



DMI

# Newsletter

*To Jesus through Mary*

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July - September 2012



## *DMI on the MOVE*

*3rd Quarter 2012*  
*Stories inside*



## DR Sis. Beth Salmon 2012 Red Cross Awardee

*By Sisters Beling Panganiban and Baby de los Reyes*

Sis. Beth Salmon, diocesan regent (DR) of the Archdiocese of Zamboanga and Prelature of Isabela de Basilan, was named one of the Best Men and Women 2012 by the Zamboanga City Red Cross Chapter during the awarding ceremony held at the Celebrity Hall of the Grand Astoria Hotel in Zamboanga City on August 18, 2012.

Sis. Beth was awarded for civic clubs and organizations together with Sis. Nenie Abendan, past regent of Our Lady of Purification Circle, Parish of Sta. Maria, Zamboanga City.

The Zamboanga City Red Cross Chapter cited Sis. Beth for her "acts of courage, kindness and noble character in her social and humanitarian awe-inspiring performance, her numerous humbling achievements and extraordinary



*Sis. Beth Salmon (at center) after receiving her Red Cross award. Flanking her are fellow awardee Sis. Nenie Abendan and Sis. Beling Panganiban.*

contributions in the community in organizations, in addition to being an avid supporter and Red Cross benefactor."

Present during the occasion were Past International Regent Sis. Beling Panganiban who was herself a Red Cross awardee in the field of Education in 2011, and Sisters Laura Fuerte, Titing Iglesias and Cholie Mendoza.



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*From the International Regent*



## MESSAGE

My dear sisters in Christ through Mary,

I am still pursuing my dream of "A CIRCLE IN EVERY PARISH".

To date, we have organized 33 new circles all over the country, two outside the Philippines. We had 507 DMI circles on record at the start of 2011. We should have one hundred circles more if only 20% of the existing circles passionately went to work. We still have a long way to go! As a consolation though, we have more or less 500 new DMI members added to our roster, considering that some of the new circles exemplified more than the 15 members minimum required to form a circle.

We tried to locate some DMIs in New Jersey, USA and Australia but failed to reach former members. The last communications we received from their end were in 1986 yet. They have probably disbanded or are beyond their active years. But we are not giving up. We believe that somewhere out there, a circle can still be revived or resurrected.

On the local front, I hope that our sisters will continue looking for parishes without a DMI circle yet. I still believe that having A CIRCLE IN EVERY PARISH is not an elusive dream. Let us bring more women closer to Mama Mary, thereby increasing devotion to our Blessed Mother. Let this be our covenant. It is never too late to even try, for the love of Mama Mary!

ENHORA BUENA!

**SIS. LYDIA L. RAMIREZ**  
International Regent



# *Beautiful Place . . . Beautiful People . . . Beautiful Memories*

*By Sis. Sally T. Estrada*

One cannot but feel smitten by the place. Experiencing nature at its best and the warmth and hospitality of its people are enough reasons for us to want to go back to Surigao del Sur.

We finally made the trip to Tandag City, the provincial capital, last August 17, 2012 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Meeting of the International Board upon invitation of Sis. Lelis Pimentel, Region XII representative, made exactly a year ago in Zamboanga City. It was during the 2011 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Board Meeting hosted by International

Regent Sis. Lyding Ramirez.

Led by Sis. Lyding, RRs from Luzon and some from the Visayas met at the Centennial Airport (NAIA-2) on the morning of Aug. 17 to board a PAL plane for Butuan City. Sis. Lelis and her welcoming party met us at Butuan Airport. We had lunch hosted by the DMIs of the Diocese of Butuan, then boarded a coaster for the 3.5-hour trip to Tandag.

Traveling all the way on smooth cemented roads, the trip was comfortable and refreshing with forest trees standing



*A group photo of the International Board at the facade of the Surigao del Sur Provincial Capitol. Shown front row, from left: Sisters Milde Tong, Lelis Pimentel and Josie Halog. Middle row, seated: Sisters Ofel Lucas, Amy Castaneda, Cecille Apura, Miriam Angot, Amelia Sayson, Sally Estrada and Ruby Macario. Back row: Sisters Tess Miranda, Lita Canonizado, Sonia Manlapig (partly hidden), Baby Acevedo, Jean Velarde, Lyding Ramirez, Mila Villanueva, Linda Castillo, Rita Samarista, Flor Barcial, and Au Manangan.*

majestically on mountainsides to the left and right of us.

We met Surigao del Sur Governor Johnny Pimentel, Sis. Lelis' husband, in an out-of-the-way barangay that was then celebrating its fiesta. Sis. Lelis said this is one way the Governor

is able to reach and know the concerns of his constituents. Dinner (of crabs, prawns, *lechon* and *ginataang langka* among others) was at their residence. We spent the night at a nearby hotel owned by the Pimentel family.



*The International Board in session at the Board Room of the Provincial Capitol.*



*Sis. Lyding Ramirez was presented a cake (her birthday was on August 13) with a giant candle.*



Breakfast (on Aug. 18, Saturday) was at a beach resort owned by the mayor of Tandag where Governor Johnny bade us good-bye as he had to go to Manila on business.

The International Board meeting was held at the board room of the Provincial Capitol. On our way to Bislig after lunch, we passed by the residence of Past International Regent Sis. Lourdes Taruc (IR from 1988 to 1990), then to an orphanage with our donation of milk for the children. We attended a

special Anticipated Mass at St. Vincent Ferrer Chapel on Forest Drive where executives of the Paper Industries Corp. of the Phils. (PICOP), then the largest paper manufacturer in the country, used to live. DMI sisters from Bislig hosted our sumptuous dinner at the Paper Country Inn where we also spent the night. Bislig was a bustling community years back when PICOP was still in operation.

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*Interacting with the children at an orphanage that the group visited*



*With the host DMIs in Bislig*



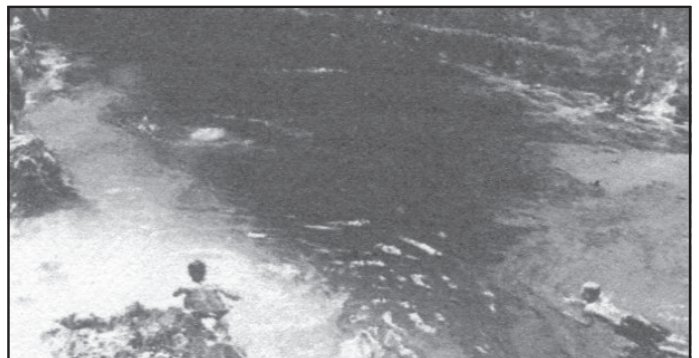
*The group performs a lively action song during Fellowship Night at the Paper Country Inn in Bislig.*



*The group with the Tinuy-an Falls in the background*



*Lunch (a feast really!) at the Hinatuan Enchanted River*



*Different varieties of large edible fish start to appear among the swimmers to feed on chopped squid when music starts to play from the PA system.*

We had real bonding with the local DMIs during the after-dinner fellowship with everybody taking to the floor to line-dance to lively music. We thanked our hosts profusely for the warm hospitality accorded us.

We spent Day 3 (Aug. 19, Sunday) visiting the tourist spots that the province takes pride in. Incidentally the places we went to were full of out-of-town picnickers (from all over Mindanao according to Sis. Lelis) who took advantage of the 4-day holiday weekend.

First on our itinerary was Tinuy-an Falls in Bislig. The falls, almost a hundred meters wide where water cascades like a lace curtain, is the third in a series of waterfalls from up a mountain. The more adventurous climb further up to see the first two. The cool waters seemed to invite us to take a dip but for lack of time, some just boarded a raft that took them nearer to the falls with its refreshing mist when the wind blows. We met Bislig Mayor Nepomuceno who said

that continuous improvement is being made to attract more visitors to Tinuy-an Falls.

Next stop was at the Enchanted River in Hinatuan with its deep aqua blue water. For lunch, we feasted on crabs, prawns and grilled seafoods. Highlight of our visit was the feeding of the fish, a truly enchanting moment for all of us. Swimmers, so many that day, were asked to swim to the sides of the pool to give way to the fishes. Then a whistle blew, a bell rang and classical music started playing from a PA system. Several started

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***The cool waters seemed to invite us to take a dip but for lack of time, some just boarded a raft that took them nearer to the falls with its refreshing mist when the wind blows.***

to appear – fish varieties served on our dinner table (*maya-maya, lapu-lapu*, etc.) each big enough to fill a large platter, jumped out of the water to catch the chopped squid thrown at them. What a magical sight to behold! A native beside us even said that the fish do not come out unless music is played.

It was late afternoon when we reached Bgy. Britania in Lianga where we were to spend our last night in Surigao. Situated in a cove, several islets dot the sea. Boats are rented out for visitors to go island-hopping which we did until the rains fell, drenching us. After dinner at a restaurant on the beach, we proceeded to Kansilad Beach Resort/Hotel. We were billeted in cottages that jut out to the sea. We woke up to a quiet morning with the sea so calm and the water so clear. The scene will forever be etched in our memories as a piece of heaven on earth.

We motored back to Butuan City to catch our plane to Manila at noon. After a quick lunch at Islands Restaurant, it

was time to say good-bye to our very gracious host, Sis. Lelis and her staff and Tandag DMI Sisters led by Sis. Tess Miranda, vicarial regent, who took very good care of us during our Surigao sojourn.

Being nearer God's earth and seeing His grand creation in close fellowship with such beautiful people was a journey of faith for all of us, as it was an affirmation of how great and wonderful our God is. There was never a dull moment, not even while on the road, as we spent the time in prayer for our Blessed Mother's intercession for protection and guidance, with hearty laughter thrown in-between when Region III RR Sis. Amy Castaneda dished out jokes from her never-ending "repertoire".

As our plane landed at NAIA-2, we felt tired but refreshed nonetheless . . . by the beautiful memories of a beautiful place with its beautiful people.





*The presidential table of the Region IV Assembly showing the DMI International and Region IV officers*



*International Regent Sis. Lyding Ramirez receives a certificate of appreciation from Diocesan Regent Sis. Violy Luna of the Diocese of Malolos. With them in photo are Vicarial Regents Sisters Lyn Millora and Mila Reyes and Region IV RR Sis. Flor Barcial.*

## Marilao Convention Center Venue of Region IV Assembly

*By Sis. Zeny S. Mabagos, Regent, San Jose Ang Manggagawa Circle*

The Regional Assembly of Region IV (Diocese of Malolos) held on Sept. 15, 2012 at the Marilao Convention Center in Marilao, Bulacan was a certified success notwithstanding

the dreadful *habagat* that rendered almost all roads leading to the venue impassable.

Nineteen circles from the seven vicariates of the Diocese were represented by more

than 280 DMI delegates. Only the delegates of two circles were not able to make it to the event because of the inclement weather although they had been pre-registered. There were exchanges among

the delegates about how they ingeniously surmounted the floods along the way. The indomitable DMI spirit shone through while they related their

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*Members of the San Jose Ang Manggagawa Circle who performed a lively intermission number.*



*Rev. Fr. Benito Justiniano, pastor of St. Joseph the Worker Parish of Meyauayan, Bulacan,*



*The Region IV officers with the assembly guests. From left: Sis. Violy Luna, Fr. Benny Justiniano, Fr. Albert Suatengco, Sisters Lyding Ramirez, Piling San Juan, Flor Barcial, Ruby Macario, Tesy Villarino and Lyn Millora*

stories, and with characteristic humor yet!

At 9:30 a.m., program emcees Sisters Cora Raymundo and Lourdes Alcantara officially announced the start of the Assembly with the traditional opening ceremonies consisting of the Parade of Colors by all the circles and the entrance of Region IV and International officers led by International Regent Sis. Lyding Ramirez, the opening prayer led by Sis. Zeny Mabagos of San Jose Ang Manggagawa Circle, the National Anthem by Regent Sis. Ketchie Francisco of Sto. Nino de Meycauayan Circle, Oath of Allegiance by Regent Sis. Kaye Lumabas of Sta. Clara Circle and the DMI March by the Queen of Flowers Circle led by Regent Sis. Pacita Mendoza.

Diocesan Regent Sis. Violy Luna officially welcomed the delegates while Region IV Representative Sis. Flor Barcial provided updates from the DMI National Office.

IR Sis. Lyding Ramirez was the special guest who was introduced by

Past Region IV RR Sis. Tesy Villarino. In her opening statement, Sis. Lyding expressed her elation over the big attendance that greeted her. Doing away with her prepared speech, she gave a personal testimony on how, through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, she was able to overcome all barriers earlier on which seemed to prevent her from fulfilling her commitment that day. She likewise narrated many small miracles in her life that all the more deepened her faith and love for Mama Mary. At the end of her inspirational message, she entertained questions from the floor, mostly about the DMI missions, underscoring the benefits that the circles' worthwhile projects can provide for the marginalized sector of our society.

International Chairperson for Upliftment of Women Workers Sis. Linda Castillo was introduced by Vicarial Regent Sis. Mila Reyes of the Vicariate of St. Martin of Tours and St. Francis of Assisi. Sis. Linda in her presentation stressed, among others, the need

to uplift the quality of life of marginalized women workers by a number of ways such as giving them SSS coverage and protecting them from becoming victims of human trafficking.

Sis. Ruby Macario, international chairperson for Youth Welfare, announced the holding of the 14<sup>th</sup> SMI Biennial Convention in May, 2013 and invited the circles to encourage their Squirettes to attend the event. She also pushed the campaign for the organization of more SMI circlettes, ending with her signature action song "I Have a Dream" with the delegates gamely joining her in the dance. So as not to lose the momentum, Sis. Rexie Cudal of the Ina ng Grasya ng Diyos Circle followed up with some aerobics exercises that kept the DMI sisters widely awake and in high spirits.

Guest speaker during the afternoon session was Rev. Fr. Benito Justiniano, pastor of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Meycauayan, Bulacan, chaplain of the San Jose Ang Manggagawa Circle, and

spiritual adviser of Bro. Mike Velarde's Born Again Movement. Fr. Benny, who was introduced by Vicarial Regent Sis. Lyn Millora of the Vicariate of Sto. Nino, is well-known for his delightful but meaningful homilies. His animated talk before the DMI delegates pertaining to his apostolic experience and work as priest kept his audience attentive and interested throughout his talk.

A Holy Mass celebrated by Rev. Fr. Albert Suatengco, DMI diocesan spiritual director, and the closing remarks by Past Region IV RR Sis. Puring Hermogenes and prayer by Regent Sis. Mely de la Pena brought the assembly to a close.

Another day of joyful Marian celebration and fellowship among the DMIs of Region IV had just taken place with the assembly delegates bringing home valuable learning experiences that form part of their faith journey.

Ensuring the smooth flow of the day's program was an Organizing Committee composed of the two

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# Our Lady Of Mt. Carmel Circle Hosts Region IX Assembly in Roxas City

*By Sis. Sylvia de la Cruz, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Circle*

The Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Circle of Roxas City hosted this year's assembly of Region IX held at the El Circulo Convention Center, Pueblo de Panay, Roxas City last Sept. 22, 2012. The assembly was attended by 247 delegates coming from the 25 circles of the

Dioceses of Capiz, Iloilo, Aklan, Bacolod and San Carlos. The theme of the assembly was "Strengthening of Faith in Jesus through Mary".

The day's program started with the Parade of Circles and Enthronement and Floral Offering to Mama Mary.

The latter was officiated by Rev. Fr. Freddie Billanes, DMI spiritual director of the Archdiocese of Capiz. Roxas City Councilor Matthew James Viterbo welcomed the assembly delegates to Roxas City while Capiz Governor Victor Tanco, Sr., impressed by the

advocacies of the DMI, pledged his full support for the organization's projects and activities.

Past International Regent Sis. Perla Arguelles and International Board Member and Region IX

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*The presidential table during the Region IX Assembly with the DMI officers and special guests Capiz Governor Victor Tanco, Sr. and Roxas City Councilor Matthew Viterbo.*



*The Eucharistic Celebration officiated by Archbishop Jose Advincula, DD with Fr. Freddie Billanes as co-celebrant.*



*Officers and members of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Circle, assembly hosts.*



*Dance presentation of the Sto. Nino de Kalibo Circle, first prize winner.*

*Our Lady Of Mt. Carmel Circle Hosts Region IX Assembly in Roxas City...cont'd. from Page 9*

Representative Sis. Manolita Acevedo also graced the occasion. The diocesan regents rendered reports on the activities undertaken by their respective dioceses. A Photo Exhibit Contest was also held among DMI circles. To perk up the morning activities, the Our Lady of Lourdes Circle of St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish in Mambusao, Capiz rendered an intermission number.

In the afternoon, a very substantive talk was delivered by Rev. Fr. Marlon Bordo focusing on the assembly theme in which he stressed the role of the Blessed Mother as great Intercessor to her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Plaques of appreciation were presented to the assembly speakers and guests. Parlor games were also held to lighten up the program.

A Eucharistic Celebration by Most Rev. Msgr. Jose F. Advincula, DD, Archbishop of Capiz provided a fitting close to the event. Fr. Nonoy Billanes was co-celebrant.

The fellowship night was a very colorful event with the DMI sisters garbed in Latin-inspired costumes. The night's program began with a production number by the host circle followed by a contest among circles for the best dance presentation. Adjudged first place was the presentation of the Sto. Nino de Kalibo Circle.



*Sisters Bing Yotingco and Manolita Acevedo pose beside the biggest bell in Asia found in the parish church in Pan-ay, Capiz.*

The ballroom dancing that followed kept the DMI sisters up on their toes until it was time to officially close the 2012 Region IX Assembly with a closing message from Regent Sis. Teresita "Bebing" Yotingco of the host circle.

A tour of Roxas City was conducted by the sisters

of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Circle for the out-of-town delegates. On their itinerary were Talon Adventure Park and the Talon Orchid and Cutfoliage Farm owned by Sis. Edna Viterbo as well as the famous old Pan-ay Church in Pan-ay, Capiz where the biggest bell in Asia is found.

*Marilao Convention Center Venue of Region IV Assembly...cont'd. from Page 8*

vicarial regents, Sisters Mila Reyes and Lyn Millora in coordination with Diocesan Regent Sis. Violy Luna and Region IV RR Sis. Flor Barcial. Regent Sis. Zeny Mabagos and the San

Jose Ang Manggagawa Circle took care of the registration, physical arrangements by Regent Sis. Ketchie Francisco and the Sto. Nino de Meycauayan Circle, finance and

venue by Regent Sis. Mely de la Cruz and the Ina ng Grasya ng Diyos Circle, give-aways by Regent Sis. Pacita Mendoza and the Queen of Flowers Circle, liturgical services by

Regent Sis. Kaye Lumabas and the Sta. Clara Circle, and programme/invitation by Past Region IV RR Sis. Tesy Villarino and Sisters Mila Reyes and Lyn Millora.



## Region V Assembly Held Sept. 29, 2012

In preparation for the observance of the Year of Faith, this year's theme of the Regional Assembly of Region V was "The DMIs: Renewing Commitment to Jesus and Mary in the Year of Faith".

The assembly was held at the Glass Garden in Santolan, Pasig City last September 29, 2012. Despite the rains, close to 350 delegates from the seven dioceses and one prelature comprising Region V – the Dioceses of Antipolo, Cubao, Imus, Kalookan, Manila, Novaliches and Paranaque and the Prelature of Palawan – attended the assembly.

Vice-International Regent for Luzon and Region V Representative

Sis. Mila Villanueva officially welcomed the delegates and thanked the Organizing Committee headed by Alternate Region V RR Sis. Cora Afuang, assembly over-all chairperson, for putting together a well-organized conference. Diocesan Regent Sis. Ruby Macario of the Diocese of Cubao who emceed the day-long program then acknowledged the circles from the different dioceses represented in the assembly.

A Eucharistic celebration by Msgr. Arnel Legarejos, pastor of Our Lady of Light Parish in Cainta, Rizal who was also the assembly keynote speaker, opened the morning session. In his homily cum keynote

address, Monsignor Legarejos talked extensively on the Year of Faith as declared by Pope Benedict XVI to start on October 11, 2012, the Golden Jubilee of the Second Vatican Council, which Pope John XXIII convened on Oct. 11, 1962. The 16 Documents of Vatican II resulted among others in changes in the liturgy, strengthening the apostolate of the laity and others aimed at reinvigorating the faith of Catholics.

He cited the objectives of the Year of Faith: 1. To help the Church focus its attention on Jesus Christ and the beauty of having faith in Him; 2. Renewed conversion to the Lord; 3. To rediscover the faith; 4. To have a correct understanding of

Church teaching; 5. To have a new evangelization; and 6. To intensify the Witness of Charity. He also pointed out that the sources of our faith are the Bible, the 16 Documents of Vatican II and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

To conclude his homily, Monsignor Legarejos stressed that the DMI as a church organization must be a "bastion of faith" and that conversion and renewal must begin with the DMIs who must also take the lead in the practice of social responsibility, steeped in love and charity and possessing Mary's virtues of obedience and humility.

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*Msgr. Arnel Legarejos receives the offerings from Sisters Mila Villanueva and Cora Afuang during the Eucharistic celebration.*



*Assembly delegates gathered at the Glass Garden listen to Sis. Monina Tayamen, guest speaker.*

Region V Assembly Held Sept. 29, 2012 ...cont'd. from Page 11



*The assembly speakers: From left, Sis. Mila Villanueva, Msgr. Arnel Legarejos, Sis. Monina Tayamen, Bro. Michael Lobrin and Sis. Helen de Leon*



*Msgr. Arnel Legarejos, keynote speaker, receives a plaque of appreciation from Sisters Mila Villanueva and Cora Afuang.*



*Bro. Michael Lobrin is awarded his plaque of appreciation as program emcee. Sis. Ruby Macario (at left) looks on.*

Sis. Monina Siazon-Tayamen was the morning's second speaker on the topic "Divine Mercy Message and Devotion: A Source of Faith, Hope and Love". Sis. Monina, who was introduced by Diocesan Regent Sis. Pitz Torres of the Diocese of Novaliches, has been in the service of the Catholic Church since 1985, currently as council president of the Manila Community of the Discalced Carmelite Order and Asian Coordinator of the Divine Mercy Movement. She was commissioned in

year 2000 by Msgr. Josefino Ramirez, rector and pastor of the Shrine Church of San Lorenzo Ruiz in Binondo, Manila in the latter position. She is passionately involved in the formation programs of the two communities.

Sis. Monina, a charter member of the DMI Mater Dei Circle, left a lucrative job in media coveted by many to heed God's call. She traced the beginnings of the Divine Mercy devotion to Sis. Faustina, a simple Polish nun who saw visions of Jesus and left a

diary of her experience and was later canonized as saint by Pope John Paul II. Based on her vision, St. Faustina depicted Jesus with rays of light emanating from His Sacred Heart – the red rays symbolizing the sacraments and the white standing for cleansing through the sacraments of baptism and reconciliation.

Sis. Monina drew the connection of the Divine Mercy devotion to the DMI, that the message of mercy must be alive in the heart of every DMI. "The mother being the

heart of the home, let that heart be merciful," she said. She also distinguished between mercy and forgiveness, the former being undeserved forgiveness. "Forgiveness is an elusive concept of spirituality which benefits us by making us closely united with Jesus and Mary, His forgiving mother," she added.

Sis. Monina's final message to her audience: "Let us be vessels of mercy for one another, especially in our home. Let us be dispensers of love,



forgiveness and mercy."

The banquet hall of Glass Garden resounded with laughter during the unholy hour that was after lunch. The afternoon's first speaker, Bro. Michael Angelo Lobrin, a much sought-after speaker and author of a series of best-selling books entitled "Laugh with God Today" who Vicarial Regent Sis. Alma Luces of the Vicariate of Our Lady of the Abandoned in Marikina City, introduced as a "force to reckon with whose cheerfulness is incurably contagious". Bro. Mike is currently on his regency, a period in his young life (he is 30 years old) when he has to discern for a future "with Christ or with Christine" after completing his theological studies at San Carlos Seminary where he also obtained his Bachelor of Arts in Classical Philosophy degree, magna cum laude. Currently, he is busy as adviser for religious affairs to a number of national and local politicians, as resource speaker in conferences, retreats and recollections and team-building seminars and as professor and lecturer in theology and

philosophy at St. Paul's University, Manila Doctors' College, De la Salle University and Entrepreneur School of Asia.

For the topic of his talk "Winning Moments with God", Bro. Mike's message was simple: "Life is a choice; choose to be a blessing to others." He summed up the ingredients to have winning moments with God in 4Ps: *kamalayan sa pananampalataya, pasasalamat, pagpapakumbaba, at pagmamahal*. He

***Bro. Mike's message was simple: "Life is a choice; choose to be a blessing to others." He summed up the ingredients to have winning moments with God in 4Ps: kamalayan sa pananampalataya, pasasalamat, pagpapakumbaba, at pagmamahal.***

pointed out that the hyphen between the date of birth and date of death written on a grave marker is what matters most because it symbolizes how the departed one spent his life on earth.

And to the DMIs, his parting message that afternoon was: "Stick to your mandate. For your organization to grow, you need not recruit. Just take care of one another. Your outreach activities must not just make you **feel** good. Be sure you are able to **do** good. Make a difference in this world."

The last of the day's speakers was Mission Chairperson for Pro-Life Sis. Helen de Leon, who at the outset stated that the previous speaker was "a hard act to follow", but nevertheless sustained the interest of the delegates with her update on the Reproductive Health Bill.

A medical doctor, Sis. Helen traced the beginnings of Reproductive Health during Martial Law when it was then known as Population Control. Through the years, several House Bills had

been introduced in Congress to address the issue of Reproductive Health. Continuous opposition from the Catholic Church had prevented its passage into law. The current bill in Congress is HB 4244 and in the Senate, SB 2378 which are being pushed by RH Bill advocates. She also cited the provisions of the bill that the Church opposes, such as the widespread distribution of condoms (funds totaling \$888 million will be forthcoming for this item when the law is passed) and abortifacients which shall be considered as essential medicines, limiting family size to only two children, and making sex education mandatory in schools starting at Grade 5, among others.

A set of amendments are being introduced to the Bill to make it more palatable to the Catholic Church and to Pro-life advocates. Meanwhile, the following events have taken place where the RH Bill is concerned: Some 192 members of the teaching staff of Ateneo de Manila University have been

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*From Baguio City*

## "Good Book Corner" Launched

*By Sis. Meli Escano, Our Lady of Atonement Circle*

Much has been said about the proliferation of negative content in today's media. It is therefore all the more significant that the DMI pursues Morality in Media as one of its missions.

This mission is one fraught with challenges, especially given the all-encompassing influence of today's media which have, by leaps and bounds, increased the radius of their reach due to technological innovations that have turned our world to the so-called "global village". While these innovations in themselves are neither good nor evil, like tools, their serving as "boons" or "banes" depends on how they are used and for what purpose they are employed.

Initiatives taken to promote morality in media must also be mindful of how the human psyche reacts to that which is prohibited. Usually, people's curiosity is heightened, or gets piqued, by that which is banned; hence, a wave of popularity accompanies the item concerned. The opposite result: instead of the banned item being shunned, it becomes tolerated to the point of it even gaining popularity and becoming fashionable, if only for a little while.

Well aware of this phenomenon,

the Our Lady of Atonement Circle of Baguio City opted to utilize positive reinforcement and promote alternative media with positive content. Thus, the circle launched last October 15, 2011 a "Good Book Corner" at the Salud Mitra Barangay. The "Good Book Corner" aims to form the nucleus of a barangay-based mini-library. A "Good Book" shall be featured each month, thereby giving the public even at the grassroots level access to literature which bears inspiring, meaningful and life-changing subject matters sure to bring home a moral lesson or two.

The book featured during the launch was "Mister God, This Is Anna" by the Irish writer known only as "Fynn". The book tells the story of an orphan girl adopted by an ordinary lower middle-class family, and how, in the three years that she stayed with that family before her death, she was able to change the people whose lives she touched. The book is enlivened by the orphan Anna's profound realizations about God's love and providence as interpreted by, and through the clear, untainted prism of her



*The shelf at the Salud Mitra Barangay Hall where the "Good Books" are kept. Notice that the shelf is empty as all the reading materials provided are in circulation. Most popular are "Mister God, This is Anna" and "Purpose-Driven Life".*

youth. "Straight from the mouth of babes" comes the deepest wisdom, an adage which this small, unassuming tome of merely 200-plus pages epitomizes.

Its length and size notwithstanding, "Mister God, This Is Anna" encapsulates man's search for a deeper and more meaningful relationship with the Maker couched in simple words – using an earth-bound perspective, a human tone, and humor set against totally unpretentious and spontaneous responses to circumstances which are truly funny.

The Our Lady of Atonement Circle aims to set up a "Good Book Corner" in all of the city's 128 barangays. A quiet vision guides



the Circle's activities for this DMI mission – that of the image of Baguio's populace acquiring a new lease on its literary preferences by the introduction of books that aim to build their personhoods and awaken a love for books which inspire and enrich the mind and soul. Giving this mission added impetus is the fact that Baguio City is the educational center of Northern Luzon. Its population is largely made up of the youth who are more gullible and impressionable, and therefore easily lured by the brash content of today's media which employ both aggressive and subtle means to get their message across.

But the Our Lady of Atonement Circle shall not stop here! Its plans include an extension of the "Good Book Corner" into endeavors which will cover the other mass media, such as the establishment of a "Good Movie Club" as well as workshops on TV Censorship Classifications, Internet Vigilance and "Art vs. Pornography". With the Blessed Virgin Mary's guidance, it is hoped that these works will grow and take root – bearing fruits by instilling the proper knowledge in making informed, appropriately discerned and enlightened media choices among Baguio City's citizenry.



*Two young ladies are engrossed in a copy of "Mr. God, This is Anna".*

#### *Region V Assembly Held Sept. 29, 2012 ...cont'd. from Page 13*

reported to be Pro-RH Bill, a Prayer Rally took place at the EDSA Shrine attended by thousands of Pro-Lifers (the DMI included) on August 4, 2012 despite the heavy rains caused by *habagat* (southwest monsoon), some Congressmen who co-authored the Bill (Cong. Danilo Suarez among them) have withdrawn sponsorship of the Bill and the opposing stands even among the Catholic clergy on the

issue of Reproductive Health.

Sis. Helen urged the DMIs present to continue the campaign for the non-passage of the Bill as she warned about a "demographic winter" that had been one of the adverse results of population control programs in countries such as Japan and Singapore. Demographic winter happens when a country starts to have

an aging population with fewer babies being born to balance it.

Assembly Chairperson Sis. Cora Afuang, in her closing remarks, thanked the officers of Region V for the help and support they extended to make the Assembly the success that it was. They were Sisters Sol Eugenio, Region V secretary and Rita Lucena, Region V treasurer and diocesan regent of the Diocese of

Antipolo, Diocesan Regents Sisters Ruby Macario of the Diocese of Cubao, Virginia Inigo of the Diocese of Imus, Sylvia San Pedro of the Diocese of Kalookan, Mimi Gan of the Diocese of Manila, Pitz Torres of the Diocese of Novaliches and Milde Tong of the Diocese of Paranaque and Sis. Josie Zabala, vicarial regent of the Prelature of Palawan.

*From the Diocese of Kalookan*



*Vicarial Regent Sis. Cathy Pineda (in white T-shirt) and Sis. Luming Vicencio draw the winning numbers in the bingo-raffle draw.*



*Bishop Deogracias Iniguez of the Diocese of Kalookan addresses the Family Day participants*

## Family Day With Our Priests

*By Sis. Catherine Pineda, Vicarial Regent, Diocese of Kalookan*

Last May 5, 2012, The DMIs of the Diocese of Kalookan held their first FAMILY DAY WITH OUR PRIESTS at the Oreta Sports Complex in Malabon City. The project was done in cooperation with the

Knights of Columbus of Kalookan. The activity had two objectives: one is to foster close relationship between the DMI and KC members and their families and the parish priests in the Diocese, and two, to create a

Medical Assistance Fund for the priests of the Diocese of Kalookan.

Raising funds for the project was done through a raffle-bingo and solicitation from church benefactors. The DMI circles and KC councils took care of selling tickets in their respective parishes.

The Family Day activities were done at the swimming pool area of the sports complex. A karaoke machine and photo booth were set up to add fun to the occasion. The DMI circles took care of bringing their respective parish priests with them and had lunch together at the sports complex.

The raffle-bingo was conducted during the activity. A zumba dance leader led the participants in zumba dancing. Most Rev. Deogracias Iniguez, Jr., DD, bishop of Kalookan was a special guest. In his message, he expressed appreciation for the conduct of the Family Day with Our Priests Project and its objectives. The program emcees were Sis. Luming Vicencio and KC Bro. Jimmy Castillo.

Despite the heat of summer, everybody had fun. Another Family Day with our Priests is being planned for next year because of the huge success of this initial activity.



*The Family Day Raffle winner (4th from right) with the DMI and KC officers, from left: Bro. Jimmy Castillo, Sis. Cathy Pineda, Diocesan Regent Sis. Sylvia San Pedro, KC Luzon Deputy Bro. Boy Yap, San Ildefonso Parish Asst. Pastor Fr. Syl Mutia, Sis. Luming Vicencio, Vicarial Regent Sis. Lucy Flores and KC District Deputy Bro. Jun Pineda.*



## Diocese Of Kalookan DMIs Go Tree-Planting

The DMI sisters of the Diocese of Kalookan held a tree-planting project on the morning of June 3, 2012. With the help of the Dept. of Agriculture (DA) – Caloocan, the DMIs were able to collect some 100 calamansi and mango seedlings which they planted in a DA-identified area in Camarin, Caloocan City.

After the tree-planting, the sisters proceeded to



*The DMIs of the Diocese of Kalookan led by Diocesan Regent Sis. Sylvia San Pedro and Vicarial Regents Sisters Cathy Pineda and Lucy Flores with DA Engineer Jun Alba show off the seedlings that they planted.*

the La Mesa Ecological Park in East Fairview, Quezon City for a picnic, enjoying a hearty lunch and a stroll down the park's tree-shaded paths for a breath of fresh air amid the lush greenery.

Spearheading the activity were Diocesan Regent Sis. Sylvia San Pedro and Vicarial Regents Sisters Cathy Pineda and Lucy Flores.



*The sisters climb the stairway with more than 100 steps leading to La Mesa Dam.*

*From Navotas City*

## "Food for The Body and Soul"

One regular activity of the DMIs of San Jose de Navotas Circle is the feeding and catechism it extends to the less privileged children of Barangay Bacog in Navotas City.

Every third Saturday of the month, the DMI sisters led by Regent Sis. Carmen Pacalda go to the Bacog Barangay

Center to conduct catechism and bring snacks to the children. Catechism would include bible readings, bible storytelling, religious action singing and dancing among others. Meals are varied: *arroz caldo*, *chamorado*, *pancit*, *puto*, sandwiches. To ensure that the children get better nutrition, they are also

given milk and chocolate drinks or fruit juices to drink.

Indeed this outreach activity of the San Jose de Navotas Circle provides "food for both the body and soul".



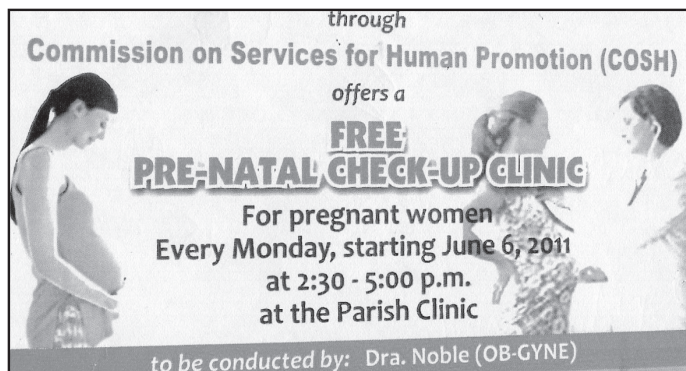
*The DMIs of San Jose de Navotas Circle with the children of Barangay Bacog*

## Mary Mother of The Church Circle Extends Regular Medical Services



Free clinics are being maintained by the Mary Mother of the Church Circle of BF Resort, Las Pinas City for parishioners of Mary Mother of the Church Parish in coordination with the Commission on Services for Human Promotion of the parish.

A Free Natal Check-up Clinic is set up every



Monday from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. An Eye Clinic every Saturday provides free eye check-ups starting at 10:00 a.m. These free medical services are provided at the Parish Clinic.

Past Regent Sis. Marissa Padlan, Regent Sis. Susan Biluan and Vice-Regent Sis. Olive Atienza are on top of the project.

## SMI Circlette Goes On Field Trip

The SMI Mary Mother of the Church Circlette went on a field trip cum outreach last February 25, 2012. The Squirettes' itinerary included the Bamboo Organ Museum in Las Pinas City and the Rope-Making Factory of Villar Foundation where they were shown how ropes are made out of shredded coconut husks.

Their last stop was an outreach at Marilac Hills where they interacted with the children who reside in the facility. DMI sisters who accompanied them were the interaction facilitators.

The circlette regularly holds fund-raising



*The Squirettes watch how rope is made out of coconut husks.*

projects for their outreach programs such as Christmas caroling which they conduct every December.



*From Las Pinas City*

## Our Lady Of Friendship Circle Sponsors Medical-Dental Mission

*By Sis. Ophie Silang*

The Our Lady of Friendship Circle, in cooperation with the Commission on Service and Human Promotions of the Holy Family Parish in Las Pinas City, sponsored a Medical-Dental Mission on June 24, 2012 at the Pugad Lawin Health Center and Community Chapel located in Almanza.

The mission's huge success showed that much can be accomplished to improve the lives of families through a vibrant partnership of government, the private sector and the parish united in a deep sense of community.

The Medical and Dental Mission was made possible through the support of volunteer doctors and other healthcare professionals from Las Pinas City. Botica Boie provided free medicines. The donation was facilitated by MJ Alovera, wife of Barangay Captain Jojo Alovera.

Ten doctors, 2 nurses, a dentist, a pharmacist and

members of the Nutrition Club provided a wide range of services to close to 300 beneficiaries – 218 medical cases, 42 dental cases and 35 body composition analyses and evaluation. A full-service activity, medicines prescribed by the doctors were given free by a volunteer pharmacist.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the residents of our community," Dr. Marvin Mambibi of Las Pinas Doctors Hospital said. With him in the medical team were Drs. Gregorio Basala, Divina Gracia Lusterio, Evelyn Fe Javier and Dr. Alandino. Dr. Dominique Carpio headed the dental team while Regina Sarte, a pharmacist, headed the Botical Boie team.

Also part of the services provided during the mission was a Health Awareness Campaign by the Nutrition Club. It provided evaluation and body analysis using the Inner Scan Body Composition Monitor. The equipment automatically registers body fats, body water, muscle mass,



*The DMI sisters with medical volunteers from Las Pinas City attend to patients of Pugad Lawin mission area. Standing from left: Regent Sis. Lolit Rivera and Sisters Rogel Siscar, Lumen Balderrama, Medy Banta and Ophie Silang*



*Volunteer Leony Rellosa takes a patient's blood pressure. BP check-ups are done prior to medical consultation.*

metabolic age bone mass and visceral fat. This information, which one obtains by merely stepping on the machine, is essential in guiding one on a path to better health through nutritious diet and exercise.

A Eucharistic celebration by Fr. Rustico V. Cruz, pastor of the Holy Family

Parish, preceded the Medical-Dental Mission. Also present at the event were Sis. Lita Rivera, regent of Our Lady of Friendship Circle; Gina Esmaquel, head of the Commission on Service and Human Promotions; Beca Agdon, BEC Zone Leader of Pugad Lawin Community and MJ Alovera.

*From Bacoor, Cavite*

## Sto. Nino De Molino Circle's Outreach Activity Benefits Wards Of 2 Institutions

Since 2010, the Sto. Nino de Molino Circle has been able to accomplish an activity for the DMI missions almost every month, spearheaded by Circle Regent Sis. Inday Ramos. Last February 14, 2012, the circle's members visited the wards of *Bahay Tuluyan*, an institution for female rape victims under the DSWD and the children at *Bahay Kalinga*, an institution for youth offenders supervised by an LGU. The visit by the DMI sisters was facilitated by Fr. George Morales, pastor of Sto.

Nino de Molino Parish.

Gifts were given, games were conducted, food was served and guides on the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy were distributed. The children in return showed their hidden talents in singing and dancing. A lecture on the value of respect was given by Fr. Gilbert Villas. Bro. Virgilio Miguel, an advocate of the Divine Mercy apostolate, gave instructions on how to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Dr. Apple Jovellano, president of the Cavite Dental



*The Sto. Nino de Molino Circle officers and members with the staff of Bahay Tuluyan*

Association, demonstrated proper dental care.

This DMI activity was made possible with the assistance of the Parish

Pastoral Council of Sto. Nino de Molino Parish. The smiles on the faces of the beneficiaries were solid proof of the success of the circle's outreach program.

## PHOTO NEWS

*From Tarlac City*

## SMI San Raphael The Archangel Circlette Organized

The San Raphael the Archangel Circle of Tarlac City has just organized its youth arm, the SMI San Raphael the Archangel Circlette. Eighteen young girls officially became the initial members of the circlette during the investiture ceremony conducted by SMI Lady Counselor Sis. Merly Ibanez. Present during the investiture were Fr. Jonathan Ovivir, parish priest, and some members of the Circle. The Squirettes are shown in photo with Fr. Ovivir and Sis. Merly.





*From Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental*

## Women Workers Attend Values Formation Seminar

*By Sis. Nilda Villegas, Vicarial Regent, Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro*

**Women workers who are officers and members of the different livelihood groups organized by the Sta. Rita de Cascia Parish, Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental which are duly registered with the Department of Labor & Employment attended a Values Formation Seminar conducted by the Parish last January 19, 2012 at the ground floor of the Sta. Rita de Cascia Formation Center.**

The seminar was conducted in partnership with the local government unit, government agencies and non-government organizations under the able leadership of Rev. Fr. Joel Lusat, SSIV, and assisted by Sis. Nilda Villegas, vicarial regent of Perpetual Help, Our Lady of Assumption and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Circles.

Out of the 30 participants, 25 were women from the Gingoog City Rice Duck Farmers Association, Society of St. Vincent de Paul Association, Oyster Mushroom

Growers Association, Baboy Luy-a Farmers Association. Medina High School Batch '80s Association and Dangoan Movers Association. Funds for these associations are provided by the local government unit of Gingoog City, City Development Funds of the City Councilors of the Sangguniang Panglungsod, the congressmen of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> districts of Misamis Oriental and some NGOs. The Sta. Rita de Cascia Parish takes charge of marketing with the assistance of some DMI members.

The seminar focused on the organizations' development and transformation. Sis. Nilda talked on "Spirituality in Organization" in terms of **Commitment to, Awareness of, Readiness for and Engagement in/with (CARE).** The other

speaker, Mrs. Flora Esconde, head of the Lawit Elementary School talked on "CARESS Among Workers" which underscored the importance of building harmonious relationship among members and workers.

Fr. Joel in his message emphasized that the formation of self (values) is of primary importance in making every organization/association productive. He also announced that a series of values formation seminars will be given by the parish to the participants at least once a month.

The participants were grateful for this parish initiative, realizing during the seminar that the quality of the organization's products largely depends on the quality of life of the organization's members.



*Participants in the Values Formation Seminar listen intently to the resource speaker.*

## PHOTO NEWS ROUND-UP

*From the Diocese of San Jose (Nueva Ecija)*

### San Jose Circle Conducts Media Forum



The San Jose Circle sponsored a lecture forum on Morality in Media at a public elementary school in San Jose City aimed at making children aware of good and bad media. The lecturers were members of the circle who are retired teachers. Visual aids were utilized to make the lecture more interesting and effective. The Circle provided snacks to the children and the staff of the school headed by their principal.

### Sta. Cecilia Circle's Fellowship Day

A post-Valentine Fellowship Day was held by the Sta. Cecilia Circle of Guimba, Nueva Ecija at the Knights of Columbus Hall on February 19, 2012. Photo shows Sis. Alma Astrero (seated at center) who was crowned as Ms. DMI 2012 with circle officers and members and guests, Diocesan Regent Sis. Dina Salvador and Vicarial Regents Sisters Aida Paguio and Helen Hipolito.



### St. James Circle Sponsors Feeding Program

The Pro-life group of St. James Circle launched recently a feeding program in Bgy. East, Lupao, Nueva Ecija. Soup and cakes were served to 102 children in the barangay.



*From Muntinlupa City*



## SMI Our Lady of The Lilies Circlette Sponsors Book Sale

The SMI Our Lady of the Lilies Circle sponsored a Book Sale recently to raise funds for its various projects. The Squirettes are shown in photo with the Our Lady of the Lilies Circle Regent Sis. Lumeng Celarde, Past Vicarial Regent Sis. Vita Zaldivia and Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Antonio Villanueva.

*From Iligan City*

## Update From St. Mary's Circle

The St. Mary's Circle of San Roque Parish, Armac, Iligan City continues to actively implement various projects and activities for the DMI missions. A new set of officers was installed in March, 2012 by Diocesan Regent Sis. Tita Lumbo. Sis. Bernadette Enerio, outgoing regent, turned over her responsibilities to the new regent, Sis. Rebecca Florendo. Rev. Fr. Dwight Calaor, parish priest, gave an inspirational message after the Eucharistic celebration which he officiated.



## St. James Circle Partners with PNP for Oplan Sumvac

The St. James Circle donated bottled drinks, canned biscuits and medicines for members of the PNP during their Oplan SUMVAC rendering assistance to motorists during the celebration of their fiesta last summer.

*Special Feature*

# St. Ann and St. Joachim and The Nativity of Mary

*By Sis. Tes A. Tablizo, Regent, Risen Christ Circle*

**B**efore time began, the Holy Trinity decreed that one day, after the creation of the world and of man and after man's fall, God the Son was to be born of a Virgin Mother. In order that this Mother should be the purest human being who ever lived, Almighty God decreed that she was to be miraculously exempt from all the stain of original sin.

In the course of time, however, most of the Chosen People of Israel were unfaithful to God in many ways. And as they became more and more materialistic, they imagined that the Messiah would appear as a great ruler who would free them by political power from the oppressors, the Romans. But some of the Israelites continued to love and to serve the Lord in humility and detachment from the world, for they knew that the Saviour would come to free men from the oppressor within their own hearts.



It was from the pure families that, by His grace, God developed and guided the ancestors of His future Mother. They were extremely simple and devout persons, very gentle and peace-loving and charitable. Out of love for God, they always lived a very mortified life. Often, the married couples practiced continence over long periods of time, particularly during holy seasons, for their highest ideal was to raise saintly children who in turn would contribute toward bringing salvation to the world. They lived in small rural communities, and they did not engage in business. They

worked on the land and tended flocks of sheep; they also had gardens and orchards. They were very conscientious in fulfilling their religious duties. Whenever they had to go to Jerusalem to offer their sacrifices in the Temple, they prepared themselves by prayer and fasting and penance. When traveling, they always helped as best they could any sick person or pauper whom they met. And because they lead such an austere and detached life, these good people had to endure the scorn of many of the other Jews.

Thus Mary's grandparents inherited from their ancestors a

*(Our special feature this issue is on the lives of Sts. Ann and Joachim, the parents of our Blessed Mother Mary, in observance of their Memorial on July 26. It also gives an account of the nativity of our Blessed Mother whose birthday we celebrate on September 8. This article had been taken from the book "The Life of Mary as Seen by the Mystics" by Raphael Brown. - Ed.)*

love of humility, chastity, mortification and the simple life. Her mother, St. Ann, and her father, St. Joachim, were the very finest products of this long line of pure and holy servants of God.

St. Ann was born in Bethlehem of rich parents who owned many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. But





*An angel announces the birth of Mary to St. Anne and St. Joachim.*

according to the Divine Law. And at the very same moment on another farm near Nazareth, an unusually pious middle-aged bachelor was also praying for God's help in choosing a wife. Although

he knew and greatly admired Ann, he was extremely humble that he did not dare think she would become his wife.

When the prayers of St. Ann and St. Joachim were presented by the angels before the throne of the Blessed Trinity, God decreed that this pure couple should unite in marriage and be the parents of the future mother of the Messiah. The Archangel Gabriel was set to announce this decision to them both.

He appeared in visible form to Ann while she was praying. He alone of the angels knew her destiny, but all he was allowed to tell her now was:

"The Lord give thee His blessing, servant of God. Continue to pray for the coming of the Redeemer and rejoice in the Lord. It is His will that thou accept Joachim as thy husband."

The Archangel went to Joachim and said to him while he slept:

"Blessed be thou by the Lord, Joachim! Persevere in the practice of justice and perfection. The Lord wants thee to take Ann as thy wife. Take care of her, esteem her, for she is dear to Him, and give thanks to God."

The very next day, Joachim, who was small, lean and broad-shouldered, went and asked Ann's father for the hand of his daughter. And soon the couple were solemnly wedded in a simple open-air ceremony. St. Ann was about twenty-four at the time, and St. Joachim was forty-two.

They made their home on the estate of Ann's father. Though they were quite wealthy, they lived very economically and charitably.

In His wisdom, Almighty God proceeded to purify them still further by

giving them a heavy cross to bear, a cross which only grew heavier as the years passed: they remained childless. Among the Israelites in those times, this was considered not only the greatest misfortune and disgrace socially, but also a clear indication that the Lord thought such a couple unworthy to contribute toward the coming of the Messiah. And so Ann and Joachim had to suffer increasing contempt and even insults from their neighbors and acquaintances. But they took these humiliations with patience and continued to pray that God might bless their marriage with children.

Seven years passed without an answer to their prayers. Then they decided to move to a smaller farm near Nazareth and to begin a new life, a much more mortified and holy life, in order thus to earn God's blessing. They even took a solemn vow to dedicate their child, if God gave them one, to His service in the Temple.

Thus, they lived through another thirteen long, trying years.

*Turn to Page 26*

they regularly gave away to the poor a large part of their possessions and kept very little for themselves. After Ann's birth, they moved to a beautiful country estate at Sephoris near Nazareth.

Just before her holy mother died, she told Ann that she was a chosen vessel and that she should pray for a worthy husband. Anne was now a comely, sturdy girl in her teens, with all the modest simplicity of a devout peasant maiden. Several young men were hoping to be her husband.

One day, Ann happened to be praying fervently to God to give her a husband who would help her to live



*St. Ann and St. Joachim and The Nativity of Mary ...cont'd. from Page 25*

Then the Archangel Gabriel appeared before her in a resplendent human form and declared:

"Ann, servant of God, the Lord has heard thy petitions. If He delays their fulfillment, it is in order to prepare thee and give thee much more than thou askest. The Most High has resolved to give thee and Joachim holy and wonderful fruit, for those who pray to Him in humble confidence are most agreeable to Him. Now He sends me to give thee joyful news: He chooses thee to be the mother of her who is to give birth to the Redeemer of mankind! Thou shalt bring forth a daughter and she shall be called Mary. She shall be blessed among women and filled with the Holy Ghost. I have announced to Joachim that he shall have a holy

daughter, but he does not know that she is to be the Mother of the Messiah. Therefore guard this secret. And now go to the Temple to give thanks to the Lord, and thou shalt meet Joachim at the Golden Gate."

Thus did Almighty God prepare and purify Mary's good parents until the great day at last came when the glorious mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God took place.

THE BLESSED MOTHER SAID TO ST. BRIDGET OF SWEDEN:

*"It is a truth that I was conceived without original sin and not in sin. A golden hour was my conception. My Son joined my father and my mother in a marriage of such chastity that a purer union has never*

*been seen. Sensuality was extinguished in them. Thus my flesh was formed through divine charity."*

**The Nativity of Mary**

As Mary's soul was infused to her body, her holy mother St. Ann was filled with the Holy Ghost and experienced an extraordinary devotion and happiness. Throughout the rest of her life and especially during the next nine months, she constantly received new graces and enlightenment concerning the great mystery of the Incarnation, and she frequently praised the Lord in canticles of love.

Early in September, St. Ann was informed interiorly by the Lord that the time of her daughter's birth was near. Filled with holy joy, she humbly prayed for a happy deliverance and sent for three of her closest women relatives. When she told St. Joachim, he rejoiced and went among his flocks in order to choose the finest lambs, goats and bulls which he sent to the Temple in care of his servants as an offering of gratitude to the Lord.

St. Ann prayed until nearly midnight, when she woke her relatives and went with them into her oratory and lit the lamps. Then she knelt before her little altar. While she was praying thus, a supernatural light began to fill the room. Noticing it, the three friends threw themselves onto the floor and hid their faces in awe. Soon the dazzling light entirely surrounded St. Ann, making her invisible.

A moment later she was holding in her hands a beautiful, spotless, radiant baby, which she tenderly wrapped in her cloak and pressed to her heart. With tears of fervent love and joy, she gazed at her child and then, raising her eyes to heaven and holding up the baby, she prayed:

"O Lord and Creator, with eternal thanks I offer Thee this blessed fruit of my womb which I have received from Thy bounty without any merit of mine. But how shall I be able to treat such a child worthily?"

God gave her to understand that she was to bring up her daughter with all motherly love and care



*Mary with her parents St. Anne and St. Joachim*

but without any outward show of reverence, while retaining inwardly her profound veneration for the future Mother of the Messiah.

In this marvelous yet natural childbirth, St. Ann had been free from the usual labor and pains experienced by mothers. Now she herself bathed and wrapped the babe in red and gray swaddling clothes.

St. Joachim was called in. The holy old man knelt beside the bed, deeply moved at the sight of this lovely daughter for which he and his dear wife had waited and suffered for twenty long years.

As soon as Mary opened her eyes on earth, she perceived with keen affection her good parents, St. Ann and St. Joachim.

Now in heaven, the Blessed Trinity announced to the choirs of angels:

"Our Chosen One shall be called Mary, and this name is to be powerful in grace."

Often when St. Ann watched her dear little girl in their home, she shed tears of love and gratitude at the thought that this lovely child was actually chosen by God to be the

Mother of the Saviour of mankind. But St. Anne never revealed the great secret of her heart.

While St. Ann naturally wished to dress her daughter as beautifully as she could, Mary, soon after she began to talk, begged her mother to clothe her in plain ash-gray cloth of cheap and coarse material. St. Ann yielded as to the form and color, but not as to the material.

As the time approached when Mary was to be taken to the Temple, St. Ann often gave her lessons, teaching her various prayers and rules of religion. She already knew how to read. Though only three and a half years old and very delicate, Mary seemed like a girl of five or six. Her long dark hair hung straight down with curls at the end.

Six months after Mary entered the service of the Temple, the Lord appeared to her in a vision and said:

"I announce to thee that thy father Joachim must pass from this mortal to eternal life."

Eight days before St. Joachim's death, Mary was told the day and hour in which he was to die, and she requested several of

*The young Mary while being given lessons by her mother St. Ann at their home with St. Joachim watching them.*

her angels to console him in his sickness, which they did. During his last hours, she sent the rest of her angels to help him, and she asked God to let him see them. This favor was granted, and the angels were commanded to say to him:

"Man of God, in order that the pain and sorrow of natural death may be relieved by the joy of the spirit, the Almighty wishes thee to know now that thy daughter Mary is to be the happy Mother of the Messiah! Since thou leavest to the world a daughter through whom God will restore it, do thou part from it in the joy of thy soul, and may the Lord bless thee!"

When she had reached the age of twelve, the life of her holy mother Ann is now about to come to an end. With grave affection, the dying Ann said slowly:

"My beloved daughter, do not forget me in the presence of the Lord, and



remind Him of the need I have of His protection in this hour – do not leave me before I close my eyes. You will be an orphan, but you will live under the guardianship of the Lord. Do not leave the Temple before choosing your state of life, with the advice of the priests. Pray that if it be God's will to give you a husband, he may be of the race of David. Share your inheritance with the poor in loving generosity. Without ceasing, ask the Almighty to show His mercy by sending His promised Messiah. Beseech Him to be your protection. And may His blessing come over you, together with mine . . ."

Then, after giving Mary her blessing, good St. Ann reclined in her daughter's arm and died in perfect peace. She was fifty-six years old.





## 14th SMI Biennial Convention

# TARA NA SA CIUDAD!

By Sis. Ruby Macario, Int'l Chairperson for Youth Welfare

all it over-excitement or whatever. We are not taking any chances, not even room for late notice or lack of prep. We want to give everyone time to prepare for this very important event, so THIS EARLY (call it super-early), we are announcing the following:

14TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION OF THE SQUIRETTES OF MARY  
May 24 to 26, 2013  
Ciudad Christia 9-Waves Resort  
Earth Street, Carrieland Country  
Homes II, Ampid, San Mateo, Rizal

(Diocese of Antipolo)

Theme: RIDING THE WAVE OF FAITH IN GOD THRU MARY IN THE YEAR OF FAITH

(Summer is . . . more fun in the city)

Registration fee of P2,800 per pax covers the following:

- Seminar kit
- 2 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners, 1 am snack and 2 pm snacks
- Accommodation – first come, first served in room assignments
- Free use of the pool and

basketball court For a fee: billiards, zipline, wall-climbing – subject to house rules on schedule, etc.

**LET'S ALL GET AWAY FROM THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE AND HAVE FUN . . IN THE CITY. TARA NA SA CIUDAD!!!**

(Plus . . . we will come out with a souvenir program and would need your ads.)

*"Seek refuge in Mary because she is the city of refuge. We know that Moses set up three cities of refuge for anyone who inadvertently killed his neighbor. Now the Lord has established a refuge of mercy, Mary, even for those who deliberately commit evil. Mary provides shelter and strength for the sinner."*

*-Saint Anthony of Padua, Doctor of the Church*