



The First (1st) SMI Mindanao Area Conference

By Cathy Pineda

The SMI Mindanao held its 1st SMI Area Conference last October 22-23, 2016 at the Hotel Koresco in Cagayan De Oro City, in the Diocese of Cagayan De Oro. The event adopted the theme "The Eucharist and the Family in the Jubilee Year of Mercy".

The 2-day conference opened with the enthronement and consecration of the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary followed by the Parade of Colors and presentation of delegates. There were 145 SMI and DMI/Lady Counselors from all over Mindanao.

The words of welcome was delivered by SMI National President Elaisa Marie Honculada. Elaisa belongs to the SMI Mindanao Diocese of Butuan.

The Holy Mass was said by the Most Reverend Antonio J. Ledesma, SJ, DD, Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro City. After the mass, Archbishop gave a talk on the Mysteries of the Holy Rosary, and he emphasized, and I quote that "in a very special way, Mary plays a vital role in the history of Mindanao. Mary is a patroness and a refuge not just for Catholics but for the people of different faiths." According to the archbishop, "In times of crisis, Mary becomes the stronghold of the people of Mindanao. She is a very important figure in the work of peace and harmony. She is our model and mother in this life of Mercy."



Most Reverend Antonio J. Ledesma, SJ, DD, Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro City saying the holy mass



Most Reverend Antonio J. Ledesma, SJ, DD with (from L to R) Sis Cathy Pineda, SMI National Chairperson, Sis Lelis Pimentel, SMI Mindanao Coordinator, Sis Laura Cespon, Regional Representative Region XIII, Sis Ruby Macario, SMI Luzon Coordinator and Sis Josie Halog, National Office Secretary.

For an intermission, the Tita DMIs and SMIs from the Virgin Most Beautiful Circle gave a hand mime presentation before the group proceeded to their afternoon activities.



The DMI and SMI from the Virgin Most Beautiful Circle giving their handmime presentation.



One Teambuilding activity was a different way of praising God by rapping John 3:16 – For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life”

The SMIs had their teambuilding and the Tita DMIs had their wellness Zumba.



The Zumba was led by Sis Cathy Pineda, Sis Lelis Pimentel, Sis Ruby Macario.

The SMIs and DMIs came in their “Denim Attire” for the evening fellowship. There were songs and dance presentations per Diocese. The evening was capped with the selection of the Star of the Night-Best SMI in Denim Attire. Squirette Shirlyn Mae Rosales from the Diocese of Butuan was the one.

The Keynote talk by Fr Jeronimo Ma. Cruz, DMI International Chaplain, was delivered by him during his homily in the mass that he said on the morning of the second day of the conference. He said that the “best celebration where we can experience the presence of the Lord is the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. This is so because it is in the Holy Eucharist where we experience God the Father, God the Son in Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. To Him we call God our Father, for indeed we are God’s children and we are brothers and sisters spiritually.”

Upon giving the final blessings, the group led by the choir greeted Fr Jerome Happy Birthday (this is a belated celebration for his birthday on September 30). Likewise greeted for her birthday on Nov 8 was Sis Ruby Macario.

Sis Cathy Pineda, SMI National Chairperson, gave her report on the SMI. She informed the body about the new maximum age of SMI membership to 25 year old, and the rotation of the National presidency to the 3 areas of the Philippines. She also mentioned about the printing of the revised SMI handbook that had been approved by the DMI Board and members. She said that the Handbook of Information would be for easier referencing and a better aid for our Tita DMIs and Lady Counselors in their SMI form requirements, samples of which are collated in this revised handbook. The SMI March and SMI Prayer are also included in the handbook.

Sis Lelis Pimentel, SMI Mindanao Coordinator, closed the conference by encouraging the lady Counselors and SMI in the entire Mindanao to be active and be supportive of the missions of the DMII, especially so that she is the International Regent Elect for Marian Years 2017-2018.

Sis Lorie Llagas, SMI Diocesan Lady Counselor of Cagayan De Oro Diocese, Sis Susan Honculada, DMI Diocesan Regent of Butuan, and the Squirette National President led the organizing committee for the 1st SMI Mindanao Area Conference. Sis Elnora Abuel, DMI Diocesan Regent of CDO, and her team ably provided support to the organizing committee.

Sis Lorie, in her closing remarks, thanked the Board members who were present – Sis Laura Cespon, Sis Cathy Pineda, Sis Ruby Macario, and their very own Sis Lelis Pimentel, and all the SMI Lady Counselors, DMI and SMI delegates for their active participation and support for the successful conduct of the 1st ever SMI Mindanao Area Conference.



Squirette Shirlyn Mae Rosales (2nd from left) was effortlessly fashionable in her denim attire. She poses with (from L-R) Sis Lelis Pimentel, Sis Cathy Pineda, Sis Ruby Macario.



Fr. Jerome saying mass.



Fr. Jerome and Sis. Ruby in light banter while being sung the birthday song.



Sis Lelis Pimentel (center) beside Fr Jerome. From L-R Sq Elaisa Honculada, Sis Cathy Pineda, Sis Laura Cespon, Sis Josie Halog, Sis Ruby Macario, Officers of the DMI and SMI of the Diocese of Cagayan De Oro.



Starting them young. These little SMIs represent the younger youth arm of the DMII. SMI joining age is 9 years old. Very cute and dainty little ladies indeed.