



DMI Newsette

To Jesus through Mary

DMI

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January - March 2010

DMI 17th National Biennial Convention Update

All Systems Go!

All systems go for the DMI 17th DMI National Biennial Convention as roads from Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao all lead to Zamboanga City, the site of the Convention which unfolds on May 21, 2010.

Opening the Convention will be the Eucharistic celebration at the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception at 1:00 P.M. to be concelebrated by Archbishop Romulo Valles of the Archdiocese of Zamboanga, Bishop Orlando Quevedo, past CBCP president and currently secretary-general of the Federation of Asian

Bishops Conference, and the DMI chaplains of the parishes in the Archdiocese. Then the delegates will proceed to the Astoria Regency Convention Center in Pasonanca, the venue of the Convention, in a motorcade.

Attending the Convention are the DMI International Officers and Board of Trustees, guest bishops, the diocesan clergy from



The 17th DMI National Biennial Convention Organizing Committee during the March 27, 2010 meeting. Over-all Convention Chairperson Sis. Beth Salmon is seated 3rd from left.

the different regions and delegates from DMI circles all over the country.

At the time of writing (March 27, 2010), a total of 639 delegates are officially registered from the different areas of the

country – 208 delegates from Luzon, 83 from the Visayas and 348 from Mindanao.

Sis. Beth Salmon, the over-all convention chairperson,

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The Convention starts with a Eucharistic celebration at the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception shown above.



The main altar of the Cathedral

DMI Chaplain Celebrates Birthday

A group of DMI sisters led by Past International Regents Sisters Sonia Mayo and Myrna Zapanta visited Msgr. Francisco Tantoco, Jr., DMI chaplain at the Arsobizpado de Manila last March 13, 2010 to join him on the eve of his birthday.

was His Eminence Julio Cardinal Rosales. The Cardinal reminded the DMI sisters present to carefully evaluate and select their candidates for the May, 2010 National Elections. He also gave them copies of his Pastoral Letter on the subject.

Special guest at the luncheon tendered in Msgr. Tantoco's honor

With Sisters Sonia and Myrna were Region V RR Sis. Lydia Ordonez and



Photo shows Msgr. Francisco Tantoco (seated, 2nd from left) with Sis. Myrna Zapanta, Julio Cardinal Rosales and Sis. Sonia Mayo. Standing: Sisters Lorie Manalansan, Lydia Ordonez, Mila Villanueva, Ruby Macario, Cora Afuang, Mimi Gan, Virgie Inigo and Milde Tong.

Region V Diocesan Regents Sisters Cora Afuang, Milde Tong, Lorie

Manalansan, Mimi Gan, Virgie Inigo and Ruby Macario.



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January 6, 2010

HER EXCELLENCY GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

President, Republic of the Philippines

Malacanang Palace, J. P. Laurel St.

San Miguel, Manila

Dear Madam President:

We are members of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, a national organization of Catholic lay women committed to serve God and country through apostolic work in our parish communities with the Blessed Mother Mary as our model and guide.

We in the DMI join our countrymen and the international community in strongly condemning the recent massacre in Maguindanao. Our organization promotes the nurturance and welfare of the family and respect for life as our main advocacies.

We find what transpired in Maguindanao a gross violation of the sacredness of life and of the family. We had heretofore believed that no one could ever commit such ruthless and ignoble acts against fellow human beings. Our hearts cry out for justice for the massacre victims and their bereaved families.

We write to appeal to you to use all the possible power and influence of your office to hold the perpetrators of these evil acts accountable for their actions and to bring justice to the victims of the senseless killings. Please heed our call for a speedy trial and resolution of this case.

We join you in praying for unity, peace and prosperity for the Philippines. We pray fervently that there be no more violence and that peace reign in the troubled areas of our country, especially as we move towards a crucial period in our history, the 2010 National Elections.

We pray, too, that the Lord shower you with gifts of wisdom, equanimity and discernment as you go about your all-important task of leading and being at the helm of government.

May God bless you and your family. May God bless our country.

Very truly yours,

THE DMI INTERNATIONAL BOARD

(This letter to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo states the official stand of the DMII on the infamous Maguindanao Massacre of November 23, 2009 signed by all the members of the DMI International Board. Similar letters were sent to Hon. Juan Ponce Enrile, Senate President, and Hon. Vicente Nograles, Speaker of the House of Representatives, in the hope that a speedy resolution of this case may be made and the perpetrators of the crime be brought to justice soonest. - Ed.)

Diocese of Malolos Officers Attend Meeting Cum Seminar

by Sis. Lyn M. Millora, Regent,
Ina ng Grasya ng Diyos Circle

A meeting cum seminar was held by the officers of the Diocese of Malolos (Region IV) at the Sto. Nino Academy in Binang 2nd, Bocaue, Bulacan last January 23, 2010.

Seminar speakers were Diocesan Regent Sis. Flor Barcial who talked on the history of the DMII, made lively and interesting by a question-and-answer portion with prizes given away for every correct answer. Sis. Presing Hermogenes, a past Region IV representative, was the next speaker who explained the structure of the DMI organization. Immediate Past Region IV Representative Sis. Piling San Juan then shared valuable pointers on leadership and human relations. The three speakers spoke with authority on the topics assigned to them, their having rendered dedicated service to the organization for a

number of years serving them in good stead.

Speakers for the five DMI missions were Vicarial Regent Sis. Cora Raymundo for Pro-Life stressing the dangers of abortion and its evil effects both on the body and the soul of a woman, Vicarial Regent Sis. Violy Luna for Morality in Media and ways in which DMI circles can pursue this mission, Chairperson Sis. Celia Mendoza for Upliftment of Women Workers who peppered her presentation with her characteristic humor, Past Vicarial Regent Sis. Aida de la Cruz for Assistance to Prisoners' Families and their Victims offering suggestions on various avenues to assist the beneficiaries of this mission and Vicarial Regent Sis. Tess Barcelon for the youth arm of the DMI, the Squirettes of Mary.



The diocesan officers of Region IV (Diocese of Malolos)

Summing up the speakers' presentations, the DMI circles of Region IV still have many areas to cover to really make a difference in the lives of people in their parish communities. And they are determined to accomplish their goal.

The diocesan meeting included the election of the officers of the Diocese of Malolos for 2011. To head Region IV as Representative is Sis. Flor Barcial. Also elected as diocesan regent was Sis. Violy Luna together with the vicarial regents of the five vicariates of the diocese. Incumbent RR and International Secretary Sis. Tesy Villarino conducted the election.

Hosting the event was the Vicariate of St. Martin of Tours and St. Francis of Assisi headed by Vicarial Regent Sis. Cora Raymundo. Composing the vicariate are the Sta. Clara Circle of Obando under Circle Regent Sis. Auring Lorenzo, the Queen of Flowers Circle of Bocaue under Regent Sis. Malou Mendoza and the *Ina ng Grasya ng Diyos* Circle of Marilao under Regent Sis. Lyn Millora. The participants representing the 21 circles of the Diocese of Malolos came away feeling fulfilled and much closer to one another and eagerly looking forward to the next diocesan gathering.

DMI 17th National Biennial Convention Update...Cont'd from Page 1

in consultation with Vice-International Regent for Mindanao Sis. Lyding Ramirez and Diocesan Regent Sis. Beling Panganiban, has mobilized the different working committees whose functions are fully coordinated to ensure the success of the convention.

During the Convention Directorate meeting held last March 27, 2010, the working committees provided the following updates:

* The Finance Committee headed by Sis. Monina Siasico, diocesan treasurer, reported that revenues in the form of convention fees continue to be received and deposited at UCPB, the depository bank. Implementation of pre-convention plans and activities is on track. Sis. Monina is ably assisted by Sis. Angie Baes.

* The Registration Committee headed by Chairperson Sis. Mila Novato reported that

systems and procedures for the registration of delegates and efficient distribution of convention kits are already in place.

* Sis. Pinky Saavedra, Transportation Committee chairperson, has been able to harness DMI volunteers who will help transport delegates during the motorcade and in arranging the transportation of delegates arriving at the airport, bus terminal and the *pantalan* to their hotels.

* The Convention Secretariat chaired by Sis. Baby de los Reyes acts as the central coordinating committee facilitating the flow of information and communication to and from concerned working committees

All the other committees have likewise drawn up and readied their action plans to guarantee a smooth flow of all the activities during the Convention.

**SEE YOU ALL IN
ZAMBOANGA!**

Region IX Assembly Held Nov. 21, 2009

by Sis. Manolita Q. Acevedo, Region IX Representative

The Daughters of Mary Immaculate of the Archdioceses of Capiz and Jaro and the Dioceses of Kalibo, Bacolod and San Carlos comprising Region IX held their Regional Assembly last November 21, 2009 at the Acevedo Farms in New Buswang, Kalibo, Aklan.

A total of 445 delegates attended the assembly, a record attendance that the organizing committee happily announced.

The morning session started with praise and worship followed by the entrance of circles bearing their respective banners, the enthronement of the Bible and the Holy Cross and floral offering to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the DMI.

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel S. Mijares, rector of the Sto. Nino Seminary and the keynote

speaker of the Assembly expounded on the assembly theme: "The DMI: Acting with Integrity, Serving with Love and Working for Peace". Making the morning session more spiritually uplifting were the talks of Rev. Fr. Ulysses Dalida, diocesan administrator, whose talk centered on the question "Who Is Jesus?" and Rev. Fr. Jude Rebaldo, assistant parish priest of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish who spoke on "The Women in the Life of Jesus and the Church".

It was fun time after lunch with the DMI sisters eagerly donning their sports attire or costume for the cultural contest. Six contending teams vied for first place in their varied presentations - modern dance, folk dance, comedy skit and choreographed singing and cheering. The afternoon program started with a

parade around the compound with two Ati groups leading in the street dancing. The performances of the competing groups who gave their all could give the Bayanihan Dance Troupe a run for their money. Even 80-year-old participants displayed grace and agility, gamely shouting "Hep, hep, hurray!" ala-Squirettes inside a badminton court.

The modern dance number of International Regent Sis. Jean Velarde's team won first place. *Ang seksi, seksi nila!* The afternoon's festivities fostered friendship, unity and charity among the assembly delegates.

It was a gala affair in the evening that saw the



The traditional Parade of Circles opened the regional assembly.

incoming regents in their white or beige gowns for their formal installation by the International Regent. The outgoing regents were equally dazzling as they received their certificates of recognition for a job well done.

Hosting the evening fellowship were Vicarial Regents Sis. Victorina Laroza, Dep-Ed superintendent of schools for Aklan and Sis. Billie

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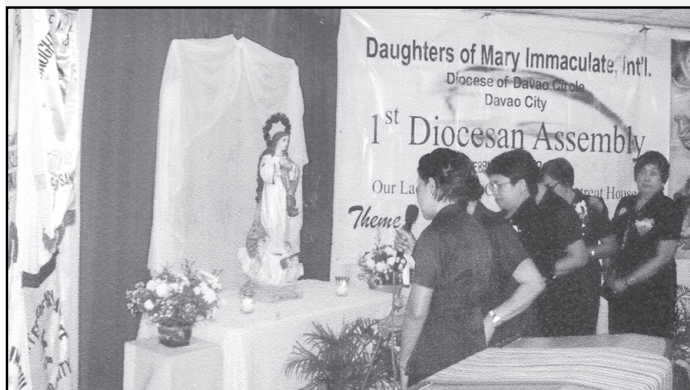


The Kalibo Diocesan Board, regional assembly host.



Installation of diocesan, vicarial and circle regents of Region IX during the regional assembly.

Archdiocese of Davao Holds Diocesan Assembly



The floral offering and 256 Hail Marys by DMI sisters led by Region XIV Representative Sis. Nemia Tagle, Past Diocesan Regents Sisters Annie Catotal and Lolit Romero and Diocesan Regent Sis. Anne Uy.

The Archdiocese of Davao City held its first Diocesan Assembly last February 21, 2010. A most awaited occasion by the DMI sisters in the diocese, the whole-day affair was held at the Our Lady of Good Counsel Retreat House.

The assembly started with the celebration of Holy

Mass by Rev. Fr. Frankie de los Reyes. In attendance were 256 DMI sisters coming from 14 circles in the Diocese. DMI spiritual director, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel "Bong" Gonzaga gave an inspirational message. Highlighting the affair was the recitation of 256 Hail Marys by the conference participants, each with a rose offered to

the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was a very meaningful and touching display of faithful devotion to Mama Mary.

Highlighting the affair was the recitation of 256 Hail Marys by the conference participants, each with a rose offered to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In the afternoon, the participating circles presented the best of their talents in singing, dancing and interpretative theatrical presentation. It was a most enjoyable conference that this early, those who attended are already looking forward to the next one.

Region IX Assembly Held Nov. 21, 2009...Cont'd from Page 5

Calizo Quimpo, vice-governor of Aklan. Special guests were Aklanon Congressmen Joeben Miraflores of the lone district of Aklan and Teddy Acevedo Casino of Bayan Muna party list.

It was a truly enriching day – both for the body and the spirit. The Diocese of Kalibo

exerted extra efforts to maximize attendance by partly subsidizing expenses through the publication of a souvenir program and solicitation of donations from generous sisters and friends. Donating the snacks served to participants were the Governor of Aklan in the morning, Sis. Jean Velarde in

the afternoon and the Diocese of Kalibo in the evening.

We thank the Lord, with the intercession of our Blessed Mother, for this memorable and fun-filled get-together of DMI sisters of Region IX.

Diocese of Cabanatuan Exemplifies New Members

Thirty-five new members coming from different circles in the Diocese of Cabanatuan were exemplified in a successful long conferral ceremony held last January 24, 2010 at the Sto. Nino Multi-Purpose Hall, Kapitan

Pepe Subd., Cabanatuan City.

The affair was well-attended by DMI members from the different parishes in the diocese and from San Luis Obispo Parish of Baler, Aurora.

Led by Sis. Aida Beltran, diocesan regent and Sis. Rita Caballero, Region II representative, the Diocesan Exemplification Team made the ceremony meaningful and impressive to the new DMI members. Words of welcome and warm

congratulations filled the air after the ceremony. The new members are expected to greatly contribute to the growth of the organization specially in carrying out the missions of the DMI.

Pre-Valentine Fellowship Held

The DMI Fellowship Day held last February 13, 2010 by the DMI Diocese of Cabanatuan was made memories- and fun-filled by the active participation of 175 DMI sisters from circles all over the Diocese. The activity was held at Alessandra's Banquet Hall in Cabanatuan City.

At 9:30 a.m., Rev. Fr. Sid Puyat, DMI spiritual director and rector of the Maria Assumpta Seminary, presided over the Eucharistic celebration with DMI sisters of the Sto. Nino Circle as lectors and commentator.

Vicarial Regent Sis. Rose Ragudo led the opening

prayer while Sis. Teresita Fajardo of the San Lorenzo Ruiz Circle led the singing of the National Anthem. The participating circles were introduced by Vicarial Regent Sis. Elisa Romano and were later welcomed by Diocesan Regent Sis. Aida Beltran.

In his short inspirational message, Fr. Sid took the opportunity to thank the DMI for the continuous support that the circles in the Diocese extend to the seminary through donations.

The fun began with parlor games and a musical program. As a pre-Valentine get-together, most came in red adding color to the occasion. Almost all circles presented special numbers, notably a beautiful dance number by the Our Lady of Mr. Carmel



Outgoing Diocesan Regent Sis. Cleotilde Baldonado was awarded a certificate of appreciation by Sisters Aida Beltran and Rita Caballero.



Ms. Valentine, Sis. Fely Cajucom (seated at center) and her court.

Circle of Baler, Quezon, the Diocese's adopted circle, and a song number entitled "Philippine Medley" by the

Immaculada Concepcion Circle.

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From Marilao, Bulacan

Ina ng Grasya ng Diyos Circle Visits Bethany House

by Sis. Mely de la Pena, Past Regent

The DMI sisters of the *Ina ng Grasya ng Diyos* Circle of Marilao, Bulacan visited the Bethany House Sto. Nino Orphanage in Tabe, Guiguinto, Bulacan last Dec. 12, 2009 to bring Christmas cheer to its 71 residents. The orphanage serves children

aged 0 to 12 years who are physically and mentally fit for education. The children have been neglected, abandoned or orphaned.

The Circle's donation of grocery items was received by Sr. Irene Panganiban, OP, apostolate directress.



The children of Bethany House with the DMI sisters

The institution receives financial assistance from generous benefactors and friends to supplement the

financial contribution from the Diocese of Malolos.

From Batangas City

Prisoners' Families Beneficiaries of Mater Purissima Circle's Christmas Outreach

by Sis. Merle Isabelita Gutierrez

Our outreach project for the latter half of 2009 had been so timed as to coincide with the season of giving.

A Christmas Party was held last Dec. 20, 2009 at the KC-DMI Hall located inside the Basilica compound in Batangas City. Guests were a group of 40 persons selected by the Circle composing ten families of prisoners identified

with the help of the CSWD as among the poorest of the poor. Each family was represented by four of their members. DMI Spiritual Director Fr. Cecil Arce in his short message talked about the real meaning of Christmas. "Christmas has no meaning without Christ," he said.

Games and a dancing contest enlivened the program with winners

receiving prizes. Each family was given three large bags full of food items such as rice, canned goods, *chamorado*, fresh fruits and ingredients for spaghetti for their *noche buena*. There were door prizes and toys and loot bags donated by Circle members were given to the kids.

Members of the Squirettes of Mary served merienda after the program.



International Chairperson for Upliftment of Women Workers Sis. Linda Castillo and other DMI sisters watch the guests enjoying the Christmas party.

Fr. Cecil Arce in his short message talked about the real meaning of Christmas. "Christmas has no meaning without Christ," he said.

From Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro

Goings-On in San Sebastian Circle

Sis. Noli Untalan, outgoing regent of the San Sebastian Circle of Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro sent a report of the Circle's activities in pursuance of the DMI missions up to December, 2009. Captured in pictures are some of these activities.



OFFICERS' INSTALLATION. Incoming Regent Sis. Alice Atienza and the other circle officers for 2010 were officially installed last December, 2009. Region VII Representative Sis. Nimfa Yyance was the installing officer.



NATIONAL PRO-LIFE CAMPAIGN. The San Sebastian Circle joined the National Pro-Life Campaign vs. HB 5043, known as the Reproductive Health Bill by putting up the prescribed tarpaulin streamer at the church courtyard.



ONDOY OUTREACH. The Circle donated food items and other relief goods to residents of Bgy. Claudio Salgado, one of the barangays affected by Tropical Storm Ondoy. The DMI sisters are shown at left photo preparing the gift packages. Right photo shows the recipients of the gifts joining the sisters in prayer.



CHRISTMAS GIFT-GIVING The poor senior citizens of Busaran were the beneficiaries of the Circle's Christmas gift-giving. The DMI sisters distributed food for noche buena. The children of the barangay also received gifts.



Our Lady of Fatima Circle Spearheads Awareness of Women's Rights

The Our Lady of Fatima Circle, Alta Tierra Village, Iloilo City sponsored a lecture-forum on Women's Rights last November 28, 2009. Co-sponsoring the event was the Zonta Club of Iloilo.

Prosecutor Atty. Ma. Elena Geroche was the resource

speaker who explained the provisions of the Magna Carta for Women, RA 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Law and RA 7877, the Anti-Sexual Harrassment Act. In the open forum that followed, the participants posed follow-up questions

on the salient provisions of the laws protecting the rights of women and children.

The forum also included a talk on the Automated 2010 Elections to educate voters on the new system of voting. Speaker was

COMELEC Director for Region VI, Atty. Dennis Ausan who assured the participants about the efficiency of the PCOS machines and allayed their apprehension regarding the computerized elections.

Pro-Life Seminar Stresses Value of Life

The Maria Auxilladora de los Cristiano Circle of Bacolod City headed by its Regent, Sis. Viol Caram, sponsored a Pro-Life Seminar recently.

The resource speaker , Dr. Lucy Caram who holds clinic at Doctors' Hospital and is an officer of the Bacolod City Health Dept., gave a very informative lecture regarding the value of life.

She placed strong emphasis on abortion citing the fact that the young generation today is prone to seeking medical solution for an unwanted baby. She imparted to the mothers appropriate knowledge regarding abortion and why the Church prohibits it.

The circle members gave full support in making the event a success.



Participants in the Pro-Life Seminar on the Value of Life with DMI sisters

The seminar was followed by a Feeding Session benefiting 50 indigent

children of Purok Paloma, Barangay 16.

From Bacolod City

Pre-Valentine Fellowship Held...Cont'd from Page 7

The program was highlighted by a raffle of six major prizes with lucky winners being awarded the titles of Ms. Unity, Ms. Friendship, Ms. Charity, Ms. Humility, Ms. Sanctity and Ms. Valentine. Sis. Fely Cajucom of Divina Pastora Circle was later crowned as Ms. Valentine and

escorted around the hall by Sis. Aida Beltran in her "victory walk".

A certificate of appreciation was awarded to Sis. Cleotilde Baldonado who served as diocesan regent for the past four years. She is now a vicarial regent. Region II

Representative Sis. Rita Caballero and Sis. Aida presented the award to her.

Sis. Aida Maraya, vice-regent of Immaculada Concepcion Circle led the closing prayer which ended the memorable celebration.

Valentine Gift-Giving for Women Inmates

The women inmates of BJMP, Iloilo City were recipients of gifts that the Our Lady of Fatima Circle members brought when they visited the City Jail on Feb. 14, 2010, Valentine's Day.

The inmates whose sentences range from six months to life imprisonment happily received personal hygiene kits from the DMI sisters. To show their appreciation, they sang and danced during the short program that followed. Diocesan Regent Sis. Yoly Galvez and Circle Regent Sis. Emma Engalla also gave inspirational messages. In return, the DMI sisters brought home household items and sweet preserves that the inmates sold to them. These are products of the livelihood project being undertaken within the BJMP.



From Victoria, Tarlac

Immaculate Conception Circle's Prison Outreach



The Immaculate Conception Circle of Victoria, Tarlac visited the Victoria Municipal Jail last December 28, 2009 to bring Christmas cheer to the jail inmates. They are shown in the above photo with members of the PNP who helped facilitate the visit. Gifts were distributed to the inmates.

– **Sis. Reynata Esteban, Circle Regent**

From Gumaca, Quezon

St. Didacus Circle Remembers Past Regent Sis. Inday Sabuelba



Sis. Lagrimas Maranca of St. Didacus Circle of Gumaca, Quezon, vicarial regent for Gumaca, Alabat and Pitogo, Quezon, wrote in to inform about the sudden demise last December 7, 2009 of

Past Regent Sis. Inday Sabuelba who was a moving force of the Circle. The photo at left, taken during the Circle's Silver Jubilee celebration, shows Sis. Inday standing fourth from left.

VIR-Visayas Visits Bohol

Sis. Carmen de la Torre, vice-international regent (VIR) for the Visayas, visited the circles in Bohol Province during an area meeting held in Tagbilaran City last November 8, 2009.

Four circles were represented at the meeting – Rosa Mystica Circle (Tagbilaran), San



Sis. Carmen de la Torre addresses participants in the area meeting.

Jose de Tagbilaran Circle, San Vicente Circle of Maribojoc, Bohol and Holy Rosary Circle of Antequera, Bohol.

Sis. Carmen updated the DMI sisters on

goings-on in the National Office and looked into the activities being undertaken by the circles. The sisters expressed appreciation for this visit by an international officer and pledged to undertake more activities for the DMI missions.



The Rosa Mystica Circle of Tagbilaran with the VIR - Visayas.



The San Jose de Tagbilaran Circle



San Vicente Ferrer Circle of Maribojoc, Bohol.



The Holy Rosary Circle of Antequera, Bohol.

From Davao City

Photo News From Our Lady Of Mt. Carmel Circle



URBAN GARDENING AND GULAYAN SA BARANGAY. The Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Circle sponsored recently a seminar on Urban Organic Home Gardening for the Parents-Teachers Association in Barangay Angliongto in Davao City. The project is aimed at encouraging and educating parents to plant vegetables through organic means in their backyard or using pots and plastic bottles. Organic fertilizers are made through vermin-culture or natural composting. The project supports Davao City's advocacy "Food Always in the Home" and helps households cut expenses by as much as 20%. Photo at left shows the PTA officers with the officers of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Circle. Middle photo: Seminar resource speaker, Barangay Kagawad Maxey Atog, chairman of the barangay's Committee on Agriculture. Right photo: The Circle has also adopted a Gulayan sa Barangay which the DMI sisters help clean and maintain.



BARANGAY FEEDING PROGRAM. The Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Circle has an ongoing Feeding Program for Bgy. Angliongto in Lanang, Davao City in partnership with the local government. Photo at left shows Circle Regent Sis. Evelina Ramos lecturing about the importance of vegetables in children's diet. Beneficiaries of the program are the pre-school pupils of Angliongto Elementary School. Right photo shows pupils of Anawim Elementary School singing Christmas carols during the Christmas Party the DMI circle gave for them last December 13, 2009.



SMI INVESTITURE. Fifteen young girls, aged 9 to 19 years, officially became members of the Squirettes of Mary Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Circle during the Investiture Ceremony held at the Diamond Village Chapel last December 13, 2009. Regent Sis. Evelina Ramos conducted the ceremony. The SMI Lady Counselor is Sis. Linda Cespon, past circle regent and vicarial regent. The circlette officers for 2010-11 headed by Mary Mie Villanosa, president, were installed last Feb. 14, 2010. The SMI Lady Counselor was installing officer.



Senor Sto. Nino Circle Launches Proper Nutrition Program

The members of the Sto. Nino Circle of Clarin, Misamis Occidental launched recently their Proper Nutrition Program benefiting indigent children of the community. Headed by Regent Sis. Fe Palanas and Pro-Life Committee Chair Sis. Brenda Bano, the DMI Sisters are shown in above photo supervising the feeding of the children.



San Vicente de Bonifacio Circle Pursues DMI Missions

Sis. Florita Jurial, regent of the San Vicente de Bonifacio Circle of Bonifacio, Misamis Occidental reported the many activities her circle (shown above with the Circle's spiritual adviser) sponsors for the DMI missions by extending assistance to the marginalized in their parish such as feeding programs, prison outreach, livelihood seminars, visitation of the sick and others.

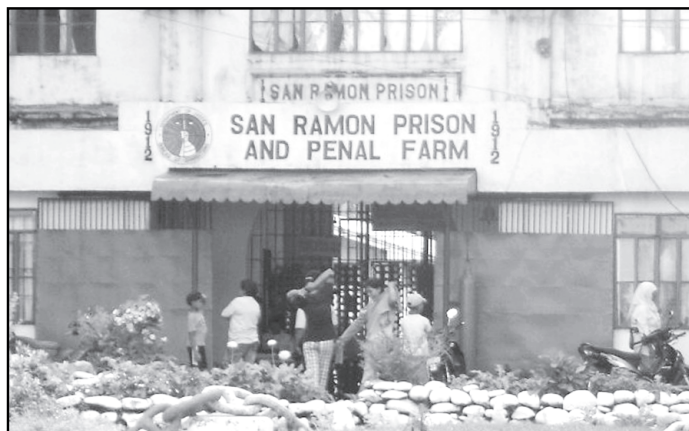
From San Diego, California

Updates From St. Charles Circle



The St. Charles Circle of San Diego, California, USA gives out awards to deserving members who serve as models in emulating the virtues of Our Blessed Mother as well as those of the Holy Family.

For the month of January, 2010, KC SK Bro. Tony Alviz and DMI Vice-Regent Sis. Masing Alviz were recipients of the "Family of the Month" award. They are shown at left photo with St. Charles Circle Regent Sis. Josie Francisco. At right photo is Sis. Nilda Tamayo who was awarded as DMI "Daughter of the Month" by Sis. Josie Francisco.



The façade of the San Ramon Penal Farm



DMI sisters conduct parlor games for San Ramon prisoners' children during their visit in November, 2009.

From Zamboanga City

"Sulat Mo, Sagot Ko" Program Is Alive And Well; San Ramon Penal Farm Revisited

The "Sulat Mo, Sagot Ko" Program is a pioneer project of the DMI circles in the Archdiocese of Zamboanga in pursuance of the DMI mission, Assistance to Prisoners' Families and their Victims. Every month, circles in the archdiocese take turns in mailing the letters of jail inmates to their families, friends and even to the judiciary in Manila. The circles which attended to the program in 2009 were the St. Anthony of Padua, Nuestra Senora del Pilar, St. Ignatius de Loyola, Our Lady of Ransom, St. Mary Claret, Holy Trinity, San Roque and Penafrancia Circles.

During the past five years, the month of November is significant to the DMIs when they spend a day visiting families of inmates in the San Ramon Penal Farm in San Ramon, Zamboanga City.

More than a hundred DMI sisters from the different circles headed by their vicarial and circle regents visit the Farm.

The annual visit to San Ramon started five years ago when Vicarial Regent Sis. Marilyn de Asis sent a representative to the San Ramon Penal Farm to look into the most urgent needs of the inmates.

The annual visit to San Ramon started five years ago when Vicarial Regent Sis. Marilyn de Asis sent a representative to the San Ramon Penal Farm to look into the most urgent needs of the inmates. The representative brought back this answer: **communication with their families.** This gave birth to the "Sulat Mo, Sagot Ko" Program with the San

Isidro Labrador Circle of Talon-Talon, Zamboanga City as the first circle to mail hundreds of letters from the inmates. Every month since then, Investigator Rodel Romero gives the letters to the Guidance Office of the Universidad de Zamboanga, the former ZAEC for the DMI, to be mailed to addressees. Assessment of the program is done during the quarterly diocesan meetings to determine current concerns and needs.

This year's visit took place last November 16 during which families of inmates received spiritual guidance and were gifted with groceries, used clothes and toys from the DMI sisters.

Those joining the activity for the first time were surprised to see new-born babies in the Farm. Investigator Romero

explained why families of inmates are allowed to stay and put up small communities within the vicinity of the Farm. There are three categories of inmates in San Ramon: Maximum security inmates are confined strictly within the Farm dressed in orange T-shirts; those in medium security while confined inside the Farm are allowed to work in the farm, cultivating rice and raising livestock such as cows, goats, pigs and chicken and paid minimum salary; and minimum security inmates will complete their sentence within the next three years and their families are allowed to join them in the Farm, the 3-year period serving as a transition from life in prison to gradual integration into the community as free men.

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Increase Your Happiness Quotient

Happiness is not something that just happens to you; it is a state of mind that you create. Here are some ways to increase your HQ.

1. **Do more things that you really enjoy.**

Think about the times when you were totally absorbed in what you were doing.

When this happened, you were living in the present moment instead of thinking about an uncertain future or a painful past.

In other words, you were happy – because you had temporarily forgotten yourself!

Happiness is what you feel when you are not thinking about yourself.

2. **Classify negative events.**

Once you have decided a particular event or situation

is bad, you can put it into one of two categories: "Things I Can't Do Anything About". Since it is a great waste of your resources to be upset

about things you can't change, make a point of not thinking about them. It there are unpleasant things you

can change, begin changing them.

3. **Find more to be happy about.**

Some of us grew up around people who complained a lot and stressed the negative occurrences in their lives. If you've picked up this bad habit, consciously look for more reasons to be happy. You will find plenty of them.

4. **Change your mind about happiness.**

If you enjoy life and have rewarding relationships, it is because you believe you deserve them. If your life seems unpleasant and unsatisfactory, it is not because it must be that way but because that is how you consciously or unconsciously believe it should be. To change this situation, improve your self-esteem, and you will automatically improve your feelings about what you deserve.

5. **Expect good things to happen.**

This doesn't mean you should concoct delightful

fantasies and then sit back and wait for them to occur. It means that if you have an ongoing expectation that positive and pleasant experiences will happen to

you, you will experience them. With an optimistic attitude, you will be mentally productive and will

improve your ideas about solving your problems.

THINKING BETTER

Having a positive attitude will increase my positive experiences.

- A Reprint



"Sulat Mo, Sagot Ko" Program Is Alive And Well...Cont'd from Page 15

The DMI sisters who visited San Ramon found the activity very rewarding, being able to share and experiencing first-hand how the families of inmates live

in the Penal Farm communities. Providing support for the activity were Vice-International Regent for Mindanao Sis. Lydia Ramirez, Diocesan Regent

Alternate Sis. Pacing Manalac, In-charge of Communication Sis. Pinky Saavedra, In-charge of Inter-Visitation Sis. Mila Navato, Program Coordinator

Sis. Flor Lim, Diocesan Secretary Sis. Baby de los Reyes and other DMI sisters. – **By Sis. Marilyn de Asis**

Basic Ecclesial Community: A New Way Of Being Church

(This article on Basic Ecclesial Communities was excerpted from a talk by Rev. Fr. Melchor Montalbo, Jr., pastor of the Holy Eucharist Parish, Moonwalk Village, Paranaque City, before lay leaders of the Parish recently. Fr. Montalbo whose forte is formation has authored a 3-volume book entitled "The Theology of the Body" based on the series of catechetical homilies and addresses on the Christian meaning and value of marriage and human sexuality delivered by the late Pope John Paul II during his regular Wednesday audience at the Vatican from Sept. 5, 1979 to November 28, 1984. The new DMI Vision sees the organization directing its missions towards basic ecclesial communities. This write-up aims to provide DMI sisters a better understanding of BECs to make their apostolic work responsive to the community's needs. – Ed.)

Basic Ecclesial Communities are the smallest pastoral unit of the Church, the ordinary place in which a person's Christian life can be nourished.

The BEC is patterned after early Christian communities where members of the community share an intimate relationship with each other as brothers and sisters. The life of the BEC is centered on the Bible, the communities arise within the Church, participate in her life, are nourished by her teaching and are loyal to their pastor.

Individual practice of faith doesn't see the need for relationships. Yet, it pleases God more to make people holy and save them, not as individuals without mutual bonds, but making them into a single people. BECs overcome the dangers existing in large parishes where life tends to be crowded and impersonal. Small number makes face-to-face contacts possible where individual contributions of members are encouraged and appreciated. The BECs are envisioned to be **nurseries** of evangelization

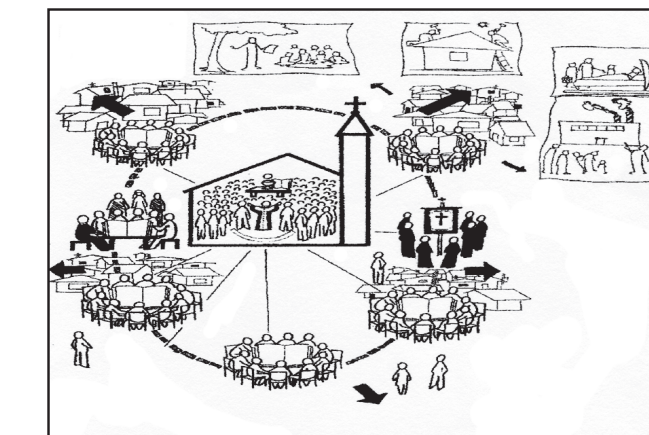
rendering a great service to larger communities especially the parish.

A Basic Ecclesial Community has four equally important elements:

1. **Neighborhood** – Members of the community meet in one of the homes in their neighborhood. They get to know and care for each other personally and members feel a great sense of belonging.

2. **Bible** – Members of a BEC make the Word of God the center of their life. Communal reflection on the Word of God through Gospel sharing becomes a central point. They reflect on the Scriptures and consider how these apply to their situation. In this way the community becomes a privileged place where true co-responsibility can become a reality.

In a BEC, the Church is brought down to the daily life and concerns of people where they actually live. In it, the Church takes on flesh and blood in the life situations of people (AMACEA #1). Gospel sharing gives the members spiritual nourishment and



mutual encouragement and strengthens their mutual trust. The Bible becomes a mirror through which they see their values and attitudes and enlightens them on how to look at events with the eyes of faith.

3. **Service** – BEC members put into practice the work of the Church. They share their faith, teach catechism, and help those in need, especially the sick, the lonely and the elderly. They help prepare parents for the baptism of their child, visit the dead, accompany adults who wish to join the Church and others. The members celebrate their faith together.

4. **Linked with Parish** – A BEC is linked with the larger

Church – the parish, the diocese. This link is brought about by celebrating Eucharist together, not in their neighborhood, but together with their fellow Catholics in the parish church.

The Church Hierarchy recognizes that as Family, the Church cannot reach her full potential unless she is divided into communities small enough to foster close human relationships. Small Christian communities have proved to be the best way of involving the average members of the parish in the task of transforming the local situation into the Spirit of Christ. This is the BEC's reason for being.

The Holy Rosary In Scripture, In History And In Our Lives



The Holy Rosary is one of the most popular devotions among Catholics worldwide. Its formal name is "The Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary". Church historians also call it the Dominican Rosary, the Marian Rosary or the Vita Christi or Life of Christ Rosary to distinguish it from other Roman Catholic bead prayers (devotions that use beads to keep count) such as the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy.

The command to pray is in the Bible, but there are endless ways to pray. The Rosary relies on prayers that come from Scripture: the "Our Father" taught by no less than our Lord, Jesus Christ, the two basic parts of the "Hail Mary" and the meditations upon the life of Christ.

Historical Background

In its history of the Rosary, the Catholic Encyclopedia recounts that in the early centuries of the Church, monks would recite the Psalms as part of their rule of life. However, learning the Psalms was restricted to those who could read. Illiterate brothers required a simpler prayer tradition. For this purpose, the Lord's Prayer was adopted and the brothers would recite 150 Our Fathers corresponding to the 150 Psalms.

Small stones were originally used to count the prayers. Later, beads were strung as prayer counters.

With the rise of widespread devotion to the Blessed Mother during the early part of the second millennium, the Hail Mary was developed and gained popularity and inserted into the prayer tradition. Recent scholars suggest that the religious

orders in Prussia were the first groups to include the Hail Mary with the contemplation of the Mysteries.

The Holy Rosary is closely associated with St. Dominic of Guzman (1170-1221 AD), the Spaniard who founded the Order of the Preachers, better known as the Dominicans.

Over the next 250 years, the devotion spread across Europe reaching the laity through voluntary confraternities and rosary picture books. There were numerous competing versions as to the number of mysteries, advocating as few as five Mysteries and as many as 200. The matter was not settled until 1560 when Pope Pius V, himself a Dominican, issued an apostolic letter establishing the 15 Mysteries of the Holy Rosary – the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious – as the official authorized Church version. In 2002, Pope John

Paul II published an apostolic letter adding five more Mysteries – the Mysteries of Light – covering Christ's public ministry.

Last October 6, 2007, the Holy Eucharist Parish through its Marian organizations (including the DMI) sponsored a symposium in celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary. Guest speaker was Sis. Andrea Mendigo, head of the Formation Ministry of the Christ the King Parish in Green Meadows, Quezon City, whose expertise is in Catholic catechesis.

Following is excerpted from her talk:

The Rosary dates back to the 16th century during the Ottoman invasion of the Byzantine Empire in Europe. The Rosary was prayed by the Holy League which Pope Pius V organized, led by Don Juan of Austria to combat

the Islamic menace. The League claimed victory in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. Then a procession during which the Rosary was prayed led to the Church of Sta. Maria Maggiore. From then on, October 7 has been designated as Feast of Our Lady of Victory.

In the Philippines, during the Dutch invasion in 1546, the Dutch armada was defeated in the Battle of Manila Bay, believed to be through the intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary, the *Virgen la Naval de Manila*, whose feast day is celebrated on October 7. The National Shrine of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary is the Sto. Domingo Church administered by the Dominicans.

Little miracles were also witnessed by many during the EDSA People Power in 1986. One account is the appearance of a beautiful nun clad in blue who stopped soldiers who were about to

break the barricades and attack the people assembled. It was said that the nun was not seen again. Then, too, wouldn't we consider it a miracle that not a single crime, even a petty one, was reported in EDSA during those four days of "living dangerously" when millions of people converged in the area to protect the heroes of People Power? No less than former President Fidel V. Ramos, hero of the EDSA Revolt who is a Protestant, who recognized the intercession of Our Blessed Mother and kept an image of her near his desk. In far away Medjugorje, one of the visionaries related that the Blessed Mother did not appear for a week coinciding with the EDSA People Power in the Philippines. When the visionary inquired about her long absence, Our Lady's reply was "I was in the Philippines protecting my beloved people."

In our life of devotion to the Blessed Mother, don't we also personally experience little miracles as we pray the Rosary?

Beautiful Reasons for Praying the Rosary Often

Quite a number of individuals, including some Catholics, complain about the repetitive prayers of the Rosary. *Paulit-ulit lang daw* and not coming from the heart.

During the Eucharistic Congress held by the Archdiocese of Manila and hosted by the Holy Eucharist Parish in Paranaque City in June, 2000 in celebration of the Jubilee Year, Fr. Mark del Rosario, SSS, novice master of the Order of the Blessed Sacrament talked on "The Eucharist and Contemplation". He said that there are four Christian prayer process leading to contemplation. They are:

1. Silencio - Silence as a requirement to listen to one's inner voice.
2. Lectio - The first stage of prayer which challenges us to face our iniquities and allow us to transform, leading to a change of heart. (Ex. Divine Lesson, Scriptures and spiritual writings)
3. Oratio - Entrance to the realm of feelings and emotions with signs, words and gestures, the willingness to unite ourselves with the Lord. At this stage, we experience physical and spiritual catharsis (purification or purgation of the emotion) (Ex. Adoration, thanksgiving, novenas and devotions)
4. Meditatio - Use of imagination to link with God, equivalent to the Eastern mantra (mystical formula of invocation or incantation) to deaden concerns and focus on the life of Jesus. (Ex. The holy Rosary)

The answer then to our friends' comment about the

repetitive prayers in the Rosary is this: Repeated words make it easier for us to meditate meaningfully. We can focus on the Mysteries of God's Kingdom while also being aware of the words we are using to connect with that Kingdom. We can use the time to learn from the Mysteries or we can allow our minds to wander and see where God leads us.

The Rosary is a powerful weapon against evil. The *Media for Christ* reported this account by Fr. Gabriel Amorth, chief exorcist of the Vatican:

One day, a colleague of mine heard the devil say during an exorcism: "Every Hail Mary is like a blow on my head. If Christians know how powerful the Rosary was, it would be my end."

The secret that makes this prayer so effective is that the Rosary is both prayer and meditation. It is addressed to the Father, to the Blessed Virgin and to the Holy Trinity, and is a meditation centered on Christ.

Fr. Gabriel also wrote in his account that the Eternal Father described to their group, through a Visionary, what happens when we pray the Rosary: "When you pray 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now' . . ." the Blessed Mother comes instantly to your side to pray with you. And she does not come alone for as the Queen of Angels, she brings with her

choirs of angels. Also she and Jesus are joined at the heart and cannot be separated so she brings Jesus with her. And Jesus cannot be separated from the Trinity so He brings the Father and the Holy Spirit with Him. And where the Holy Trinity is, all of creation is, and you are surrounded by such beauty and light as you cannot imagine in this life. Your Mother comes as Our Lady of Grace with her hands outstretched from which rays of light emit, piercing your body, healing you and filling you with graces. This is your inheritance which was poured out from the Heart of Jesus on the Cross, when the centurion pierced His Heart with the spear, into the only pure vessel ready to receive such graces at that time, His Blessed Mother Mary."

Dear sisters, as daughters of Mary Immaculate, it is incumbent upon us to constantly pray the Rosary and to help spread the devotion so that the world may be converted and saved. Parts of the messages of Our Lady to the three children – Francisco, Jacinta and Lucia – in Fatima, Portugal have come to pass (we have witnessed the conversion of Russia) and a third message as revealed to Sister Lucia is going the rounds in the Internet describing a horrifying scenario of the END time.

Let us continue to pray, and pray even more so that we may be saved.

An Open Letter from the SMI National President

Know, Love and Serve

Dear Fellow SMIs:

It was in my weakness that God became my strength. It was in the silence of that morning that I prayed and God heard my cry. It was in that moment that I was alone, Mother Mary embraced me. It was when I let go and God took charge of everything. It was being a sinner and unworthy that I have been called and chosen to serve.



Jonah del Prado (at center, foreground) with roommates during the SMI Convention in Leyte last May, 2009

My fellow Squirettes of Mary Immaculate, we may not see each other for we are far apart but we are under one sky. We may be young ladies but we can make changes. I miss you so much that until now your laughter lingers on my mind. Being with you that moment makes me feel life is beautiful. Always remember that God uses not so much the popular one but those who are willing. Please, keep your fire burning in serving our Lord through our Mother Mary.

Deep inside us are many beautiful things which the world may not understand nor care about, but this won't stop us serving our God. It is our faith that will keep us working for love and fulfilling our mission in life. Life could be cruel and harsh. People could be so unkind but we will always have true friends. I know I have one, for I have you! Courage, my dear SMIs! You are loved more than you know. Hold on and be strong. Squirettes *yata tayo!*

To the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, no words could express how grateful we are that you are always there for us. You never get tired of supporting and helping us. During our convention, you treated us like we were one family. You became not only our *Titas* but mothers who care and believe in us. Your smiles made us feel welcome and loved. DMIs, keep on smiling; it makes you look younger and more beautiful.

In Christ through Mary,

Sq. JONAH ELIZA C. PRADO

P. S.

May nag-text!

This early, the SMIs and DMIs of Aklan are excited and getting ready for the next SMI National Biennial Convention in 2011. When we celebrated our anniversary, we got 100 SMIs! To the new members of our family, WELCOME!

I want to be connected with your circlette. Please email me at pinkgirl_pulchritude@yahoo.com. I will be pleased to hear your stories about your circlettes. And it would be an honor to meet you in person during our National Convention. So, see you in Boracay!