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Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year



Christmas Message 2022



Our beloved DMII Sisters,

A Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all!

There are so many things we need to thank God for - the blessings and the graces we have received from God in the year 2022. There is so much to hope for in the year 2023.

As the year passes, but especially during the pandemic, we realized that life is more than all the things we are dreaming of and planning and achieving. Life indeed is more than getting an education and working, raising families and building careers, growing older and fading. We realized that in all these, relationship is at the foundation of every stage of our life.

Relationship is one of, if not, the most important facet of our humanity. We were made to be in relation. No wonder, our God Himself is a relationship - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - united as one.

This Christmas, we discover that family and friends and other relationships form the ambit of our joys and happiness. The gift givings, the sharings, the celebrations find their meaning and fulfillment in relationships made whole by the reaching out, the thoughtfulness and the remembrances, the forgiveness and acceptance.

At the very heart of these relationships is our own personal relationship with Jesus, God-made-Man and with Mary, His Mother and our mother. Without this core relation, our other relationships become incomplete, detached from the Source of all blessings and graces. That's why we have to ensure that our relationship with God is as strong and as intimate as possible.

Our Bishop, Bishop Pablo Virgilio S. David (Bishop Ambo) sent me recently this story:

The following is an incident that occurred one Christmas, concerning the great Saint Jerome. He was the man who translated the Holy Bible from its original languages into the universal Latin. This holy man, who had a great love for God, actually died, in 420, in the blessed town where God had been born - Bethlehem.

As he was on this day meditating about the first Christmas, Saint Jerome received a glorious apparition of the Divine Infant.

"Jerome," Jesus asked him, "what are you going to give Me for My Birthday?"

"Divine Infant," Jerome replied, "I give You my heart."

"That is very good," said the Holy Child, "but give Me something else."

Jerome answered, "I give You my prayers and all my heart's affections."

"That also is good, but give Me something else." His Sacred Heart was yearning for still more.

"I give You," the Saint, wishing to leave nothing behind, offered, "all that I have and all that I possess."

"Very good." The smile radiating from His Holy Face showed that He was pleased. There is, however, nothing which can compare with the Divine Love and Generosity of God. "But," the Boy continued, "I desire that you give Me still something more."

"But, Divine Infant," Jerome cried, "I have nothing, what do You desire me to give You?"

"Jerome," said Jesus eagerly, "give Me your sins!"

The Saint was shocked. "But," he asked, "what would You do with them?"

"Give Me your sins," Jesus explained, "in order that I may pardon them all."

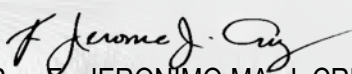
The generosity which Jerome had shown Christ on His Birthday was more than repaid by the loving rapture he experienced upon hearing those merciful words.

"O Divine Infant," said Jerome, "You make me weep for joy!"

Yes, my beloved Sisters, Jesus does not want merely a part of us or a fraction of our personality. He wants the whole of us with all our imperfections and unworthiness and ugliness. It is His enduring love and His boundless Mercy that make us whole and complete. It is His total self-emptying (Kenosis) on the cross that saves us.

May God's generosity be repaid by our readiness to enter into a loving covenant with Him.

God bless you and your loved ones always. Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon!


Rev. Fr. JERONIMO MA. J. CRUZ
DMII International Chaplain

THIS CHRISTMAS, LET US GIVE WITHOUT REMEMBERING AND RECEIVE WITHOUT FORGETTING



My dear DMI Sisters,

Ave Maria!

Join me in thanking God and Mama Mary for the countless blessings that we receive, most specially the gift of life, the gift of good health and the gift of faith, despite the many different challenges that confront us.

As the month of September begins, a feeling of excitement starts to build up. "It's the BER months", the run-up to Christmas.

In our liturgical calendar, the birthday of Mama Mary is the significant event of the month when her mother, St. Anne, gave birth on September 8 to the woman chosen by the Almighty Father to give birth to His Only-Begotten Son, the Word Incarnate, for man's redemption.

The role of Mary, who had been immaculately conceived, since her humble acceptance of being the Mother of God, her FIAT, is a most significant one in Salvation History – from giving birth to Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem, to taking care of the Child Jesus in quiet Nazareth beside His foster father, St. Joseph, His public ministry, His passion and death on the Cross and His resurrection and ascension to heaven.

Mama Mary's significant role as our POWERFUL INTERCESSOR after her assumption into heaven continues to this day. Her numerous apparitions throughout history in various parts of the world consistently bring the message of her Son for us to repent from our sins and pray the Holy Rosary daily as our shield against the snares of the devil. The latter message is highlighted in October, Rosary Month.

In November, we celebrate the feast of all saints and remember our beloved departed dead. On All Saints' Day, we honor and thank the saints for being our role model in following God's Will through the way they lived their lives here on earth. We also remember and pray for our departed loved ones and for all souls. The day reminds us of our transitory life here on earth and our end-goal of being with our Father eternally in His Heavenly Home.

The excitement reaches its climax in December when we celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 'Mary conceived without sin', the sinless vessel destined to carry our Savior Jesus Christ, on December 8.

Then comes Christmas! The joyful celebration of Christmas when we become more generous, more thankful, more forgiving, more loving because we emulate the love of God and Mama Mary. This Christmas, let us remember to ALWAYS GIVE WITHOUT REMEMBERING AND RECEIVE WITHOUT FORGETTING BECAUSE ONE CANNOT GIVE WITHOUT LOVING AND ONE CANNOT LOVE WITHOUT GIVING.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR, DEAR SISTERS!

Yours in Christ through Mary,

A stylized, cursive signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Asuncion B. Naraga'.

SIS. ASUNCION B. NARAGA
International Regent

BREAKING NEWS!

22nd DMI BIENNIAL CONVENTION ON SEPT. 2 - 3, 2023

In a special board meeting held via Zoom last November 12, 2022, your International Officers and Board have approved the holding of a face-to-face convention on Sept. 2-3, 2023 with Mindanao as host.

This was announced by International Regent Sis. Sionee Naraga during the face-to-face 4th Quarter Board Meeting held on December 10, 2022 at the IDM Bldg. function room in Paranaque City. Region XII has agreed to host the convention in Butuan City.

Sis. Annie Ty, Morality in Media coordinator for Mindanao reported the following details on behalf of Region XII Representative Sis. Shiela Peji who was not able to make it to Manila for the meeting:

**Convention Venue - Almont Inland Resort Hotel,
J. C. Aquino Ave, Butuan City**

Date: September 2 and 3, 2023

Conference Fee – P3,000

Deadline of Registration – First week of July, 2023

Almont's function hall can accommodate only up to 1,000 attendees. Our past two conventions in Davao City in 2016 and Baguio City in 2018 had more than 2,000 participants.

Please register early to be part of our 22ND DMII BIENNIAL CONVENTION. See you in Butuan City, sisters!



A typical hotel room with amenities catering to guests' comfort.



Parts of the hotel grounds



The Almont Hotel function hall

REGION VII ASSEMBLY DELEGATES BRAVE TYPHOON 'PAENG'

By Sis. Agnes Arada, Region VII Representative

Despite the threat of heavy rains and gale force wind of Typhoon 'Paeng', more than 400 DMI sisters from the Archdiocese of Lipa, the Dioceses of Gumaca and Lucena and The Vicariates of San Jose (Occ. Mindoro) and Calapan (Or. Mindoro) comprising Region VII converged at Forest Crest Hotel in Batulao, Nasugbu, Batangas last October 29, 2022.

Guests from the DMII Board led by International Chaplain Fr. Jerome Cruz and International Regent Sis. Sionee Naraga included International Vice-Regent for Luzon Sis. Milde Tong, Region VII Representative Sis. Agnes Arada and International Mission Chairpersons Sisters Cora Afuang, Biannah Villanueva, Lorie Manalansan and Cathy Pineda. Also present was Past Region VII Representative Sis. Adeline Lee.

Participating in the processional for the enthronement and consecration of the image of the Blessed Mothe that opens every DMII gathering were the guests from the DMII Board, Past Diocesan Regent Sis. Cora Gonzales and the Diocesan Regents, Vicarial Regents and Circle Regents of Region VII. The Parade of Circles followed with the Circle regents carrying their respective circle banners.

Vicarial Regent Sis. Rosalie Dastas welcomed the delegates followed by an inspirational message of IVR-Luzon Sis. Milde. A Eucharistic celebration officiated by Fr. Jerome Cruz came next.

Fr. Christopher Aytona, O.P. of St. Mary Magdalene in Caleruega was the keynote speaker. He was introduced by Sis. Agnes.

International Regent Sis. Sionee also gave an inspirational message. The reports of the International Mission Chairpersons filled the rest of the day-long session – Sis. Marlin Abratique for Pro-Life via a video presentation, Sis. Biannah Villanueva for Morality in Media, Sis. Lorie Manalansan for Upliftment of Women Workers, Sis. Cora Afuang for Assistance to Prisoners' Families & their Victims and Sis. Cathy Pineda for Youth Welfare/SMI.

As Typhoon 'Paeng' raged outside, Past Vicarial Regent Sis. Charito Apacible gave her closing message and Sis. Agnes led the closing prayer. Sis. Rachel Bacit was the day's program host.

The Region VII Assembly was a big success, 'Paeng' notwithstanding. Going to the venue and going back home safe and sound was proof of how the Blessed Mother kept her daughters in her motherly love and protection. Through her intercession, the DMIs are assured of God's blessings and graces.



Fr. Jerome Cruz and Sis. Sionee Naraga carry the Blessed Mother's image to her altar during the enthronement and consecration ceremony.



Guests from the DMII Board received plaques of appreciation. From left: Sisters Biannah Villanueva, Cathy Pineda, Agnes Arada, Sionee Naraga, Milde Tong and Cora Afuang.



Fr. Christopher Aytona, OP, keynote speaker.



The Our Lady of Peace Circle, assembly host

REGION IX ASSEMBLY HELD IN ILOILO CITY

*By Sis. Ilda Borlongan,
Region IX Representative*

The Smallville 21 Hotel in Iloilo City was the venue of the Region IX Assembly last September 10, 2021 with the theme “The DMII Journeying Together in Synodality and Discernment with Mama Mary”.

A total of 318 delegates attended the assembly coming from the dioceses comprising Region IX – the Archdioceses of Jaro and Capiz and the Dioceses of Kalibo, Bacolod and San Carlos.

After the enthronement and consecration of Mama Mary's image and the Parade of Circles with the regents of participating circles carrying their respective circle banners, Sis. Bebera Barrido, regent of the Archdiocese of Jaro acknowledged and welcomed the assembly participants and guests, the past regional and international officers and International Regent Sis. Sionee Naraga.

Sis. Sionee gave her inspirational message. She expounded on the theme and exhorted everyone to prepare ourselves to

journey in synodality with our brethren, so that we can walk together harmoniously, where in journeying, nobody is left behind and nobody will leave anyone behind. The Holy Spirit, she said, can empower and work in us. She also shared three points – Prayer by which we communicate with God,, Love which empowers us to serve joyfully and not feeling burdened and Living by Example to show what truly is a life with God and Mama Mary.

Fr. Aris James Java keynoted the assembly, starting his talk with a Synod Prayer. He then explained the reasons why Pope Francis called for this historical synod to facilitate renewal within the Church seeking to build bridges between the people of God. He tried to relate communion, the first of three concepts alongside participation and mission in the life of DMIs. He cited the factors that prevent us from having communion. He said that according to Pope Francis, there are three viruses, undetected and unseen, that silently attack relationship of people and have detrimental effects. These are: the virus of isolationism (withdrawing from the community is very counterproductive), the virus of individualism (me, myself, mine), and the virus of racism (clannish attitude)

If we reached real communion, participation and mission are possible. The beauty of life comes from the realization that we are all connected, brothers and sisters in one fatherhood of God. We are designed to connect. These concepts can only be understood in the context of prayerful discernment.

If there is one thing that our Blessed Mother possesses, it is a discerning spirit and this is the value which every Christian should possess. Discernment means “to sort out, to distinguish or to discriminate, recognizing something as distinct or different”. It is discovering in prayer how the Lord wishes us to act personally, that is knowing the will of God for us in the reality of everyday life.



Enthronement and consecration of the Blessed Mother led by IR Sis. Sionee Naraga.



The Parade of Circles



Keynote address by Fr. Aris James Java.

Fr. Java's talk was followed by an open forum.

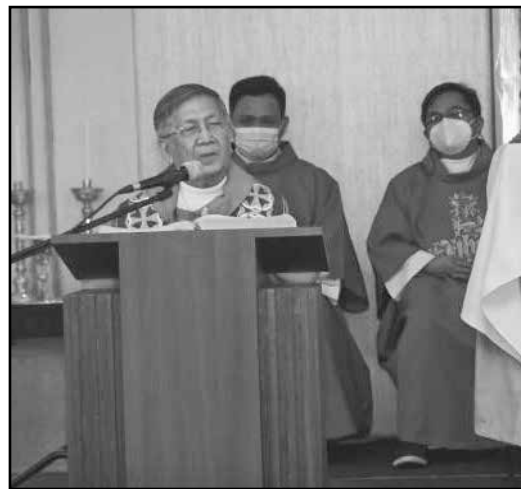
After lunch and a short break, the afternoon session started with a Zumba dance followed by the accomplishment reports on the missions by the diocesan regents. The reports were summaries of projects and activities of circles undertaken in the dioceses comprising Region IX. The presentors were Diocesan Regent Sis. Rosalinda Desales for the Diocese of San Carlos, DR Sis. Lilian Romero of the Diocese of Kalibo, Sis. Milagros Verano of the Diocese of Bacolod and Sis. Bebera Barrido of the Archdiocese of Jaro.

The regional assembly ended with a Eucharistic celebration officiated by Most Rev. Jose Romeo Lazo, DD, archbishop of Jaro, Fr. Julius Alneria as liturgist and Frs. Christopher Villa and Mark Joseph Hormigoso as concelebrants. In the Archbishop's homily on the day's gospel, he said, "The lost one has to be found; we get lost and we find joy when we are found." And to the DMIs present: "You have found that you belong to the DMII. You have found Mary."

Region IX RR Sis. Ilda thanked the participants and the assembly organizing committee for a successful event and led the closing prayer.



Assembly participants enjoy the Zumba energizer.



Archbishop Lazo celebrates Mass.

REGION XIV HOLDS 8TH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

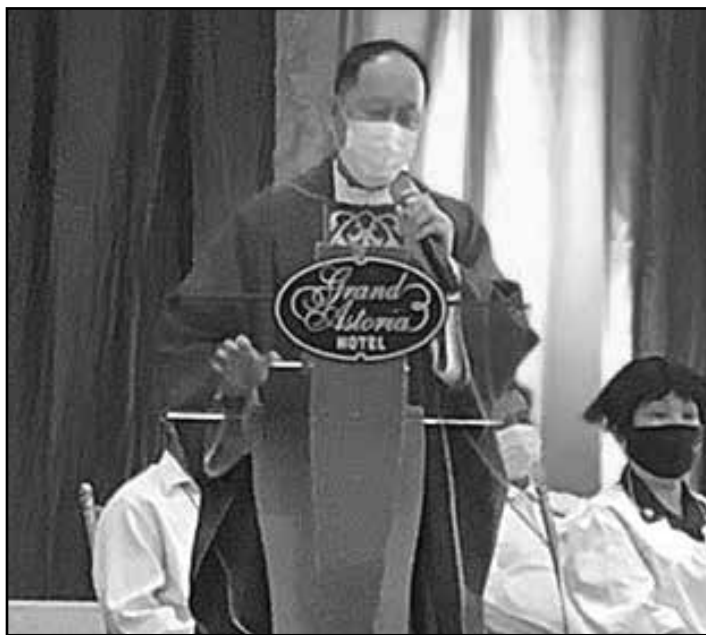
*By Sis. Marilyn de Asis, Diocesan Regent,
Archdiocese of Zamboanga*

The 8th Regional Assembly of Region XIV covering the Dioceses of Dipolog and Iligan and the Archdioceses of Ozamis and Zamboanga and Prelature of Isabela de Basilan was held last October 22, 2022 at the Royce Convention Center of Grand Astoria Hotel in Zamboanga City. A total of 434 delegates attended the assembly.

The entrance of colors and enthronement of the image of the Blessed Mother officially started the day's program. The enthronement processional was led by International Chaplain Fr. Jerome Cruz and International Regent Sis. Sionee Naraga followed by the Parade of Circles led by the diocesan officers of the participating dioceses.

As the event host, Diocesan Regent Sis. Marilyn de Asis welcomed the delegates followed by a spiritual message of Fr. Jerome and the inspirational messages of IR Sis. Sionee Naraga and Region XIV Representative Sis. Pinky Saavedra. The resource speakers for the DMI Missions were Pro-Life Coordinator for Mindanao Sis. Angie Baes, Mindanao Area Coordinator for Upliftment of Women Workers Sis. Shirley Corvera, Mindanao

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Fr. Jerome Cruz celebrates mass.

Region XIV holds... from page 7

Area Coordinator for Morality in Media Sis. Annie Ty, Mindanao Area Coordinator for Assistance to Prisoners' Families & their Victims Sis. Marilyn de Asis and Mindanao Area Coordinator for Youth Welfare/SMI Sis. Susan Honculada. Fr. Leh Taib, DMI spiritual director of the Archdiocese of Zamboanga also gave his message to the participants.

A Eucharistic celebration presided by Fr. Jerome Cruz with Fr. Elizer Mondragon, DMI spiritual adviser of Basilan as co-celebrant ended the day's program.



The assembly participants

The evening's fellowship and socials capped the Region XIV Assembly highlighted by a dance contest. Adding color to the event was the floral attire worn by the assembly delegates. The dance presentation by the Archdiocese of Ozamis won first prize. The second prize went to the Diocese of Dipolog and the third prize, to the Diocese of Iligan. The Archdiocese of Zamboanga as assembly host also presented dance numbers as intermission. Loyalty awards were given to circles in Region XIV for actively pursuing the DMI missions during the past 25 and 40 years.

Hosting the day's activities were Sis. Jacinta Tan for the assembly session and Sisters Sonia Garcia and Estee Tan for the fellowship and socials program.



The Parade of Circles



An intermission number by DMI sisters



Fr. Leh Taib receives plaque of appreciation from Region XIV RR Sis. Pinky Saavedra, DR Sis. Marilyn de Asis, Fr. Jerome Cruz and IR Sis. Sionee Naraga.



The Mission presentors receive their tokens of appreciation: Sis. Angie Baes for Pro-life, Sis. Annie Ty for Morality in Media, Sis. Shirley Corvera for Upliftment of Women Workers and Sis. Susan Honculada For Youth Welfare/SMI

ROVING MAMA MARY VISITS DMI SISTERS' HOMES

By Sis. Tina Ballesteros, Region I Representative



Blessed Mother Mary has been welcomed by the Our Lady of Good Counsel Circle of the Diocese of Laoag as soon as the restrictions of the Covid 19 pandemic eased. She has been visiting their homes as well as those of other parishioners who request for her intercession and blessing.

Started on April 3, 2022 at the home of Sis. Adelina Simon Roa on her birthday, followed by a short circle meeting, Mama Mary had since visited the homes of a couple on their 46th wedding anniversary and of Region I Representative Sis. Tina Ballesteros and KC Bro. Knight Albie, her husband.

Mama Mary's visits are made on schedule, regardless of the weather condition. During the scheduled visit to the home of Sis. Zeny Sahagun, for instance, a heavy downpour caused the flooding of streets that no transport was available. The sisters prayed for the rain to stop and it did just ten minutes before the novena when the skies cleared and the flood receded. The latest that Mama Mary visited were the ancestral home of the Palanca Family and the residence of Sis. Vicky Palanca-Tan.

The officers and members of the Our Lady of Good Counsel Circle and some friends regularly attend the activity.

From the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan – Region II

MARCH OF THE SAINTS FOR HALLOWEEN '22

By Sis. Aileen Santos, Diocesan Regent

The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Dagupan City celebrated the eve of All Saints Day on October 31, 2022 with a "March of the Saints" during which participants came dressed as saints.

The March of the Saints replaced the traditional scary costumes worn by people during the celebration of Halloween. The DMI sisters of the Miraculous Medal Circle participated in the event.

"This event is a great way to change people's perceptions of November 1 and show them that it is actually a day to celebrate the lives of saints and to allow the saints within us shine", the organizers of the event said.



Diocesan Regent Sis. Aileen Santos who won first place in the adult category tells the story of St. Rita of Cascia during the march.



The participants in the March of the Saints



Incoming Circle Regent Sis. Agnes Ramirez dressed as St. Agnes.

UPDATES FROM THE SAN JOSE CIRCLE

By Sis. Evangeline Ruanto, Circle Scribe

San Jose Circle Regent Sis. Jo Carino divided the circle members into four groups to undertake DMI Mission projects. Reported in this issue are activities undertaken for Morality in Media, Upliftment of Women Workers and Assistance to Prisoners' Families & their Victims.

For **Morality in Media**, Mission Chair Sis. Evangeline Ruanto and her members helped launch the Block Rosary Crusade that Fr. Jetty Ferrer, pastor of the St. Joseph Cathedral Parish conceptualized to celebrate the Rosary Month in October. The parish acquired 52 images of the Blessed Mother for distribution to the 38 barangays of San Jose City. The purpose was to propagate praying of the Holy Rosary among families in the parish during Rosary Month. The images were to be returned to the cathedral at the end of October.

Some members of the San Jose Circle were entrusted with the Blessed Mother's image. Sis. Josephine Mateo, a catechist, was designated leader of Zone 2 of Barangay Abar 1st. Circle sisters from nearby areas joined Sis. Josephine in the Block Rosary. Another sister, Sis. Nida Vicmundo who was entrusted with an image of Our Lady of Fatima covered Barangay Pinili, a remote barangay of

the city. The families visited were those in the "laylayan ng lipunan" as Fr. Jetty had suggested. A laminated prayer guide accompanied each image.

Before the launch of the Block Rosary Crusade on October 1, the group leaders first surveyed the families to be visited. Their experiences during the visits were varied. In Zone 2 of Bgy. Abar 1st, the homes of poverty-stricken families were visited and the group had to enter narrow eskinitas that got flooded during a heavy rain. During the prayer, they used umbrellas inside the house to protect them from the leaking roof. Those that the sisters visited in Bgy. Pinili were families who no longer go to church.

The common outcome of the visits that the DMI sisters reported was encouraging in that the families expressed appreciation for the visit and learning about the mysteries of the Rosary. The mysteries of the Rosary are all about Christ's passion and death on the Cross for the salvation of mankind as well as the Blessed Mother's role in His life, her sacrifices and pain for her Son's suffering and death. They also appreciated being visited by the sisters who expected nothing in return.

For **Upliftment of Women Workers**, Mission Chairperson Sis. Nida Vicmundo and her group chose to hold a demonstration on kimchi-making. Kimchi is a Korean pickled vegetable dish that has become very popular among Filipinos and can be a source of livelihood for the participants.

The demo was held on October 2, 2022 attended by 18 housewives from Bgy. Pinili. The activity was held at the barangay hall. Some DMI sisters were also present. The trainers were Ms. Maricar Aquino and Ms. Jessa Amparo who brought with them the materials and equipment for kimchi preparation.

The DMIs assisted the trainers in the preparation of ingredients like chopping the vegetables, etc. With printed recipes in hand, the participants went through the process of kimchi-making such as cleaning and salting the vegetables, preparing the



The DMI sisters pray the rosary with a homeowner under umbrellas to protect them from the leaking roof.



Trainers Maricar Aquino and Jessa Amparo demonstrate how to prepare kimchi.

paste with seasonings and spices and putting them in jars for the fermentation process.

The trainers brought with them ready-to-eat kimchi for the participants to taste. They liked it and said that they will prepare some for the family and eventually sell kimchi as a small business venture.

For **Assistance to Prisoners' Families & their Victims (APFV)**, the group headed by Sis. Ma. Luisa Lazaro coordinated with the BJMP in identifying families of persons deprived of liberty (PDL) needing help as well as the DSWD and barangay officials for information on the families' present circumstances and their addresses.

The sisters selected five families needing help the most. They are families of PDLs detained for violation

of the Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. Accompanied by the barangay staff, they invited the families to go to the Barangay Hall on October 15 for the circle's gift-giving activity. A short program was held with Bgy. Captain Librado Dulay welcoming the families.

The APFV Committee also reached out to the PDLs at the city's BJMP facility through the following activities: distribution of 200 food packs and toiletries to the PDLs and the guards on October 15, praying the rosary and distribution of rosaries on Oct. 18 and a Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Redentor Asuncion, Jr. on Oct. 24 as the culminating activity for Prison Awareness Month.

The DMI sisters felt fulfilled providing the PDLs with nourishment for both body and soul.



The DMI sisters with their beneficiaries during their gift-giving.

STO. ROSARIO CIRCLE JOINS DEP-ED'S BRIGADA ESKWELA '22

By Sis. Sheryl S. Villarico

From a famous quote by Maria Montessori, “Early education is the key to the betterment of society”, the Sto. Rosario Circle supported the Brigada Eskwela Project of the Dept. of Education with the theme “Brigada Eskwela: Tugon sa Hamon sa Ligtas na Balik-Aral” held on August 11, 2022 at the Paraiso Elementary School in Orani, Bataan.

The circle headed by Regent Sis. Olga de la Cruz donated 100 pairs of slippers to selected learners in the different grade school levels. Mr. Jeffrey Valerio David, school principal, who helped coordinate the activity welcomed the DMI sisters and introduced Sis. Olga who gave a short background on the Daughters of Mary Immaculate as well as its youth

arm, the Squirettes of Mary Immaculate. She invited the young girls to join the SMI.

It was heartwarming to see the young learners' eagerness to go back to school after two years of distance learning due to the pandemic. The learners' initial hesitance because of school protocols unfamiliar to them was lessened when they received new pairs of slippers with their teachers guiding them in choosing the slippers that would fit them.

The activity gave the learners the chance to visit their school and see the ongoing preparations for their return. The gift from the Sto. Rosario Circle ignited the enthusiasm of the children to go back to school.



The learners who received new pairs of slippers from the Sto. Rosario Circle.



The DMI sisters with the teachers of the Paraiso Elementary School.

OUR TREE-PLANTING EXPERIENCE

*By Sis. Melissa Lourdes Z. Reyes,
Past Regent, St. Joseph Circle*

In observance of the Season of Creation, the St. Joseph Circle of Balanga City held a tree-planting activity last Sept. 20, 2022. The monsoon rains did not deter six members of the circle to go ahead with the activity. More could have joined were it not for the inclement weather.

Reaching the planting site at Alangan, Limay, Bataan accompanied by Ms. May Cruz, a staff member of the Dinalupihan CENRO Office, the trail that we took was muddy and slippery due to the rains. We were able to plant 50 narra trees with the help of the ALANGAN Farmers-Producers Association headed by its chairperson, Ms. Estrella Aucena who took care of digging the holes where we planted the tree seedlings. Incidentally, members of the Bataan Medical Association were also at the site to plant 100 cashew trees in celebration of their anniversary.

On our way home, the sun started to shine. I felt God's embrace and the immense joy for the worthwhile job we have done for Mother Earth.



Participants in the tree-planting activity, from left: Sisters Cris Espuelas, Precy Imperial, Regent Luz Carreon, Past Diocesan Regent Digna Banzon, Rosa Tuazon and Melissa Reyes.



Sisters Cristina Espuelas and Melissa Reyes with CENRO-Dinalupihan's May Cruz and members of the Alangan Farmers-Producers Association.

DIOCESAN PRO-LIFE COMMITTEE SPONSORS CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS LECTURE

*By Sis. Susan Ong, Chairperson,
Diocesan Pro-Life Committee*

The Pro-Life Committee of the Diocese of Antipolo sponsored a lecture on Cervical Cancer Awareness last August 9, 2022 at the Marikina Super Health Center in coordination with the Marikina City Health Office.

It was an interactive session during which 33 DMI sisters and 50 women from 16 barangays of the city shared their experiences about the topic.

Ms. Daisy Velasquez, OIC of the City Health Office was the lecturer after which free Pap smear and cervical screening through visual inspection and acetic acid wash were conducted by Ms. Rhea San Juan of the City Health Office and Sis. Naneth Doles of the Nativity Circle.

The Diocesan Pro-Life Committee provided the needed supplies such as gloves, cotton, acetic acid solution, snacks for the attendees and tokens for the City Health Office staff. The Committee also sponsored the

pathologist reading of the pap test of 50 women pre-registered by the Barangay Health workers.

Information gathered from the lecture: Cervical cancer is a most common cancer among women, second only to breast cancer. Twelve Filipino women die from cervical cancer each day. It is caused by Human Papilloma Virus, transmitted by multiple sexual partners, smoking and risky behaviors. How to be prevented and protected: sexual abstinence, regular cervical screening/pap test, vaccination against HPV for adolescent girls 10 to 14 years old.

The result of the screening and tests were made available after two weeks.

According to Diocesan Regent Mercy Ong, the Diocese of Antipolo will continue holding seminars and lectures as part of its Cancer Awareness Campaign.



Participants of the interactive lecture by Ms. Daisy Velasquez



Pap smear and cervical screening performed by the City Health Office staff.

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY AND EXEMPLIFICATION OF NEW MEMBERS HELD

By Sis. Rony Bambilla, Vicarial Regent

The first physical gathering of DMI sisters in the Diocese of Imus after close to three years of hiatus due to the pandemic brought close to 200 participants to the Our Lady of the Pillar Seminary gymnasium on November 19, 2022.

Participating in the event were DMI sisters from the nine circles of the Diocese – the Sto. Nino de Molino, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Nuestra Senora de la Merced, Inay Maria ng Magnificat Circles, all in Bacoor City, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Circle of Dasmarinas City, the Our Lady of Candelaria Circle of Silang and the St. Anthony of Padua Circle of Maragondon.

The occasion was graced by International Regent Sis. Sione Naraga via a video message as she was at the time also attending the Region XI Assembly in Tacloban City, Past International Regent Sis. Ruby Macario, International Vice-Regent for Luzon Sis. Milde Tong, International Chairperson for Upliftment of Women Workers and incoming Region V Representative Sis. Lorie Manalansan, and International Chairpersons Sisters Biennah Villanueva for Morality in Media and Cathy Pineda for Youth Welfare/SMI.

The enthronement and consecration of the image of the Blessed Mother which opened the day's program was made significant with the touching Caviten way of honoring her through

a caracol dance. Four DMI sisters carried her andas over their shoulders while slowly swaying to the tune of Stella Maris.

Rev. Fr. Reuel Castaneda, DMI diocesan spiritual director and currently vicar general and moderator of the Curia of the Diocese of Imus, was the keynote speaker. He expounded on the theme "The DMII: Journeying Together in Synodality and Discernment with Mama Mary" and made us understand the importance of our role in the oneness of the Catholic Church.

In the afternoon, 53 new DMI members from the circles of the Diocese were exemplified by an Exemplification Team assisted by a Conferral Choir and its Support Group. The emotional welcome by the DMI sisters made the activity very memorable for the new members making them proud to belong to the DMI sisterhood.

Outgoing Diocesan Regent Sis. Zenia Velasco was commended by the International Officers present for the significant growth of the Diocese of Imus not only in numbers but also in the quality of living out the DMI way.



Enthronement and consecration of the image of the Blessed Mother by sisters dancing the caracol.



Guest speaker Fr. Reuel Castaneda with the DMII International Board Sisters Ruby Macario, Milde Tong, Biennah Villanueva, Lorie Manalansan and Cathy Pineda and Diocesan Officers Sisters Zenia Valasco, Emelie Ramos, Lily Habon and Rony Bambilla.



The 53 new DMI members with the Diocesan Exemplification Team.

MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE CIRCLE CELEBRATES ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

*By Sis. Lorie Manalansan,
Int'l Chairperson for Upliftment of
Women Workers & Region V Correspondent*

The 40th (Ruby) Anniversary of the Mother of Divine Grace Circle on Nov. 28, 2022 was capped by a dinner celebration at the Pescadores Restaurant on Letre Road in Malabon City on December 2.

Way back then, the K of C wives who gave support to the activities of the Knights of Columbus Council No. 3951 one of which was the daily October Rosary Devotion were the original members of the circle. Its organization was officially confirmed by then District Deputy Sis. Concepcion Javier-Ramos.

The circle's charter officers led by Regent-elect Sis. Celia Cabrera were installed on Nov. 28, 1982 at the Camp Aguinaldo Officers' Clubhouse following the induction of its charter members.

A welcome message by Vicarial Regent Sis. Jessie Abagat opened this year's anniversary celebration followed by a video message from International Regent Sis. Sionee Naraga who exhorted the sisters "to continue to be an inspiration and a blessing . . . to be the strong and faithful sisters who journey in synodality with Mama Mary"

Among those present during the activity were Past Diocesan Regent Sis. Myra Sevilla who is one of the remaining charter members of the circle, DMI International Chaplain Fr. Jerome Cruz, Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Priest Fr. Mariano Bartolome, and Malabon Mayor Jeannie Sandoval and husband, former Congressman Ricky Sandoval. Also present to lend

support were Youth Welfare/SMI International Chairperson Sis. Cathy Pineda and Diocesan Regent Sis. Monique Bularan.

The traditional blowing of the candle on the cake was done by Sis. Myra Sevilla. She was later joined for a toast by Past Regents Sisters Lory Manalansan, Cely Abagat, Lucy Flores, Vangie Esmino, Nory de Ramos, Jessie Abagat, Lilian So, Marie San Jose, Esper Lacorte, incumbent Regent Sis. Yolly Domingo and incoming Regent Sis. Teresita Ocampo.

Adding color and gaiety to the affair were the dance number, raffle prizes and games with winners receiving special prizes.



Regent Sis. Yolly Domingo with Incoming Regent Sis. Teresita Ocampo.



Toasting 40 years – the past circle regents with Sisters Monique Bularan and Cathy Pineda.

CELEBRATING FR. JEROME'S BIRTHDAY

DMII International Chaplain Fr. Jerome Cruz celebrated his birthday last September 30, 2022 at the San Roque Cathedral in Caloocan City, where he currently serves as Rector, with a Holy Mass and luncheon attended by lay leaders in the Diocese of Kalookan and friends. Photo at bottom shows the representatives of the DMII Board with Fr. Jerome and Bishop Pablo “Ambo” David of the Diocese of Kalookan and present CBCP President. From left: Sisters Cathy Pineda, Tess Miranda, Juliet Cruz, and Ruby Macario, Bishop David, Fr. Jerome and Sisters Sally Estrada and Josie Halog. Photo at right shows Past Int’l Regent Sis. Mila Villanueva extending the greetings and well wishes on behalf of the DMII.



DIOCESAN EXEMPLIFICATION OF NEW MEMBERS HELD

Six circles in the Diocese of Paranaque held a joint exemplification ceremony last November 20, 2022 hosted by the Risen Christ Circle of the Holy Eucharist Parish, Moonwalk Village, Paranaque City. The activity was held at the events hall of IDM Building.

The 19 new members were recruits of the St. Anthony of Padua, Mary Mother of the Church, Mary Immaculate of Moonwalk, Las Pinas, Our Lady of Buensuceso, Our Lady of Unity and Risen Christ Circles.

The Diocese of Cubao led the exemplification Team headed by Past International Regent Sis. Ruby Macario assisted by officers from the Dioceses of Antipolo, Kalookan and Paranaque.



The exemplification team



The recruits during the exemplification rites

BAMBOO PLANTING AT THE LA MESA WATERSHED

By Sis. Rose Enriquez, Vicarial Regent

In celebration of World Bamboo Day on Sept. 18, 2022, the Diocese of Novaliches led by Diocesan Regent Sis. Edna May Landicho planted 500 potted bamboos at the La Mesa Watershed in Quezon City ahead of the actual day on Sept. 10. Collaborating in the project were the Knights of Columbus, Fr. Walter de Vilder Assembly, North Luzon Jurisdiction, as initiator, and the Rotary Club of Lagro Ascension.

The three groups led by their respective heads braved the unpredictable weather and the slippery and rugged path leading to the planting site. With DR Sis Edna May were Vicarial Regent Sis. Rose Enriquez and some members of the Mater Dei Circle headed by Regent Sis. Estrella Rosal and the Mother of the Redeemer Circle headed by Regent Sis. Concepcion Arcena.

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A group of DMI sisters led by Diocesan Regent Sis. Edna May Landicho walk along the muddy path leading to the planting site.

DMI CIRCLES CELEBRATE MARIAN, OTHER FEASTS

By Sis. Nitz Austria, Vicarial Regent

The DMI circles in Puerto Princesa City joined the culminating activity during the celebration of Rosary Month last October 31, 2022. The heavy downpour experienced almost daily during the month did not deter the sisters from going to Mass and praying the Rosary at 3 o'clock in the morning in the various chapels in the parish.

A significant event took place at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral on November 23, 2022, Red Wednesday, attended by the DMIs of St. Bernadette Circle.

The event was held to commemorate the sacrifices of missionaries and martyrs who died defending our Catholic faith.

The sisters also pray the Theotokos daily for all priests, bishops and the Pope, especially those who are sick.

The St. Peter Circle sisters led the novena prayers for the Immaculate Conception starting on November 29, 2022, in celebration of her feast day on December 8.



A special prayer for missionaries and martyrs on Red Wednesday.



A Living Rosary at the cathedral grounds, a culminating activity for Rosary Month.



St. Bernadette Circle sisters pray the Theotokos for all priests, bishops and the Pope.

Bamboo Planting...from page 18

Bamboo planting is in line with the government's effort to improve the lives of the Filipinos through bamboo reforestation that will enhance the forest cover and eventually become a valuable economic and environmental resource. The roots of giant bamboo can efficiently absorb excess water and bind the soil together, thus reducing erosion.

Bamboo has rapidly transitioned from being "a poor man's lumber" to a sought-after commodity now called "green gold". It is important for its ecological functions absorbing greenhouse gases, insulating carbon dioxide from the environment and producing more oxygen than its equivalent tree size. Its innumerable uses are felt in our daily lives – food, housing, building, construction and livelihood materials, medicines, ornaments and others.



Two DMI sisters plant the potted bamboo on a water-logged hole.

NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE DIOCESE OF SAN PABLO

By Sis. Llarina Mojica,
Region VI Newsette Correspondent

Region VI DMIs Join Unity Walk for the Environment and Tree-Planting

The DMIs of the Diocese of San Pablo joined the Friends of The Seven Lakes Foundation in a Unity Walk for the environment starting from the San Pablo Cathedral to Sampaloc Lake together with other civic organizations. A short program and tree planting of indigenous trees and “Linis Lawa” followed the walk.

Some 500 seedlings of *narra*, *guyabano*, *bignay* and *banaba* donated by CENRO-Sta. Cruz, Laguna were planted by the participants during the activity. Vicarial Regent Sis. Brigie Baldovino-Alican of St. Paul the First Hermit Vicariate inked a Memorandum of Agreement with the Diocese of San Pablo for the preservation of Sampaloc Lake.



The Unity Walk participants during their “Linis Lawa” activity.

Diocesan Advent Recollection Held

A virtual Advent Recollection was held last November 30, 2022 hosted via Zoom by Sis. Helen Cocson, diocesan Morality in Media chairperson. The recollection theme was “God calls us DMIs through Mama Mary to present our lives as a GIFT to Him”.

Eighteen circles of the diocese consisting of 105 participants attended the recollection. Messages were given by Region VI Representative Sis. Luming Lagunda and Diocesan Regent Sis. Norma Eusebio.

Rev. Fr. Richard Buenaventura, DMI diocesan spiritual director and pastor of St. John Paul II Parish in Sta. Cruz, Laguna was the recollection speaker. He reminded his audience about their Christmas journey – the apostolate of PRESENCE if possible in all undertakings and the need to purify themselves and become a semblance of Christ to their neighbors.

This year’s Advent Recollection was a good avenue for withdrawing from earthly desires of our body and spiritually seeking the Lord’s presence and guidance in our hearts as we fulfill our missions in the DMI.



Fr. Richard Buenaventura, recollection speaker

DMII MARKERS UNVEILED AND BLESSED IN REGION VI

Five DMII markers have thus far been unveiled and blessed in the Diocese of San Pablo. The marker of St. Paul the First Hermit Circle in San Pablo City was unveiled and blessed by Fr. Jerry Bitoon on June 25, 2022 while that of St. Bartholomew Circle in Nagcarlan, Laguna was blessed by Fr. Eduardo Arupo on August 17, 2022. In San Lorenzo Ruiz Parish in San Padro City, Parish Priest Fr. Frederick Yapana blessed the marker on July 20, 2022. DMII markers have also been installed and blessed in Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Siniloan and St. Therese Parish in Los Banos, Laguna.



A DMII market proto-type

MISSION ACTIVITIES OF REGION VII CIRCLES IN PHOTOS

By Sis. Agnes Arada,
Region VII Representative

Morality in Media

DIOCESE OF LUCENA



The St. Ferdinand Circle conducted a symposium with Fr. Ramil Esplana as speaker. Attending with the circle sisters were some members of Munting Simbahang Kristiyano. Spearheading the project were Circle Regent Sis. Merly de Castro and Past Regent Sis. Rizza Dayo.

APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF SAN JOSE (MINDORO OCC.)



The Mina de Oro Circle sponsored a Gender Equality Seminar with 42 parishioners as participants on August 27, 2022. Dr. Victoria Ungria was the resource speaker.

Upliftment of Women Workers

ARCHDIOCESE OF LIPA



The Our Lady of Fatima Circle's Sis. Mariefa Manalo, recording secretary and Pro-Life chairperson, won the Ms.Singkolympics 2022 title, a part of the sportsfest activity of the Holy Family Parish of Bolo, Bauan, Batangas and two other parishes in the vicariate. DMI Archdiocesan Spiritual Director Fr. Emmanuel Vergara, rector of the Holy Family Parish graced the event.

VICARIATE OF SAN JOSE



The San Sebastian Circle of Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro headed by Regent Sis. Sheryll Kenept donated used clothes and t-shirts and two cones of thread to women parishioners who sew pot holders to sell as a source of income.



The Mina de Oro Circle sisters planted snake plants as part of the beautification of the cathedral compound.

Youth Welfare/SMI

VICARIATE OF SAN JOSE



The Nuestra Senora del Pilar Circlette of Mamburao, Mindoro Occidental had a members' reorientation and catechism conducted by Region VII Representative Sis. Agnes Arada, Vicarial Regent Sis. Clarinda Lorenzo, Circle Regent Sis. Mila Abad and SMI Lady Counselor Sis. Emeline Alcayde last Aug. 16, 2022.



The Mina de Oro Circle spearheaded a Vicarial Conference of Youth Ministers last Aug. 12, 2022. Nineteen participants attended the conference.

ARCHDIOCESE OF LIPA



The Our Lady of Fatima Circle, on the occasion of its first anniversary, conducted an orientation on the Squirettes of Mary to 35 young girls as prospective SMI members. Sis. Nikka Ilagan of Mater Purissima Circle was the speaker during the orientation held on Nov. 20, 2022.

Pro-Life

ARCHDIOCESE OF LIPA



The St. Ferdinand Circle conducted a symposium with Fr. Ramil Esplana as speaker. Attending with the circle sisters were some members of Munting Simbahang Kristiyano. Spearheading the project were Circle Regent Sis. Merly de Castro and Past Regent Sis. Rizza Dayo.



The St. Martin of Tours Circle of Taal headed by Regent Sis. Baby Hernandez distributed food packs to 30 indigent families in celebration of Mama Mary's birthday on Sept. 8, 2022.

Assistance to Prisoners' Families & their Victims

ARCHDIOCESE OF LIPA



The Our Lady of Peace Circle held a prison outreach with Fr. Joseph Reden Ramos as speaker. Gifts were later distributed to the families of 102 persons deprived of liberty (PDLs). Vicarial Regent Sis. Rosalie Dastas and Circle Regent Sis. Vissa de Guzman.. led the activity.



The St. Raphael the Archangel Circle of Calaca, Batangas in coordination with the St. Raphael the Archangel Multi-Purpose Cooperative distributed gifts and served meals to PDLs' families. Rector Fr. Noel Abutal and Parochial Vicar Fr. Michael Sandoval attended the event spearheaded by Regent Sis. Nenette Asuncion.

REGION VIII HOLDS REGIONAL MARIAN CONGRESS

By Sis. Eufemia Abragan,
Region VIII Representative

The St. Raphael the Archangel Circle of Pili, Camarines Sur hosted a Regional Marian Congress last Sept. 24, 2022. The congress participants were welcomed by the Pili Parochial School Band led by their majorettes and DLC exhibiting their routines to the tune of “Mabuhay”.

The Squirettes of St. Raphael the Archangel Circle ushered the arriving guests first to the Marian Exhibit where 61 images of the Blessed Virgin were on display.

The Congress officially started with the enthronement and consecration ceremony led by Region VIII Representative Sis. Eufemia Abragan with the vicarial and circle regents present offering candles and flowers at the altar at the center of the stage. Ten circles from the Dioceses of Caceres, Iriga and Albay were represented at the congress. – the Sta. Teresita of Avila, Divine Shepherd, St. Rose of Lima, Holy Trinity and St. Raphael the Archangel Circles of the Diocese of Caceres, Little Flower and Sta. Maria Goretti Circles of the Diocese of Iriga and the St. Claire, St. Rose of Lima and the Our Lady of Carmel Circles of the Diocese of Albay. Their presence was acknowledged by Sis. Lilia de los Santos, vice-regent of the host circle.

Sis. Cyril Baltazar, regent of St. Raphael the Archangel Circle welcomed the delegates followed by an inspirational message of Sis. Fem Abragan who

thanked the participants for their presence and the efforts of Vicarial Regent Sis. Merly Jean Plaza and Diocesan Regent Sis. Helen Gaite for spearheading preparations for the Congress,

The first guest speaker was Msgr. Noe Badiola, DMI diocesan spiritual director, who was introduced by Diocesan Treasurer Sis. Polly Ortega. In his talk Msgr. Badiola discussed the four basic Marian Dogmas – Divine Maternity, Immaculate Conception, Perpetual Virginity and Assumption which the participants found very informative.

The afternoon’s guest speaker was Fr. Wilmer Joseph Tria, pastor of St. Raphael the Archangel Parish and Vicar Forane who dwelt on the topic “Journeying Together in Synodality and Discernment with Mama Mary”. He underscored the importance of the DMI’s devotion to the Blessed Mother to be led on the path of synodality to Jesus, one’s final destination. “Mary is the way to Jesus” was his final message.

Fr. Rex Luis Hidalgo, parochial vicar of the St. Raphael the Archangel Parish, celebrated the Holy Eucharist to conclude the Congress.

A short meeting presided by Sis. Fem took place to discuss DMII business emanating from the National Office as well as regional DMI matters needing urgent attention.



Region VIII Representative Sis. Fem Abragan at the Marian exhibit.



Fr. Rex Hidalgo with (from left) Vicarial Regent Sis. Belen Bernales, Regional SMI Coordinator Sis. Amy Rariza, Region VIII RR Sis. Fem Abragan, Regent Sisters Dalen Vargas and Star Oliva of the Diocese of Iriga.

TWO SMI CIRCLETTES ORGANIZED IN THE DIOCESE OF TANDAG

By Sis. Shiela Peji, Region XII Representative

Two Squirettes of Mary circlettes were organized in the Vicariate of Bislig last November 13, 2022. The investiture of the new Squirettes took place at the St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Forest Drive Village in San Roque, Bislig City. The installation of officers of the circlettes – Our Blessed Mother and Our Lady of Fatima Circlettes – followed the investiture ceremony.

The activity was attended by 35 DMI sisters and 33 SMIs with the initiating team coming from the San Antonio de Padua Circlette of Bgy. Lapinigan, San Francisco, Agusan del Sur led by SMI President Blessy Joy Beluca and Squirettes Dixie Hannah Jane Prieto, Heart Despi, Kim Jorge, Maria Amor Lagapa, Pia Arroza and SMI Lady Counselor Sis. Bernadine Fabian and Past DR and Regional Morality in Media Chair Sis. Catherine Oclarit.

Fr. Gamaliel Joyo, pastor of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, graced the event and delivered an inspirational message. He said that the SMIs will be of great help to the parish and the community with the guidance of their mother DMI

circles, the Blessed Mother Circle headed by Regent Sis. Sahlem S. Fudalan and Our Lady of Fatima Circle Regent Sis. Mea Laurente. Sisters Nenita Picandong and Elena Lumio assisted in the ceremonials.



The SMIs of the newly-organized Our Lady of Fatima Circlette with Lady Counselor Sis. Cecille Gesulga and DMI Circle Regent Sis. Sahlem Fudalan. At center is Region XII Rep. Sis. Shiela Peji.



The Blessed Mother Circlette with Fr. Gamaliel Joyo, Sis. Shiela Peji and Regent Sis. Mea Laurente.

DMII GOES ON AIR OVER RADIO STATION DXXX

By Sis. Marilyn de Asis,
Diocesan Regent

The Morality in Media Mission of the Archdiocese of Zamboanga & Prelature of Isabela de Basilan has expanded its reach to inform the public about the mission activities of the DMII in Region XIV via DXXXX RPN Zamboanga.

Launched on June 12, 2022, Diocesan Regent Sis. Marilyn de Asis, Morality in Media Chair Sis. Ernie de Peralta and Sis. Mila Espinoza went on air to discuss the good and bad effects of media, particularly social media concerns such as fake news, hacking of Facebook account, scammers, etc.

Radio Station Manager Ms. Christine Perez gave DMII one hour every Sunday, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Other topics discussed during the weekly program include:

- Financial literacy that reaches 20% savings of one's income for emergency needs and the benefits of

membership in cooperatives

- Assistance given to families of PDLs (persons deprived of liberty) such as scholarship, provision of school uniforms and supplies, cash allowance, etc. for their children. Diocesan Chair for Assistance to Prisoners' Families & their Victims Sis. Sonia Garcia discussed this topic during the program
- For Upliftment of Women Workers, Diocesan Chair Sis. Mila Espinosa reported the partnership between the DMII and TESDA in providing skills training to housewives and others and how the training programs have helped them start income-generating activities that help provide for the family. The women are trained in sewing, cooking, baking, cross-stitching, etc.



The radio program speakers, from top left: Sis. Marilyn de Asis, Sis. Ernie de Peralta, Sis. Mila Espinoza and Sis. Sonia Garcia

DMI PRO-LIFE AND APFV MISSION ACTIVITIES IN ZAMBOANGA

By Sis. Marilyn de Asis,
Diocesan Regent

For PRO-LIFE

The DMI sisters of St. Ignatius de Loyola Circle of Tetuan, Zamboanga City were able to achieve two pro-life projects as they celebrated the Feast of St. Ignatius de Loyola on June 30, 2022 which falls within the observance of Nutrition Month.

The feast day celebration featured a feeding program for 150 children who also received loot bags and distribution of food packs to 150 families at the St. Maria Goretti Chapel that the circle adopted.

Mangrove Tree-Planting was another activity undertaken by the circle to help prevent coastal flooding and sustain the ecosystem.

The Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Circle of Tetuan, ZC sponsored "Operation Tuli" for male teen-agers in coordination with barangay officials headed by Captain Jackelin Lim last July 25, 2022.

St. Joseph Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary Circle distributed pre-loved items to kasambahays spearheaded by Sis. Dolly

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Canizares. School supplies were also distributed to the children of Fatima who receive catechism from the DMI sisters every first Saturday of the month.

Nuestra Senora del Pilar de Zaragoza Circle distributed groceries to indigent families in selected BECs of the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Zamboanga City.

For ASSISTANCE TO PRISONERS' FAMILIES & THEIR VICTIMS

Our Lady of Purification Circle, Sta. Maria Parish, ZC visited the families of PDLs to give school supplies, groceries and financial aid to the children for their face-to-face classes starting August 22, 2022.

Our Lady of Ransom Circle of Mercedes, ZC distributed pre-loved clothing for teen-aged children of PDLs in the neighboring barangays of the parish.



Children receive loot bags from the St. Ignatius de Loyola Circle.



Most Holy Rosary of Manaoag Circle's "Operation Tuli"



DMI Sisters of St. Joseph Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary get pre-loved clothes and other articles ready for distribution.



The children of Fatima during their first Saturday catechism.



PDLs' children receive school supplies from the DMI sisters.

AN UPDATE REPORT FROM THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS CIRCLE

By Sis. Lorelei Onglengko,
Charter Regent

FIAT! A ministry arises beyond expectations and thrives for Mana Mary's mission for all women.

Our DMI circle was organized in the Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Woodbury, New York on December 8, 2019 with about eleven members. Though most of us are Filipino women, there are other nationalities in the group. During the pandemic, we have been striving to find ways to help other women who might need encouragement and to empower ourselves with the graces of Mother Mary Immaculate amid people dying from this deadly virus. We figured during the height of it all, many women were tired and discouraged in life. It was so timely that this ministry was created. It gave a purpose for all of us. We realized we need each other to feel life again. Yes, many passed from this horrific illness, but for many of us who are still living, alive and able to survive, we tended to forget to live meaningfully.

We are grateful to our Blessed Mother for calling us to continue her mission of love and hope. We now meet every second Wednesday of the month (it used to be every first Tuesday) to pray the rosary and the virtues of Mama Mary together. We plan and brainstorm and share with each other our life's struggles and hopes.

Last year, we had mission as well as fun activities. For Oktoberfest, we invited women to come to church for some fun with karaoke and dancing. Some young adults came in costumes, thinking it was a Halloween party. They joined us in singing and dancing and had great fun nevertheless.

For Pro-Life, we went and prayed the rosary and Divine Mercy in front of Planned Parenthood in Hempstead, New York, spearheaded by our Sis. Collette Sweeney, an active pro-lifer. We also supported our Knights of Columbus brother knights with their Coat Drive and Summer Picnic. We celebrated our first Christmas gathering, singing Christmas carols with our invited families and guests as our way of honoring the Blessed Mother giving us the Hope of Jesus. We gave gifts to unfortunate women at the Madonna Heights – single mothers, pregnant women, unemployed women, troubled women and those who are coping with life's trials – gifts according to their needs. The smiles on their faces were in turn their gift to us, the joy we felt for having been able to share the blessings of our lives.

On December 10, 2021, the Manila-based DMII International Board headed by International Chaplain Fr. Jerome Cruz formally

installed the circle officers in a virtual ceremony in the presence of Msgr. Richard Bauhoff, pastor of the Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Woodbury, New York.

This year, 2022, we had numerous exciting and spirit-filled activities such as the first DMI Retreat in March at the Immaculate Conception Parish in Queens, New York. We had our successful first Communion Breakfast in June with ten prospective members attending the activity. Fr. Nestor Matin celebrated a special mass for us.

During Lent, it had been a tradition with our family to go to the Our Lady of the Island for the Stations of the Cross and some circle members joined us this year. On Mother's Day in May, we offered flowers to our Blessed Mother and as we paraded holding our floral offering and praying a special Mother's Prayer, some became emotional. Msgr. Bauhoff blessed all the mothers present during each mass.

Summer was super-hot and a dangerous heat wave prevented us to undertake our mission activities. The weather became kinder in September and we held our Summer Barbecue

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A photo collage of the Holy Name of Jesus Circle's activities

A Pro-Life Witnessing: MY "MIRACLE BABY"

By Sis. Modesta Beltran, Regent,
Risen Christ Circle, Diocese of Paranaque

(Editor's Note: On August 13, 2022, a seminar on Pro-Life was attended by some DMI sisters in Region V at the St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Makati City on the topic "Everything You Need to Know About Abortion But Are Afraid to Ask". The seminar speaker was Dr. Calum Miller of Oxford University Medical School in the UK. He is a medical doctor and at the same time teaches philosophy and his research focuses on abortion policy.)

During the Q & A portion of the seminar on abortion held at the St. Andrew Church in Makati on August 13, 2022, a teary-eyed father asked Dr. Calum Miller about a serious dilemma regarding a medical condition of his pregnant wife that would endanger her life. The father was crying and I cried, too. *Relate na relate ako!*

The question brought me back to the year 2002 when my husband and I were confronted with the same dilemma.

I was turning 40 years old when I became pregnant with our fourth child. My doctor told us that I'm having a high-risk pregnancy due to high blood pressure and gestational diabetes and he could not assure us that I and my baby would be safe. My husband and I prayed very hard, harder than we had ever done before.

When my pregnancy reached 6 ½ months, my doctor decided that I should be confined in hospital for him to be able to constantly monitor my condition. On the baby's seventh month, a Cæsarian Section could safely be done.

I woke up at the recovery room after the CS procedure and my baby stayed at the neonatal ICU in critical condition, according to the doctor. He was fed through the tube and had blood transfusion. During that time, my husband cried a lot fearing the prospect of losing me or the baby. Unceasingly praying, we let go and LET GOD. "Your Will be done, Lord!"

I lost my husband in 2004 and was left taking care of four children including our youngest, our "miracle baby" who is now a tall and handsome (in my eyes!) 19-year-old.

Maverick Lloyd now studies in New York with his sister, Candy and elder brother, Neale. My eldest, Emmanuel is married and lives with his family here in the Philippines. My husband's sister looks after my three kids in New York.

Lloyd is now a college freshman and plays basketball. His team's latest game was in Atlantic City.

Looking back, I would say a partnership between Science and God had saved my Miracle Baby, a great collaboration between the Supreme Being and Science.

And for the father who asked Dr. Miller what to do in his present dilemma, I pray that he and his wife will be able to arrive at the right decision with the help of science and our God.



A recent photo of Lloyd and his mother, Sis. Dess.

Holy Name of Jesus Circle...from page 27

and potluck picnic. It was our last hurrah for summer 2022. The weather was perfect and we enjoyed each other's company.

Last month, we had our special Pro-Life Prayer and we look forward to ending the year with our 3-day Holiday Flea Market on December 2 to 4 and our YE Christmas Party on Dec. 10.

You see, we try to live in this world with our usual daily routine but what really matters is to be able to relate to and make others happy. We can encourage, empower and uplift one another by praying and living our lives meaningfully. We hope to continue to grow in this ministry in faith and in numbers with the help of our Blessed Mother Mary.

As I end my term this year, I hope that I had been able to inspire and uplift our sisters as well as other women in the parish community. My special thanks to Sis. Mofty Aujero and Sis. Mila Villanueva from the Philippines who gave us the opportunity to serve through the Holy Name of Jesus DMI Circle. The loyalty and dedication of my DMI sisters, including my sisters, Elisa and May, daughter Lorraine and daughter-in-law Andrea, in the service of our ministry will forever be cherished. And for the new set of officers for 2023, you are assured of my full support and cooperation.

Thank you all, my dear sisters. Hail to thee, oh Mother Mary and to God be the glory!



REFLECTIONS OF LIFE

By Sis. Mila A. Villanueva, Past International Regent

Life begins in many complex ways. A harmonious combination of the Spiritual: love, compassion and empathy, the Scientific: chromosomes, oxygen, calcium and the etherial, and the Universe: earth, water, fire and ether or space. Through this interaction, we became whole and an integral part of this Universe that is ever changing and more complex.

We awake at dawns, weave on to the daylights and the sunshines and then to the nights and back again! Round and round we go, as we watch and feel the movements of the universe.

Then it becomes reflections from our dreams, to our imaginations, to our visions and to our foresights. Where it starts depends on what touches us the most at that moment, day or night!

To some, the night is like the rest that comes after a long day.

To some, the night is the beginning of an exhausting day.

To some, the night is a tunnel, too dark to find any hope.

To some, it is the starting point of a new Beginning.

These beautiful lines that I picked up from a script of an uplifting drama of life made me ponder deeply. Unknowingly, I started to reflect about my surroundings, the noise that reverberates around me. The beeping of the cell phone, the clanging of the pots and pans from the kitchen . . . a normalcy long anticipated.

Then the sun starts to set, daily at the precise hour with the changing of the seasons, entralling us by its kaleidoscope of colors. From its descending metallic, almost blinding yet scintillating reflections, framed by the darkening clouds that seem to move to another stage. As if saying, watch and follow the sun. It signals us to call it a day.

The poems that follow are reflections of life. Yours . . . mine . . . ours! Somehow each of us looks forward to watch the sun as it sets. We time the seconds it takes to cover itself amongst the dark clouds. Then we anticipate the soft comforting light from the moon and the stars in the vastness of the firmament. Easing our worries . . . finding

the answers . . . and yielding in humble obedience to God's message. "You have done well. Rest now. Tomorrow is another day."

Here now are my reflections of life inspired by the firmament. It's vast,

immeasurable, and unfathomable ether! I hope you, too, will feel the message these reflections bring to you and your inmost being. Take a few moments to meditate on how lucky we are to begin to know this earth and our universe.

FROM BIRTHDAY ONE TO EVERMORE

One day, I am born
The time and day unplanned
From my mother's womb
Our hearts beating in perfect harmony.
I do not know if in my closeted world
It was bright or dark;
All I know is I am in a shelter
Where all I needed are there.

The time of day has come
In the brightness of the light
My first wail was heard
Everyone was with their happiest smiles.

Loving hugs and kisses I had felt
Milk as sweet as honey
From my mother's breasts
Where love and nutrient flowed
For every sup I take.

In my first days of infancy
I knew not the time of day
My clock seemed to be in my tummy
As I'd only wake up when I'm hungry.

And the warmth of your embrace
Totally pacified me.

The hours and the days passed so quickly
Days became years, years became decades
Learning and coping preoccupied me.
Immense and complex data filled my mind
That works eighty-six thousand
And four hundred minutes a day.

Where voluminous books stacked the library
shelves,
Computers have taken over their spaces
And everything became just a click away!

So I look forward to my birthdays,
Unmindful of my surroundings
Of the many storms that threatened
Or of the many diseases I'd beaten.

Today, I am certain that
With all the wonders of science and technology,
I am sure!
I shall live for at least a thousand more days.

OF AGING

Time flies, sights dim, distances get farther . . .
Almost unreachable!
Memories flicker like the candle light in the dark
Clouds in the sky floating in the wind
Transforming its shapes into whatever our minds
perceive.
Then each day becomes a dream that floats
Like the clouds up above.
It sways like the leaves and flies like the bird
Mystical sometimes . . . mythical sometimes . . .
Magical sometimes!

Whatever it may be, we chose how we want it to be

. . .
The time and day matter not!
But . . . we must remember our choices . . .
To be free spirited, happy and content.

JUST BELIEVE

Just believe!
Tomorrow will come at the precise hour!
The Sun will rise at dawn and will set at dusk.

Just believe!
Tomorrow will be another day,
Another chance to appreciate God's gift of life.

Just believe!
Tomorrow is here, the future is here!
Man had travelled to the moon and back
Vaccines were invented for lasting cures.

Just believe!
Races and religions shall open their doors
To listen to one another,
To become ONE glorious tribe.

Just believe!
Tomorrow is here, just as sure as
The sun rises in the east,
So shall it set in the west!

JUST BELIEVE!

GROWING IN YEARS

*By Sis. Ma. Theresa G. Curia,
Past Int'l Secretary & Region IV Representative*

Today we hear people say that 80 is the new 60. I totally agree with this statement. I turned 60 last November, but I still feel as excited with life, with my family and my dancing as I did several years ago. I honestly feel that I am just turning 40. Perhaps on my 80th birthday, I shall finally feel being 60.

There is no denying that I am advancing in years and so I thought of writing how I feel or should feel and thought of the inevitable return to the Father's house. There are some occasions that I had to ask my older relatives and gather some ideas from Dr. Google's experts. Here is how it goes.

I shall focus on what challenges and blessings those who enter their 70s have shared with me.

These points of view did not come from people who are sick, nor those who are severely financially challenged. These were gathered from women who live modestly, and who welcome the coming of the years more positively most of the time. They say they undergo fears, doubts, uncertainties about their future, too as well as insecurities about their finances. But for the most part, their lives are peaceful, simple and uneventful.

I present the topics that follow from the eyes of a 73-year-old aunt. I figured that if I start writing about something that I have not internalized yet, I might sound like a book nerd, or appear to be pontificating. Should you have questions about this article, I can refer you to her.

Entering the 70s is a good time to reminisce the past, recall the significant experiences, even make a good life map of what we have been through in life. It is good to ask oneself: What happened to me because of those experiences, despite those faults, failures, mistakes? How was my life affected by the wrong decisions I made, by the hurts which I have caused others, by the relationships I developed, I have broken, betrayed or nurtured? What effects have the good memories, the beautiful adventures, the successes and achievements on my soul? Because of them, what have become of me?

May I invite you to look into our life as though we were

reading a book. What do we discover to be the peak moments? Which were the lowest? Having seen our highs and lows, let us now try to assess how we are doing right now, at this very moment. How do we feel seeing ourselves as decent, peaceful human beings, despite the difficulties we had gone through? We realize that traumas, phobias, mistrust and distrust do not rule our lives now. If you resonate with these thoughts, then I invite you to celebrate what we have been blessed with.

This is also the time to forgive ourselves and others for the negative experiences that came our way. It is the time to purge out of our system the toxic elements of hatred, "tampo", unforgiveness, regrets. the 'what ifs', 'if only I . . .', 'what could have happened if . . .'. Those are useless questions and thoughts now. What is important is that we find ourselves whole, with positive outlook, caring and grateful persons.

And how will our book end? What will be the title of the last chapter?

Full retirement provides us with the blessed time to be quiet, listen, think, recall, integrate the scattered pieces of our past into a beautiful whole. The pluses and minuses, the highs and the lows, the tears and the fears, the joys and the hopes. They surface in our consciousness to be recognized as necessary parts of our history or our story.

We have time now, as we age, to keep quiet, to reminisce and feel how the Lord is blessing us with wisdom and joy. We remember the good things and look at them as graces and blessings which have contributed to make us what and who we are today. It is good to remember the people who have helped us grow, who have facilitated our learning, who have supported our dreams. But when we recall the people who made life difficult for us, we realize that now, we know what pitfalls to avoid just remembering their negative words, thoughts and actions. We learned how to avoid putting on the airs those people showed us because we saw how badly they made us feel. And because we are now who we are, we realize that those people have actually helped us to become strong against opposition. They forced us to be wise in avoiding those mistakes that they did, and they taught us how to smell toxic people from a distance and make our detours. The bad things that happened to us or which we did, as long as we have learned lessons from them are actually fertilizers for our soul.

Old age gives us time to review, to reassess our past and be grateful for the lessons we have learned. It is time to sing alleluias for the emotional and spiritual muscles we have grown, and the virtues we have developed. Give yourself time to be quiet. Enter into silence and listen to the Spirit of the Lord telling you that we, oldies, are loved; that we have a future in the arms of the Father. And that these last years can be fruitful in terms of love, wisdom, patience, care and intercession for others.

Our mission in the professional, family, community and national welfare may be over. Other people may be doing our jobs now. But our mission to pray, to listen, to support, to counsel young



people is never over. At least our peace can assure them that it is not fearful to grow old; that getting old does not mean we are useless. There are small things we still can do at home. We should do them with dedication and mindfulness. You might be surprised to find out that you could actually enjoy doing them.

Keep yourself healthy. This will spare the younger people trouble in looking after you if you get sick.

Keep yourself at peace, joyful inside. This will spare them the worry of seeing you depressed, hopeless, helpless. It is not good for old folks to demand attention and pity ourselves for our situation. If we attend to our mental health, we will be fine. And the people around us will be absolutely grateful. They have their own lives and present responsibilities. They are willing to support us emotionally and even financially. But they cannot be by our side 24/7.

Praying and being with the Lord is a good way to be mentally healthy. But seeing a friend, chatting on the phone with our friends and relatives, visiting those who are sick or alone, sharing food and flowers and small gifts with those who need, all these will cheer us up and make our lives feel useful.

And if we cannot move too much anymore as to visit our friends, and do our regular walking exercises, then we must see our situation, not as worse than before, but as different. We have a new stage of our life now. And with it comes a new mission. Our new mission is to keep happy, prayerful and healthy so that we do not cause others any problem. Not only that. If we are happy, we make other people happy, too. If we can just move around slowly and do very little tasks in our little space at home, then let us rejoice in the little corners that we find which need to be cleaned, arranged, kept in order. If we cannot do many things anymore, then pay attention to the little achievements of being able to move from the bed to the table, etc. There is something else that we can do: rejoice in the little movements and chores that we finish, no matter how small they may be.

This stage is different. We cannot compare it with the previous ones. Before we used to look at our surroundings on two feet. Now we watch people and things go by on our chair. Sooner or later, we might be watching things from our bed. The point of view is different now. But surely, we will discover other things, feel more things, react differently and still be our old selves. We can hear different songs and rhythms from what and how we see things. Before we had lots of energy. Now we have peace, patience, hope, delight in the Lord.

And thinking of the afterlife? Well, we do not really know much about what it will be there. We only know that we will be in God's company. Can anything be better than that? So, start reading the bible right now, so that you can know Jesus better. Knowing Him better, you will be sure that when you see Him face to face, you can have a rich conversation with Him. Listen to the good homilies online. They make us understand what Jesus means by His words in the bible. So the best way to prepare for the next life is to be a friend of Jesus NOW.

Talk to the saints, especially Mary and Joseph. Read, listen to stories of the saints. Pray the novenas. Watch lives of saints on YouTube. Then if we get to know them better, if we befriend them now, we need not worry about what the afterlife will be. We will be in the best company. And don't you forget to pray for your beloved dead. Don't forget to thank them for the good memories you have

of them. They will surely be around you there.

The best preparation for the afterlife is to be fully conscious of the present. To enter into the spirit of the moment. To be aware of what we are doing on a daily basis. List down what we need to do at the start of each day. List down our projects for the day or for the near future in terms of house fixture. We cannot offer God big projects anymore. We cannot also relive the past achievements and glory in our laurels alone. The past is gone, but we have the present. Live every moment as though God is with us. He is watching us, energizing us, keeping us company, inspiring us with good thoughts, with hope and dreams for a better world.

And should one day we pass on, and we will surely do, I am sure that we will not feel lost. We will not be out of place. The God with whom we were in good company in our daily life is the same God we will meet. And He will say: "Welcome home!"

We need to listen to the good news that happen around us. We must keep track of the positive things that develop in the world. Being aware of the good things around us will make us see and follow how God continues to create and recreate our world. Time to rejoice and enjoy the world where our God lives. These may really be the new heaven and the new earth that were promised to us. This might be what we will find out in the afterlife.

So we need not fear our death. If we live in fear, we might get stressed and actually be sick, or meet an accident or be confused. If we are anxious about what we will do when we get sick, we actually push ourselves to be sick. But if we are composed, at peace in God's company, we will be calm, do our chores quietly and carefully and even live well.

If sometimes we are tempted to request God to please not make us suffer long with bad and expensive illness, this is what you can tell yourself. How do you know you will live long? Or if your request is, please God, don't let me die alone, tell yourself this: At your death bed, you might not know anymore whether you are alone or surrounded by family and friends. You might be very busy attending to your departed loved ones who are calling you to join them. You might even be consoled by the presence of Mary and Joseph or our guardian angel. And our favorite saints.

There is no better way to prepare for death than having a normal but contemplative stance on life. Have a good and peaceful prayer life. Live a life of service to others. A life lived in joy and gratitude for the good things life can offer, for the beauty that surrounds us, for the sun and the wind and the rain and the plants and the flowers. If you can rejoice in all of these now, then we prepare not only for a good death but even for a longer beautiful life here on earth.





Your International Officers and Board present during the 4th Quarter face-to-face Board Meeting and Christmas Get-Together last December 10, 2022 took time out to pose for this souvenir photo. Their collective message:

**“WISHING YOU ALL A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!”**



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