenges, we, the youth, are the hope of the future.

The annual election of the SMI National Officers came next. Overseeing the election was Sis. Biennah, Sis. Evelyn and Sis. Chodee assisted by the incumbent SMI National Officers. Elected National Officers for Year 2020-2021 are the following:

- President – Elizabeth Urmeneta
- Vice-President for Luzon – Mary Joy Ancheta
- Vice-President for Visayas – Cesca Lozano
- Vice-President for Mindanao – Elaisa Marie Honculado
- Secretary – Jonalyn Nebres Lico
- Treasurer – Jenica Recinto
- Chancellor – Elvanne Laynes

IR Sis. Ruby and Sis. Biennah installed the newly-elected officers into office. International Chaplain Fr. Jerome Cruz blessed them after the Eucharistic celebration that he presided.

Time for some fun once again! Team-building activities had been built into every SMI Convention which give the Squirettes the chance to display teamwork and camaraderie through physical activities that complement their spiritual learnings.

Day 2’s Fellowship Night was as colorful as the previous night’s program with groups coming from the different regions presenting their regional dances in “Kulturang



Left to right: Sis Ging, Sis. Cathy, Sis. Annie, Sis. Biennah, Sq. Jenica, Sq. Jona, Sq. Elizabeth, Fr. Dela Cruz, Sq. Joy, Sq. Cesca, Sq. Elaisa, Sq. Elvanne, Sis. Ruby and Sis. Milde

Sayaw Alay Kay Maria". The performers did not disappoint: the talent and effort they put in their presentations were beyond expectations. The dances presented were: Region 2 – Muslim Dance, Region 3 – Jota Cabangan, Region 4 – Bulaklakan, Region 5 – Sulteros, Muslim Dance and Igorot Dance, Region 6 – Folk Dance Evolution, Region 7 – Pandango Wasiwas, Region 8 – Pandango Rinconada, Region 9 – Salakot Dance, Region 11 - Pintados Festival and Region 12 – Mixed Mindanao.

The presentations were judged and the winners were selected to be awarded on Day 3. Intermission numbers were provided by the Mary Immaculate Parish with the song "Sa Libis ng Nayon", a medley, and the Alitaptap Dance. The Fellowship Night ended with an announcement of the circlette having the most number of delegates – the Tower of Ivory Circlette of Tacloban City with 22 Squirette-delegates.

Day 3

Despite yesterday's heavy schedule, everyone was still eager to start the day early with yet another energy-packed morning zumba prayer by the pool followed by a delicious breakfast buffet.

The day's guest speaker was Mr. Rollie Reyes, a counseling expert. He talked on mental health and



Fellowship Night features "Kulturang Sayaw Alay Kay Maria"

emphasized the importance of taking care of one's mental state and how having strong faith can be a big help.

It was Sis. Biennah's turn to give her closing remarks during which she thanked the organizing committee, the DMI officers and attendees and most importantly, the SMI delegates for their very active participation in the convention activities. After her talk, each group took turns in performing the short yell they prepared.

Then, it was time for the much-awaited awarding ceremonies. Awards were given to the following winners: Best in Youth Camp – Team Lime Green, Best in Team Building – Team Blue, Best in Yell – Team Purple, Dance Presentation 2nd Runner-up – Mixed Mindanao Dance, Dance Presentation 1st Runner-up – Folk Dance Evolution, Dance Presentation Champion – Pintados Festival, Best in Dance Costume – Pintados Festival, and Special Award – Salakot Dance. But with the experience the delegates had during the 3-day convention filled with spiritual, mental and physical growth, each one was a winner.

The closing ceremonies immediately followed starting with the exit of colors, the reccessional rites while the farewell prayer was being recited and for the last time, the alert song that all the DMIs and SMIs sang and danced to to celebrate yet another successful SMI Biennial Convention.

In those three days, we bonded, reflected, learned, worked hard and played hard. We arrived with eager hearts and left with fulfilled ones. This one is surely for the books!

Acknowledgments

International Regent Sis. Ruby Macario
 Int'l Vice-Regent- Luzon and Region V RR Sis Milde Tong (host region)
 Region III Representative Sis. Joan Dizon (co-host region)
 Diocesan Regent Sis. Irma Pulangco of the Diocese of Iba
 Diocesan Regent Sis. Lina Reyes of the Diocese of Pasig
 Diocesan Regent Sis. Mercy Ong of the Diocese of Antipolo
 SMI Lady Counselor Sis. Krysta Elaine Abel-Torino of Mater Purissima Circle
 Diocesan SMI Lady Counselor Sis. Baby Ayson of the Diocese of Cubao
 Columban Circle Regent Sis. Luming Santos
 International Auditor-Financial Sis. Lydia Ordonez
 Morality in Media Int'l Chairperson Sis. Cathy Pineda
 Diocesan Regent Sis. Monique Bularan of the Diocese of Kalookan
 SMI Area Coordinator for Luzon Sis. Evelyn Alcantara
 SMI Area Coordinator for Visayas Sis. Ging Manulat
 SMI Area Coordinator for Mindanao Sis. Annie Ty
 Diocesan SMI Lady Counselor Sis. Chodee Amoranto of the Diocese of San Pablo
 International Chairperson for Ceremonials Sis. Beth Bongon
 International Advocate Sis. Merinnisa Ligaya
 Sis. Josie Halog of the DMII National Office
 Ms. Gemma Cruz, Markeing Manager of
 Anne Raquel's Hillside Resort
 DMII Regional Representatives
 All the DMI Titas who sponsored and supported the SMI delegates



And to the following Squirettes:

Sq. Madison Pineda	Sq. Angelee Perada	Sq. Mary Joy Ancheta
Sq. Jara Alcantara	Sq. Jonalyn Lico	Sq. Abbie Villanueva
Sq. Dilma Padua Amar	Sq. Mara Ella Tayag	Sq. Rovee Frances L. Estaris
Sq. Jenica Recinto	Sq. Chear Nicole Palileo	