



DMINewssette

To Jesus through Mary

DMI

VOL. XXIX, No. 1

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY IMMACULATE INTERNATIONAL

January - March 2012

Convention Preparations in Full Swing

Close to 1,300 delegates have registered as of March 26, 2012 for the 18th DMI Biennial Convention set to unfold at the Tagaytay International Convention Center in Tagaytay City on May 12, 2012.

Sis. Mila Villanueva, Vice-International Regent for Luzon and Regional Representative of Region V, the host region, provided the following updates during the meeting of the Convention Organizing

Committee on March 10, 2012 at Mary's House:

His Eminence Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, former Archbishop of Manila will be the main presider at the concelebrated Mass which will open the convention on May 12. He is also the keynote speaker on the convention theme "Strengthening of Faith in Jesus through Mary in the DMI Missions".

Bro. Bernard Canaberal, former national director and up till now is segment host of the Family Rosary Crusade aired every



The Convention Organizing Committee in session during its March 10, 2012 meeting at Mary's House

Sunday from 7 to 8 a.m. on ABS-CBN's Studio 23 and on TV Maria and host of "Pamilya Mo, Pamilya Ko" aired over Radio Veritas from Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, will talk on "Mary, Media and the Rosary" on Day 1 of the convention. Bro. Bernard has been a

long-time media practitioner having written thousands of plays for both radio and television, done social documentaries and music videos for religious organizations, private corporations and government institutions,

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The DMI international officers with Rev. Fr. Paul Gomez, SVD. Seated from left: Sisters Cecille Apura, Rebie Pacanan, Lyding Ramirez, Helen de Leon, Myrna Zapanta and Mila Villanueva. Standing: Sisters Ruby Macario, Milde Tong, Au Manangan and Flor Barcial.

Blue Ladies Storm ABS-CBN

By Sis. Ruby P. Macario, Regent, Diocese of Cubao

It started with a simple request from International Regent Sis. Lyding Ramirez to Past International Regent Sis. Myrna Zapanta that the DMIs join one of ABS-CBN's Healing Eucharist

Sunday masses. And the rest is history. An estimated 100 DMI sisters from nearby Metro Manila circles were expected to

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attend the Healing Mass but the number doubled even before 6:00 a.m. on February 26, 2012, the first Sunday of Lent.

The ABS-CBN studio became a sea of blue as the DMI sisters continued to arrive. Rev. Fr. Glenn Paul Gomez, SVD celebrated mass for an SRO crowd. Fr. Gomez who celebrates Mass every fourth Sunday of the month is head of the Healing Eucharist, Inc. and SVD's Media Communications. In his homily, he dwelt on the

day's gospel with his signature light-hearted approach, yet touched the core of everyone's heart with his call for forgiveness as the key to healing.

Fr. Gomez with part of the SRO crowd



The Spirit drove Jesus into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel." - Mk 1:12-15



Daughters Of Mary Immaculate International

Block 3, Lot 5, Kathleen Place, Fernando St., Pasay City

Tel. No. 833-1203

Website: www.dmiinternational.org

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From the International Regent

MESSAGE



My dear Sisters:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you, my sisters for the generous donations you sent to the victims of the devastating floods in Northern Mindanao caused by Typhoon 'Sendong'. While many had died, still many survived who urgently need our help. It is my earnest hope that this endeavor will be emulated by more DMI sisters whenever calamities and other tragedies occur in our country.

A BIT OF GOOD NEWS: We were able to scour some documents regarding the existence of DMI beyond Philippine shores - in Australia and New Jersey, USA. We are in the process of getting connected with these circles. The last communication was dated 1986. Somehow there may still be DMI sisters in these places at this time.

Under our program of having a circle in every parish, we should as well hone and burnish these existing circles, here and abroad, to once again boost our international appellation. Three circles, the St. Charles Circle of San Diego and St. Joseph Circle in Westmorland, both in California, USA and the Our Lady of Fatima Circle in Macau are all doing well. Soon there may be one in Hongkong. We hope to extend our organization to many countries around the world to bring in more sisters who can truly help us strengthen each and every family in our country and the world.

I thank the Lord for making the DMI an instrument of His healing mission through the apostolic works entrusted to us Daughters of Mary Immaculate.

To Jesus Through Mary,

SIS. LYDIA L. RAMIREZ
International Regent

Diocese of Bacolod Hosts 2011 Visayas Area Conference

The Grand Regal Hotel in Bacolod City was the setting of the 2011 Visayas Area Conference on Dec. 3, 2011. DMI sisters from all over the Visayas composed of Regions IX, X and XI started arriving in Bacolod on December 2. Diocesan Regent Sis. Celia Ferrer of the Diocese of Bacolod, the host diocese, welcomed the delegates and the International Officers led by International Regent Sis. Lydia Ramirez.

The conference formally opened with the traditional opening ceremonies, the entrance of the image of the Blessed Mother signaling the start of the conference followed by the entrance of the International Officers and the regional and diocesan officers. Sis. Celia then delivered her welcome address. Representatives of Bacolod City Mayor Evelio Leonardia and Negros Province Governor Alfredo

Maranon, Jr. also welcomed the delegates.

Sis. Lyding Ramirez was the keynote speaker on the conference theme "Mary, Our Hope and Inspiration to Renew". Vice-International Regent for the Visayas Sis. Carmen de la Torre gave an inspirational message. Other invited speakers were Rev. Fr. Raymond Asoy who talked on the Blessed Mother while Past International Regent Sis. Jean Velarde talked on the DMI history, goals and objectives.

Workshops on the Five DMI Missions were held in the afternoon facilitated by International Chairpersons for Pro-Life Sis. Helen de Leon, for Assistance to Prisoners' Families & their Victims Sis. Milde Tong, for Morality in Media Sis. Sonia Manlapig and for Squirettes of Mary Sis. Ruby Macario. Region XI RR Sis. Rebecca Pacanan facilitated the Workshop on



The presidential table during the conference. Shown from left are Bacolod Diocesan Regent Sis. Celia Ferrer, Past VIR-Visayas Sis. Evelyn Aquino, Past IR Sis. Amy Veloso, VIR-Visayas Sis. Carmen de la Torre and IR Sis. Lyding Ramirez.

Upliftment of Women Workers in place of Sis. Linda Castillo who was not able to attend the conference.

Msgr. Victorino Rivas, vicar general of the Diocese of Bacolod, celebrated an Anticipated Mass after the conference sessions.

A festive mood pervaded the conference venue during the evening fellowship with

Caribbean as its motif. The delegates came in their colorful Caribbean costumes. Representatives from the circles presented dance numbers as contest participants. A Ms. Caribbean was also selected from among the circles' entries. Prizes were given to the contest winners while the conference speakers were awarded plaques and certificates of appreciation.



Sis. Lyding crowns the evening's Ms. Caribbean contest winner assisted by past IR Sis. Jean Velarde and DR Sis. Celia Ferrer.



A group photo of conference delegates in their colorful Caribbean costumes

A Circle Is Born In Macau

By Sis. Mila A. Villanueva, Vice-International Regent for Luzon

Our dream has always been to expand . . . to once again go beyond Philippine shores. Now there are two circles in California and a third nearer home . . . in Asia.

Yes, we did it! We now have a circle in Macau . . . but not without challenges. Here's our Macau diary:

September 23, 2011 (Friday). Seven DMI sisters and a daughter – five from St. Joseph Circle of Zamboanga City headed by International Regent Sis. Lydia Ramirez, Vicarial Regent Sis. Pinky Saavedra and daughter Fatima Mae, Regent Sis. Bernadette Santiago, Past Regent Sis. Patsy Ebol and Financial Secretary Sis. Rose Bulawin, and from the Risen Christ Circle of Paranaque, Sister Milde Tong, regent of the Diocese of Paranaque and myself – boarded a Cebu Pacific flight for Macau, arriving there at 9:00 p.m.

We were met at the airport by Sis. Eleanor Uy-Sin, St. Joseph Circle's Macau coordinator. As we were a big group, it took a while for us to get three taxis to bring us to Red Square District some 40 minutes away where the

hotel is located.

The 'fun' started when we got to our hotel. Since pensiones were not familiar with us and we were not briefed beforehand, our hotel turned out to be a pensione with a narrow entrance with the stairs directly in front of the door. The rooms we were billeted in were on the second floor requiring two flights of steep stairs. Going up was already a challenge, but lugging our suitcases was an even daunting one.

Sisters Lyding, Patsy and Rose tried the first three steps but gave up. (They left Zamboanga at 5:00 a.m. and had been on their feet for 15 hours!) "Aren't we supposed to be billeted in Guandong Hotel?" they asked.

Myrna Recto, a nice shy lady who is one of the DMI recruits embarrassingly explained that she booked the two pensione rooms because the rate is only a fifth of a regular hotel room. The rooms were pre-paid by her from money she borrowed, but she told the group that she will try to get a refund. That being the case, five of us



The organizing team from the Philippines with Fr. Mierg Diord and Fr. Jose Angel Hernandez.



The newly-exemplified members of the Our Lady of Fatima, Macau take their oath of membership in the DMI.

decided to stay. Sisters Lyding, Patsy and Rose will stay in Guandong.

After putting our things in our pensione room, we all walked to Guandong Hotel 'just around the corner' (which actually were three corner turns), lugging luggages along an almost empty street at 11:00 p.m. Finally we got the only room available for the night. "Let's worry about tomorrow," we said.

September 24, Saturday. A nice fine day! After breakfast, the five 'pensione' sisters fetched the three sisters in Guandong. Once again, lugging their suitcases and things, we began our hunt for the 'other hotel' nearby. Heading the group was Sis. Eleanor, holding a piece of paper with the name and address

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A Circle Is Born In Macau...cont'd. from Page 5



The charter officers of Our Lady of Fatima Circle with the organizing team and Fr. Mierg.



The DMI sisters from the Philippines while resting on a park bench, still good-humored after their 3-kilometer walk.

of the hotel which is only by the corner at the end of the road. The group got to the first corner, crossed the street and turned another long corner, but no hotel. Finally at the third corner, we asked a gentlemen passing by. He said, "Do you see that blue canopy after this high wall? Cross the street to a park and that is where the hotel is."

This road was a four-lane road with beautiful Swiss-type buildings. This walk was about a kilometer of ascending road. Tired and thirsty after having walked about 3 kilometers, we sat on

the park benches, taking turns to take photos for posterity. We all heartily laughed when we overheard some Filipinos passing by saying, "Ay, kawawa naman, walang matirahan!" Having rested, we walked another 500 meters and there it is, the hotel! Two street levels up! Nice hotel! Looks like five-star. Before starting our ascent, Sis. Lyding asked, "By the way, how much is it per night?" Sis. Eleanor answered, "It's 2,300 patakas." What? That is more than P15,000! Let's all go back to the pensione. And there we all stayed "happily ever after". We all rewarded

ourselves with a hearty lunch of roast goose and noodles.

September 25, Sunday.

This is the BIG day! We started with a Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Church. We all felt like we were in the Philippines as the Mass was attended by almost 80% Filipinos. They also had their choir group accompanied by a Filipino guitarist. The pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Parish is Fr. Jose Angel Castellano Hernandez, a Puerto Rican. Lunch was prepared by our hosts and the candidates for DMI membership. All 15 of them joined us for lunch of five different versions of *pancit bijon*, boiled vegetables with *bagoong Balayan* sauce and adobo. Who said we missed Filipino food?

After our lunch, the orientation started. I talked about the DMI organization, its Vision and Mission, the members' duties and responsibilities, the finer points of being a DMI and the perks of being a member. Sis. Milde handled the 5 Thrusts, zeroing in on what they can do as overseas Filipinos in a country which is not Catholic.

Mid-way through the orientation, Fr. Mierg Driod, a Polish who takes charge of mandated organizations in the parish, came by to listen for a while. After our talks, he left and came back with two half-gallons of Magnolia Ice Cream.

The 15 candidates were at first hesitant about proceeding to their conferral. But thanks to Fr. Mierg, the ladies agreed.

Thus was born the Our Lady of Fatima Circle in the parish of the same name and located within the grounds of the big Girls' Catholic School in Macau.

Election of officers followed with the installation of the following: Sisters Myrna Recto, regent; Judy Daddli, vice-regent; Ma. Fe Grumo, financial secretary; Mayolyn Saddi, recording secretary; Rusela Baltar, chancellor; Lerma Tria, treasurer; Irene Abellano, scribe; Jackelyn Grumo, monitor; Jackeline Tacadera, trustee and Precy Arandela, banner bearer.

Sometime soon, we shall be returning to Macau to confer more new members and to Hongkong to initiate a new circle. Let us all pray that our Mother Mary Immaculate will help us to connect with the many women workers in Hongkong.

We were challenged! We were tired! But no one got angry. No one was disappointed. We simply laughed all our trials away. There is no challenge big enough that we as DMIs can't overcome. As long as we all work for the glory of Jesus through Mary.

PHOTO NEWS



**ST. CHRISTOPHER CIRCLE'S
LIVELIHOOD PROJECT**

Members of the St. Christopher Circle sponsored a demo-seminar on tamarind candy-making as an income-generating activity. Sisters Celia Jimenez, Ofelia Layug, Avelina Reyes, Nenita Cultura and Gloria Fiesta are shown in photo preparing the tamarind candies themselves.



**SAN JOSE CIRCLE'S
OUTREACH TO PRISONERS**

Last December, 2011, DMI sisters of San Jose Circle, San Jose City reached out to selected prisoners' victims and their families in their parish, bringing them comfort, counseling and gifts. Each household received a half-sack of rice and groceries that circle members donated.

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and written, produced, directed and performed in countless plays staged by major theater groups.

Speaker for Day 2, May 13 (Sunday) is Sis. Lorna Melegrito, executive director of Pro-Life Philippines. Her topic is "Pro-Life – A Testimony of Faith".

The Convention Organizing Committee continues to draw up and get their action plans ready to ensure a smooth flow of all the activities during the convention. The Organizing Committee is composed of the

following:

Over-all Chairperson – Sis. Milla Villanueva
Program:

Content & Speakers – Sisters Mila Villanueva and Milde Tong

Design & Printing - Sis. Ruby Macario

Awards & Certificates – Sisters Pitz Torres and Cathy Pineda

Budget & Finance – Sisters Mila Villanueva and Rita Lucena

Logistics & Physical Arrangements – Sisters Sylvia San Pedro and Cathy Pineda

Registration – Sisters Cora Afuang, Mimi Gan and Jean

Castaneda
Reception – Sis. Virgie Inigo
Food Marshaling – Sisters Milde Tong, Mimi Gan and Virgie Inigo with the Diocese of Imus
Convention Kits – Sisters Rita Lucena, Josie Halog, Sylvia San Pedro and Cathy Pineda
Liturgy & Mass – Sisters Sol Eugenio and Irene Erni
Snacks Preparation – Sisters Milde Tong and Juliet Cruz
Souvenir Program – Sisters Cora Afuang, Sally Estrada and Ruby Macario
Registration of delegates continues to be accepted until the last banking hour of March 30, 2012. Walk-in delegates will not be entertained at the

venue on the day of the convention. This is to ensure that adequate food and accommodations are provided for all the delegates at the Tagaytay International Convention Center.

While the Organizing Committee aims to have another very successful and memorable Biennial Convention, the delegates' help will be invaluable by observing procedures and complying with convention guidelines.

SEE YOU IN TAGAYTAY IN MAY!

From Malolos City

Diocese of Malolos Sponsors Diocesan Livelihood Project

By Sis. E. R. Fajardo, Regent, Immaculate Conception Circle

A Flower-Making & Arrangement Seminar was sponsored by the Diocese of Malolos (Region IV) last Oct. 25, 2011. Spearheading the project was the Diocesan Committee on Upliftment of Women Workers headed by Sis. Celia Mendiola.

Twenty-one participants from six circles of the Diocese attended the seminar held at the Villa Reina Resort in Catmon, Malolos, Bulacan. They learned how to make flowers using different colors of crepe paper and arrangement of fresh

flowers for different occasions. Ms. Yoly Villarama, a TESDA-accredited assessor with 15 years experience in flower-making and arrangement conducted the demo-seminar.

Region IV Regional Representative Sis. Flor Barcial led the diocesan officers who attended the seminar. The group included Diocesan Regent Sis. Violy Luna, Vicarial Regents Sisters Cora Villano and Gloria Gatus and the regents of the six participating circles.

Post Script: Two days after the demo-seminar at



The sisters learn flower-making using crepe paper.

Villa Reina, Sis. Fely Mangali, chair of the Upliftment of Women Workers Committee of the Immaculate Conception Circle invited a few friends to attend an echo of the Flower-Making Seminar

using crepe paper. A circle member bought some of the finished products and the rest were arranged in two baskets. Sis. Irene Moraleda, co-chair of the committee conducted the demonstration.

Second Circle Organized In Meycauayan City

*By Sis. Lyn Millora,
Vicarial Regent, Vicariate of St. Nino*

The formation of San Jose ang Manggagawa Circle is another living proof of God's goodness and magnanimity. Our journey towards our goal of

opening a DMI circle at the St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Maycauayan City took most of last year.

The journey began on Jan. 12, 2011 when Past



The charter officers and members of the San Jose ang Manggagawa Circle during the officers' installation

From Meycauayan City

From Quezon City

Gift-Giving Conducted by the Diocese Of Cubao

On November 19, 2011, DMI sisters from the Diocese of Cubao held a gift-giving activity at the Women's Dormitory of Camp Karingal, Sikatuna Village, Quezon City with over 500 detainees. Led by Diocesan Regent Sis. Ruby Macario, the vicarial regents and circle regents, dedicated DMIs from eleven circles in the Diocese were involved in the activity.

The day's program started with the recitation of the

Holy Rosary followed by a short song and drama presentation by the detainees. Gift bags of toiletries such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, face towel and other items were later distributed to them.

The visit gave the sisters an opportunity to interact with the women detainees some of whom have been neglected by their families. The sisters distributed Christmas cards for the detainees to send to their loved ones, the delivery



Detainees had the chance to reconnect with their loved ones through the Christmas cards printed and mailed for them by the DMI sisters.

and mailing expenses, local or international, c/o the DMI Diocese of Cubao. The gesture was deeply appreciated by the detainees as they were given the chance to reconnect with their loved ones in time for Christmas and the New Year.

Seeing how important keeping communication open between the detainee and her family is, the DMIs of the Diocese of Cubao have decided to include this program as a continuing activity for Assistance to Prisoners' Families & their Victims.

International Secretary and Region IV RR Sis. Tesy Villarino, Vicarial Regent Sis. Mila Reyes of the Vicariate of St. Martin of Tours & St. Francis of Assissi and I, then regent of the Ina ng Grasya ng Diyos Circle of Marilao, Bulacan went to see Fr. Benny Justiniano, pastor of St. Joseph the Worker Parish. Armed with our letter-proposal, we requested Fr. Benny to allow us to form a DMI circle in his parish. The good-natured priest received us warmly and promised to take up our proposal during the forthcoming planning conference of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Fr. Benny kept his word. During our next visit, he told us the good news that the PPC has approved our proposal. Some problems cropped up during the ensuing months but they didn't deter us from pursuing our goal. We intensified our member recruitment program with support from Sis. Bing Rescate, chair of the Family & Life Commission of the parish, Sis. Nina Varias, COS vice-chair who became a DMI member herself, and the Knights of Columbus.

With God's grace and Divine Guidance from the Holy Spirit and Mama Mary, our efforts bore fruit.

The San Jose ang Manggagawa Circle was finally born and its charter members officially became DMI members during the Diocesan Long Conferral held on Nov. 12, 2011 in Valenzuela City. This circle is the second to be formed in Meycauayan City by the Ina ng Grasya ng Diyos Circle. The first is the Sto. Nino de Meycauayan Circle organized on October 9, 2010.

The new circle has 26 charter members. Its charter officers are: Sisters Zeny Mabagos – regent, Linda Lunaria – vice-regent, Pom Sarmiento – recording

secretary, Sylvia Torzar – treasurer, Cristy Tiburcio – financial secretary, Nina Varias, Grace Sempio and Pauline Castro – trustees, Edna Valencia and Violeta Bernabe – banner bearers, Aleli Santiago – scribe, Flor Mogpo – guide 1, Au Caisip – guide 2, Nene Montano – inner guard and Amy Aguinaldo – outer guard. The circle's spiritual director is Fr. Benito Justiniano.

Now the circle's charter members are more than ready to tackle the daunting tasks of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate.

From Quezon City

Mater Dei Circle Turns 18

By Sis. Rose Enriquez, Immediate Past Regent

We have come of age. We turned 18 years old last Sept. 18, 2011. Like a debutante, we made this event an exciting and memorable occasion. So we celebrated it through activities that fittingly honored Mary Immaculate as our mother and model in loving and following Jesus Christ.

Just like the previous anniversaries and other activities of the Circle, our celebration started with a circle-offered Mass during which copies of Cenacle booklets were part of our offering for use by the community aimed at drawing the people to greater appreciation of and devotion to Mama Mary. Our Cenacle prayers now include Oratio Imperata for the Respect of All Human Lives, a prayer that seeks her intercession for our pro-life advocacy.

The second part, dubbed as "The Celebration of Life in the DMI" allowed us to look back on the Circle's 18 years. Here, a special prayer was offered for our departed sisters as they were instrumental in molding what we are now. The circle's pillars, the past regents, were given tribute for their invaluable role in leading the circle. The showing of "Through the Years", a documentary video, added color and vividness while reminiscing on our past activities and experiences.

The past was put aside for a while when selected sisters danced the "Polka sa Nasyon" and "La Jota Moncadena". This was followed by the offering of 18 roses to the Blessed Mother while extolling the meaning of devotion to her coupled with the sharing of experiences of her love especially during troubled times.

An unforgettable experience, one that the circle treasures, was the two-day pilgrimage to Laguna that the circle members made during the height of TS 'Ondoy'. Little did we know that the storm had brought so much rain, submerging a large part of Metro Manila, the kind one had not experienced before. Through text messages, we learned of the instant flooding affecting even immediate members of our families. Going back to Quezon City via Rizal Province, we couldn't make it through as the highway and some bridges were



Mater Dei Circle members watch the video presentation, "Through the Years".



The sisters with Fr. Bobot Clarin, priest presider, after the Mass that the circle sponsored.

devastated by the floods. Trusting in God that He will bring us home, we prayed for the intercession of Mama Mary with more focus and fervor. After several detours and many hours on the road, our driver was able to bring us home. For us, it was a miracle! There had been other instances and events when we experienced God's love and protection through the prayer of our Mother which have firmed our unwavering faith and trust in Him. Indeed, the line from the DMI Hymn "Like our Mother Mary Immaculate, Whose trust and faith to God is firmed" is alive in us.

As we move towards our 19th year, we in the Mater Dei Circle pledge our unwavering devotion to our Immaculate Mother as we pray to her to always lead and guide us as we fulfill our solemn vow to love and serve the Lord.

Campus Media Sympo Series Goes On

The Morality in Media Committee of the Risen Christ Circle, Holy Eucharist Parish, Moonwalk Village, Paranaque City continues to conduct media symposiums in schools and communities to promote awareness of the adverse effects of excessive use of media.

A series was conducted during 2011 using the module entitled "Media – A Double-Edged Sword". The first was conducted on January 15, 2011 at the Sacred Heart School Gymnasium in Multinational Village in Paranaque attended by some 500 parents and 60 teachers and sisters of the school.

The second was a diocesan level symposium held at the Social Action Center of the Holy Eucharist Parish for 43 Squirettes

of Mary and 12 DMI sisters from five circles in the Diocese of Paranaque on July 16 and the last was on November 19 for 300 parents of high school students of Sacred Heart School.

During the symposium, the parents were requested to monitor the kind of reading materials, viewing materials and means of communication their children are exposed to during the day. Likewise, the parents were also directed to adopt means by which they could have direct hand in the choice of media materials and entertainment for their children. Filipino values such as respect for elders, obedience to God, love for neighbors and others are also included in the module.

After the symposium, the parents

expressed their appreciation for the opportunity given to them and suggested that more of similar symposiums for more effective parenting be held in the future.

Conducting the media module were Morality in Media Chairperson Sis. Helen Balmores and Sisters Dina Infante and Bing Latumbo, committee members. International Chairperson for Morality in Media Sis. Sonia Manlapig also shared ideas on the proper use of media in our lives.

A series is likewise lined up for 2012. Forthcoming in March are a symposium on media back-to-back with pro-life at the Sacred Heart School on March 10 and at the San Agustin Elementary School, also in Paranaque on March 28.



Sis. Helen Balmores, Morality in Media chair of Risen Christ Circle conducts media symposium.



International Chairperson for Morality in Media Sis. Sonia Manlapig addresses the parents of Sacred Heart School.



Members of Risen Christ Circle's Media Committee with the Sacred Heart School directress. Seated in front are Circle Regent Sis. Juliet Cruz, Sis. Sonia Manlapig, Sis. Dina Infante and Sis. Helen Balmores.

From Los Banos, Laguna

New Circle Organized in Los Banos, Laguna

The Theresian Circle of St. Therese of the Child Jesus Parish, Los Banos, Laguna organized a new circle in the Diocese of San Pablo in its neighboring parish community. The new circle is named Our Mother of Life Circle. The recruitment, screening and orientation of the circle's charter members started as early as November, 2011.

Sixteen applicants were eventually exemplified as the circle's charter members at simple exemplification rites on January 15, 2012 at San Antonio de Padua Church in Junction, Los Banos, Laguna.

The program started with a Eucharistic celebration by Fr. Rey Hayag, pastor of San Antonio de Padua. Present during the exemplification ceremonies were International Seretary and Region VI RR Sis. Lita Canonizado, Diocesan Regent Sis. Elvie Arambulo and Theresian Circle Outgoing Regent Sis. Tess Banzon who gave inspirational messages to the members of the new circle. Sis. Elmy Antonio led the installation of the circle's charter officers. They are: Sisters Cerenilla Cruz, regent; Nona Umali, vice-



The charter officers and members of Our Mother of Life Circle

regent; Aniceta Amar, recording secretary; Zenaida Fontanilla, financial secretary; Remedios Kahanap, treasurer; Magdalene Josephine Seno, scribe; Filomena de Leon, chancellor; Imelda Reyes, custodian; Lalaine Aquino, banner bearer; Profetiza Mercado and Esperanza Bacalangco, guards, Stella Tolentino and Ana Marie Ortega, guides; Aniceta Caneda, monitor and Marcelina Baradas and Liza Miguela Arpon, trustees.

Typhoon 'Sendong' Victims Receive DMI Assistance

The DMIs of the Archdiocese of Zamboanga and Prelature of Basilan responded to a call by Diocesan Regent Sis. Beth Salmon for assistance to victims of Typhoon 'Sendong' in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities. In no time at all, the sisters were able to gather 30 boxes and eleven sacks of slightly-used clothing and footwear,

two boxes of noodles and two boxes of bottled water aside from the cash donated by the different circles. The donations were sent on Dec. 22, 2011 through the Ateneo de Zamboanga University, one of the receiving centers in Zamboanga City.

Sis. Beth expressed her deep gratitude to all the DMI sisters who went out of their way to bring their donations to



The DMI sisters led by Diocesan Regent Sis. Beth Salmon (2nd from right) with the packed relief goods.

FEDEX/Air 21 Zamboanga which provided space for three days as drop-off point for the donations and the sisters from Sta. Maria and Putik circles and Sis. Marilyn

de Asis and daughter Twinkle who sorted the items before bringing them to Ateneo.

From Gubat, Sorsogon

... and in Gubat, Sorsogon

A new DMI circle has just been born at the St. Anthony Padua Parish in Gubat, Sorsogon.

Twenty-five ladies officially became charter members of the DMI during the long conferral ceremonies performed by the exemplification team of St. Rita Circle of the Cathedral Parish, Legaspi City. Region VIII Regional Representative Sis. Rita Samarista and Diocesan Regent Sis. Edith Lawenko-Manila of the Diocese of Legaspi headed the exemplification team.

The Our Lady of Penafrancia Circle, at this

point the only active circle in the Diocese of Sorsogon, will pave the way for the formation of more DMI circles in the Diocese in line with the International Regent's program of establishing a DMI circle in every parish in the country. SK Dennis Jardiolin, DGK of the Knights of Columbus Molave Council 5625 of Gubat, Sorsogon helped in the formation of the new circle.

The installation of the Circle's charter officers by Sis. Rita immediately followed. They are: Sis. Erlinda Esquillo, regent; Sis. Elisa Estolonio, vice-regent; Sis. Imelda Escandor, financial



The charter officers and members of the Our Lady of Penafrancia of Gubat, Sorsogon

secretary; Sis. Necita Tiotangco, treasurer; Sis. Glenda Gestiada, recording secretary. Sis. Susan Ereno, chancellor; Sis. Carmen Elpos, custodian; Sis. Mercy Funtanares, scribe; Sisters Josefina Endraca and Luz Esteras, trustees; Sis. Lilian Bon, banner bearer; Sis. Rowena Gestiada,

monitor; Sis. Ely Gestiada, guide, Sis. Evelyn Funtanares, inner guard; Sis. Regina Jardiolin, outer guard and Sis. Helen Escalante, organist. The circle's spiritual adviser is Msgr. Francisco Monje, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Parish.

From Mati City, Davao Oriental

Pieta Project Completed



Diocesan Regent Sis. Virginia David of the Diocese of Mati spearheaded the Pieta Project that saw completion recently with moral support and encouragement from Fr. Carlos Baquial, pastor of the Divine Mercy Shrine Parish. The Pieta stands within the parish courtyard in Madang, City of Mati. The Pieta is a gift from the DMI sisters of the Divine Mercy Circle led by Sis. Marietta de los Reyes.

From Boac, Marinduque

SISTERS ACT: A Special Moment with Dear Fathers

To commemorate the feast day of St. John Mary Vianney, the patron saint of priests, the DMI sisters of Our Lady of Biglang-Awa Circle of Boac, Marinduque feted the bishop of the Diocese of Boac and seven priests at the Immaculate Conception Parish with a surprise dinner and program last August 9, 2011.

Prior to the event, the sisters had fun planning the activities. Excitement was generated during their rehearsals for a surprise dance number from the movie "Sister Act". Their expectation was met when their time to perform came. The priest-honorees rolled in laughter while watching the performance, the sisters at first dancing to the tune "I Will Follow Him", followed by a lively one to the tune "So Sexy" after discarding their nun's habits to reveal their *jejemon* attire.



The DMI sisters perform their "Sister Act" dance number.



The priest honorees wear crowns after the traditional putong

It was indeed an unusual way to honor the priests. It was fun all the way save for the time when many of the sisters who are active church workers gave personal testimonies on how their pastors have touched their and their families' lives. It was a nostalgia trip for the priest-honorees. After dinner and a toast to their health, the traditional *putong* was held when the sisters sang and danced while pinning on their shirts red *ampao* envelopes containing crisp bills.



The sisters pose with their priest-honorees while offering their after-dinner toast.

*From Mary we learn to surrender to God's Will in all things.
From Mary we learn to trust even when all hope seems gone.
From Mary we learn to love Christ her Son and the Son of God!
~Blessed Pope John Paul II*

*Such is the will of God that we should have everything through Mary.
~St. Alphonsus Liguori*

NEWS IN PHOTOS



From Tarlac City

ST. RAPHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CIRCLE JOINS RELIEF OPERATION

Sisters of the St. Raphael the Archangel Circle of Tarlac City joined the DMI diocesan relief operations at Bacsay, Camiling Tarlac last October 12, 2011. They gladly offered donations in cash and in kind to share with families affected by flash floods in the area and in turn found it a very fulfilling experience.



From Las Pinas City

MARY MOTHER OF THE CHURCH CIRCLE'S PRO-LIFE PROJECT

The Pro-Life Committee of Mary Mother of the Church Circle of BF Resort, Las Pinas City headed by Sis. Marijo Silayan undertook a project benefiting newborn babies and their mothers during the Christmas season. The beneficiaries were from the developing communities of Manggahan and Remedios in Las Pinas City. The activity started with a praying and sharing session. Diapers and Santa bags were later distributed to the mothers.



From Cebu City

15TH CEBU ARCHDIOCESAN MASS MEDIA AWARDS

Diocesan Regent Sis. Lucila Bajarias of the Archdiocese of Cebu was a juror during the 15th Cebu Archdiocesan Mass Media Awards for the English newspaper category. Sis. Lucila is shown in photo assisting Most Rev. Jose Palma, Archbishop of Cebu during the awards night at the SM Cinema 1 in Cebu City last Aug. 28, 2011.



From Bonifacio, Misamis Occidental

29 NEW SMI MEMBERS INVESTED

An investiture ceremony was held last Oct. 9, 2011 for twenty-nine new members of the SMI San Vicente Ferrer de Bonifacio Circlette by Vicarial Regents Sisters Sonia Narit and Ida Talictic. Present during the investiture rites were Region XIV RR Sis. Miriam Angot and Diocesan Regent Sis. Azucena Ruiz and the Squirettes' parents. Photo shows the Squirettes with Sis. Azucena Ruiz, San Vicente Ferrer Circle Regent Sis. Florita Jurial, SMI Lady Counselor Sis. Ligaya Lobitana, other circle members and the parents of the Squirettes.

Fr. Fernando Suarez - Hope in Pandora's Box

By Sis. Evelyn P. Carpio, St. Francis Circle, Agoo, La Union

Pandora's story teaches us that there is hope amid countless crises that befall humans. The human body, rendered imperfect by the original sin, is in itself a Pandora's box, a vessel for potentially sick, sometimes fatal, cells that can lead to diseases, ordinary or serious. But its immune system offers the first line of defense, constantly waging war against them and fending off ailments. However, in this age of relatively unhealthy lifestyles, the so-called auto-immune diseases leave it inefficient, sometimes useless. The result? Terminal, deadly and incurable diseases. For people desperately hoping for a cure, Fr. Fernando Suarez, the healing priest, may be their last and only chance, the remaining HOPE in Pandora's Box.

So on June 11, 2011, hundreds trooped to the Basilica Minore of Our Lady of Charity in Agoo, La Union. Most of them pre-registered days prior to Fr. Suarez's visit and many who had not pre-registered tried their luck as walk-in patients, hoping they could also make it to his queue. The day saw

people of varying degrees and seriousness of illnesses, from the ones nursing simple allergies and coughs to those who came in wheelchairs and stretchers carried along by relatives. All came for a sole purpose – to get a healing touch.

The sisters of the St. Francis Circle were deployed to ensure that everything would go well during the Mass and the healing sessions. They worked together with other church-based organizations like the Knights of Columbus and PREX. Weeks before the visit, Vicarial Regent Sis.

Fr. Suarez emphasized that he is not the one who heals. He is simply the medium by which God heals His sick people. In short, faith must be at work in one's heart if he ardently desires to be totally healed.

Agnes Laron who chaired the healing visit laid out the details to the sisters and charged them their work. The "marshals" would oversee the flow of people in all the five main doors of the Basilica. The "catchers" would lay patients gently on the marble floor after receiving Fr. Suarez's healing touch. Those in charge of the registration would list the patients' names and write their ailments on adhesive tags. The usherettes would lead them to where they should be during the healing mass and sessions. Since this was the last leg of Fr. Suarez's visit in La Union, they expected an unusually large number of patients, pre-registered and walk-in alike.

True to what they expected, the Basilica was filled to capacity in no time at all and still, long lines of people waited outside patiently, unmindful of the heat and the discomfort. Given priority were the sickest and the gravest. In his homily, Fr. Suarez emphasized that he is not the one who heals. He is simply the medium by which God heals His sick people. In short, faith

must be at work in one's heart if he ardently desires to be totally healed.

For hours, the queue was long and the pews full of people. Emotions rose when a patient suddenly stood from his wheelchair after Fr. Suarez touched his ailing part and walked on the aisle, staggering at first but gradually gaining speed and confidence. It was a long day for the DMI sisters who were almost drained of their energy. But when the last patient received his blessings early in the afternoon, it was as if they were instantly recharged – it was now their turn. They lined up before Fr. Suarez, clasped their hands in silent prayer and received God's healing through Fr. Suarez.

One particular song I have always loved is "Healing". Its chorus goes, "... 'cause your love just keeps on healing me, no matter how I bruise..." Indeed God's love brings healing not just to our physical bodies. More importantly, it heals our hearts and souls. Fr. Suarez is a reminder of its awesome power.



The Holy Cross Circle of Talairon, host of the conference.



Mr. Dennis Leopoldo is congratulated by Region XIV Representative Sis. Miriam Angot after receiving his award of appreciation.

From Ozamis City

Ozamis Archdiocesan Conference Held

The 9th Archdiocesan Conference of Ozamis was held on November 27, 2011 at the Holy Cross Parish Church, Talairon, Oroquieta City. The Our Lady of the Holy Cross Circle of Talairon hosted the event with the theme "The DMII's Commitments to Strengthen the Family, Environment and the Church in Emulation of Mary Immaculate".

A total of 210 delegates represented the 12 circles comprising the diocese: San Vicente Ferrer de Bonifacio, Inmaculada Concepcion de Ozamis, Mother of Perpetual Help del Carmen, Sto. Nino de Clarin, San Isidro Labrador de Tudela, St. John the Baptist de Jimenez, Holy Cross de Panaon, Our Lady of the Holy Cross of

Talairon, Sto. Rosario de Oroquieta, St. Francis Xavier de Lopez Jaena, St. Nicholas de Tolentino of Plaridel and Regina Virginum of Calamba. Invited speakers were Rev. Fr. Rey Pernia, secretary to the Bishop, Mr. Dennis Leopoldo from ENRO and Region XIV Representative Sis. Miriam Angot.

The delegates started arriving as early as 7:00 a.m. A concelebrated Mass by Rev. Fr. Rogelio Taguran, pastor of Holy Cross Parish and Fr. Pernia started the day's program. Immediately after the Mass, the enthronement of the Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception was held with the DMI sisters offering roses to Mama Mary while singing

the enthronement song and the DMI hymn. The doxology led by Diocesan Regent Sis. Azucena Ruiz followed.

The conference proper started with the traditional opening ceremonies – the Parade of Circles, the National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Sis. Ana Marie Velez, vice-regent.

Vicarial Regent Sis. Emerenciana Conol welcomed the guests and delegates, thanked them for a very good attendance turn-out and expounded a bit on the conference theme.

In his spiritual message, Fr. Taguran stressed the significance of our devotion to Mama Mary for our perfection. We

honor Mary just as God Himself honored Mary. We pray to her because God wants that we go to Him through our Mother. **"To Jesus through Mary."** He said that this should be the guiding principle of our life.

Fr. Pernia for his part strongly appealed to his audience to give a deeper meaning to Advent. We need to prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus. He also shared his observation that during Holy Week, people go to Hongkong or Boracay when they should be in church and feel His real presence, His sacrifices and His great love for us. He exhorted the DMIs to reflect on the theme and

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Special Feature: Monasterio de San Jose

A Pilgrimage in Fulfillment of a Sister's Last Wish

By Sis. Romela Frances Escano, Recording Secretary,
Our Lady of Atonement Circle, Baguio City

The search for the True Cross, the very one on which Christ Jesus, our Savior, was crucified, is one of the most colorful, enigmatic and even controversial mysteries of the Catholic faith. History holds that the first search for the True Cross was initiated by St. Helena (c. AD 250 -330), mother of Constantine, first Christian emperor of Rome. Legend has it that the venerable St. Helena was able to seek out the hiding place of the three crosses believed to have been used during Jesus Christ's crucifixion – one each for the two thieves, St. Dimas and Gestas, and the third used by Jesus Himself.

Eusebius of Caesaria, a renowned scholar of the early Christian era who authored *The Life of Constantine*, recounts how the Holy

Sepulchre, originally a site of veneration for the Christian community of Jerusalem, had been covered with earth and a temple to Venus built on top, probably as part of Emperor Hadrian's reconstruction of Jerusalem as *Aeolia Capitolina* in AD 135 at the height of the Roman era of Christian persecution. Socrates Scholasticus (born c. AD 380), in his *Ecclesiastical History*, gives an account detailing how St. Helena had the temple destroyed and the Sepulchre uncovered, unearthing three crosses and the titulus from Jesus' crucifixion. In Socrates' version of the story, Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem who was ordered to build a church on the former site of Venus' temple, had the three crosses placed in turn on the body of a deathly ill woman. The woman recovered at the touch of the



The chapel of the Monasterio de San Jose in Tarlac

third cross. This was taken as a sign that this, indeed, was the cross of Jesus. Socrates adds that having likewise found the nails with which Christ had been fastened to the cross, Helena sent this to Constantinople, where they were smelted and incorporated in Emperor Constantine's helmet, as well as the bridle of his horse.

How a relic of the True Cross came to be lodged in the keeping of the Monastery in a small country in Far-East Asia is a sequel to the True Cross's saga as mystical and fascinating as its finding. It was in 2005 during the World Youth Day celebrations when Msgr. Volker Bauer of Germany offered Rev. Fr. Ronald "Archie" Thomas Cortez, founder of the Monasterio de San Jose, a sacred trust – the post of next guardian/keeper of the True Cross. This, of course, came long after the churches in Europe underwent radical transformation due to the advent of communism; with most of the religious edifices turned into museums or warehouses. Apart from this, the monasteries in Europe

were failing; monastic aspirants were rare, and the remaining monks are now facing the travails of old age. This would lead to an event that would open the doors of grace and healing to Filipinos and countless believers in Asia.

The Monasterio de San Jose itself is perched atop one of Tarlac's highest peaks, and is



The "arqueta" bearing the relic of the True Cross

nestled deep within the 247-hectare Tarlac Eco-Tourism Park. One of the most iconic sites which Tarlac boasts is the 30-foot high statue of the Risen Christ, the Monastery's most popular landmark. The statue stands sentinel over the green valley, as if extending its protective arm over all flora



Interior view of the monastery chapel

and fauna within its beatific scope. The Monastery has built a dormitory for the faithful who wish to renew their spirits with its serenity. Its priory is open for the conduct of spiritual renewal activities such as retreats and recollections.

For the members of Our Lady of Atonement Circle (OLAC) of Baguio City, the long-planned pilgrimage to the Monasterio de San Jose which did not push through on its original date in March, 2011 due to a tragic loss that left the DMIs of Baguio reeling and still recovering from, finally pushed through on September 14, 2011. At 3:00 a.m. of that day, 23 OLAC sisters boarded the City Government of Baguio's coaster at the Baguio Cathedral grounds to fulfill a dear sister's last wish. Pilgrimage chaplain was Fr. Emmanuel Panayo, pastor of Our Lady of Atonement Parish.

The OLAC sisters' pilgrimage was in memory of the late Vicarial Regent Sis. Margaret Ceoile who perished in a vehicular accident at Kennon Road on March 7, 2011. The Pajero she and four companions were riding in on their way to the Monasterio on that drizzly morning skidded off the zigzag road and plunged into a ravine. Only one of her companions survived. (Please see related story, "Sis. Mary Margaret Caoile, A Zealous and Passionate DMI", April-June, 2011 issue of the *DMI Newsette*. – Ed.)

The day before, Sis. Margie guested at our circle meeting during which she stressed the

importance of spiritual formation and enrichment prior to the exemplification of new members. The Monasterio was close to her heart, visiting the place two or three times a week and staying overnight at the Monastery dorm to pray the Divine Office with the Servants of the Risen Christ, the order founded by Fr. Archie. She urged the OLAC members to go on a pilgrimage to the Monasterio and mentioned going there the following day.

We were all shocked by the news of Sis. Margie's death. And it is taking us a long time to recover from the loss of an inspiring leader. We scheduled several dates for the pilgrimage to fulfill her last wish, but they all fell through. It might have been a blessing in disguise, for the sisters finally decided to go on September 14, the anniversary of the Monasterio and Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, and one of two days during the year when the relic is exposed to the public.

The sisters waited with bated breath for Sept. 14 as Baguio was experiencing heavy rains during the week and they feared having to postpone the pilgrimage. But Sept. 14 came, heralded by a cold and misty dawn, but no rain. The sisters left Baguio at 3:20 a.m., arriving for breakfast at the home of Regent Sis. Zeny Cabunilas in Paniqui, Tarlac about an hour and a half later. The group then proceeded to the Monastery and arrived just in time for Mass.

A big crowd, numbering more



The statue of the Risen Christ, the monastery's most famous landmark



Priests assembled at the monastery plaza for the Eucharistic celebration.

than 10,000, packed the monastery plaza under the sweltering sun. Heading the phalanx of priests at the concelebrated Mass (which included our Fr. Manny) was Archbishop Florentino Cinense, D.D. of the Archdiocese of Tarlac. Braving the heat and the incredible press of a large mass of pilgrims wishing to venerate the relic, the OLAC sisters, joined by some delegates from St. Vincent Ferrer Circle, Sis. Margie's home circle, patiently queued up and joined the long, slow shuffle to the Veneration Chapel.

The relic is usually housed in a silver "arqueta" or small ark, engraved with Catholic

symbols at its side. On this day, the patient pilgrim will be able to catch a glimpse of the relic and for 30 seconds or so spend time with a small, glass-encased piece of wood, not even larger than a foot in size, obviously scarred by age and bearing an inlaid carved image of the cross on its front. Experts have determined that the nondescript piece of wood is of olive, the hardy tree that characterized (and still does) the landscape of Jesus' time.

Halfway through the snaking queue, a semblance of order took place, four deep for each line. The singing of religious songs by volunteers bolstered

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Ozamis Archdiocesan Conference Held...cont'd. from Page 17

live it out.

On the environment, Mr. Leopoldo gave a thorough discussion on the greenhouse effect, ozone layer depletion, global warming, cause and ill effects of climate change and posed this question: "What can we do to mitigate global warming and climate change?" He ended his presentation with this challenging thought: "We abuse the earth because we

consider it as a commodity which we own. When we see the earth as a community to which we belong, then we will be able to use it with love and respect." He reinforced his final statement with a quote from Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that it ever has."

The last speaker was Sis. Miriam Angot who cited the factors that

are slowly attacking and destroying the Filipino family and clearly explained the real score behind the RH Bill. To the DMIs, it's definitely NO to the RH Bill and we will continue to pray together, decide together, act together in upholding the sacredness of human life and family as our commitment and participation to live and realize the fullness of life through Mama Mary.

Francis Xavier de Lopez Jaena, Sto. Rosario de Oroquieta, Regina Virginum of Calamba and Our Lady of the Holy Cross of Talairon Circles added color to the event. Certificates of appreciation were given to the speakers and cash prizes to the winning presentations.

The closing remarks by Sis. Helen Madjos, regent of the host circle brought the conference to a close.

Dance numbers from St.



Dance presentations by the DMI sisters lent color to the event.

A Pilgrimage in Fulfillment of a Sister's Last Wish...cont'd. from Page 19

the prayerful atmosphere that pervaded the place. Time stands still as one reached the head of the line. The only realities are you – and the unassuming piece of wood before you. You kneel on the cushion provided by the monks for the pilgrims before the relic and pray, pray with all your heart before the wood which had touched our Savior's flesh and soaked by our Savior's blood.

Throughout the experience, a patina of solemnity is maintained. Time is kept by novice monks who strike a

dome-shaped Sacring Bell/ Cymbalum with a small wooden mallet every 30 seconds or so, signaling the pilgrim that it is time for him to rise and give way for the others after him. The experience may strike others as an ordeal, an exercise to test one's patience in withstanding heat and hunger, but the thoughtful pilgrim will find it a fulfilling one, a real-life allegory of the hardships one has to endure to achieve a state of grace.

As the OLAC sisters filed out of the chapel, the rain fell in torrents. They waited for a lull in the storm, then ran across the

plaza, past the Priory and down the road where their coaster was parked. They had to scuttle plans to visit the Monasterio's parks and visit the giant statue of the Risen Christ.

Back to Paniqui where a late lunch at the Cabunilas Family's newly-renovated ancestral home awaited them. Lunch was served after Fr. Manny's blessing of the house. It was a meal marked by laughter and camaraderie, two hours filled with the pure joy of unity and togetherness by sisters who only see each other once a month, and wish to spend

more time with each other.

Still happily sharing stories, this time sated and rested, the sisters wended their way home, exhausted but happy, and nursing a fervent hope to go back to Monasterio de San Jose to breathe its pure air, to drink in full measure its serenity without the hassle of a huge crowd and to once again answer the call of a relic, the only one of its kind in Asia, and partake of the True Cross' mead of healing - in mind, body and spirit. And that is a promise the OLAC sisters are sure to keep!